San Francisco
SILENT
Film Festival

June 2-5, 2016

The CASTRO THEATRE

SILENTFILM.ORG

Welcome to the San Francisco Silent Film Festival for four days and nights of enchantment in the dark! For twenty-one years the festival has proudly brought beautiful images to the screen accompanied by live, glorious music. A nonprofit organization, the festival is dedicated to educating the public about silent-era cinema as an art form and as a valuable historical and cultural record. Throughout the year, SFSFF produces events that showcase important titles from the silent era, often in restored or preserved prints, with live musical performances by some of the world's finest practitioners of silent film accompaniment. Each presentation exemplifies the extraordinary quality that Academy Award-winning film historian Kevin Brownlow calls "live cinema."

Silent-era filmmakers produced masterpieces that can seem breathtakingly modern. In a remarkably short time after the birth of movies, filmmakers developed the techniques that made cinema its own art form. The only technique that eluded them was the ability to marry sound to the film print. Yet these films were never meant to be viewed in silence and music was often a part of the production as well as the exhibition. The absence of recording on the set meant that the camera was free to move with a grace and an intricacy that allowed visual storytelling to flourish and made motion pictures more than merely filmed theater. It is through these films that the world first came to love movies, as entertainment and art. They have influenced each subsequent generation of filmmakers and continue to astonish audiences a century after they were made.

silentfilm.org

THURSDAY JUNE 2

7:00 PM BEGGARS OF LIFE
Musical accompaniment by the Mont Alto Motion Picture Orchestra
Underwritten by McRoskey Mattress Company
and by Friends of the Silent Film Festival
Introduction by Robert Byrne

FRIDAY JUNE 3

10:00 AM AMAZING TALES FROM THE ARCHIVES
Presenters: Bryony Dixon, Peter Schade, Emily Wensel, Georges Mourier
Musical accompaniment by Stephen Horne

1:00 PM A WOMAN OF THE WORLD
Musical accompaniment by Donald Sosin
Introduction by Cari Beauchamp

3:00 PM THAT NIGHT'S WIFE
Musical accompaniment by Maud Nelissen

4:30 PM MOTHERS OF MEN
Musical accompaniment by the Mont Alto Motion Picture Orchestra
Introduction by Shelley Stamp

7:15 PM VARIETÉ
Musical accompaniment by the Berklee Silent Film Orchestra
Underwritten by Adam S. Rubinson
Introduction by Sheldon Mirowitz

9:30 PM BEHIND THE DOOR
Musical accompaniment by Stephen Horne
Introduction by Robert Byrne

SATURDAY JUNE 4

10:00 AM THE BATTLE OF THE CENTURY AND OTHER COMEDY RESTORATIONS
Musical accompaniment by Jon Mirsalis
Introduction by Leonard Maltin

12:00 NOON THE STRONGEST
Musical accompaniment by the Matti Bye Ensemble

2:30 PM SHOOTING STARS
Musical accompaniment by Stephen Horne
2016 SFSFF Award presentation to David Robinson
Bryony Dixon will join David Robinson in conversation

5:15 PM WITHIN OUR GATES
Musical accompaniment by Oakland Symphony and Chorus members,
conducted by Michael Morgan
Introduction by Michael Morgan

7:30 PM THE ITALIAN STRAW HAT
Musical accompaniment by the Guenter Buchwald Ensemble
Introduction by Guenter Buchwald

10:00 PM THE LAST WARNING
Musical accompaniment by Donald Sosin and Frank Bockius
Underwritten by Universal Pictures

SUNDAY JUNE 5

10:00 AM FANTASIA OF COLOR IN EARLY CINEMA
Musical accompaniment by Donald Sosin
Introduction by Robert Byrne

12:00 NOON GIRLS WILL BE BOYS
Musical accompaniment by Maud Nelissen and Frank Bockius
Introduction by Laura Horak

1:45 PM NANOOK OF THE NORTH
Musical accompaniment by the Matti Bye Ensemble

3:45 PM DESTINY
Musical accompaniment by the Stephen Horne Ensemble
Introduction by Illeana Douglas

6:30 PM LES DEUX TIMIDES
Musical accompaniment by the Mont Alto Motion Picture Orchestra
Underwritten by Kenneth and Marjorie Sauer
Introduction by Céline Ruivo

8:30 PM WHEN THE CLOUDS ROLL BY
Musical accompaniment by Guenter Buchwald and Frank Bockius
Introduction by Tracey Goessel

Special support provided by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation, the Consulate General of Sweden in San Francisco, the French American Cultural Society, and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the United States

SFSFF2016
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MUSICIANS AT THE FESTIVAL

Incubated at Boston's world-renowned Berklee School of Music, the **BERKLEE SILENT FILM ORCHESTRA** works under the leadership of three-time Emmy nominee Sheldon Mirowitz to compose original scores for classic silent films and perform them live. Last year BSFO dazzled audiences with its score for *The Last Laugh* and returns to the festival this year for another Weimar-era classic, *Varieté*. The 2016 class composers are Mateo Rodo, Larry Hong, Austin Matthews, HyunJu Yun, Kanako Hashiyama, and Nathan Drube.

A versatile jazz percussionist, **FRANK BOCKIUS** has performed for dance and theater companies as well as in his own bands, including the jazz quintet Whisper Hot and the percussion ensemble Timpanicks. He began playing with Guenter Buchwald more than twenty years ago and has since performed for silent films at festivals in Kyoto, Pordenone, and Sodankylä, Finland. This year he performs with Guenter Buchwald, Stephen Horne, Maud Nelissen, and Donald Sosin.

Conductor, composer, pianist, and violinist **GUENTER BUCHWALD** is a pioneer of the renaissance in silent film music with a rich repertoire of more than three thousand titles. Acclaimed as a virtuoso improviser, he has appeared at film festivals from Berlin to Tokyo and is the founding member of the thirty-year-old Silent Movie Music Company. This year, Buchwald has adapted Raymond Alessandrini's 1989 score for the newly restored *The Italian Straw Hat* to be performed live by the Guenter Buchwald Ensemble.

Based at London's BFI Southbank, **STEPHEN HORNE** is considered one of the leading silent film accompanists working today and his music has met with acclaim at worldwide festivals. Principally a pianist, he often incorporates other instruments into his performances, sometimes playing them simultaneously. This year, his original score for Fritz Lang's *Destiny* will be performed by the Stephen Horne Ensemble, which includes Guenter Buchwald, Frank Bockius, and Brian Collins of the Mont Alto Motion Picture Orchestra.

Led by the Swedish Film Institute's resident silent-movie pianist and award-winning film composer Matti Bye, the **MATTI BYE ENSEMBLE** is constantly seeking that magical, emotional alchemy between the music and the images. Ensemble members Bye, Kristian Holmgren, Henrik Olsson, and Leo Svensson play a wide variety of instruments that includes piano, glockenspiel, violin, musical saw, and other percussion.

JON MIRSALIS has been creating silent film scores for more than forty years, recording them for DVD release and performing live at George Eastman Museum, the Library of Congress, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and the Pacific Film Archive, among other venues. His discovery of long-lost footage for Laurel and Hardy's *Battle of the Century* was crucial to its restoration and he will accompany the film on piano at the festival screening.

A chamber ensemble that revives the tradition of silent-film orchestras, **MONT ALTO MOTION PICTURE ORCHESTRA** culls historic libraries of music for its live musical accompaniment. Together, Rodney Sauer, Britt Swenson, David Short, Brian Collins, and Dawn Kramer have recorded and toured widely, creating vibrant, emotional, and historically appropriate musical scores for more than 120 films. This year, the orchestra accompanies the opening night film *Beggars of Life* and *Mothers of Men* as well as *Les Deux Timides*, with firecracker sounds provided by Molly Sauer.

Music director and conductor of the Oakland Symphony, **MICHAEL MORGAN** serves as artistic director of the Oakland Symphony Youth Orchestra and music director at the Bear Valley Music Festival and has won awards for his compositions. Making his first appearance at the festival, he conducts the San Francisco premiere performance of Adolphus Hailstork's original score for *Within Our Gates*, played by Oakland Symphony string musicians and sung by members of the Oakland Symphony Chorus. An interview with composer Adolphus Hailstork can be found on page 60.

Dutch composer and pianist **MAUD NELISSEN** has earned international acclaim performing live and recording both solo and with her ensemble, The Sprockets. She made her American debut in 2008 at the Telluride Film Festival and, in 2011, she performed at the Turner Classic Movies Film Festival in Los Angeles. She makes her San Francisco Silent Film Festival debut this year, playing for the Girls Will Be Boys program and for Yasujiro Ozu's *That Night's Wife*.

Pianist **DONALD SOSIN** has been creating and performing silent film music for forty-five years, playing at New York's Museum of Modern Art and at major film festivals around the world. His scores are heard regularly on Turner Classic Movies and his music accompanies films on more than fifty DVD releases. In April, he received the Denver Silent Film Festival's Career Achievement Award. He has performed at the San Francisco Silent Film Festival since 2007, and, this June, Donald performs his expanded original score for *Sherlock Holmes* at the Odessa International Film Festival on the iconic Odessa Steps.

Photo by Pamela Gentile

BEGGARS OF LIFE

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY THE MONT ALTO MOTION PICTURE ORCHESTRA

Directed by William A. Wellman, USA, 1928
Cast Wallace Beery, Louise Brooks, Richard Arlen, Robert Perry, Edgar "Blue" Washington, H.A. Morgan, Roscoe Karns, and Jacque Chapin
Production Paramount Famous Lasky Corporation **Print Source** George Eastman Museum

Louise Brooks has become a legend of cinema who continues to fascinate and *Beggars of Life* showcases her timeless beauty, her striking modernity, and the depth of her talent. While costar Wallace Beery receives top billing, it is Brooks who captivates the camera and captures our imagination.

Before *Beggars of Life*, the Kansas-born Brooks had been a dancer with the Ziegfeld Follies and her on-screen performances were primarily limited to light comedies, playing impish characters with names such as Snuggles Joy (*The City Gone Wild*), Fox Trot (*Evening Clothes*), and Kitty Laverne (*A Social Celebrity*). A script that identifies her character simply as "The Girl" might not have seemed a step up, but this story of a young woman who kills her cruel stepfather to save herself and then dresses as a man to avoid capture allowed Brooks to change out of her flapper gowns, high heels, and headdresses into pants and a flat cap. Mary Pickford, Marion Davies, and Greta Garbo all played female characters who dressed as men, but Brooks was playing against type to an extreme and brought a new allure to androgyny in the movies. (It has to be assumed she inspired Veronica Lake's ersatz hobo in Preston Sturges's *Sullivan's Travels*.)

Brooks captivates the camera and captures our imagination.

The scenario for *Beggars of Life* is based on the 1924 autobiographical novel by Jim Tully, a writer called "the missing link between Jack London and Jack Kerouac" by one of his biographers. Tully spent several years of his childhood in an orphanage and, when he was twelve, worked for a farmer who abused him, perhaps planting the seeds for this story of escape and survival riding the rails. Dubbed the "Hobo Writer" because of his knockabout past, Tully held a wide variety of jobs, including as a publicist for Charlie Chaplin, before becoming an acclaimed writer for *Vanity Fair* and H.L. Mencken's *American Mercury*.

William Wellman, fresh off *Wings* (1927), the first Academy Award-winner for best picture, directed *Beggars of Life*. Wellman had used planes to inspire gasps of fear and awe in audiences who had packed the theaters to see *Wings* and, in *Beggars of Life*, he managed to do the same with a train. He filmed *Beggars* more or less in order with the first ten days spent at Paramount shooting the early farmhouse scenes of the father's attack and the chance arrival of Richard Arlen's character. Then it was off for several weeks to Jacumba, California, just north of the Mexican border. A small town of four hundred people that was known for its hot springs, Jacumba's major attraction for the filmmakers was that the railroad line between San Diego and Yuma passed through it. A train came by only a few times a day, leaving hours for filming on the studio's railroad cars. The isolated town and its surroundings included mountains, canyons, and miles of empty fields, providing almost all the locations the shoot required.

Louise Brooks and Richard Arlen

Brooks drove to Jacumba with costar Wallace Beery, who took one look around and announced he planned to commute daily by plane from Los Angeles. (Many filmdom characters including Beery, Wellman, and Cecil B. DeMille were pilots.) Brooks and Beery had made a film together before, but they bonded on the drive, no small feat considering Beery's reputation for self-absorption and camera hogging. She was sorry not to have him around after hours, but seventy-five other cast and crew members descended upon Jacumba with many staying in the town's one major hotel. It had already seen better days and did not provide for luxurious living, but Brooks had her own ground-floor bedroom with a private bath and her maid in tow.

Brooks soon came to the conclusion that Wellman possessed "a quiet sadism," particularly "in his direction of women." In spite of Beery urging Brooks not to let the director talk her into doing her own stunts, she did perform most of them. As she told Kevin Brownlow later in life, "Except for that dive down the embankment when the railroad cop hit my hands, I did everything. Wellman risked my legs making me hop a train and you don't even know that it is I. He might well have broken my spine dropping me off the back of a milk cart. But good old Bill was always safe behind the camera."

Another source of tension was that Brooks already disliked Richard Arlen, who played the man her character fell in love with. The two had not gotten along when making *Rolled Stockings* the year before and didn't respect each other professionally. Arlen had worked with Wellman before on *Wings* and thought very highly of himself. One drunken evening back at the hotel, he spewed his resentment of her because of her higher salary and for having what he considered the undeserved accoutrements of stardom such as a chauffeur and maid.

Richard Arlen and Louise Brooks

Being the only actress on a set run by "Wild Bill" Wellman could not have been easy, but sometimes the recently divorced, twenty-five-year-old Brooks was her own worst enemy. It didn't help her personal or professional reputation when her male stunt double spread the word of their spur-of-the-moment one-night stand. (It's little wonder that when the Berlin-based director G.W. Pabst reached out to her to star in *Pandora's Box*, she grabbed the opportunity to get out of Hollywood.)

Brooks told these stories and many more in her book, *Lulu in Hollywood*, which has to be one of the least deferential Hollywood memoirs ever written. Her sharp opinions and observations about her colleagues and her experiences were partly responsible for Brooks's rediscovery after the decades of obscurity that followed her departure from filmmaking in the mid-1930s. The restoration of her films by the George Eastman House (now the Eastman Museum), along with her late-in-life friendship with its preservationist, James Card, are key to the revival of her films.

Wallace Beery's rough-edged and naturalistic performance as Oklahoma Red portends his Academy Award-winning role in 1931's *The Champ* and his two acclaimed portrayals in *Min and Bill* and *The Big House*, both from 1930. While Brooks credited Wellman with directing the first part of the film "with a sure dramatic swiftness," she thought it was Beery's performance that elevated the picture. "Neither God nor the Devil could have influenced Beery's least gesture before the camera … His Oklahoma Red is a little masterpiece."

Another role worthy of note in *Beggars of Life* is Big Mose, portrayed in a nuanced performance by the former prizefighter and Negro League baseball player Edgar "Blue" Washington. Having an African American play a sympathetic character who mixes with the rest of the ensemble on almost equal terms was close to unheard of in the 1920s, and for decades afterward.

The year 1928 marked the full throttle transition to sound and the end of masterful silent epics such as King Vidor's *The Crowd* and Victor Sjöström's *The Wind*. *Beggars of Life* might not be known for having the great expanse of those films, but several years had to pass for sound technology to advance far enough to record complex action shots like the ones captured so well by cinematographer Henry Gerrard and his crew with their silent hand-cranked camera.

When *Beggars of Life* was released that September, theaters, particularly in major cities, were rushing to install sound equipment. Exhibitors put pressure on studios to provide sound in their films so theater owners could recoup the expense. Sound effects, music, and a bit of dialogue were subsequently added to *Beggars of Life*. Wallace Beery recorded a song ("Hark the Bells") and that fact was plastered on ads to attract audiences to what was billed as Paramount's first sound film. (At the time, Paramount had only one soundstage, which operated on a twenty-four-hour-a-day schedule until more could be built.) All these years later, when more than seventy percent of silent films are considered lost, there is a touch of irony that the only version of *Beggars of Life* remaining today is silent.

— Cari Beauchamp

RIDING THE RAILS:
FEMALE HOBOES IN AMERICAN CINEMA

by Mary Mallory

Hoboes were America's first freelance workers, rambling across the country in search of employment. Industrialization in the northern United States after the Civil War developed the need for seasonal and temporary workers, creating a shadow economy of casual or itinerant labor. Never quite able to gain a foothold, a restless "army of the unemployed" soon took to the road looking for new jobs. This transient population joined the push westward into the ever-expanding agricultural opportunities of the American prairie. Booming railroad construction opened new territories to farming, offering easy transportation and housing to those seasonal field hands migrating between harvesting jobs as they endured hardship, despair, and loneliness. During grueling economic times after the turn of the twentieth century, women joined the parade of vagabonds looking for work, disguising themselves in baggy male attire as a form of protection. Courageous and daring, these Sheboes confronted danger with only their wits and imagination, inspiring characters found in both silent and sound films.

MISS NOBODY
(FIRST NATIONAL, 1926)

In this adaptation of Tiffany Wells's serialized novel *Shebo*, Anna Q. Nilsson plays spirited society girl Barbara Brown, flitting from party to party as one of the most popular girls in town. Her wastrel father squanders the family fortune, leaving them destitute and turning his daughter into "Miss Nobody." Determined to escape her impoverished fate, she masquerades as a young man, hitting the road in search of work. Along the way she joins a ragtag band of hoboes hopping trains from town to town. At first they seem harmless, engaging in slapstick fisticuffs, but then some begin menacing her. Bravo, the leader of the makeshift gang, played by Walter Pidgeon, steps in and saves her and the two split off on a series of comic adventures of their own.

ALIAS THE DEACON
(UNIVERSAL, 1927)

Based on John B. Hymer and LeRoy Clemens's long-running play, *Alias the Deacon* opens on a motley group of hoboes occupying a refrigerator car. Phyllis, a young girl played by June Marlowe, lurks in the shadows, dressed like a boy after desperate circumstances forced her to run away from home. Realizing a girl is in their midst, the boorish group starts a game with her as top prize. Jean Hersholt, a lovable card sharp masquerading as a pious church deacon, wins her with his card tricks but the tramps refuse to turn her over. Boxer John Adams (Ralph Graves) frees her from their clutches before the pair hop off the train in a small town and into a new life.

BEGGARS OF LIFE
(PARAMOUNT, 1928)

Directed by William Wellman, Louise Brooks plays a spirited runaway in her standout American film adapted from Jim Tully's hard-hitting novel of the migratory life at the turn of the twentieth century. Fleeing the law by impersonating a young man after murdering her violent stepfather, the girl goes on the run with an honorable drifter played by Richard Arlen. They come up against a sinister element of the hobo underworld, seek shelter in a freight car, scrounge for food at a makeshift camp occupied by an array of outcasts, and fend off a potential gang rape of the girl, all part of the dangerous, grim existence endured by those riding the rails.

Veronica Lake and Joel McCrea in *Sullivan's Travels*

WILD BOYS OF THE ROAD
(WARNER BROS., 1933)

Wellman also directed this powerful look at desperate youth trying to persevere during the depths of the Great Depression. Teenagers Eddie (Frankie Darro) and Tommy (Edwin Phillips) strike out on their own, jumping trains or pounding the pavement, traveling the country in search of employment and discovering how dangerous and difficult the transient life really is. They join forces with a boyishly clad Sally (Dorothy Coonan), camping out in the makeshift Sewer City and enduring miserable living conditions as they fend off the authorities and other surly youth in a never-ending battle to survive.

