

The Artist



So, The Artist won big at the Academy Awards.

You can get on the already long holds list for its June 26th release on home video, but while you are waiting...

You might check out OSS 117, Cario Nest of Spies and its sequel, both directed by and starring new Academy Award winners Michel Hazanavicius and Jean Dujardin, respectively (B eatrice Bejo even co-stars in the first one). These films are playful spoofs that show a bit of the same homage to filmmaking as the Best Picture winner, just set in a later time period and genre, and with color and sound (French with English subtitles). They are parodies of a set of spy books and movies from France in the 1950s and 1960s that are supposedly similar to Ian Fleming's James Bond series. The two newer films are full of intentionally kooky sight gags and constant mugging by Dujardin (that he does so well). The jokes are hit-or-miss depending on your own personal taste, but the films are definitely nice to look at. And they've got stupid Nazis.

If you are more interested in checking out pictures from the silent film era, we have a great number of classic films to recommend from Hollywood and beyond.

You could start historically with our set of Thomas Edison shorts or collections by the Lumi re Brothers or Georges Melli s (the latter of whom was featured prominently in the other big Award winner, Hugo). If you like comedy, we are lucky to have a wealth of early comedians that are just as funny without talking (some well known like Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton, some less well known like Harold Lloyd, Harry Langdon, or Fatty Arbuckle). If you're not looking for comedy, we have films from dramatic stars like Douglas Fairbanks (whom Dujardin's George Valentin most closely resembles), Mary Pickford, Rudolph Valentino, Greta Garbo, or (one of my personal favorites) Lon Chaney. And there are the famous (and not-so famous) filmmakers like Sergei Eisenstein, Abel Gance, D.W. Griffith, Fritz Lang, F.W. Murnau, G.W. Pabst, Victor Sj ostrom, and Jean Vigo who are responsible for influencing how films have been constructed up through today. Lots of links here, but we are fortunate to still have so many choices, thanks to film preservation efforts by institutions like The Academy and Martin Scorsese's Film Foundation.

Posted by Brandon R. on February 27, 2012

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