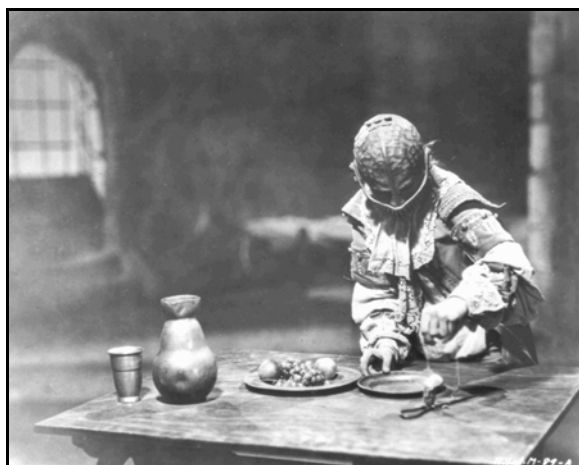


# THE IRON MASK

Elton Corp 1929  
Directed by Allan Dwan



The Queen Mother.... Belle Bennett  
Constance.... Marguerite De La Motte  
Milady De Winter.... Dorothy Revier  
Louis XIV and his twin.... William Bakewell  
Cardinal Richelieu.... Nigel de Brulier  
De Rochefort.... Ulrich Haupt  
Athos.... Leon Bary  
Porthos.... Stanley Sandford  
Aramis.... Gino Corrado  
D'Artagnan.... Douglas Fairbanks

Story.... Elton Thomas  
Photography.... Henry Sharp  
Interior Decorator.... Burgess Beall  
Production Consultant.... Maurice Leloir  
Film Editor.... William Nolan  
Production Manager.... Robert Fairbanks  
Art Directors.... Laurence Irving,  
Carl Oscar Borg

A fully restored print, including two speeches  
by Fairbanks  
Duration: 104 minutes  
Special projection requirements:  
Variable speed and Dolby Digital Sound  
Aperture: Full

Score by **Carl Davis**  
(48 players)



# THE IRON MASK

So come with me to France of old ...

Having based his 1921 film *The Three Musketeers* on part of Alexander Dumas' book of the same name, Fairbanks incorporated more from that book with episodes from one of its sequels, *The Vicomte de Bragelonne*, to make *The Iron Mask*. In Dumas's books the man in the iron mask was the twin brother of Louis XIV, a more sympathetic personality than the King himself, who was kept a masked prisoner to protect the succession. Fairbanks switched personality traits making the Sun King as blithe as his epithet and his brother a malevolent pretender intent on seizing the throne of France.

William Bakewell, who played the dual role of Louis and his brother, remembers 'There was something fabulous about Doug Fairbanks that stirred the adventurous yearnings of young and old.' In *The Three Musketeers* Fairbanks had made the role of D'Artagnan his own. Eight years later, *The Iron Mask* is full to brimming with Fairbanks' still fantastic stunts and dextrous swordplay: his comic gymnastics and juggling in the tavern brawl, his vertiginous attempts to save Constance from imprisonment and his menacing interception of both De Rochefort and Richelieu. But unlike his earlier films, *The Iron Mask* includes passages of extreme sensitivity and eloquence. D'Artagnan is beset by separations, from his love, from his dearest friends and, little by little, from his adventurous life. At age 46, this was the film in which Fairbanks bade farewell to his career as a movie swashbuckler.

It was not only age that made Fairbanks bow out of film-making. By 1929 the talkies had arrived and Fairbanks felt that they did not suit his style. Douglas Fairbanks jr said, 'he felt it wasn't his medium. Rather than as an actor, he saw himself as an athletic dancer leaping with graceful and visually effective movement across the adventures of history. Sound for his purposes was too literal, too realistic, too restricting.' On entering a sound stage for the first time Fairbanks lamented, 'The romance of picture making ends here.'

However, as a sop to the new standard, he and director Allan Dwan shot talking prologues to the film's two parts, which have been digitally restored in this version. To reflect the period in which the story is set, Carl Davis' score parodies a number of late seventeenth and early eighteenth century styles. Like the film the score has at its core an underlying sense of melancholy contrasting with Fairbanks' unmistakable élan and joie de vivre.