HALF A SINNER
(UNIVERSAL, 1934)

Alias the Deacon updated to the Great Depression, *Half a Sinner* features Sally Blane's troubled Phyllis disguised as a boy who meets up with Joel McCrea's tough John Adams in a freight car. The shrewd John befriends the innocent Phyllis, taking her under his wing and instructing her on the unwritten rules of surviving the hobo life. Fellow traveler Berton Churchill is the wily card sharp impersonating a respected church elder who prevents a tramp from attacking Phyllis.

SULLIVAN'S TRAVELS
(PARAMOUNT, 1942)

Produced long after the silent era had ended Preston Sturges's *Sullivan's Travels* takes place in the wake of the Great Depression, whose troubling times were left behind only the year before. Tired of Hollywood superficiality, comedy director John L. Sullivan (Joel McCrea) impersonates a hobo to gather material for a serious drama. He's joined on his quest by a failed actress (Veronica Lake) who dresses like a boy to blend in. Together they hop a train and face the hunger, fear, and danger that is the everyday life of hoboes. Before long he insists that she stay behind for safety and he continues on alone. A potent blend of satire, uproarious comedy, and pathos, the film is an American classic. *Trains* magazine ranked it twenty-fifth on its list of 100 Greatest Train Movies.

THE STATE OF PRESERVATION

Robert Byrne on Restoring Silent Films in the Digital Age

by Marilyn Ferdinand

Robert Byrne, longtime president of the board of the San Francisco Silent Film Festival, remembers when he first got his hands on the original camera negatives of *Italian Straw Hat* and *Les Deux Timides*, two René Clair films he recently restored that play at this year's festival. "There are a hundred years of age in these films, and they were used in most cases to make film prints, so there's certainly wear and tear. But the quality and depth of the image is just gorgeous!" For a film restorer dedicated to providing the best possible viewing experience, it doesn't get any better than that. Yet film preservation is rarely so ideal. Byrne talks about his work in an age when digital technology has largely supplanted the photochemical process in both making films and restoring them.

WHAT CHANGES HAVE YOU WITNESSED ON THE SILENT FILM LANDSCAPE?

In terms of archives and preservation, there hasn't been a huge change. There is far too little money for film preservation. That's not just the silent era, that's in general. It is a very hard sell on an institutional level to get public money for the preservation of motion pictures. The biggest change over the last ten years is that film preservation and restoration have gone from being completely analog and photochemical processes to more and more digital, which has its plusses and its minuses. Digital allows for things, especially 5in restoration, simply not possible when it was strictly photochemical. And certainly digital is a great platform for access. You don't have to have a 35mm projector to watch a film. So films can get into venues and into homes. The downside is that people tend to see digital as the solution to a preservation problem. Digital is not a preservation medium. That's a conversation I find myself having over and over again when I tell people what I do. To truly preserve a film, you have to go back onto film, create a 35mm negative, and properly store it.

WHY IS THAT SO?

Digital media is incredibly fragile. If a disk or a drive is damaged, it goes from being a film to being junk. There's nothing you can recover. And, there's hardware obsolescence. I went to a presentation in Amsterdam about a computer video artist whose archive came into EYE Filmmuseum on floppy drives, a hard drive, and zip drives. The archive went on Marktplaats, the Dutch version of eBay, to find a twenty-year-old computer so they could get it to work. Then there's format obsolescence. There are hundreds of image formats. If you go back ten, fifteen, twenty years, you would be stuck in whatever technology you were in then. If you're digital and you're going to preserve something digitally that means that every five years, you're going to reformat and migrate to a new technology. If you break that chain, you've lost the artifact forever. Compare that to 35mm film. You make a negative, and you make a print on modern polyester film stock that the manufacturers say can be stored for five hundred years. You can always recover the image. You can hold it up to the light and look at it. It can always be rescanned. If you take a pushpin and scratch it across the top of a DVD, you've just created junk. If you take a pushpin and scratch it across a frame of film, you now have a frame with a scratch problem.

"Let's do some work on it."

WHAT IS THE OUTLOOK FOR FILM MANUFACTURING AND PHOTOCHEMICAL PROCESSING?

Film has always been a business. I believe that there will always be a demand. There is money to be made manufacturing film stock. If there weren't, they wouldn't do it. Some of the newest stocks are preservation film stocks. Likewise with film labs. Some are going out of business or consolidating, but you're also seeing others expand. The lab we use in Bologna for a lot of our restorations, L'Immagine Ritrovata, is actually expanding into Hong Kong and Paris, and all they do are restorations. I think there will be fewer labs, but I think they will hit a steady state where they have a good business.

IS PROJECTION BECOMING A PROBLEM AROUND THE WORLD?

It's becoming a challenge. A number of European countries made a specific decision at a government level to go all digital, and government money went to converting cinemas to digital. Having said everything I have about film, most restored films have digital versions available.

ONE OF THE FESTIVAL FILMS GAVE YOU A UNIQUE PRESERVATION OPPORTUNITY. TELL US ABOUT IT.

Film scholar Laura Horak was programming films for her *Girls Will Be Boys* cross-dressing series to be shown at the Pordenone festival. She came across one 16mm reel of *What's the World Coming To?*, but Pordenone cannot show 16mm, so she was going to have to get it scanned. When we found the film's second reel at New York University, I said, "Let's do some work on it." So much of what survives from the silent era only survives in 16mm or 24mm, and these shrink and fall apart, too. So I wanted to use this as a test case for preservation because small-gauge prints are rarely preserved or restored to new 35mm stock.

IS THE FILM LOSS RATE STILL AT ABOUT SEVENTY PERCENT? ARE NEW RECOVERIES COMING ALONG AT A FASTER CLIP?

The rule of thumb is fifteen to twenty percent of the silent era survives. There's no real metric because you'd have to know how many silent films were produced and have an accurate inventory of what's left. We don't have either one of those numbers. The International Federation of Film Archives maintains a database of information from its members, but everyone knows that database is incomplete, and that doesn't even account for what's in the hands of private collectors. Then there are things that exist but nobody knows about, the stuff that turns up in barns and closets. Giant collections come into archives without labels, leaders, or titles, and it takes years to work through them. My favorite story is when *Beyond the Rocks*, starring Rudolph Valentino and Gloria Swanson, came to light. The archive got it from the estate of a collector who had this one film scattered all over the Netherlands in his miscellaneous stashes. It was a very long time until the final reel showed up.

AMAZING TALES FROM THE ARCHIVES
PRESENTATIONS

BEHIND THE SILVER SCREEN
Bryony Dixon, senior curator of silent film for the British Film Institute, returns to present rarely seen short nonfiction films and cine-magazine items about the British film industry in the 1920s (plus a special American visitor), offering a peek at the artifice and arduousness behind the silver screen.

UNIVERSAL'S RESTORATION INITIATIVE
Last year, Universal Studios launched a project to restore a slate of silent films with an announcement at SFSFF 2015 and, on Saturday night, the festival hosts the world premiere of the newly restored *The Last Warning*, director Paul Leni's last film. Peter Schade, vice-president of content management, and Emily Wensel, director of content mastering at Universal Pictures, discuss plans to dust off more of the studio's catalog of silents.

RESTORING NAPOLEON
Currently overseeing a six-and-a-half-hour restoration of Abel Gance's *Napoleon* for the Cinémathèque Française, filmmaker and restoration expert Georges Mourier charts the fascinating discovery of unseen footage and documents key to the director's epic vision, which included a four-hour "Opera" version for selected screenings and a nine-hour "Apollo" version intended for wider release as episodes.

The Les Ombres scene from Abel Gance's *Napoleon*

A WOMAN OF THE WORLD

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY DONALD SOSIN

Directed by Malcolm St. Clair, USA, 1925
Cast Pola Negri, Chester Conklin, Holbert Holmes, Charles Emmett Mack, Blanche Mahaffey, Lucille Ward, Guy Oliver, Dot Farley, May Foster, and Dorothea Wolbert
Production Famous Players-Lasky Corp. **Print Source** Paramount Pictures

"I am a woman of the world, not the world's woman," states "Elnora Natatorini," as played by Pola Negri in the 1925 *A Woman of the World*. She has just found the man she adores holding another woman in his arms. Despite her diamond earrings, her stylish bobbed hair, her lengthy fur train, her chestful of orchids, and, most significantly, her lover's family crest tattooed on her forearm, she has lost in the game of love. What to do, what to do? Since she's Pola Negri, she's not just going to stand around. She announces she'll journey "to the other side of the world." It's a familiar silent film female crisis, setting the audience up for a tale of tragedy and degradation. However, *A Woman of the World* is directed by the witty Malcolm St. Clair and stars the versatile and often unpredictable Negri. There *will* be some suffering, some hurt feelings, some misunderstandings, and even a savage whipping, but mostly there will be audience delight and surprise, starting with "the other side of the world," which turns out to be Maple Valley, Iowa, instead of an exotic retreat in the Himalayas.

When Negri steps off the train in Maple Valley ("127 miles to Des Moines, 210 miles to Davenport") to visit a bumpkin cousin (Chester Conklin), it's the perfect setup for a culture clash to end all culture clashes. Negri swishes into her relative's ordinary existence waving her black onyx cigarette holder around, and it's as if the circus has come to town and the panther is loose in the living room. She lolls in a hammock in chiffon and satin shoes, scandalizes a stiff prig who wants to run her out of town (Holbert Holmes), and never hesitates to flash her tattoo. She fends off a young would-be suitor ("Remember me as half lover and half mother"), survives the "The Water Works Bazaar" at which she's the main attraction ("Talk to a real countess, 25¢"), and finally marries the prig (but only after publicly horse-whipping him).

it's as if the circus has come to town and the panther is loose in the living room

Pola Negri carries all this off with grace and nonchalance. She was an actress who could—and did—do everything on-screen in a believable manner. Today she's often thought of mainly as a graduate of the Norma Desmond school of movie stardom. Negri herself helped promote this myth because she understood that colorful behavior would enhance and prolong her time in the limelight. She played movie star twenty-four hours a day. She drove around Hollywood in a chauffeured white Rolls Royce upholstered in velvet, sitting in the back under a white fur rug, flanked by two white Russian wolfhounds. She painted her toenails fire engine red, scattered orchid petals on her dressing room floor, kept a pet tiger on a leash, conducted a pseudo-feud with Gloria Swanson, and enjoyed hot love affairs with Charlie Chaplin and Rudolph Valentino. These outrageous shenanigans made really good copy, but Negri backed them up with talent and hard work.

Pola Negri

Pola Negri was born in the late 1890s (dates vary) in Poland. She studied ballet, appeared on stage, and began making movies around 1914, migrating to Germany in 1917 where she rose to the top in both film and theater. In Berlin she formed a strong professional relationship with the great director Ernst Lubitsch, and their work together in movies such as *Carmen* (1918), *Madame Dubarry* (1919), and *Sumurun* (1921) inevitably brought them to Hollywood's attention. They arrived in America in 1922. Negri was an immediate success, presenting the image of a woman who possessed a strong sexuality and felt no need to hide it or curb it. She could enact fearless portrayals of erotic passion on-screen, but she could also be humorous, light, and playful—the qualities that had attracted Lubitsch. Her range is on display in *A Woman of the World*, where her skills are beautifully directed by Malcolm St. Clair, often described as "another Lubitsch." (The comparison is not incorrect, just incomplete.)

St. Clair's name is not as well known as it should be. A sophisticated, fashionable man with a distinct cinematic style of his own, he was responsible for many excellent silent comedies, such as *The Grand Duchess and the Waiter* (1926), *Breakfast at Sunrise* (1927), and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1928). He began his career as a Keystone Kop and then became a gag writer for Mack Sennett. He codirected shorts with Buster Keaton (*The Goat*, 1921; *The Blacksmith*, 1922) and steered dog star Rin Tin Tin vehicles (*Find Your Man*, *Lighthouse by the Sea*, both from 1924). The hallmark of St. Clair's style was his remarkable ability to clarify action and emotion without reliance on titles. He did not use multiple cameras, believing effective performances were obtained by using only one. St. Clair said: "A film actor, unlike a stage actor, must have something to play to. On the stage he has the audience. In the movies, it is the camera. How can you poke five or six cameras into a set … and expect an actor to give a smooth performance?"

The St. Clair philosophy of camera and performance is well illustrated in *A Woman of the World*. In 1925 he already understood how important it was to build a strong alliance between the viewing audience and a character such as the "tattooed countess." Since the film is all about Negri's star power, St. Clair showcases her gift of interior acting, in which she allows an array of clearly, but subtly defined emotions to play across her expressive face. (A radiant beauty, wide-eyed and broad-cheeked, Negri had one of the great faces of silent cinema and she knew how to use it. She's a completely commanding movie presence.) St. Clair holds on Negri's close-ups, giving her all the time she needs, letting her create an unspoken "dialogue" with her viewers. In one scene Chester Conklin stands in front of her. To display his familial solidarity he starts taking off his clothes to bare his own hidden tattoos. Using only one camera, St. Clair shows Negri's response in medium close-ups. She looks stunned, and then unexpectedly amused. In spite of herself, she starts a low laugh, a sort of "I can't believe this man is doing this" response. She tries to stop, but the laugh builds. She finally lets it erupt full force. She throws back her head and roars, a raucous out-and-out guffaw. She has moved from a detached and elegant sophistication to an involved and girlish participation in an example of the effective St. Clair/Negri cinematic chemistry.

A Woman of the World (based on a popular 1924 novel by Carl Van Vechten, *A Tattooed Countess*) at first seems to be working an old-fashioned idea of how rubes narrow-mindedly reject a woman just because she has a tattoo. (The original novel was not really a comedy.) However, St. Clair and Negri know how to find the humanity and the humor in the situation, giving the film a modern vibe. Ultimately, two women bond together to resolve the bad behavior of men, as Iowa and the Riviera learn to tolerate one another, with a little whipping to speed the process.

— Jeanine Basinger

A WOMAN OF THE WORLD—Paramount

AWAKE! Negri fans, from your long siesta. The fascinating, continental Pola is with us once again. A dangerous, cynical tempestuous Italian countess she is, wearing a tattoo—insignia of an amorous adventure. Director Malcolm St. Clair deserves credit for the restraint shown the small-town scenes and types that must have tempted exaggeration. Not for the children.

Reprinted from the February 1926 issue of *Photoplay* from the section of quick reviews titled, "National Guide to Motion Pictures Saves You Time and Money."

THAT NIGHT'S WIFE

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY MAUD NELISSEN

Directed by Yasujiro Ozu, Japan, 1930
Cast Tokihiko Okada, Emiko Yagumo, Mitsuko Ichimura, Togo Yamamoto, and Tatsuo Saito
Production Shochiko Kamata **Print Source** Janus Films

Few directors have a stronger trademark than Yasujiro Ozu, who developed one of the most original and distinctive filmmaking styles in cinema history. But viewers who know Ozu through his delicately heartbreaking *Tokyo Story* (1953) and his contemplative portraits of ordinary families may be astonished by his silent comedies and crime dramas. The man labeled the "most Japanese of Japanese directors" was deeply influenced by the Hollywood movies he grew up devouring, including Hal Roach slapstick and proto-noir gangster films. David Bordwell has called Ozu "almost certainly the most cinephiliac major director before the New Wave." As Godard dropped allusions to Hollywood actors and genres into his films, Ozu hung American movie posters in his sets, acknowledging his own debt and also suggesting how his characters' lives have been infiltrated by Western pop culture.

Ozu's silent crime dramas reveal many links to his mature work.

Born in 1903, Ozu came of age during the Taisho period (1912–1926), a time of rapid modernization and Westernization that was akin in many ways to Germany's Weimar era: a turbulent and unstable but creatively dynamic interlude preceding the rise of militarism and nationalism that led up to the Second World War. The conflict between traditional Japanese values and imported mores (mirrored in clashing aesthetic influences) was a driving force in early Japanese cinema, nowhere more dazzlingly on display than in Ozu's jazzy *Dragnet Girl* (1933).

Surprising at first glance, Ozu's silent crime dramas reveal many links to his mature work. His sixteenth film, *That Night's Wife* (*Sono yo no tsuma*,1930), adapted from a story by the American writer Oscar Schisgall, opens with a daring holdup and a chase through dark city streets, but the film soon becomes a family drama in a hushed, intimate key. Aside from the noirish opening sequence, *That Night's Wife* confines itself almost entirely to the small apartment where Shuji Hashizume (Tokihiko Okada) lives with his wife and child. Ozu cross-cuts between Hashizume's escape from the office he has robbed and his wife at home taking care of their sick child, Michiko (the adorable Mitsuko Ichimura). A detective, Kagawa (Togo Yamamoto), tracks the robber home but agrees to let him stay through the night because his daughter is in critical condition. It's a suspenseful setup, but the texture of everyday life, of mundane objects and activities, is crucial to the story's emotional power. Guns are important—early on, we see one in close-up pointed directly at the camera—but so is the ice pack that soothes the feverish child, a telephone receiver, a flower in a water glass, a child's drawings.

Close-ups of objects, and of hands and feet, punctuate the film. Sometimes they are functional: a prominent shot of the robber's hat, thrown down when he arrives home, foreshadows how it will later serve the plot. Sometimes close-ups fill in facts—the cans of paint and jars of brushes around the apartment tell

Tokihiko Okada

This is the crime thriller as haiku.

us that Hashizume is an artist, and the half-loaf of bread and ashtray overflowing with cigarette butts that he picks through tell us he is poor. Sometimes the images have allegorical weight, like Michiko's floppy doll on a toy swing signifying her fragility and innocence. And sometimes they are cryptic and lyrical, like the handprint left on a glass door after the robbery, the first of many expressive shots of hands, or the leaf-shadows fidgeting in a pool of lamplight. This is the crime thriller as haiku.

There has been a long-running debate about whether Ozu was essentially a formalist, an experimental filmmaker, as Bordwell argues, or whether, as Donald Richie contends, he was primarily interested in a singular narrative theme, the dissolution of the family. *That Night's Wife* shows how these two impulses were integrated as one: to tell a story through purely cinematic means. Camera movements—deliberate lateral tracking shots, searching pans, and sudden dollies in or out convey as much about the characters' feelings and reactions as the quietly restrained performances do. Ozu is also starting to depict sound visually, as he did with great flourish in *Dragnet Girl*. (The Japanese film industry was late in adapting to sound; the nation's first talkie was made in 1931, and Ozu did not make his sound debut until 1936.) When an ominous knocking comes, the camera rushes toward the door and, with an almost invisible cut, continues the movement on the other side, a subtly magical effect that imitates the power of sound to travel through surfaces.

A long circular pan introduces the apartment, taking in the vertical lines of hanging laundry, dangling ropes, a ladder, the railings of the bed, and the crazy collage of posters and blackboards papering the walls. The snippets of English on these posters form a surreal background commentary throughout the drama: "Broadway Scandals," "Walter Huston," and the slyly fitting "Two's Company – Three's a Crowd." There is a single overtly Japanese note in the film's visual vocabulary, the kimono worn by Hashizume's wife Mayumi (Emiko Yagumo). When we first see her, bowing to a doctor and presenting a bowl of water for him to wash his hands, she is an image of classic Japanese femininity, nurturing and self-effacing. But when the detective comes to arrest her husband, she picks up a gun (which she has hidden in her child's bed) and calmly trains it on him.

Emiko Yagumo and Tokihiko Okada

Endangered by external forces rather than internal tensions, this family is one of the most loyal and demonstratively loving that Ozu portrayed. The heart of the movie is about people watching each other, and about how observation develops into empathy. The wife watches for her husband to come home, the parents watch over their daughter as she struggles with fever, the wife watches the detective, and the detective, in turn, watches the husband, softening as he witnesses the criminal hugging and kissing his adoring child. Ozu's own father was mostly absent when he was growing up and, while the director remained very close to his mother into adulthood, his films obsess over relationships between fathers and children, from early works like *Passing Fancy* (1933), about a widower with a young son, through his last film, *An Autumn Afternoon* (1962), about a widower trying to marry off his grown daughter.

Ozu directed his first film in 1927 and churned out a series of short comedies for Shochiku in the late twenties, most now lost. With *That Night's Wife* he was on the cusp between his emergence and his recognition for early masterpieces like *I Was Born, But...* (1932). Yet much of Ozu's signature style is already recognizable, though the film's frequent tracking shots largely vanished from his mature work. The trademark "tatami shots" are already present, as the camera kneels to be on a level with the characters, and the use of static close-ups of objects or settings for transitions became a key element of his unique approach to continuity.

At a pivotal moment in *That Night's Wife*, the camera leaves the room, moving away from Mayumi as she struggles to stay awake and keep the detective covered. The camera creeps around the apartment, passes outside to observe the milkman's arrival in the grey dawn, then returns and pans back around the apartment to find the situation crucially altered. With this elegant ellipsis, Ozu not only delivers a plot twist but links the family's desperate crisis to the ongoing rhythms of a workaday world in a way that is at once comforting and poignant. The director spoke about the challenge of dramatizing a whole story in one cramped set, but he was wise to limit excursions to this single, fleeting breath of air. For the trapped characters, freedom and normality are so close and yet still so out of reach.

– Imogen Sara Smith

MOTHERS OF MEN

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY THE MONT ALTO MOTION PICTURE ORCHESTRA

Directed by Willis Robards, USA, 1917
Cast Willis Robards, Dorothy Davenport, Hal Reid, Mrs. Hal Reid, Katherine Griffith, Arthur Tavares, Billie Bennett, Marcella Russell, Harry Griffith, Grace Blake, and George Utell
Print Source Reid-Robards Pictures Co. **Print Source** SFSFF Collection

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, the issue of voting rights for American women was widely debated across the nation. Five states, including California, granted women the right to vote in the early 1910s, several more states held referenda on the issue, and Congress debated women's suffrage for the first time in 1913. As the debate escalated during the teens, activists adopted a more confrontational style, leading to arrests, imprisonment, hunger strikes, and force-feeding. In 1916, three years before the Nineteenth Amendment guaranteed women the right to vote, Jeannette Rankin, Republican of Montana and an outspoken suffragist, became the first woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. "I may be the first woman member of Congress," she declared, "but I won't be the last."

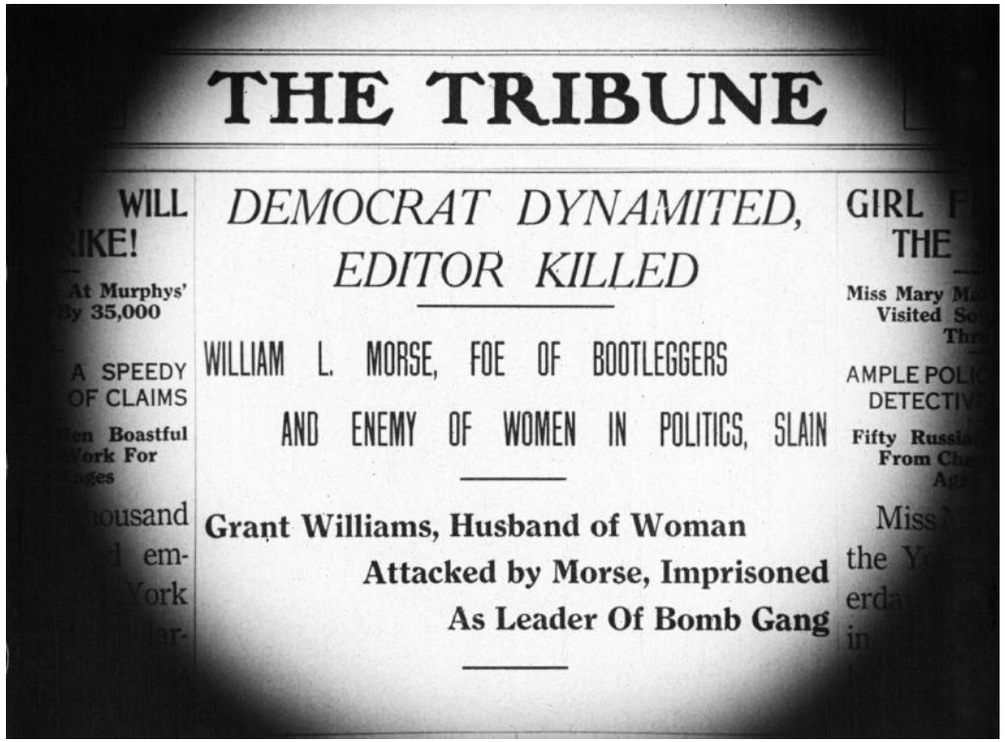
"Your sisters of the world over look to you."

It was against this background that 1917's *Mothers of Men* addressed some of the most contentious questions surrounding the issue of women's suffrage. Can women provide effective political leadership without their emotions getting in the way? Will women bring a stronger moral compass to public office? Can female leadership curtail political corruption? How will the press treat women in elected office? Rather than mounting a plea for equal voting rights, the story imagines a future when women not only vote but also serve in public office. *Motion Picture News* noted that the film's "timely theme" was a subject of interest to "millions of women," not just "ardent suffragists" but "all womankind who are optimistic concerning universal victory for woman suffrage."

Suffrage activists had long embraced visual propaganda to promote their cause, staging marches, parades, open-air pageants, and tableaux. Suffragists were also among the first activist groups to employ cinema in their efforts. Documentary footage captured their marches and pageants, suffrage leaders recorded their speeches on some of the earliest sound film recordings, and activists spoke and presented slide shows at neighborhood movie theaters. Both the National American Woman Suffrage Association and the Women's Political Union made feature films to promote their cause. Noted activists like Harriot Stanton Blatch played themselves in these films, appearing alongside fictional heroines who were campaigning for the right to vote. Perhaps the most renowned suffragist at the time, Britain's Emmeline Pankhurst, appeared in the prologue of the 1913 suffrage feature *Eighty Million Women Want —?*

If features produced by suffrage groups found drama in the fight for voting rights, *Mothers of Men* took a different tack, focusing instead on the career of "brilliant young female lawyer" Clara Madison in an imagined future when women had already achieved political equality. Soon after the film begins Clara is nominated to run for Superior Court judge on the Women's Party ticket and is later elected governor. Clara's political ascent takes place in the face of opposition orchestrated by corrupt politicians working

Dorothy Davenport



THE TRIBUNE

DEMOCRAT DYNAMITED, EDITOR KILLED

WILLIAM L. MORSE, FOE OF BOOTLEGGERS AND ENEMY OF WOMEN IN POLITICS, SLAIN

Grant Williams, Husband of Woman Attacked by Morse, Imprisoned As Leader Of Bomb Gang

in cahoots with the popular press. The editor of the local newspaper is a "bitter foe to women in politics" who vows to roast "the hens" in his paper, while the "boss" of the political machine is motivated by his fear that morally upstanding women will clean up city politics. Sure enough, shortly after she is elected judge Clara orders all saloons closed on Sundays, enraging her political opponents.

Beset by "spreading tentacles" of the city's political machine, Clara also struggles with challenges on the home front when her husband is falsely accused of murder and sentenced to die. Will Clara use her office to pardon him or let the execution proceed? Will she act as a loving wife or a prudent governor? By putting Clara in such a melodramatic situation, *Mothers of Men* insists that women, however powerful, remain bound by familial ties and emotional attachments perceived to be at odds with civic life. Leaders of the Women's Party, forever hovering around Clara, remind her that as the nation's first female governor she has a "greater duty to womanhood," telling her that "your sisters of the world over look to you—you cannot fail them now!"

Dorothy Davenport played Clara in a performance that, as *Moving Picture World*'s reviewer put it, "compels respect for the character at all times." She embodied a "new brand of womanhood," at once "extremely dignified, sympathetic and thrilling," according to the *Exhibitors Herald*. This was one of the last roles Davenport accepted before taking a break from acting following the birth of her son Wallace Reid Jr. In the next decade, she went on to produce several influential films, including *Human Wreckage* (1923) about drug addiction, an issue that also touched her personally, *Broken Laws* (1924) about juvenile delinquency, and *The Red Kimona* (1925) about prostitution. Appearing in prologues for these films and lending her name to promotional materials, she became an authoritative voice on contemporary social issues. Davenport's appearance in *Mothers of Men* demonstrates her early interest in using film to support social causes, particularly those affecting women.

The production was something of a family affair. Davenport's father-in-law Hal Reid wrote and produced the picture and appeared on-screen as Clara Madison's father, with Mrs. Hal Reid (Bertha Westbrook) playing her mother. Five years earlier Hal Reid had made *Votes for Women*, a two-reel suffrage film featuring activists Dr. Anna Howard Shaw and Jane Addams. He had also helped produce Lois Weber's explosive birth control feature *Where Are My Children?* the previous year, suggesting his willingness to engage in the nation's most polemical debates. Eager to earn endorsements from suffragists, Reid screened a print of *Mothers of Men* for suffrage leaders on the East Coast then incorporated many of the changes they suggested. Having made the film in California, where women could already vote, he wanted the film to have a wide reach across the country.

Shot on location in Santa Cruz, California, *Mothers of Men* contains striking footage of local landmarks like the Cooper Street Courthouse, Holy Cross Church, Piedmont House, and Chinatown and concludes with a scene on the (now-eroded) rock arches at Natural Bridges. Berkeley's Shattuck Avenue is also visible in several shots. There was considerable excitement in Santa Cruz during the filming of the production as well as optimism that the town might become a northern California hub for moviemaking. Mary Pickford was filming *Romance of the Redwoods* in the surrounding mountains about the same time. William S. Hart and Tom Mix later also shot films in the area, but Santa Cruz never took off as a production center.

Mothers of Men was rereleased as *Every Woman's Problem* in 1921, just a few months after the Nineteenth Amendment went into effect, and included a written foreword acknowledging that women had been "newly released from the fetters of inequality." The distant future imagined in 1917 was now much closer, but "every woman's problem"—a battle between head and heart—still threatened women's engagement in civic life.

Assumed lost, *Mothers of Men* was rediscovered at the British Film Institute in 1997 by James Mockoski, film archivist at Francis Ford Coppola's American Zoetrope since 2002. It was recently restored under his supervision, just in time for our current electoral season. With a woman competing for the country's highest office questions remain about how much the rhetoric surrounding women in politics has changed over the past one hundred years.

— Shelley Stamp

ABOUT THE RESTORATION

Willis Robards's *Mothers of Men* was originally released in November 1917 and then rereleased four years later, after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, with the new title, *Every Woman's Problem*. No elements of the 1917 version are known to survive, but a single complete, tinted 35mm nitrate print of the 1921 rerelease has been preserved at the British Film Institute. Film archivist James Mockoski has been passionate in his research on the film and its significance to the history of his native Santa Cruz and suggested a collaboration between SFSFF and the BFI National Archive to restore the film.

Digital tools allowed for minimizing the dirt and damage present in the ninety-five-year-old print, which was scanned at 4K, and the color tinting present in the rerelease print was reproduced. In addition to the materials preserved at the BFI National Archive, a new 35mm preservation negative and positive print have been deposited in the San Francisco Silent Film Festival Collection at the Library of Congress.

— Robert Byrne

Dorothy Davenport's Message Movies

Actress Dorothy Davenport traveled west with the Nestor film company just as the movie industry and the feature-length film was taking form in Hollywood. A prominent player when Nestor was absorbed by Universal, she married fellow actor Wallace Reid in 1913. The good-looking, affable Reid skyrocketed to matinee idol status after leaving Universal for Jesse Lasky's company and took leading roles in films by Cecil B. DeMille. The year Davenport made *Mothers of Men*, she had already acted in more than one hundred films, including another feature about capital punishment directed by her father-in-law Hal Reid, *The Girl and the Crisis* (1917). With the birth of their first child Wally Jr., she took a semi-hiatus, appearing in only three films. But her domesticated life ended after her husband's death and subsequent scandal. Injured on the set of *The Valley of Giants* in 1919, Reid became addicted to painkillers. Although he eventually conquered his habit, his health was destroyed and he died in 1923 at age thirty-one. By this time Davenport was already billing herself as Davenport Reid. As one newspaper noted when she added her husband's last name, it "will be a great shock to the women who are new-fashioned enough to think that every member of the feminine sex should carve her career under her own name—especially when she has one as well known as Dorothy Davenport." After Reid's death, she took on the mantle of widow and reformer, listing herself in credits as Mrs. Wallace Reid. The exact nature of her participation is still unclear but she was the impetus behind her films, whether producing or directing or writing, sometimes taking starring roles, sometimes small parts, or appearing in prologues to advocate for her positions on social issues of the day.

HUMAN WRECKAGE (1923) Sponsored by the Los Angeles Anti-Narcotic League, Davenport Reid's first film after Wallace Reid's death took on her late husband's affliction. The film was granted a "special dispensation" from Will Hays's censorship office, which objected to drug-taking as subject matter. To prepare for the role of the lead junkie, Bessie Love visited a sanitarium and was shown by one eager inmate how to inject morphine. To dramatize the fraught world of the dope-fiend, *Human Wreckage* used a *Caligari*-style nightmarish, off-kilter street scene. A mixture of melodrama and message, the film was a hit. *Motion Picture Classic* reported favorably on the film: "There is nothing cheap or sensational about it." Davenport took it on the road, making a plea for public awareness that addicts suffered illness, not moral turpitude, and needed help, not punishment. With the film's profits, she set up the Wallace Reid Foundation Sanitarium and her own independent production unit under Thomas Ince.

BROKEN LAWS (1924) Writer Adela Rogers St. Johns, a Davenport colleague and friend, contributed this "spare the rod spoil the child" morality play about a mother who is too indulgent with her young son. He grows up to be an irresponsible delinquent, keeping bad company (i.e. flappers) and driving too fast, until one night he runs over someone on his way home from carousing. Davenport starred as the mother who dreamed the whole plot and, upon awaking, gives her boy, still thankfully just eight years old, a good spanking. "People who have a message are usually great bores," the reviewer in *Picture-Play* wrote. "But *Broken Laws* is an excellent study of family life as waged in the Great American Home." Directed by Roy William Neill and produced at Ince, the film was billed as a Mrs. Wallace Reid Production.

THE RED KIMONA (1925) When Rogers St. Johns was a newspaper reporter she covered the real-life trial of Gabrielle Darley who was acquitted of murdering her philandering husband in 1915, and the story later became good fodder for Mrs. Wallace Reid Production's "Sins of the World" series. A small-town teacher marries a dandy and they move to New Orleans. Abandoned by him in Storyville, the city's notorious red-light district, Gabrielle gets by the only way she can. When she finds her husband buying an engagement ring for another lover, she shoots him dead. When the real Gabrielle Darley saw the film, she sued for $50,000 or $60,000 (depending on the source). According to *Variety* the suit was settled out of court in 1932. Scenario by Dorothy Arzner, who directed her first film, *Fashions for Women*, in 1927. Director Walter Lang, who was later nominated for an Academy Award in 1956 for *The King and I*, also directed two other Davenport films, *The Earth Woman* (1926) and *The Satin Woman* (1927).

LINDA (1929) Based on the 1912 novel by Margaret Prescott Montague, winner of the first ever O. Henry prize for short fiction, *Linda* is Davenport's first official director credit. About the daughter of a brutal backwoodsman who marries an older man to escape her father's violence but then falls in love with a young doctor, the film merited an "excellent" in *Film Daily*, which went on to call it "nicely gaited for the family trade." Scholar Mark Lynn Anderson says the film is "an interesting portrayal of strong female friendships and loyalties" even as it "looks toward the exploitation films Davenport Reid would direct for independent producer Wills Kent in the early 1930s."

THE ROAD TO RUIN (1934) In addition to codirecting, Davenport also took a small role as Mrs. Merrill, who's in charge of female "sex delinquents" at the local precinct. When a high-schooler and her platinum-blonde bestie head down the road to ruin paved with steamy romance novels, cigarettes, and booze, they end up across from Davenport's character who obliquely tells the girls they have to be tested for venereal disease and then counsels "intelligent sex education." The film earns its exploitation repute for a strip poker scene with lingerie-clad girls followed by a dip in the backyard pool but is also a heartfelt, if heavy-handed, portrayal of the tragic consequences of a back-alley abortion. Davenport continued to work in films throughout the next two decades, taking credit as simply Dorothy Reid.

— The Editors

Read more about Dorothy Davenport on the Women Film Pioneers Project website.

VARIETÉ

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY THE BERKLEE SILENT FILM ORCHESTRA

Directed by E.A. Dupont, Germany, 1925
Cast Emil Jannings, Lya de Putti, Warwick Ward, Maly Deschaft, Georg John, Kurt Gerron, Georg Baselt, Charles Lincoln, Alice Hechy, Paul Rehkopf, Trude Hesterberg, and Enrico Rastelli the juggler
Production Universum Film A.G. (Ufa) **Print Source** Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation

One of the outstanding examples of the mid-twenties golden age of German cinema, Ewald André Dupont's *Varieté* has a plot that would work nicely for a late-forties film noir, complete with an alluring femme fatale, betrayal, and death. It begins in a bleak prison where Boss Huller (Emil Jannings) is about to finish serving a ten-year sentence for murder. For the first time he confides to the warden the true story behind his crime. Even though he is finally being released, he has little to look forward to on the outside. Before his arrest, Boss had destroyed everything that ever meant anything to him.

Berta-Marie's hoochie-coochie drives men wild, Boss included.

Once a celebrated trapeze artist, Boss has been reduced to running a low-grade peep show and carnival with his devoted wife and their small child. One day an exotic-looking young woman, Berta-Marie (Lya de Putti), "just arrived from Frisco," hopes that they will hire her as a side-show dancer. Frau Huller feels threatened, but Boss says, "She stays." Berta-Marie's hoochie-coochie dance drives men wild, Boss included. Before long he has fallen madly in love, and they run off together.

Boss forms his own trapeze act with Berta-Marie and, back in the limelight and in love, is living a dream. Their act has drawn the attention of a famous trapeze artist, the suave, elegant Artinelli (Warwick Ward) who hires them to be his new partners. It doesn't take long for Artinelli to use his charm and a little sparkling bling to seduce Berta-Marie. Boss is consumed with jealousy, and the bond among the trapeze artists, whose very lives depend on their complete trust in each other as they fly through the air and into their partners' sure grips, is shattered.

Varieté was one of the signature productions of the German film studio Ufa, which in 1925, was at the peak of its legendary reputation. The studio was formed by the German military in 1917 to produce propaganda films in the last years of World War I and, after the war, became quickly known as a center of the utmost professionalism and innovation in motion pictures. These years coincided with the all-too-short days under the Weimar Republic during which German art and culture flourished. In cinema these were the early years of Ernst Lubitsch, F.W. Murnau, Fritz Lang, and E.A. Dupont. Pola Negri, Emil Jannings, and Marlene Dietrich became world famous stars. Ufa's reputation was such that a young Englishman by the name of Alfred Hitchcock found himself directing his first feature there, learning everything he could from the masters of photography and the nuances of visual drama.

E.A. Dupont began as a screenwriter and directed programmers, mostly detective stories from his own scripts. His breakthrough came with two films featuring Henny Porten, *The Green Manuela* (1923), about a young dancer who falls in love with a smuggler whose brother gives his life to ensure their happiness, and *Das alte Gesetz* (1923), the story of

Berlin's Wintergarten Theater in *Varieté*

a young Jew's flight from his orthodox home to seek fame in the theater.

In *Varieté*, which the director adapted himself from the 1921 novel by Felix Holländer, Dupont best demonstrated his thorough grasp of the medium. In her influential 1952 book *The Haunted Screen*, Lotte Eisner describes "the secret of Dupont's talent." She writes, "He has the gift of capturing and fixing fluctuating forms which vary incessantly under the effect of light and movement. His objective is always and everywhere the ebb and flow of light."

In his 1947 book *From Caligari to Hitler*, Siegfried Kracauer points to Dupont's talent for revealing the hidden motivations of his characters. "Unusual camera angles, multiple exposures, and sagacious transitions help transport the spectator to the heart of the events," writes Kracauer on how Dupont deftly opened a window onto "the psychological processes below their surface."

For *Varieté* Dupont was able to gather the greatest talents of German cinema, beginning with the leading man, Emil Jannings, fresh off his virtuoso performance in *The Last Laugh* (1924), which cemented his reputation as the country's greatest actor. Jannings had the ability to make himself the rock-solid center of a film, whether as the lowly doorman in F.W. Murnau's film or the beaten-down Professor Immanuel Rath in Josef von Sternberg's *The Blue Angel* (1930). Already well-known and admired for his earlier German films, Jannings came to Hollywood in 1926 on a contract with Paramount and had even greater success, garnering the first ever Best Actor Academy Award for his appearances in Victor Fleming's *The Way of All Flesh* and von Sternberg's *The Last Command*.

Lya de Putti, a sultry, Hungarian-born former dancer, was perfectly suited for the part of the young temptress Berta-Marie, making a credible transition from cowering, orphaned teenager to adept seducer. The attention earned her a Hollywood contract, where she was mostly cast as vamps. The fan magazine *Picture-Play* gushed about her performance in *Varieté*. "Lya de Putti is a seductress the like of which the screen has never yielded from the long line of native sirens. She is baleful, unbridled—as naïvely physical as a quadruped of the jungle." De Putti also worked on the New York stage and made other films

Lya de Putti and Emil Jannings

Emil Jannings as Boss Huller

in Europe but died at thirty-one after a so-so stateside career.

The behind-the-scenes talent who contributed most to the visual artistry of *Varieté* was cinematographer Karl Freund, that mad scientist of the camera. As Kracauer points out, the camerawork for *Varieté* had its dress rehearsal in *The Last Laugh*, shot the year before. Freund tried everything possible to give his films a distinctive look, especially with the use of movement, and his characteristic unleashed camera was uniquely suited to the high-flying action in *Varieté*. The camera moved everywhere, on vehicles and in the streets. He even attached a camera to the swinging trapezes of Boss, Berta-Marie, and Artinelli, for a vertigo-inducing point of view. After *Varieté*, Freund shot Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, another unparalleled achievement, and was one of the photographers of Walter Ruttmann's avant-garde *Berlin—Symphony of a Great City* (1927), for which he developed a high-speed film stock that made shooting outside at night without artificial lighting as feasible as shooting during the daytime.

The film achieved considerable critical and popular success in America. "However the public may have received the Ufa picture *Variety*, it had a tremendous effect on Hollywood," wrote an excited columnist in *Picture-Play*. "Directors, scenario writers, producers, and actors have seen the picture as many as half a dozen times and one may expect to see many varieties of *Variety* on the screen shortly."

The principal creative artists of *Varieté* took advantage of the opportunities this success offered. Dupont directed the Viennese period piece at Universal, *Love Me and the World Is Mine*, which was inexplicably shelved until 1928, when it fell flat with audiences and critics. He had better luck in Britain, where he made two other films set in a show-biz demimonde, *Piccadilly* and *Moulin Rouge*. Despite his monumental talent, his was a sadly underappreciated career.

In his book *E.A. Dupont and his Contribution to British Film*, Paul Matthew St. Pierre describes a portion of Dupont's considerable achievements: "He made the first movie, *Atlantic*, about the sinking of the Titanic. He cast Anna May Wong in her first starring role in an English-language movie, after she had made 30 films in America, all in stereotypical Asian supporting roles; *Piccadilly* established Wong as a lead actor in the movies. In *Two Worlds*, Dupont was one of the film filmmakers to depict not only a pogrom but also Jewish armed resistance to it during the First World War."

— Miguel Pendás

BSFO COMPOSERS Mateo Rodo, Larry Hong, Austin Matthews, HyunJu Yun, Kanako Hashiyama, and Nathan Drube
PLAYERS Luisa Cartagena (flutes), Andrew Van Der Paardt (oboe and English horn), Stephanie Clark (clarinet/bass clarinet), Shachar Ziv (horn), Joshua Shpak (trumpet), Robert Hoveland (trombones), Victoria Ruggiero (keyboard), Eren Basbug (keyboard), Grace Herzog (percussion), Tania Mesa (violin), Marta Roma (cello), and Michael Simon (double bass)
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR Sheldon Mirowitz
MANAGING DIRECTOR Rob Hayes

THE DIVINE DECADENCE OF Lya de Putti

Photos of actress Lya de Putti from the 1920s show a smoldering beauty with heavy-lidded eyes, bee-stung Clara Bow lips, and a severe black Louise Brooks bob. She rarely smiles. In one full-length portrait, she's clad head to toe in a fetishistic high-necked, long-sleeved dress made of clinging black leather. In the 1972 film musical *Cabaret,* set in Weimar-era Berlin, Sally Bowles, played by Liza Minnelli, name-checks Lya de Putti as her favorite actress and imitates her style, what Bowles calls "divine decadence." Although de Putti made her last film in 1929 and died in 1931, the already-forgotten actress was evoked as the epitome of a German movie siren and of Weimar excess. As film historian Christian Rogowsky writes in *The Many Faces of Weimar Cinema*, "impish Lya de Putti projected the image of the 'naughty child.'" In a brief but dazzling career that declined even before the arrival of talkies, Lya de Putti's descent cannot be written off to lack of talent, but rather an excess of temperament, typecasting, changing tastes, and spectacularly bad luck.

Amalia de Putti was born to aristocratic parents in 1897 in the village of Vécse, in what was then Austria-Hungary and is now Slovakia. Married off to a wealthy judge at sixteen, she later gave birth to two daughters. Bored with provincial life and dreaming of a career onstage, she fled to Budapest, where she found work as a dancer and singer in a musical and made her film debut. Soon after the war ended Budapest was swept up in revolution and she escaped to Bucharest with the help of a much older lover, a Romanian general. There, she studied ballet, had some success in the theater, and appeared in one film. But political turmoil and a scandalous private life forced her to flee again in 1920, this time to Berlin, aided by yet another lover, a Norwegian diplomat who became her second husband in 1922. Somewhere along the way, she began to use a variation of her given name, billing herself as "Lya."

In Berlin, de Putti danced and acted in shows at the city's top theaters and music halls, including the Wintergarten, where much of *Varieté* is set, and had supporting roles in a few films. She was also a regular at the city's trendiest clubs and cafés. Her biggest break came when director Joe May cast her in an important role as a temple dancer in a two-part adventure film, *Das indische Grabmahl* (*The Indian Tomb*) in 1921. It was a huge hit in Germany and was also seen in America, giving de Putti's movie career a boost. Soon after, she landed a prestige project, a supporting role in a film version of *Othello* starring superstar actor Emil Jannings as the tortured Moor. Jannings was impressed and introduced de Putti to director F.W. Murnau, who cast her in two of his films.

De Putti was on her way. She was in demand–the top German film studio Ufa wanted her under exclusive contract, but Hollywood had also noticed her, so she accepted only a three-picture deal with Ufa. By 1925, when she costarred with Jannings in *Varieté*, she was a big star. She made two more German films, including *Manon Lescaut*, directed by Arthur Robison, about the scandalously tragic love affair between a noble and a commoner, before signing a Paramount contract

and sailing for New York in 1926. The Hollywood publicity buildup began immediately. An article in an American movie magazine, written while she was still in Berlin, refers to her "strong energy and restless temperament," both qualities on display in *Varieté*, and maybe harbingers of future problems. "She is known to be the life and death of every party," the same article warned. Movie magazines also made much of her noble lineage, though they often got the details wrong.

De Putti's first American film, *The Sorrows of Satan*, seemed at first glance like a prestige project–a Faustian story directed by D.W. Griffith. The legendary American director, however, was past his prime and de Putti was again typecast as a vamp, this time a Russian princess. She and Adolphe Menjou, as the "Satan" character, got the best reviews. Mordaunt Hall's *New York Times* review called it "A marvelously beautiful film," and added, "Lya de Putti depicts the siren with a sinuous ease … She is not pretty, but she is striking and somewhat exotic." The public did not agree with Hall's opinion, and the film flopped at the box office. She vamped again in her next two pictures, and, when she played a peasant girl in her fourth American movie, she was criticized as being too worldly for the role.

After another American film that was little seen, she returned to Germany for one film, a comedy she hoped would redefine her image. While in Berlin, de Putti was injured when she fell from a window. Some press accounts speculated that the accident was actually a suicide attempt, but those rumors were denied and she returned to Hollywood. When her American film career failed to ignite, she went to England for *The Informer* (1929), a part-talkie based on Liam O'Flaherty's novel. She played an Irish girl and her dialogue was dubbed by a British actress.

With her English-language movie career on the skids, de Putti decided to try the stage, making her Broadway debut in the comedy *Made in France*. That too was unsuccessful, closing after only five performances. In late 1931, she was hospitalized after swallowing a chicken bone. She underwent surgery to remove it but developed an infection and pneumonia and died a few days later. It was a bizarre end for one of the iconic figures of 1920s German cinema, who flared up brilliantly then faded out just as quickly.

—The Editors

BEHIND THE DOOR

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY STEPHEN HORNE

Directed by Irvin V. Willat, USA, 1919
Cast Hobart Bosworth, Jane Novak, Wallace Beery, James Gordon, J. P. Lockney, and Otto Hoffman
Production Thomas H. Ince Corporation **Print Source** SFSFF Collection

Although it's been more than one hundred years since World War I began, the sacrifice, sorrow, fear, and divisions of that great period of unrest are still evident today. When America finally entered the conflict in 1917, three years after it had begun in Europe, the whole nation rallied behind the war effort. *McClure's* magazine did its part by publishing patriotic fiction and nonfiction. On the cover of the July 1918 issue was a teaser for one story, inviting the reader to "find out what is 'Behind the Door' by Gouverneur Morris." Barely two pages long, it still packed a literary punch suitable to the cause.

The magazine story begins with the musings of two ship officers, speculating about the patriotism of their German-American captain and his motive for saving a German U-boat commander from drowning after a submarine is sunk by the ship's gunfire. When the war ended in November, the story was still compelling enough for film producer Thomas H. Ince to pay a generous price of $10,000 for the rights and put it into production. Ince hired a trusted colleague, Irvin V. Willat, to direct.

Willat and Ince had known each other since 1910, when Willat was working in the film lab at the Independent Moving Pictures Company (IMP) and Ince was hired to act and later direct. Willat recalled in an interview in 1971 with film historian Robert S. Birchard, "Tom Ince used to come in and play bits. First time I saw him he was playing a sailor, and they were carrying him out in a stretcher." Ince was made a director for Mary Pickford's IMP films, and in 1911 he became a producer for the New York Motion Picture Company, moving from New York to Santa Monica to set up production facilities at what became known as Inceville. Willat soon followed to organize the new studio's lab then went back to the New York office to supervise the final editing, titling, and release of Ince's films.

After the outbreak of war in Europe, the debate over America's entry into the conflict began, and Ince produced *Civilization* (1916), a pacifist call for peace. The production, filmed in 1915, was in trouble (as many as seven men on the Ince lot, including Ince, had directed parts of it), and Willat was summoned from New York to fix technical problems. Willat thought the movie was "lousy" and serendipity intervened when the editor accidentally destroyed the flammable nitrate work print with a careless cigarette and all the footage had to be reprinted. Willat now had complete control over the film and added submarine sequences from another current Ince production, *The Purple Cross*, as well as filmed a prologue and epilogue, changed all the intertitles, and re-edited the film. It became Ince's biggest moneymaker and launched Willat's directing career, although he received no screen credit for the film.

Willat went on to fix *The Purple Cross,* replacing the submarine scenes with a zeppelin and renaming it *The Zeppelin's Last Raid* (1917), another pacifist film. Willat's recognition as a director came with *False Faces* (1919), starring Henry B. Walthall as the Lone Wolf, a thief working for the Allies during the war. One of the film's major set pieces is the sinking of a passenger ship by a German submarine that happens to rescue the Lone Wolf. For his next film, Willat directed *The Grim Game* (1919), starring Harry Houdini and featuring an unplanned plane crash that ended up in the film.

Hobart Bosworth

"ONE PARAMOUNT SPECIAL THAT IS SPECIAL."

The same month that principal photography ended for *The Grim Game*, Willat began shooting *Behind the Door*, starring Hobart Bosworth as the seafarer of German extraction who enlists to do his patriotic duty. A pioneering actor, director, and producer, Bosworth began as an eighteen-year-old stage actor in 1885 in San Francisco. For twenty years he toured with many of the great names in the business, until tuberculosis stopped him from performing. He later went to Los Angeles, still struggling with his health, and started an acting school. When a director with the Selig Polyscope Film Company opened a temporary studio in downtown Los Angeles in 1909, he offered Bosworth a job. By then Bosworth's school was foundering, but his health was better, so he accepted. His first film, in a career that spanned thirty-three years, was *In the Sultan's Power* (1909). Bosworth acted in dozens of one-reel films, the staple product of the day, and was soon writing and directing at Selig. He left the company in 1913 to start his own feature film company, producing *The Sea Wolf* (1913) with its opening scenes shot in San Francisco. By 1915, he was pushed out of the company he had founded in a studio takeover, and he began working freelance for Cecil B. DeMille and other notable directors. He returned to the stage briefly to revive Wolf Larson in a tabloid version of *The Sea Wolf* and had just returned to films when he was cast in *Behind the Door.* Wallace Beery was cast opposite him as the story's ruthless German submarine commander.

Beery really was the boy who left home to join the circus. He became an assistant elephant handler but longed to be an actor. His break came on Broadway in 1907 as an understudy in the musical comedy *The Yankee Tourist* when the star failed to show up. Beery later proved adept at both comedy and drama when he entered films in 1913 at the Chicago Essanay studio. In 1914, he starred in his own popular series, playing a Swedish maid named Sweedie. After the director left for another studio, Beery began directing. About that time he also began a romance with a young dress-extra at the studio, fifteen-year-old Gloria Swanson. When scandal over the relationship threatened to derail his career, Beery quickly moved to the Niles Essanay studio in northern California, where he directed Ben Turpin comedies. The Niles studio closed in February 1916 and Beery moved to Los Angeles, where he reunited with Swanson and took on comic villain roles at the Keystone Film Company. As the war progressed, Beery frequently portrayed German villains in movie melodramas. It may have been his role as the vicious Colonel Klemm in *The Unpardonable Sin* (1919) that led to his casting as the evil Lieutenant Brandt in *Behind the Door.*

James Gordon and Hobart Bosworth

Most of the filming was done at Ince's new facility in Culver City. The film's fishing village was constructed at the old Inceville lot in Santa Monica along the Pacific Coast. Submarine scenes were done at San Pedro in August 1919. At one point during the submarine shoot, the submarine dived and the suction drew Bosworth down with it. According to a September *Motion Picture News* item, "only [Bosworth's] remarkable physical condition saved him" from drowning.

Behind the Door was released on December 14, 1919, to sold-out shows and excellent reviews. *Exhibitors Herald* proclaimed, "One Paramount special that is a special. Too bad they're not all in this class." Another critic felt it equaled the artistry of two other recent releases, D.W. Griffith's *Broken Blossoms* and *The Miracle Man*, featuring Lon Chaney. The studio knew they had a winner and immediately started production on *Below the Surface*, another submarine film starring Bosworth and directed by Willat. Box office returns of $289,039 confirmed *Behind the Door* as an Ince success, but if the film had been released while the war was still on, its gruesome take on revenge may well have made it a must-see propaganda piece for the war effort, and even more profitable.

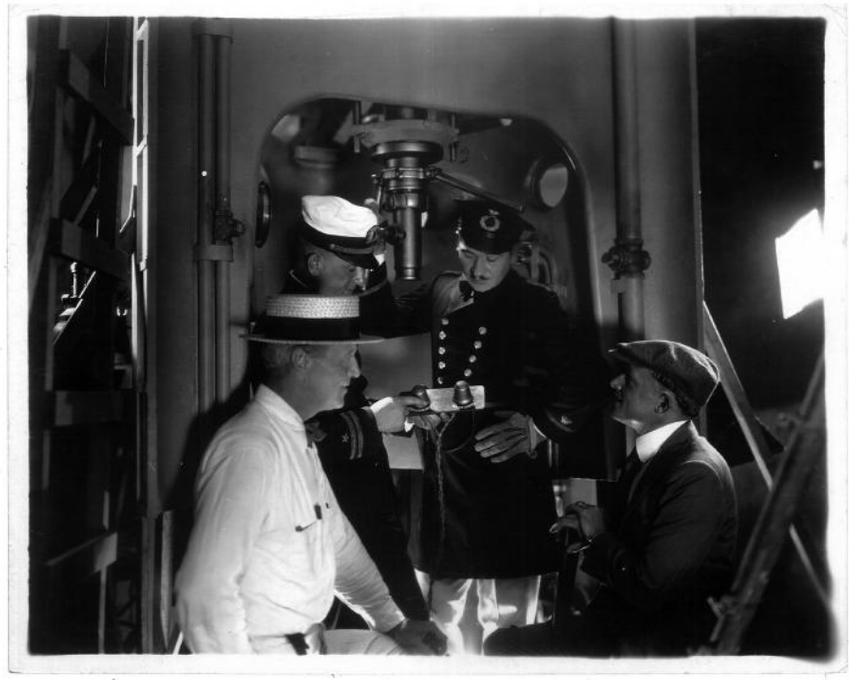
— David Kiehn

ABOUT THE RESTORATION

What survived of this Thomas Ince production is an incomplete print, a roll of outtakes, and another small roll of shots from the estate of Hobart Bosworth preserved at the Library of Congress, as well as the remains of an edited export print safeguarded at the Gosfilmofond, the Russian national archive. In 1994 the Library of Congress created a reconstruction based only on the material in its vaults, inserting titles to cover large gaps in the narrative. With the participation of Gosfilmofond, however, a brand new restoration became possible and *Behind the Door*, which Kevin Brownlow called "the most outspoken of all the [WWI] vengeance films," can now be seen in its most complete form since its release in 1919.

Film historian Robert Birchard lent his copy of director Irvin Willat's original continuity script to help ensure that the reconstruction matched the original editing sequence and as a reference for the reel missing its English-language intertitles. The original color tinting scheme is also restored, based on analysis of the film leaders and the structure of the printing rolls. A new 35mm preservation negative and a print are now housed in the San Francisco Silent Film Festival Collection at the Library of Congress. Another 35mm print is also housed in the archives of restoration partner Gosfilmofond in Moscow.

— Robert Byrne



Irvin Willat's Bungalow

by Kevin Brownlow

When I worked for the American Film Institute in the late 1960s, my wife and I, renting an apartment in West Hollywood, discovered that director Irvin Willat lived right behind us. I had only seen a couple of his films but had heard rumors about *Behind the Door* (1919) that made it sound like a horror film.

I went to see Willat in his ramshackle bungalow and the first thing I noticed was a Confederate flag protruding from the barrel of a gun. He was in his eightieth year; a clipped moustache and forelock suggested that a certain dictator had survived an extra twenty-five years. He gave me a Southern welcome, telling me he was born in Georgia. (Most sources say Stamford, Connecticut.)

The moment I mentioned *Behind the Door*, his face lit up. He said it was the film that pleased him most. He dug out a painting of Hobart Bosworth, as the sea captain, struggling with Wallace Beery as the U-boat commander, and produced a review that he read aloud with gusto: "Builds to a climax of terrific power which is so horrible that it may sicken. Hold fast to your stomachs, there was never a more dynamic climax. They don't show you the German's body, but it doesn't take a vivid imagination to see it there because they've certainly built this up in the most expert style."

"Blimey," I said. "Did you really do that? Skinning the U-boat captain alive?"

"Yes," replied Willat. "Would you like to take off your coat?"

I knew the plot—the wife of a sea captain, adrift at sea, is taken aboard a U-boat. The commander hands her to the crew. "And when she died," he boasts, not realizing he is talking to her husband, "I shoved her out through the torpedo tube."

Willat, who had intended to become an artist, began his career as an actor and as a darkroom boy for his brother, the legendary Carl Alfred "Doc" Willat. An exhibitor in 1905, "Doc" Willat joined Vitagraph and brought in such names as Maurice Costello and John Bunny. He helped reorganize the New York Motion Picture Co. and, in 1911, became its general manager, overseeing its labs and producing brands that included Broncho and 101 Bison. He built and operated the Willat studio and labs at Fort Lee and, in 1916, became a vital figure at Technicolor as managing producer. George Eastman said that "Doc" Willat did more for the technical advancement of the motion picture than any other man.

Irvin, who had graduated to the Thomas Ince studio as cameraman and editor, helped to rescue Ince's pacifist epic *Civilization* (1916) by using optical printing and building it up with another film, *The Purple Cross*. "After which Mr. Ince gave me charge of something like eight departments: camera, editing, portrait, titles, tinting, lighting, studios, miniatures … and he also gave me, as my big job, the pictures that were put on the shelf. It was my job to shoot extra scenes and titles to make them work. I don't think I failed, but I had one really tough one. Mr. Ince handed me the remains of *The Purple Cross*."

While under contract to Famous Players-Lasky. Willat directed *The Grim Game* (1919). Again he quoted a contemporary critic: "There is more excitement in one reel of *The Grim Game* than in any five reels I have ever watched." He showed me the celebrated aerial accident in a series of frame enlargements in his scrapbook. "See, we were trying to pass this man to this plane and in our efforts to do so, why the two planes fell to earth. I was in the camera plane, and when they pulled away they both were able to reach a place where they could land. When this first one came down, the pilot, Al Wilson, came in slow as he could and he [the stunt man] never did let go, He was dragged all the way on that plowed field. It was fortunate that they picked a plowed field! We had hired a stunt man who was no stunt man. His name was Robert Kennedy, formerly an army pilot. Kennedy's rope held him dangling there until he could be dropped without serious injury. He didn't realize that under that speed, swinging back, you're working against gravity. He couldn't climb; he was hooked. He stayed there and hung on and I signaled to them to let him down. They did, and the guy landed. He wasn't hurt, but he wouldn't come back for his money—he just flew!"

"The picture featured Harry Houdini who told me 'I thought I was a magician until I met you' because of all the things we could do in the camera that he would never think of. He was no actor, you know, he was a practical man. But a very personable fellow."

Willat made another submarine picture, *Below the Surface* (1920), again with Bosworth; *North of 36* (1924) with Jack Holt, a kind of sequel to *The Covered Wagon*; and he remade Maurice Tourneur's *Isle of Lost Ships* (1929). With his brother, he set up a studio in 1920 to make a series of low-budget art films. The studio headquarters in Culver City was so picturesque, designed in Hansel-and-Gretel style by Harry Oliver, that drivers were distracted and cars kept colliding. The police ordered the building moved and it is now a private residence on Walden Drive in Beverly Hills.

I asked Willat if he had kept any films. He handed over *The Toss of a Coin*, a 1911 IMP one-reeler with Mary Pickford and Irvin Willat as leading man. It had solidly decomposed. Little did I know, while I was talking to him about his Technicolor westerns, such as *Heritage of the Desert* and *Wanderer of the Wasteland* (both 1924), that he had those very titles walled up in his bungalow—a fact that only came to light in 1976 after his death when the place was demolished. Alas, these unique Technicolor films had also decomposed.

Above opposite: *Hobart Bosworth, Lt. John Cook, Wallace Beery, and Irvin Willat in submarine conning tower constructed at Thomas Ince Studio for* Behind the Door. *Image courtesy of Kevin Brownlow*

THE PIE FIGHT OF THE CENTURY

BY LEONARD MALTIN

Every film buff and scholar has a Holy Grail, a "lost" movie he or she would give anything to see. *The Battle of the Century* has been at the top of my wish list since I was seven years old. I was already a Laurel and Hardy fan. I watched their talkie shorts and features every single day on local television, but I had never seen any of their silent films until 1958 when my parents took me to the now defunct Guild Theater (right behind Radio City Music Hall in Manhattan) for a showing of Robert Youngson's landmark compilation feature *The Golden Age of Comedy.* Its unquestioned highlight was a three-minute excerpt of the massive pie fight from *The Battle of the Century*.

But where was the rest of the film?

This was one of the first short subjects that officially starred Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy. Audiences were still getting acquainted with the fat-and-skinny duo, just as the two comedians were getting to know their screen characters. Stan is a blank-faced innocent who isn't very bright, while Ollie is a pompous fellow who thinks he's smart … but isn't.

Laurel and Hardy shaped and polished these characters with the help of a great team at the Hal Roach studio, where comedy was king. Having piloted one great Charley Chase short after another, Leo McCarey had been promoted to supervising director at the studio. He was a master of comedy who went on to make such classics as *Duck Soup*, *Ruggles of Red Gap*, and *Going My Way*. The director was gag man Clyde Bruckman, a close colleague of Buster Keaton (and later, Harold Lloyd and W.C. Fields) who had already directed the duo in the hilarious two-reeler *Putting Pants on Phillip*. He worked with them again later on *Leave 'Em Laughing* and *The Finishing Touch*. Photographing the picture was George Stevens, who got his first shot at directing from Hal Roach in 1930 and went on to make great American films like *Swing Time*, *Gunga Din*, *Shane*, and *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

According to Laurel and Hardy biographer John McCabe, it was Hal Roach's writers who came up with the idea for a large-scale pie fight as the finale of this two-reeler. Stan plays a hapless (and hopeless) prizefighter and Ollie is his manager. When it becomes apparent that Stan will never bring home a hefty purse, Ollie purchases an accident insurance policy from salesman Eugene Pallette—and then tries to arrange for an accident to occur. When the wrong person slips on one of Ollie's banana peels (intended for Stan) the pie throwing commences. This slapstick staple was always good for a laugh, but the writers' idea was to raise it to epic proportions. McCabe says it was designed to be "the pie fight to end all pie fights." It failed in that, but after almost ninety years it remains the best one ever put on film and one of the funniest scenes ever created.

It isn't just the escalation of the central gag that makes it work. As producer Hal Roach explained years later, "It isn't pie-throwing that's funny. It's who is throwing the pie and who is being hit with the pie." The evidence speaks for itself, as does the device defined by McCabe as "reciprocal destruction." In other words, when one person insults another (tearing off his pants, destroying part of his car, or hitting him with a cream pie), the perpetrator waits calmly while the victim exacts revenge. This tit-for-tat brand of comedy was developed and honed to perfection at the Roach studio, especially in the comedies featuring Laurel and Hardy. (Incidentally, the title of this short was a timely reference to the recent Jack Dempsey-Gene Tunney championship fight.)

Stan Laurel in *The Battle of the Century*

For years, all that existed of *The Battle of the Century* were the excerpts of the climax reedited for *The Golden Age of Comedy*, a particular frustration because almost all Laurel and Hardy's other silent short subjects remain intact.

I was working as a curator for the Museum of Modern Art's salute to American comedy for the Bicentennial, when, to my astonishment, I discovered that MoMA held a 35mm nitrate print of *Battle*'s first reel in its vaults. It was sitting there for years but no one realized it! I practically burst open with excitement as I watched it and then programmed it for a Sunday showing with other comedy shorts. But that Sunday the projectionist was fearful that a torn sprocket could ignite the highly flammable film. He refused to run it, which was his prerogative but also a great disappointment. At least Reel One had been uncovered and was subsequently preserved. (It also revealed the presence of future comedy star Lou Costello as an extra in the front row of spectators at Stan Laurel's prizefight.)

Then, last summer, film collector (and silent film pianist) Jon Mirsalis found the complete Reel Two among the titles he purchased from the Gordon Berkow estate—including prints Berkow acquired from the collection of *The Golden Age of Comedy*'s producer Robert Youngson. It seems Youngson struck a 16mm print for himself while he had access to the 35mm negative in the 1950s.

There is still some missing footage from the end of Reel One in which Eugene Pallette sells Oliver Hardy accident insurance on his pal Stan Laurel. Years ago, Blackhawk Films filled in this gap with a pair of stills and two title cards when they released the incomplete film on 16mm. Reel Two, however, is intact—and was well worth waiting a lifetime to see. Youngson chose the shots he liked best for his compilation feature and did a seamless job of editing, but the complete pie fight is four minutes longer and even funnier. We have Serge Bromberg of Lobster Films to thank (along with the Museum of Modern Art, Library of Congress, and Blackhawk's David Shepard) for bringing the elements together and enabling us to see *The Battle of the Century* in all its glory. Its discovery, after so many years, fuels the hope of film buffs everywhere that other films on our wish lists might still turn up. Would that they all turned out to be as great as this one.

THE BATTLE OF THE CENTURY AND OTHER COMEDY RESTORATIONS

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY JON MIRSALIS

All restorations by Lobster Films

THE BATTLE OF THE CENTURY

Directed by Clyde Bruckman, 1927, starring Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy

See description on preceding pages

COPS

Directed by Buster Keaton, Eddie Cline, 1922

One of Buster Keaton's best known comedies, *Cops* was one of his few short films widely available before the great Keaton revival of the 1970s (and the beautiful restorations painstakingly assembled today). It's Keaton at his purest, the lone comic pursued by hordes of policemen through the streets of Los Angeles. Mack Sennett's Keystone Kops had been popular in the teens but were passé by 1922. Keaton deadpanned to the press before the film was released that the new trends in comedy would include custard pies, fire hoses, and "something in the way of policemen. Cops have never been used by any comedy director. I believe that this season will witness their appearance in motion pictures." He promised five hundred of them in his new film. (No one at the time noted that the film audaciously parodies the then notorious 1920 bombing of Wall Street via horse-drawn cart.) In *Moving Picture World*, Mary Kelly accurately captured how Keaton's "personality, a somber blue note in a bedlam of jazz, has seldom been capitalized to better advantage." No other of his short films so well represents Keaton's stone-faced impudence as he mocks anarchists, authority—and happy endings.

– Gregg Rickman

THE BALLOONATIC

Directed by Buster Keaton, Eddie Cline, 1922

One of Buster Keaton's last silent short films, *The Balloonatic* was filmed quickly in August–September 1922 when Sennett bathing beauty Phyllis Haver became available. Keaton publicity promoted her appearance: "of course, she had to have some water scenes and while Buster does some fishing Phyllis shows her lines too." Haver went on to star in 1928's *Chicago* and *The Battle of the Sexes*. Here she plays one of Keaton's favorite recurring characters, a "mountain girl" at ease in nature. Never shirking from danger, Keaton risked his life at least twice on the production. The first time he tried his balloon flight he had to cling to his perch as the ballast bag settled on the telephone and streetcar wires on Santa Monica Boulevard before dropping into a field. (Nonetheless he insisted on reshooting the stunt.) And then there was his other costar, the famed stunt bear John Brown. Billed in trade ads as the "Most Perfect Bear in the World," he weighed six hundred pounds, was "Absolutely Tame and Reliable," and "Guaranteed to Work With Women, Children, Anyone, Anywhere." The bear was oversold; director Harry Edwards had suffered a "severely lacerated wrist" when bitten during the filming of an Al Christie comedy in February. Keaton, ever the risk-taker, still insisted on having John Brown in the same frame with him in several shots. That's no digital bear snuffling him.

– Gregg Rickman

THE DANCING PIG

1907

A popular act on the vaudeville circuit staged, recreated, and filmed for Pathé-Frères' camera. No animals were harmed in the making of this film.

Anders Henrikson (right)

THE STRONGEST

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY THE MATTI BYE ENSEMBLE

Directed by Axel Lindblom and Alf Sjöberg, Sweden, 1929
Cast Bengt Djurberg, Anders Henrikson, Gösta Gustafson, Gun Holmquist, Hjalmar Peters, Maria Röhr, Civert Braekmo, Tore Pedersen, and Håkon Antonsen
Production AB Svensk Filmindustri **Print Source** Swedish Film Institute

For a brief period between the late 1910s and early 1920s, Swedish cinema challenged the supremacy of Hollywood in the production of sophisticated, mature, and visually majestic films. Filmmakers Victor Sjöstrom, Mauritz Stiller, and the lesser known outside Sweden Gustaf Molander led the way, turning to literary works and setting the powerful psychological and emotional forces of their characters against the elemental grandeur of snowbound mountains, stormy coasts, and icy seas in films like *A Man There Was* (1917) and *Sir Arne's Treasure* (1919). Where American and Europe filmmakers of the 1910s generally relied on locations near the studios or constructed imagined worlds on studio stages, Sjöstrom, Stiller, and others took their cameras deep into the wilderness and up into the mountains or onto the rocky coasts and out onto the seas in order to capture majestic views and unforgiving environments unseen in other national cinemas. The landscape wasn't merely backdrop, it was an essential element of being Swedish and, in turn, became a character in its own right. Hollywood lured away Sjöstrom and Stiller as well as stars Lars Hansen and Greta Garbo and the Golden Age passed, but Swedish cinema was far from over.

Den Starkaste (*The Strongest*), one of the final silent films from Sweden, is in many ways a return to the elemental cinema of Sjöstrom and Stiller. The film's codirector and cinematographer Axel Lindblom developed the original story set against the summer season of hunting seals and polar bears in the near-perpetual daylight of the Arctic seas. Before photographing films in the 1920s for Sjöstrom and Molander, Lindblom had sailed to the Arctic to shoot a series of nonfiction shorts. The experience inspired him to pen a scenario about the competition between rival crews in the Arctic hunting season. The title refers to the Darwinian order in the stark environment of the far north seas: "The right belongs to the strongest," explains a veteran sea captain to the new man on his crew as they lay claim to their hunting ground.

... in many ways a return to the elemental cinema of Sjöström and Stiller.

Lindblom wrote the screenplay in 1923 but shelved it until 1929, when Svensk Filmindustri put it into production with Lindblom as photographer and codirector along with Alf Sjöberg, a theater director who made his name as a filmmaker a decade later with *The Road to Heaven* (1942) and the Cannes Grand Prix-winner *Miss Julie* (1951). The two first-time film directors divided the job according to their experience: Sjöberg was responsible for directing the actors and shaping the performances and Lindblom was in charge of location scenes.

The Strongest begins and ends on a pastoral farm on the banks of a picturesque fjord lazily winding

"The sensation of the wasteland, its colors and grandiosity, were unforgettable and never before experienced."

through verdant hills. The cozy farmhouse where *Viking* sea captain Larsen (Hjalmar Peters) lives when he's not at sea is worlds away from the hunt, which dominates the film. Lindblom's photography enhances the differences between the gentle beauty of the farmland and the harsh environment of the Arctic, a desert of black water, white ice floes, and constant sunlight that can suddenly dissipate into a haze of fog, swallowing ships like seals disappearing under the water's surface. The inland farm is surrounded by life in bloom, like an impressionist painting of a rural paradise come to life. But even the pastoral country existence has a natural order. When out of work sailor Gustav (Bengt Djurberg) strolls up to the Larsen farm after *The Viking* has set sail with its crew, the grandmother offers him a meal in exchange for chopping firewood: "You get nothing for free here."

Snow and sea, defining elements of Sweden's Golden Age, become the arena in which Gustav and Ole, Larsen's loyal first mate (played by Anders Henrikson), compete for the hand of Larsen's daughter Ingeborg (Gun Holmqvist). Handsome and broad-shouldered, Djurberg cuts a mighty figure on the screen. The man seems hewn from the landscape, alert and poised, his chest out as if ready to meet any challenge, yet also at ease and quick with a hearty laugh. He is the ideal of morality and masculinity in action.

Apart from interiors, which were shot on studio sets, the muscular northern adventure was filmed mostly on location. The crew began their journey at the port of Tromsø in Norway, where the ship docked for supplies before making the trip north in late spring, followed by a five-week expedition to the Arctic. Sjöberg kept a journal of the production, which is preserved at Swedish Film Institute library in Stockholm. "By and by we force the ice, and the ships pass as smoothly as cats between treacherous floes with their dangerous bottoms underneath," he wrote on June 17, 1929. Two weeks later, as their northward journey took them to bigger floes, he observed: "The sensation of the wasteland, its colors and grandiosity, were unforgettable and never before experienced."

No special effects here (apart from an attack by a polar bear). Seals are shot and slaughtered on-screen. The actors row their own boats from the ship to the floes. When Gustav races on foot across the melting river to save a fellow hunter, a dynamic sequence that alternates long shots of the black-clad hunter against the white of that frozen world with close-ups of the treacherous obstacles, that's frigid Arctic water surrounding him, not a safe studio tank. On July 2, the crew sighted a bear and filmed the pursuit. Sjöberg wrote in his journal:

> *We put out a boat that is dragged over the ice. Djurberg by the bow, Dahlqvist in the stern. They go out–after an enormous struggle they get a lasso round the neck of the old, grey bear and hold him, hour after hour, while our ships force the ice, millimeter by millimeter, at times by means of dynamite. Then we come loose and hasten to the bear. Three boats are finally put out, after tremendous difficulties we loosen the snare, and he swims towards the waste of ice. The boats with the cameras follow. He dives under an ice-floe, gets up on the ice, and dies after three shots …*

The hunt gives the film a documentary authenticity as powerful as anything in *Nanook of the North*. The film is a harmonious marriage of documentary, poetic realism, the elemental drama of Sjöström, and a climactic sequence edited with a dramatic rhythm inspired by Sergei Eisenstein (whom Sjöberg had discovered in 1928). "Qualities as strong, rugged, and manly signify this new Swedish film," reads the unsigned review in the October 29, 1929, edition of the Stockholm newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*. "We are shown men who fight for their livelihood under harsh conditions, men who struggle with the forces of nature in the Arctic Ocean's majestic, but also desolate, region, fraught with danger."

Sjöberg's debut feature proved to be his last film as director for more than a decade. As sound arrived and the industry turned to comedies and light drama, he returned to the theater. He made his second film, *Med livet som insats* (*They Staked Their Lives*), in 1940 and became a towering force in Swedish cinema and a major influence on Ingmar Bergman. In fact, Sjöberg directed Bergman's first screenplay, *Torment* (1944). Film critic and historian Peter Cowie, in his 1970 volume on Swedish cinema, wrote that *The Strongest* remains Sjöberg's most purely cinematic production.

Axel Lindblom never directed another feature. After shooting Anthony Asquith's *A Cottage on Dartmoor* (1929), a British film coproduced by Sweden's Svensk Filmindustri, he retired from the movie business. One source reports he turned to farming. Perhaps not so much of a surprise given the affinity with the outdoors he had shown in *The Strongest*.

— Sean Axmaker

(Translations of quotes from the original Swedish by Marina Dahlquist of Stockholm University.)

Annette Benson

SHOOTING STARS

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY STEPHEN HORNE

Directed by A.V. Bramble and Anthony Asquith, Great Britain, 1928
Cast Annette Benson, Brian Aherne, Donald Calthrop, Chili Bouchier, Wally Patch, David Brooks, Ella Daincourt, and Tubby Phillips
Production British Instructional Films **Print Source** British Film Institute

Near the beginning of *Shooting Stars*, Anthony Asquith's directorial debut, he boldly declares his infatuation with the movies in an astonishing sequence. It begins with a tender love scene between a cowboy on a horse and a golden-haired beauty perched in a blossom-laden tree. As he rides off into the sunset, the dove she's billing and cooing with attacks her, and we see that his horse is a sawhorse propelled by stagehands; they are in a scene being shot on a film stage. Then, the camera wanders around the entire building, not only introducing characters but also providing a fascinating look at the mechanics of filmmaking. There is a bravura one-and-a-half minute overhead tracking shot that follows the female star as she leaves the set, goes up one flight of stairs and down another to where another movie is filming, and ends with a glimpse of musicians providing mood music for those actors. All this takes place in the first ten minutes, setting up what at first appears to be a comedy but turns into a romantic triangle among a married pair of stars and a Chaplinesque comic and then into a thriller as dizzying as that opening.

what at first appears to be a comedy turns into a thriller as dizzying as the opening

Asquith's privileged background was an unlikely preparation for a film career. The son of a British prime minister and his socialite second wife, Asquith had an upper-class upbringing with a boarding school education, followed by Oxford. During his university years, he became an avid moviegoer, seeing some films six or seven times; his insatiable appetite for cinema included not just British and American films, but the more innovative works coming out of France, Germany, Scandinavia, and the Soviet Union. Asquith became one of the founding members of London's Film Society, which held screenings and promoted artistic appreciation of film. His older sister Elizabeth had married a Romanian diplomat, Prince Antoine Bibesco, and, after Asquith graduated in the mid-1920s, he visited the couple in Washington where Bibesco was posted. From there, Asquith and his sister traveled to Hollywood, where Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks, eager to host titled visitors, were thrilled to have a member of European royalty and the son of a former British prime minister as guests in their home.

The Hollywood crowd was impressed with young Asquith's knowledge of film. Lillian Gish told Asquith biographer R.J. Minney, "He could talk with authority about films made all over the world—the techniques of the various directors … how all the effects were obtained. He was really dedicated to films. It was his vocation, like the priesthood." Asquith later told Minney that he had spent a lot of time at the Fairbanks-Pickford studios observing the couple at work. "I made a close study of all the processes of film-making, from camera work to cutting and

editing. I asked endless questions, I'm afraid." He also got to know the couple's close friend and neighbor, Charlie Chaplin, and spent time observing during the production of Chaplin's *The Circus*, even arguing with him about the point-of-view shot on the trapeze in E.A. Dupont's *Varieté*, "which Charlie thought was merely an irritating trick." Asquith spent six months in America's movie capital, also observing other directors such as Ernst Lubitsch at work. This informal apprenticeship was the ideal preparation for his future career.

Back in London in 1926 and determined to work in the movies, he sent a screenplay he had written to the head of production at British Instructional Films, which made nature documentaries and films about World War I. The company was moving into feature production and Asquith was hired. His first screen credit, *Boadicea*, about the Celtic warrior queen, was "Property Master, Assistant Make-Up Artist, Assistant Cutter, Stunt Man." He later gleefully described what he did to earn the latter credit. "Lillian Hall-Davis, as Boadicea's daughter, had to career at great speed across the Sussex Downs in a chariot … So I put on a flowing blonde wig and billowing robes and sat perched high in the chariot while the horses tore across the field."

Asquith climbed the production ladder quickly. After working in various capacities on *Thou Fool*, he moved into the director's chair. The opening credit on *Shooting Stars* reads "Shooting Stars by Anthony Asquith," whose original story it was. The director is listed as A.V. Bramble, but most sources agree that Bramble's purpose was only to supervise the less experienced Asquith. A recently discovered copy of the original screenplay shows that Asquith planned for every shot in the completed film. Even most of the press accounts of the era refer to the production as an Anthony Asquith film. The production's visual pyrotechnics showcase Asquith's love of German and Russian techniques throughout, not just in the impressive opening. One scene of a bicycle careening down a cliff is reminiscent of the Odessa Steps sequence in Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*. *Shooting Stars* was the first British film credit for German lighting technician Karl Fischer, who also lit Asquith's next film, *Underground*. Asquith's final British silent, the thriller *A Cottage on Dartmoor*, was released in 1929.

Brian Aherne

Shooting Stars was a big hit with audiences in Europe, but opinion on both sides of the Atlantic was mixed. *Variety* ran two reviews, a negative one by an English critic and a positive one by an American. The British critic wrote, "Acting and photography are both good. The rest is inexcusable." The American writer, who liked it overall, nevertheless noted, "the picture is too modern for the average moving picture patron, who is confronted with the difficulty of carrying in his mind a story within a story and then part of another story within the inside story."

Annette Benson and Brian Aherne

Asquith had been one of the most exciting young British filmmakers of the late silent era. But in the early 1930s British Instructional was taken over by another company, and Asquith changed studios several times. For the next few years, his career stagnated with a series of mediocre pictures. He regained his footing when he was hired to codirect the film version of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* (1938). Star Leslie Howard agreed to play Henry Higgins if he could also direct, but he soon found he was in over his head and asked for help. Asquith was brought in and not only had to deal with Howard, but also with two outsize egos, Shaw's and producer Gabriel Pascal's, plus editor David Lean, who had his own directing ambitions and ideas for the film. Always kind, tactful, and gentlemanly, Asquith smoothly managed to satisfy all concerned, and the film was a big hit. By the 1950s, Asquith was one of the few British filmmakers to have a successful international career. He was perceived as a director who specialized in stories of the upper classes and literary and theatrical adaptations, the types of films that were becoming passé with the rise of the "kitchen sink drama" of the era. Asquith's final two films were part of an emerging genre reflecting the new reality of international coproductions: the all-star omnibus movie featuring actors with global reputations, *The V.I.P.s* (1963), starring Taylor and Burton, and *The Yellow Rolls-Royce* (1964), with Ingrid Bergman and Omar Sharif.

When he died in 1968, Asquith's youthful experimentation with film was far behind him; his work had settled into a smooth, if sometimes bland professionalism. In a long and prolific career that spanned three dazzling, increasingly confident silents and three dozen varied, elegant, and well-crafted sound films, Asquith proved to be one of Britain's most successful— if not always admired—filmmakers. Reflecting on his career, film critic Dilys Powell summed up his indisputable influence: "It is impossible to think of the British film industry without thinking of Anthony Asquith."

— Margarita Landazuri

HERE'S TO YOU, MR. ROBINSON

A PERSONAL TRIBUTE TO THE 2016 SILENT FILM FESTIVAL AWARD WINNER DAVID ROBINSON

by Kevin Brownlow

Back in the 1950s and '60s, Liam O'Leary was one of the most significant figures in silent film preservation. Not only was he deputy curator at the British Film Institute's National Film Archive, he was also mentor to a number of youthful enthusiasts such as myself (I was then fifteen). He was the man who, having spotted Abel Gance visiting London in 1954, made sure I got to meet him even though it meant my playing truant from a school exam. And that same year, he introduced me to David Robinson.

Like Liam, David worked for the British Film Institute, writing for two of its publications, *Sight and Sound* and the *Monthly Film Bulletin*. One Sunday afternoon, David was setting out for a walk when he bumped into Liam who commanded, "Come with me. I'm going to take you somewhere." And that "somewhere" was my parents' flat in Swiss Cottage, London. I was expecting Liam, who had asked to see my 9.5mm version of Abel Gance's *Napoleon* (which I had succeeded in expanding to a whole six reels), and I was thrilled to be able to show it to another grownup who worked in films. Liam had seen it and been deeply impressed. But I knew nothing of this friend of his.

David was only twenty-four, charming, as good-looking as Leslie Howard, and surprisingly knowledgeable—he was building up a collection primarily devoted to pre-cinema, which was rapidly spreading into the silent era. His reaction to Gance's film was more perceptive and enthusiastic than I could have hoped for. We have remained friends ever since.

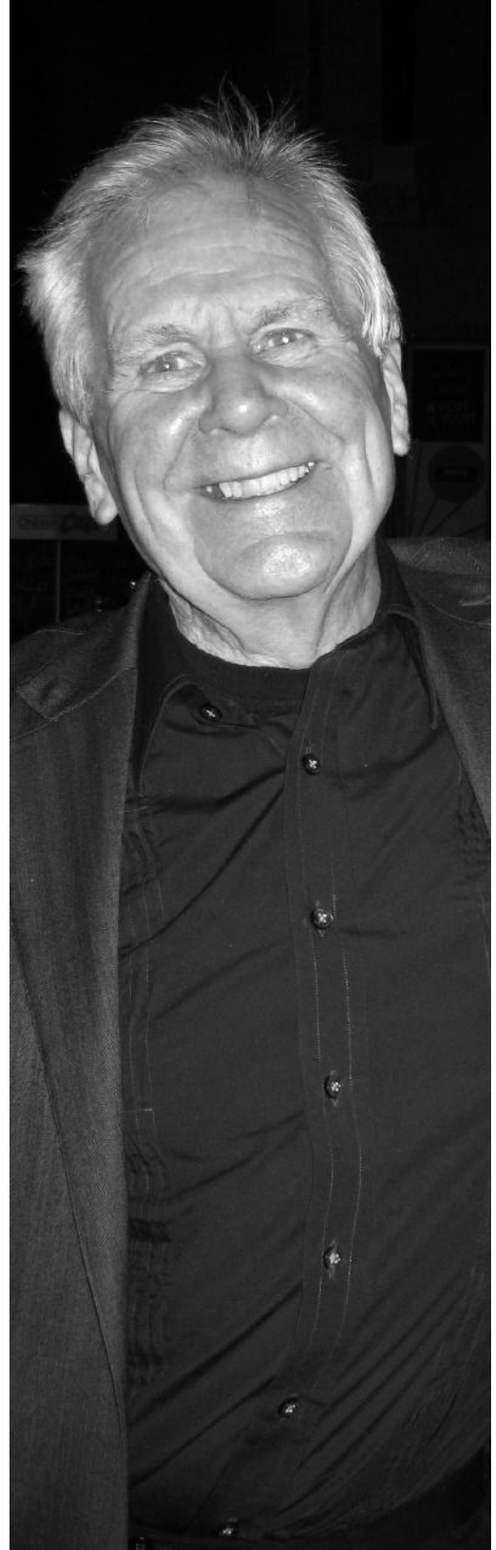
After leaving the BFI, David became one of the top film critics in London, first for *The Financial Times* and then for *The Times* itself—higher than which you could not go. When I directed the controversial *It Happened Here* (1964), about what might have happened if Britain had been occupied by the Nazis, he was one of the critics who signed a letter protesting censorship of the film. He also wrote an introduction to my book about the making of the film. It was no tactful publicity piece. It was so brilliantly written, so critical—in the best sense—that whenever I look back at it, I am struck by yet another point he got absolutely right.

For Mamoun Hassan, the adventurous head of Britain's now defunct National Film Finance Corporation, David was the first film critic he ever encountered. At a meeting at Friends' House, Euston Road, a young radical jumped up and demanded to know how David could be familiar with the working class since he was born into privilege and went to public school and Cambridge. David, failing to mention that he actually came from quite humble origins and went to grammar school, said simply "You may be right."

"Ever since then," Mamoun recently told me, "I've been an admirer. And I've always thought he was our best critic."

David educated many of those of my generation who attended the National Film Theatre. Believe it or not, Laurel and Hardy were then comedians we saw only at newsreel theaters. The critical establishment considered them scarcely worth watching until David put on a season and we all emerged weak from laughing. He did the same with Buster Keaton, staging an NFT season in the 1960s, where I courted Virginia, my future wife. He also made valuable films about the music-hall star Hetty Kelly and the black singers Elisabeth Welch and Adelaide Hall.

A distinctive feature of David is his kindness; he formed close friendships with film personalities as diverse as Bessie Love, Jean Darling, Diana Cary, and Leatrice Gilbert Fountain. He wrote a small but



excellent book on silent film called *Hollywood in the Twenties* (1968). Thanks to the enormous number of films he had seen—silent and sound—he was able to follow it in 1973 with an encyclopedic volume entitled *World Cinema*. He compiled *Music of the Shadows* (1990), a study of musical accompaniment in the silent era, because he was not only interested in films but he was also intimately familiar with theater and music.

Today, he admits to frustration at the inevitable passage of time—he is eighty-five after all—but is as energetic as ever. He has only just stepped aside as director of the Giornate del Cinema Muto in Pordenone, after almost twenty years, to remain director emeritus. His leadership of the festival has been extraordinary and he proved he could be both combative and the soul of diplomacy. Each year I scan the program and say to myself, "Haven't heard of many of these titles. Can't be any good. I think I'll skip it." But sense prevails and, of course, the reason I hadn't heard of them was because they were discoveries—forgotten or neglected films, often from forgotten or neglected national cinemas—that invariably turn out to be unmissable.

David Robinson is world famous for writing the definitive biography of Chaplin, one of the greatest figures in film history. I am glad that David is now being celebrated as one of the greatest figures in film appreciation.

David Robinson receives the San Francisco Silent Film Festival Award at the screening of Anthony Asquith's *Shooting Stars*.

SILENT FILM FESTIVAL AWARD RECIPIENTS

2015 SERGE BROMBERG
2014 BFI NATIONAL ARCHIVE
2013 CINÉMATHÈQUE FRANÇAISE
2012 TELLURIDE FILM FESTIVAL
2011 UCLA FILM AND TELEVISION ARCHIVE
2010 KEVIN BROWNLOW AND PATRICK STANBURY OF PHOTOPLAY PRODUCTIONS
2009 CHINA FILM ARCHIVE
2008 DAVID SHEPARD OF FILM PRESERVATION ASSOCIATES
2007 TURNER CLASSIC MOVIES
2006 LIBRARY OF CONGRESS AND MELISSA CHITTICK
2005 NATIONAL FILM PRESERVATION FOUNDATION
2004 GEORGE EASTMAN HOUSE
2003 FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DES ARCHIVES DU FILM (FIAF)

The award was sponsored by Haghefilm from 2003 to 2006.

WITHIN OUR GATES

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE OAKLAND SYMPHONY AND CHORUS, CONDUCTED BY MICHAEL MORGAN

Directed by Oscar Micheaux, USA, 1920
Cast Evelyn Preer, Flo Clements, Charles D. Lucas, James D. Ruffin, Jack Chenault, William Smith, Mrs. Evelyn, Bernice Ladd, William Starks, Mattie Edwards, Grant Edwards, Ralph Johnson, Grant Gorman, and E.G. Tatum
Production Micheaux Film Company **Print Source** Library of Congress

Within Our Gates is the earliest surviving feature film by an African American, a distinction that can make it seem merely some historic curiosity. Instead, the film remains dramatically gripping and socially audacious in so many ways. Its mixed-race cast allows it to grapple with issues far beyond the scope both of later all black "race movies" and of tamer Hollywood productions: bigotry, miscegenation, the Great Migration north, racial uplift, and racial betrayal, all under the cloud of Jim Crow-era lynching. This second of Oscar Micheaux's films (after the lost *The Homesteader*) centers on a young, light-skinned African American named Sylvia Landry (played by Evelyn Preer, the lead also in eight lost Micheaux silents) with a mysterious past and a mission to raise funds in the North for a struggling school for black children in the South.

IT'S CLEAR THAT HIS MOST UNCOMPROMISING WORKS WERE HIS SILENTS.

Micheaux's thirty years as an independent producer, scriptwriter, director, editor, and distributor makes him a filmmaker like none of his generation. Born the son of two ex-slaves in 1884, he spent three years as a Pullman porter out of Chicago before trying his hand as a South Dakota homesteader, an occupation doomed by harsh winters—and by the scheming of his wife's minister father, if one can believe the versions in his first and third books: *The Conquest: The Story of a Negro Pioneer* (1913) and its novelization, *The Homesteader* (1917). He declined an offer from the black-owned Lincoln Motion Picture Company to adapt *The Homesteader*—preferring "creative control," as we'd say now—and took up filmmaking himself, financing it with small stock sales similar to the door-to-door way he had pre-sold his books (as described in his 1915 novel *The Forged Note: A Romance of the Darker Races*). From 1918 through 1939, with a final film in 1948, he made some forty features, an especially astonishing achievement in light of the lack of any institutional structure for their distribution beyond a loose network of theaters and screenings for African American audiences. Micheaux went bankrupt in 1928, near the close of the silent era, and was forced to rely on white financiers for his sound films. It's clear that his most uncompromising works were his silents, and more's the tragedy that so few survive.

By comparison with slicker Hollywood conventions, *Within Our Gates* can initially look meandering and even inept. Certainly it was produced on the lowest possible budget by a self-taught filmmaker, shot in borrowed homes and on the streets of Chicago. Later accounts of Micheaux's frugal techniques suggest that he seldom allowed more than a single take

Jack Chenault and Evelyn Preer

"THE TIME IS RIPE TO BRING THE LESSON TO THE FRONT"

of any scene. As in his novels, *Within Our Gates* is structured though convoluted digressions, cutaways to distant stories, and flashbacks interrupting flashbacks, but taken on its own distinctive terms the film is complexly coherent and builds brilliantly. Most of its final half-hour is an astonishing backstory tracing Sylvia's traumatic youth, including the lynching of her foster parents and an attempted rape by her white biological father. This finale indeed looks like a response—in both storyline and crosscut editing style—to D.W. Griffith's racist landmark *The Birth of a Nation*, released four years earlier but hardly forgotten, especially among the African American community.

Within Our Gates' enigmatic title hints at tolerance, if with a skeptical eye. (The Old Testament phrase originates in the King James translation of Deuteronomy 5:14, which instructs "the stranger that is within thy gates to rest also on the Sabbath alongside you"—it's no accident that in the film Sunday is the day for lynchings, when whole families can festively join in.) The film's wealth of often confusingly interlinked characters includes criminals and doctors, philanthropists and murderers, ministers and blackmailers, rural sharecroppers and urban professionals. The most controversial characters created for the film are the race traitors who toady up to whites: the servant Ephrem, whose offscreen lynching is painfully ironic, and the minister "Old Ned," who at least laments his own hypocrisy. Micheaux cast himself in a cameo as a low-level criminal who discusses selling fake jewelry with the gambler Larry.

Oscar Micheaux

The film was completed by late 1919 but delayed from release until January 1920 by two months of debate within Chicago's film censor board. The major black-owned newspaper of the time, *The Chicago Defender*, reported on the dispute over the film's showing, with reference to the city's race riots the previous summer (in which twenty-three African Americans and fifteen whites died): "Those who reasoned with the spectacle of last July in Chicago ever before them, declared the showing pre-eminently dangerous; while those who reasoned with the knowledge of existing conditions, the injustices of the times, the lynchings and handicaps of ignorance, determined that the time is ripe to bring the lesson to the front." The film ends with another reflection of the year of production, when World War I was fresh, in the curiously patriotic marriage proposal from Sylvia's Boston lover, Dr. Vivian, who mixes expressions of love with allusions to battles won by black U.S. Army troops. For Dr. Vivian, such steps toward empowerment are evidence of American society coming together. Sylvia, with her violent personal past, looks not entirely convinced that America can so easily fuse into an integrated whole.

Of Micheaux's roughly twenty-two silent features, only *Body and Soul* (1925) survives through an original English-language print. *Within Our Gates* was long assumed lost, but in the late 1970s film historian Thomas Cripps located in Spain's national film archive a Spanish print released under the title *La Negra*. In the 1990s, the Library of Congress reconstructed the film, under my supervision, and it may be worth a few words about what you'll see in this version.

When the film was distributed in Spain in the early 1920s, the film's English intertitles were discarded and replaced by Spanish-language ones. No record seems to survive of Micheaux's original titles, and their reconstruction presented puzzles. The first discovery, useful but disconcerting, was that the sloppy Spanish distributor had in four cases inadvertently left one frame of the English intertitles alongside the new Spanish ones. These four remaining original titles revealed that the Spanish distributor sometimes felt the need to explain or simplify the American context. Most notable is in a scene in which a Southern white man murders the town's richest white man because (in translation of the Spanish) he has been "cheated and violently insulted." Micheaux's keener original title explains that he had been cheated "and when he had called him to terms, had laughed in his face, calling him 'poor white trash—and no better than a negro.'"

Thus the reconstructed titles can only approximate Micheaux's originals, but my translation back into English (with assistance from Alex Vargas) attempts to be true to Micheaux's intertitle style, including his preference to render certain characters' speech in slang (evident from the original titles in *Body and Soul*). As fully as possible, the diction and phrasing of the translation back into English are drawn from usages in *Body and Soul* and Micheaux's three books of 1913–17. Among these *The Forged Note*

proved especially useful because it introduces characters who reappear in *Within Our Gates*.

It's evident from reviews and advertisements that Micheaux edited several different versions of *Within Our Gates*, partly in response to the threatened censorship brought especially by the lynching scenes. Late in the month of the film's release, January 1920, he sailed for Europe to arrange international distribution. But for the next seven decades, while *The Birth of a Nation* was being enshrined in film histories as the first cinematic masterpiece, *Within Our Gates* was lost from memory. What we have now—via the perilous survival of a single print in Spain—is only one version of Micheaux's film. But how essential to have it back.

— Scott Simmon

Maestro Michael Morgan conducts the West Coast premiere of the new score by composer Adolphus Hailstork. The score was composed for and performed as part of* The Birth of an Answer*, an event put on by the Institute of Humanities at Old Dominion University in 2015.

AMERICAN SYMPHONY:

ADOLPHUS HAILSTORK SETS MICHEAUX TO MUSIC

BY JEFF STAFFORD

A composer faced with creating a new score for Oscar Micheaux's landmark 1920 film *Within Our Gates* might be tempted to emulate the emotional and melodramatic nature of the storytelling, but Dr. Adolphus Hailstork, whom the *Washington Post* has called "an eloquent traditionalist," has taken a unique approach. Instead, the composer and professor of music and eminent scholar at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, wrote a symphony for strings and a choral group to convey the film's essence, creating musical motifs for the major characters and settings rather than cues for every major event. At an early age, Hailstork immersed himself in both classical and Episcopal church music and his score for Micheaux's film reflects these and other influences to evoke the settings (the rural South, the urban North), recurring characters, and major themes of racial injustice. Although this is Hailstork's first film score, he has more than fifty years of musical achievement that includes celebrated orchestral and operatic works about distinctly American subjects—the deaths of the four little girls in the 1963 bombing of an African-American church, the Underground Railroad, the work of poet Walt Whitman, and blacklisted actor and activist Paul Robeson.

HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT WRITING THE SCORE TO MICHEAUX'S FILM?

I watched the movie numerous times and would follow along with my iPad, looking at a scene and creating different music ideas for each event. The ideas gradually evolved to fit the scene. Pizzicato for sneaky moments. Pulsating music for the card game. Choral music for the rural sharecropper.

HOW DID YOU SELECT THE ORCHESTRA-INSTRUMENT ARRANGEMENT FOR THE SCORE AND LIVE PERFORMANCE?

They told me they wanted a small ensemble and I wanted something homogeneous because string instruments are just so soloistic. My own feeling was that at an hour and seventeen minutes using just strings was a bit much. So there's a scene in the movie in which a sharecropper is standing in front of the school talking about trying to get an education for his children, and I decided that's the perfect opportunity for a choir, particularly an African-American choir, to capture the flavor of the type of singing that the slaves and recently released slaves would sing, church music.

SINCE THERE ARE SEVERAL RECURRING CHARACTERS THROUGHOUT THE NARRATIVE, DID YOU DESIGN DIFFERENT MUSICAL THEMES FOR SOME OF THEM?

Yes, there is Sylvia's theme. There's a theme for Larry, the bad guy. There's a theme for the scene where Sylvia is recovering in the hospital and talking to her future benefactor and asking who's promising to look into the case in terms of money. That's when the choir performs a very nice celebration in the sense of thankfulness. There's also a church music scene where the minister is preaching. I used the music from the card game that happens earlier in the film because he's almost as much of a shyster as the card players. So there is the card theme music during the preacher ranting and raving and asking for money. The piece did fit together in a kind of symphonic structure that way. It's kind of a theme in variations.

HOW DID YOU HANDLE THE ELABORATE FLASHBACK SEQUENCE?

When the film goes into Sylvia's backstory, I was glad because it allowed me to lighten the mood and introduce the young man who was Sylvia's brother and the folksy character of the big-eyed tattletale [Efrem]. There is humor there and it allowed me to work that in.

DID YOU EVER CONSIDER INTEGRATING SOUND EFFECTS INTO THE SCORE LIKE SOME COMPOSERS HAVE DONE FOR SILENT FILMS?

I tried to create a musical metaphor for what was happening. I didn't go for brazen sound effects. Actually there weren't that many opportunities for sound effects unless you wanted to convey the sound of a fire or a fight or the sound of cards hitting the table. That's a little hokey so I just went for a metaphor for the scene and its emotions.

WHEN YOU WERE COMPOSING THE SCORE DID YOU THINK ABOUT HOW A LIVE AUDIENCE MIGHT REACT TO IT?

I was less interested in the audience's reaction than in trying to actually match the film. In other words, the film became my audience and if I matched the scene well then that was my definition of success.

DO YOU FORESEE ANY CHALLENGES FOR MICHAEL MORGAN WHEN HE PERFORMS THE SCORE LIVE AT THE FESTIVAL?

When we first performed the score in Norfolk, Michael solved every single problem perfectly and he knows the piece better than anybody in the world. He's the perfect conductor for it and any problems were just a matter of timing. The musical score is nonstop from beginning to end but there are gaps where I want the audience to read what was being said in the intertitles.

NOW THAT YOU'VE SCORED A SILENT FILM, WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO MORE?

I would. I particularly like silent film—I call it silent archaic—because you don't have to wrestle with the director's desires [laughs]. The thing is I've been an independent composer for so long that when a director says I want this here or that there, I find it is stifling for me. But I had free range on composing the score to *Within Our Gates*.

HAVING SEEN "WITHIN OUR GATES" SEVERAL TIMES, WHAT IS IMPORTANT ABOUT THE FILM FOR YOU?

What I think is the most distinctive thing is Micheaux's fairness. Every kind of character is in there. There's no "all these people are good" or "all these people are bad" type of thing. There's good *and* bad, regardless of race. We have some crazy people on both sides. It's so comprehensive and rich. It seems like a heroic soap opera, sensitively done, and touches on subjects still worth considering.

YOUR LONG LIST OF MUSICAL ACHIEVEMENTS INCLUDES ALMOST EVERY TYPE OF CLASSICAL MUSIC BUT IS THERE A STYLE OR GENRE YOU HAVEN'T ATTEMPTED?

My wish or dream is to do a little bit more of what I've been doing. I'm going to write more symphonies and I want to write operas, more choral music, and some more concertos. I've written a lot of chamber music and will continue to do that. There's nothing that a composer can't write on his own. The question really is to what extent are you influenced by the opportunity for performance? And I am influenced by that. I'm always looking for those kinds of opportunities.

THE ITALIAN STRAW HAT

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY THE GUENTER BUCHWALD ENSEMBLE

Directed by René Clair, France, 1927
Cast Albert Préjean, Olga Chekhova (as Tschekova), Vital Geymond, Yvonneck, Maryse Maïa (as Marise Maia), Paul Ollivier (as Olivier), Louis Pré fils, Alice Tissot, Alexis Bondireff (as Bondi), Jim Gérald, and Alex Allin
Production Films Albatros **Print Source** SFSFF Collection

From the Lumières' point-and-shoot street scenes to Méliès's fantastical trick films, from the thrilling serials of Feuillade to the foible-filled folly of Max Linder, French filmmakers enthralled global audiences with the worlds they created on-screen. But then the war came and German and American productions vanquished not just French exports but the home market as well. Into this void stepped artists with a new language and a new purpose, to create what they called "pure cinema."

A recurring beef among critics and these new filmmakers was French cinema's reliance on theater and literature, not only for content but form. In 1921, Jean Epstein described the national cinema as nothing more than "albums of poses and catalogues of décor." When Abel Gance's *La Roue* plowed onto screens in 1923, critics loved its kinetic rhythms (a camera was mounted on the wheels of a train, among other moving places) and saw in it a new path for narrative filmmaking. Young journalist and budding director René Clair mostly agreed but thought the film had not gone far enough, relying too much on the written word: "Oh if Mr. Abel Gance would only give up making locomotives saying yes and no, lending a railroad engineer thoughts of a hero of antiquity and quoting his favorite authors … Oh, if he were willing to give up literature and place his trust in the cinema!"

By the time he directed *The Italian Straw Hat*, Clair had put his complete trust in film's visual language, a trust he had developed over a scant five years, first writing about cinema then making it. According to Celia McGerr's biography of the director, in 1920 singer Damia "persuaded a reluctant Clair to play the role of a suave Parisian in Loie Fuller's poetic film on dance, *Le lys de la vie*, by telling him about the pretty girls who would be present." He appeared in two Feuillade films and became an assistant to director Jacques de Baroncelli. He met Diamant-Berger, a director and producer then operating his own studio who made possible Clair's short film about a powerful ray that zaps almost all of Paris asleep in *Paris qui dort*, a storyline conceived, says film historian Allan Williams, in an opium-induced stupor. In 1924, Clair collaborated with painter Francis Picabia and composer Erik Satie on the short film *Entr'acte* for a Dadaist night out at the Ballets suédois.

"one of the funniest films ever made"

He moved on to fantastical narratives, *Le Fantôme du Moulin Rouge* and *Le Voyage imaginaire*, which combine whimsy with gentle social satire while employing the tricks and techniques of his experimental work. Clair was taken, too, with the narrative economy and dazzling special effects of American motion pictures. "How in the hell did they do that, make Douglas [Fairbanks] fly about on the magic carpet, for example? I spent weeks trying to figure it out." He recognized the limits of American industrial production, writing that Hollywood's inventiveness with camera angles "seemed to have stopped short in fear of what still remained to be discovered." Still, he routinely took his fellow Frenchmen to task for

Albert Préjean

what he judged a neglect of a storyline. Even his favorable review of *Coeur fidèle*, for which Epstein strapped a camera to a twirling merry-go-round, one of what Clair called "surprising angles," criticized the film for going "astray into technical experiments, which the action does not demand."

When producer Alexandre Kamenka went looking to replace the Russian émigré filmmakers recently defected to another Parisian outfit, he found several obliging locals with pure cinema aspirations willing to dedicate themselves to story. Marcel L'Herbier, Epstein, and Clair (along with Jacques Feyder) became the names associated with France's late silent-era. Clair's *La Proie du vent*, adapted from a 1926 novel, did well with the public but he later dismissed it as proof he "could make a commercial film as bad as everyone else's." It's valuable enough, however, as the film that allowed him to make *Italian Straw Hat*.

In what might seem like a contradiction of his pure cinema stance, Clair chose a play from the previous century for his second Albatros outing, Eugène Labiche's most popular boulevard burlesque (*Un Chapeau de paille d'Italie*, written with Marc Michel), about a bridegroom whose wedding day is complicated by a straw hat. In a 1979 interview, an eighty-year-old Clair described how he prepared to transform the material for film: "After I accepted the idea of a play or a novel, the first thing I did was to close the book and not to look at it anymore."

With the expert help of Albatros resident set designer Lazare Meerson, he lovingly recreated the era in which cinema was born, transforming the mid-nineteenth century setting to the Belle Époque and paying homage to one of the French cinema greats, Max Linder, in the form of a tuxedoed leading man (Albert Préjean) as a decorous gentleman beset by increasingly absurd circumstances on his wedding day after his horse chomps the wrong lady's hat. Préjean is joined by a stellar cast of equals, Maryse Maïa as his longsuffering bride who endures her groom's perplexing new behaviors, Russian-born Olga Chekhova, in a drooping artichoke of a dress repeatedly fainting into the arms of a succession of men, and Vital Geymond whose buttoned-down chest heaves with his threat to break every stick of furniture in the groom's newly furnished apartment unless restitution is made for said hat. Intertitles are sparse, but no less entertaining, and one tersely explaining the gravity of Chekhova's condition will elicit gales of laughter.

Albert Préjean and Maryse Maïa

Everyone has a sartorial irritant to overcome, a test to their Sunday-best dignity: a stray pin, tight dress shoes, a missing glove—a pesky tie becomes a running joke that gives generously time and again. The supporting players hold up their end splendidly: Paul Ollivier as the hard-of-hearing uncle with his malfunctioning ear horn, Jim Gérald as the rotund cuckold, and Alice Tissot and Alexis Bondireff as a couple whose years of marriage have not improved the legibility of their secret sign language. Valentine Tessier (Jean Renoir's Madame Bovary in 1933) as a lady shopper in a boldly striped dress has a few moments of exquisite exasperation as men invade a domain heretofore restricted to ladies. The camera is employed in only a few "surprising" angles, once on the dance floor when the groom's frustrated quest has him spinning nearly out of control.

Italian Straw Hat has been heralded since its release as a gem. Edmond Epardaud wrote that "René Clair founded a new genre" and, in 1929, Charles de St. Cyr called it a "comic masterpiece of French cinema." The Museum of Modern Art's Iris Barry observed in 1940 about the film's rich saturation in nostalgia, "scene after scene painstakingly and brilliantly captures the very atmosphere and flavor of pictures taken 30 years earlier, as when the Lumière employees walked out of their factory at lunch-time and were eternally caught and recorded by the motion picture in a sunlit moment of time." It stood up thirty years later when Pauline Kael called it "very simply one of the funniest films ever made."

That it does not appear on Best Film Ever lists alongside *The General*, *Sunrise*, *Man With a Movie Camera*, etc., can only be an oversight that will surely be corrected as soon as this new restoration, showing off the beautiful photography (by Maurice Desfassiaux and Nicolas Roudakoff) and lush sepia tinting, makes the critical rounds. As tightly choreographed and as keenly attuned to subtle expression and gesture as any Buster Keaton film, it, like the best Keatons, delivers much more than laughs.

— Shari Kizirian

ABOUT THE RESTORATION

For years it has been difficult, if not impossible, to see the original version of René Clair's masterful *The Italian Straw Hat*. Instead, American viewers have had to be satisfied with either the alternate version that was released in the United States in 1931, or hybrids that supplement the American version with additional footage. This brand new restoration brings Clair's original French version to modern audiences using the finest original material possible: the film's original camera negative and original French title negative, both of which are preserved at the Cinémathèque Française. As sparkling as these original materials are, there were a small number of instances where chemical decomposition rendered a shot or title unusable. In these instances material from a diacetate positive print replaced the damaged shots. Two insert cards, a wedding invitation and the front cover of sheet music, were also incorporated from the camera negative of an export release.

A collaboration between the Cinémathèque Française and the San Francisco Silent Film Festival, the complete French version of *The Italian Straw Hat* can be seen for the first time since 1928, at the correct projection speed of 19 fps and with the original color tinting scheme. A new 35mm preservation negative was created to ensure long-term survival of René Clair's most celebrated film.

— Robert Byrne

OUR ACTRESS IN BERLIN:

The Mostly True Life of Olga Chekhova

When historian Antony Beevor went looking for the truth behind the improbable life of Olga Chekhova, he was frustrated by her misleading autobiography, going so far as to call the two volumes published in 1952 and 1973, respectively, "exasperatingly disingenuous." Fudging the facts in service of myth, especially in the entertainment industry, surprises no one. Little lies on the resume become how you get a job, how you get quoted in the press, how you cement a legacy. Chekhova's case, however, is all the more intriguing because she didn't have to embellish or invent. Her life's raw biographical data is stuff enough for legend.

At sixteen she went to live, against her father's wishes, with her paternal aunt, the great stage actress Olga Knipper-Chekhova, widow of Anton Chekhov and former sweetheart to one of the founders of the Moscow Art Theater, the wellspring of what became known as "the Method" school of acting. Chekhova's maternal uncle, Vladimir Knipper, was an opera singer and one-time director of the Bolshoi. Her brother, Lev Knipper, became a celebrated Soviet composer. The Knipper family milieu included visits from Maxim Gorky (hopelessly in love with the widow Chekhova). Permanently seduced by the artistic life, young Olga married her cousin Mikhail Chekhov, nephew to the famous writer and a rising star on the Moscow stage.

Even though their marriage was brief it produced a daughter and gave Olga visibility as part of the artistic dynasty, which she made the most of in forging a career of her own.

She survived two winters in Moscow during the grueling years of the Civil War that followed the Russian Revolution in a communal flat with her sister Ada. They endured overnight breadlines menaced by opportunistic thieves as well as the threat of rape or a lecherous exchange proposed by men with the means to negotiate, as the city sank into further squalor with cholera and typhus epidemics. Depending on which version you believe, she smuggled herself out from the Belorussky station during the Red Terror wrapped in peasant garb or on the arm of an Austro-Hungarian cavalry captain. She left her young daughter in the care of her mother and father, a railroad engineer allowed to evacuate to Siberia.

Chekhova had played minor roles in a few Russian silent films after her divorce. In Berlin, while making a living selling her illustrations and sculptures, she mixed with the Russian diaspora there, one day borrowing clothes so she could audition for producer Erich Pommer and director F.W. Murnau who cast her in his 1921 film *The Haunted Castle*. One reviewer compared her portrayal of the film's brooding baroness to stage legend Eleonora Duse.

Her letters home downplay her film work as a way to make ends meet and play up her reception on the Berlin stage, where she made her debut in 1924. She pulled double shifts, driving to Babelsberg for filming during the day and appearing onstage at night. She was able to buy a big apartment and began to collect her family from Russia and even helped ex-husband Misha and his new wife, resettling them near her in Berlin and later directing him in a film.

According to the research Beevor uncovered for his 2004 book *The Mystery of Olga Chekhova*, it was in Berlin that the actress was recruited by her brother, a former White Guard officer turned Bolshevik loyalist, to inform on counterrevolutionary expatriates. That she could get her family permission to travel to Berlin supports the claim. While making *Italian Straw Hat* at the studio founded in France by Russian émigrés, Chekhova (credited as Tschechowa by the Germans and Tschekova by the French) was in a position to mingle with the many refugees from Bolshevism in Paris. But it was just as easy to encounter one by hailing a cab, a job as obtainable then as it is now. Nothing concrete has come to light to suggest any betrayal.

By Beevor's count, she made close to forty German silent films but her most famous silent-era role is undoubtedly as cabaret singer Parysia in E.A. Dupont's *Moulin Rouge* for British International Pictures. The American trade paper *Variety*, disappointed overall in the film, wrote of Chekhova: "She undresses almost as much and as well as Mae Murray and fairly exudes sex appeal from a French perspective. She can put emotion onto the screen but is mostly seen in undress as a stage star." During the 1930s she was directed by the era's top talent, including Gerhard Lamprecht, Max Ophuls, and Alfred Hitchcock, mostly playing grand dame-types. Her first sound film, Wilhelm Thiele's hugely popular *Die Drei von der Tankstelle* (*Three from the Filling Station*), heralded one of the more seamless transitions to talkies on record. Fully established as a star, she remained in Germany after so many had fled and, by 1936, was named State Actress of the Third Reich. There is a famous picture of her seated very elegantly but comfortably right next to Adolph Hitler at a diplomatic reception held in 1939. It horrified her family in Moscow and remains a chilling image even today.

The exact truth of her (mis)deeds for the Soviet intelligence service throughout the years is still buried in the archives but it seems clear she did more acting offscreen than on, suggesting another motive for her equivocal memoirs, titled *I Conceal Nothing!* She was flown back to Moscow after World War II by orders of Beria, the notorious chief of Stalin's secret police, for an extensive debriefing and he still had the confidence in her by 1953 to order her to discover Chancellor Adenauer's position on German reunification. When Beria was arrested that year, Chekhova saw her chance to loosen the Soviet Union's grip on her life and moved to Munich. Her finances, Beevor says, hint that she may still have been their actress in Germany. She was making films (and some television) in the early 1970s when the West German government awarded her the Cross of the Order of Merit, evidently clueless of her status as a Soviet sleeper agent.

— The Editors

Olga Chekhova (seated) in *Three from the Filling Station*

THE LAST WARNING

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY DONALD SOSIN

Directed by Paul Leni, USA 1929
Cast Laura La Plante, Montagu Love, Roy D'Arcy, Margaret Livingston, John Boles, Burr McIntosh, Mack Swain, Bert Roach, Carrie Daumery, Slim Summerville, Torben Meyer, D'Arcy Corrigan, Bud Phelps, and Tim O'Brien
Production Universal Pictures Corp. **Print Source** Universal Studios

Something like a postmodern riff on the entire idea of German Expressionism, Paul Leni's *The Last Warning* (1929) was the final film for the illustrious Leni who died eight months after its release of blood poisoning at the age of forty-four. Today he's a neglected figure, even among silent-film auteur geeks, and seems in dire need of exhumation as one of late silent cinema's most exuberant stylists. But there's more to it than that: in the sphere and influence of German Expressionism, where morbid moralism often goes hand-in-hand with surface shadowlands and supernatural menace, Leni was the arch-imagist for whom the style was sheer fun. From his early design work (for everyone from Joe May to Michael Curtiz) through to the features he directed, *The Mystery of Bangalore* (1917), *Waxworks* (1924), *The Cat and the Canary* (1927), *The Man Who Laughs* (1928), and *The Last Warning*, nobody seemed to have as much of a flat-out blast behind the camera as Leni for whom the contraptions, Gothic mood, and ornate geography of Expressionism was simply, in Orson Welles's term, a giant model railroad set, a contrived playground for a great game of scare-your-pants-off. Other filmmakers, particularly Lubitsch, used Expressionism lightly, in comedies, but in films like *The Oyster Princess* (1919), the Aubrey Beardsley-like set design is part of the narrative's outrageous satire. With Leni, the fun to be had was with the artificial world itself. No satirical agenda was required.

Something like a postmodern riff on the entire idea of German Expressionism

The Last Warning was also one of the very last silent films Universal made—except it was also released in a "part-talkie" version, with roughly sixty feet of sound scenes added (only a minute or two), the nature of which go unrecorded and now lost to time. Tacked on synch-sound scenes in those precious years rarely if ever improved a film (think Paul Fejos's *Lonesome*) and, in the case of a rambunctious artist like Leni, could only have dampened the party.

The kind of party we're in for was immediately familiar to audiences in 1929 because of the intense popularity two years earlier of Leni's *The Cat and the Canary*—to which *The Last Warning* is devised to be a companion film, almost a redux. The setup, from an old novel by Charles Wadsworth Camp (Madeleine L'Engle's father), was already so hoary in 1929 as to be a solid joke: in a vast Broadway theater, a play's star is murdered onstage during a crowded performance. With the body missing and the death unsolved, the theater is condemned as haunted and closed, until years later, when a new "producer" suspiciously arrives to restage the play with all its old cast and crew—setting up the not-at-all remote possibility that the same murder will occur all over again.

Menacing notes from the dead man appear, a phantom figure is glimpsed, hidden passageways are discovered, pratfalls and accidents afflict the long-suffering comedy relief (Slim Summerville,

Carrie Daumery

It has the lip-smacking flavor of pulp well-trodden and well-loved and a little well-mocked.

Mack Swain, Margaret Livingston). All of it arrives with a briskness and energy that suggest that Leni & Co., with tongue in cheek, knew very well the thin ice upon which they tread. The joy of this kind of filmmaking, in fact, finds its DNA not in the Germanic assault of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, but in the earlier French serials of Louis Feuillade, whose *Fantômas* (1913–14) and *Les Vampires* (1916) are filthy with secrets, turnabouts, wall-scaling mysterians in black, and deranged criminal plots. Leni was playing a well-seasoned fiddle by 1929 and feels free to play it up—his cutaways to the nervous could-be culprits, the harumphing sleuth, the ham-handed explication of clues, the sudden disappearance of cast members in the darkened theater, all of it has the lip-smacking flavor of pulp well-trodden and well-loved and a little well-mocked. Even Leni's title cards succumb to the hyperbole, zooming in and out, wavering in and out of focus, shuddering with fear, generally wracked with an expressive evocation of the sound that isn't there in ways that are both effective and, given the year, hilarious.

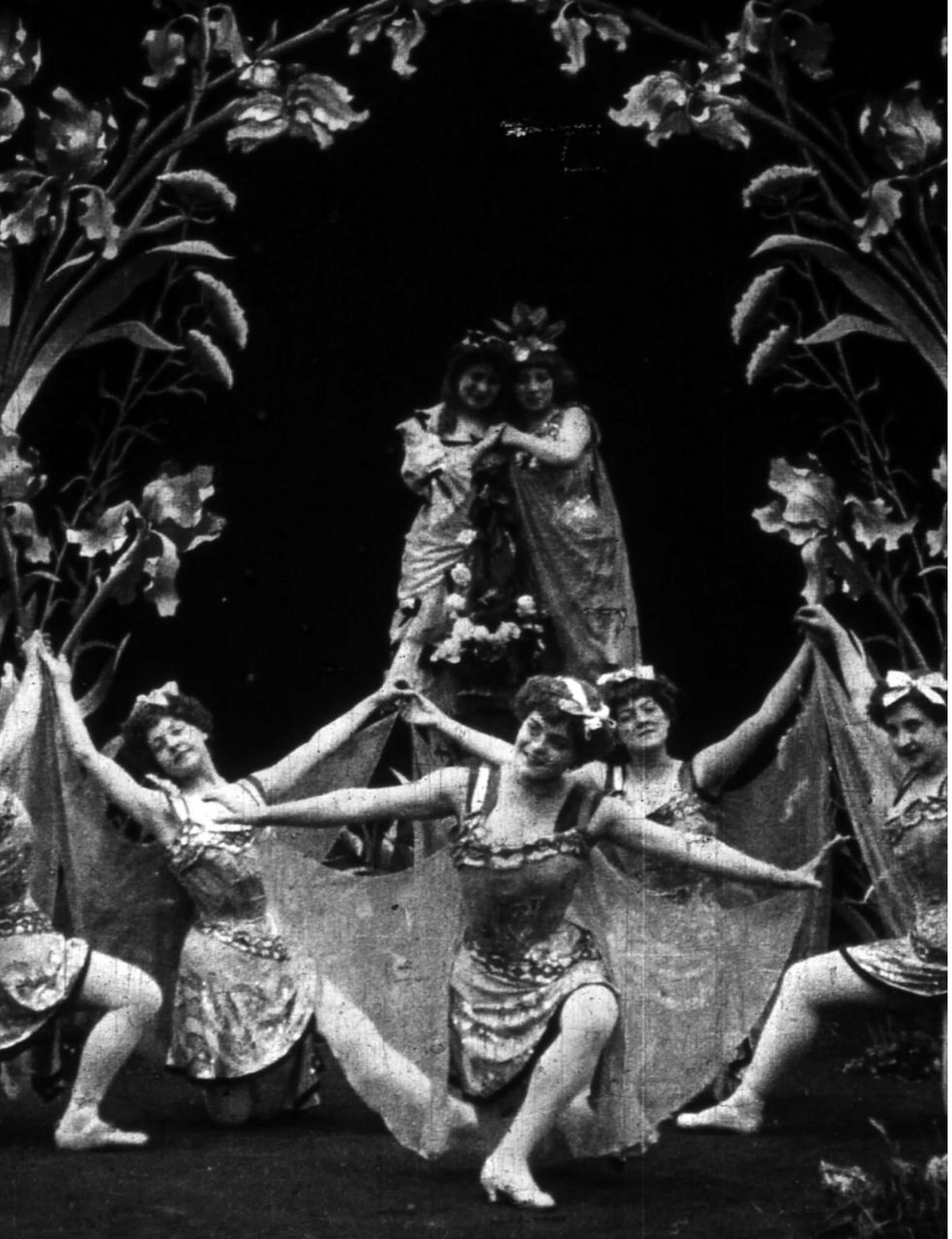
Though the star of the film is ostensibly Laura La Plante as the play's female star, the real protagonist is the magnificent theater set, which is so thoroughly convincing in three dimensions—from looming baroque balconies to stage area to scaffolding to backstage corridors and dressing rooms—you couldn't be blamed for thinking it was an actual, fabulous old theater used as-is, and for wanting to go visit it. You can't—it's actually the leftover set at Universal Studios for Lon Chaney's *The Phantom of the Opera*, which was featured in numerous studio-shot films over the next half-century (including *The Sting*), and still stands waiting for the restoration and relocation efforts announced as recently as 2014. Perhaps no film ever used this standing wonder so thoroughly or elaborately as *The Last Warning*, scanning almost like an anatomical blueprint for a building that doesn't in any real way exist.

All of this would be merely fine if Leni's filmmaking didn't propel the movie forward on roller skates—his camera never stops swooping and shifting, searching for new perspectives, even exploiting the center stage's trap door, intended to disappear or reappear characters in mid-scene, but used by Leni for a beneath-to-above crane shot. The film's climax, ignited by a policeman's whistle, is a literal explosion of movement, montage, and hyper-Feuilladean action. The late-silent-period pyrotechnics—often approaching an Abel Gance-like love of variety and movement within the Expressionist shadow-maze—meshes with the set space and the plot, mustering a fascinating aggregate sense of how theater and life commingle. *The Last Warning* is one of the first films to exploit this hall-of-mirrors reality, as we (and the camera) restlessly examine the ironic relationship between the mystery of the stage play reflected in the story's "real" murder-mystery saga, which is reoccurring (like the play, or like the movie we're watching), in a vast theater where both mysteries transpired, and where they'll transpire again, and so on. Every clue and character secret has a double or triple meaning, and everything is "acted." As in the cinema of Feuillade and, later, Jacques Rivette, there is no reality—just reflecting layers of make-believe.

All of which would have all made Leni chuckle, of course—he was just making entertainment, as zestily and atmospherically as he could. *The Last Warning* was not the hit *The Cat and the Canary* was—it hardly had a chance with talkies already stealing every bit of thunder in American theaters that year. After that, it was all but forgotten, another casualty of faddish technology. Leni never lived to make a sound film or see an all-talkie moviescape. One can only imagine how this manic craftsman might have, á la Mamoulian, Hitchcock, Lang, and Clair, managed to bring his particular filmmaking arsenal into the new era.

— Michael Atkinson

Audience at the Woodford Theatre in *The Last Warning*



FANTASIA OF COLOR IN EARLY CINEMA

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY DONALD SOSIN

"Old black-and-white movies" is a phrase that trips easily off the tongue but, like many common beliefs about silent cinema, it is inaccurate. Color has accompanied motion pictures since the beginning with some of the earliest public screenings featuring hand-colored films in their programs. Because of the low survival rate of silent films in general and the tendency of chemical colors to fade, it is impossible to say exactly how many silent-era motion pictures came in color. Film color historian Joshua Yumibe studied a collection of film fragments that were mostly dated between 1908 and 1912 and discovered that seventy-four percent of the titles contained some degree of color, twelve percent with hand- or stencil color and the rest tinted or toned.

Photographic color, which coauthor of the recently published book *Fantasia of Color in Early Cinema* Tom Gunning describes as "a chemical and optical process by which colors of things are captured (with varying degrees of accuracy) onto film," is familiar, common, and expected in modern film but applied color techniques of the silent era remain unfamiliar to many modern cinemagoers. Tinting, toning, hand-coloring, and stencil color were used to varying degrees throughout the silent era and the resulting images have a charm and beauty all their own, like watercolor illustrations breathed miraculously to life.

like watercolor illustrations breathed miraculously to life

There were many intriguing color techniques in the silent era but early cinema was particularly notable for its hand-coloring and stencil processes. Adding color to particular parts of the frame by hand required considerable time and effort. Pigments were applied directly to the film with fine brushes, some only consisting of a single hair, and care was required to ensure an even layer of color that stayed reasonably within the lines of the object being colored. *Les Parisiennes* (1897) is a particularly fine example of this dainty precision with color following the dresses, ruffles, feathers, and ribbons that bedeck a quartet of dancers. As *Fantasia of Color in Early Cinema* puts it: "Frozen as a still image, one can see the ways in which the delicate strokes of the blended, hand-colored hues add depth and material volume to the film."

While the process of hand-coloring nitrate film was neither fast nor cheap, it remained in high demand. Motion picture exhibitors placed colored films as their top-billed entertainment and distributors could command up to double the price for colored titles in comparison to black-and-white. For exhibitors who wished to offer hand-colored films but balked at the price, Edison's motion picture company offered discounted prints with only partial color.

Because of the then-current notion that women were more sensitive to color and that they were better suited to delicate work, the majority of colorists were women. In France, Elisabeth Thuillier was one of the most successful and renowned in the world of applied color and she later recalled that she spent her nights selecting shades for the motion pictures that were sent to her—her clients included Georges Méliès—and spent her days overseeing a staff of

Les Tulipes

more than two hundred colorists. The labor was divided by color and Thuillier claimed that it was not unusual to exceed twenty colors in a single film.

Films grew longer as the 1900s wore on but hand-coloring remained as labor intensive as ever; a colorist could add pigment to approximately two hundred feet of film a week and each release print of a motion picture had to be colored individually. With the demand for hand-colored films far exceeding supply, industrialization was inevitable. Already noted for their mastery of hand-coloring, French film companies embraced a newer, faster, cheaper, and more uniform method of adding color to motion pictures: the stencil process. Pathé Frères, the company most associated with stencil-color, began its experiments with the procedure in 1903 and found such success that it was able to expand its facilities and double its colorist workforce during 1906.

Workers cut a particular portion of a film cell (the outline of a character's hat, for example); they repeated this process for the entire scene and the film was then used as a stencil. The earliest stencils were cut with scalpels and the colors were hand-applied by brush, but Pathé quickly upgraded to precision stencil-cutting machines and mechanical dye applicators. The initial cutting required time, skill, and a practiced hand but it allowed for comparatively rapid reproduction once the stencil was ready. Hand-coloring was still used but much less often after the mid-1900s.

While hand-color and stencil-color remained crowd-pleasers, tinting and toning, also introduced in the 1890s, struck a balance between artistry and thrift and as a result were the most popular methods for coloring films during the silent era. Tinting colors the "whites" of the film while toning colors the darker parts of the frame, and the two methods could be used together for a luscious dual color effect. Tinting and toning could also be combined with hand-colored, stencil-colored, or Technicolor sequences for dramatic or artistic effect.

Stencil color is most often associated with films of the pre-feature and early feature eras but there were some artistic triumphs in the later silent era, such as the all-color *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1925), which had its color application overseen by Mme. Thuillier.

Applied color could result in a raucous riot of hues, bold, brash, and delightful. However, there was also a subtle side to applied color with dainty floral shades and tasteful combinations. Colors could attempt realism, as is the case with the verdant hues of *Bout-de-Zan et le crocodile* (1913), or head in a more fanciful or dramatic direction, sculpting the audience's emotional response. Alfred Machin's 1912 film *De Molens die juichen en weenen* is on the more dramatic side with painterly swirls of indigo and candy pink for the sky and then a burst of angry red tinting for the climactic fire. In contrast, the red tint in *Buona sera fiori!* (1909) is cheery and suits the lively stop-motion flowers as they fly about spelling messages and creating proto-emojis. Segundo de Chomón's celluloid magic show *Le Roi des dollars* (1905) contents itself with simplicity and realism: yellow for the illusionist's sleeve, metallic tones for the coins, and a tan shade for his hands. His *Voyage sur Jupiter* by comparison owned its science-fiction premise with a fully textured world of multi-hued stars, variegated pastel landscapes, and violent puffs of poppy-colored smoke and flame.

Whether bold, elegant, or some combination, these applied colors remain as much an attraction for modern viewers as they were for the audiences who were present at the birth of the movies.

— Fritzi Kramer

Les Tulipes

THE FILMS

LES TULIPES (The Tulips)
Directed by Segundo de Chomón, France, 1907

L'ALBUM MERVEILLEUX (The Wonderful Book)
Directed by Gaston Velle, France, 1905

BOUT-DE-ZAN ET LE CROCODILE (Bout-de-Zan and the Crocodile)
Directed by Louis Feuillade, France, 1913

LE CHARMEUR (The Charmer)
Directed by Segundo de Chomón, France, 1906

COIFFES HOLLANDAISES (Dutch Types)
Director unknown, France, 1915

DE MOLENS DIE JUICHEN EN WEENEN (Mills and Joy in Sorrow)
Directed by Alfred Machin, The Netherlands, 1912

DANSES ALGÉRIENNES I: DANSE DES OULED-NAÏL (Algerian Dances)
Director unknown, France, 1902

VISIONS D'ART: 3. LA FÉE AUX ÉTOILES (The Fairy of the Stars)
Director unknown, France, 1902

L'OBSESSION D'OR (The Golden Obsession)
Directed by Segundo de Chomón, France, 1906

LES PARISIENNES (The Parisians)
Director unknown, USA, 1897

LA PEINE DU TALION (The Penalty of Retaliation)
Directed by Segundo do Chomón, France, 1906

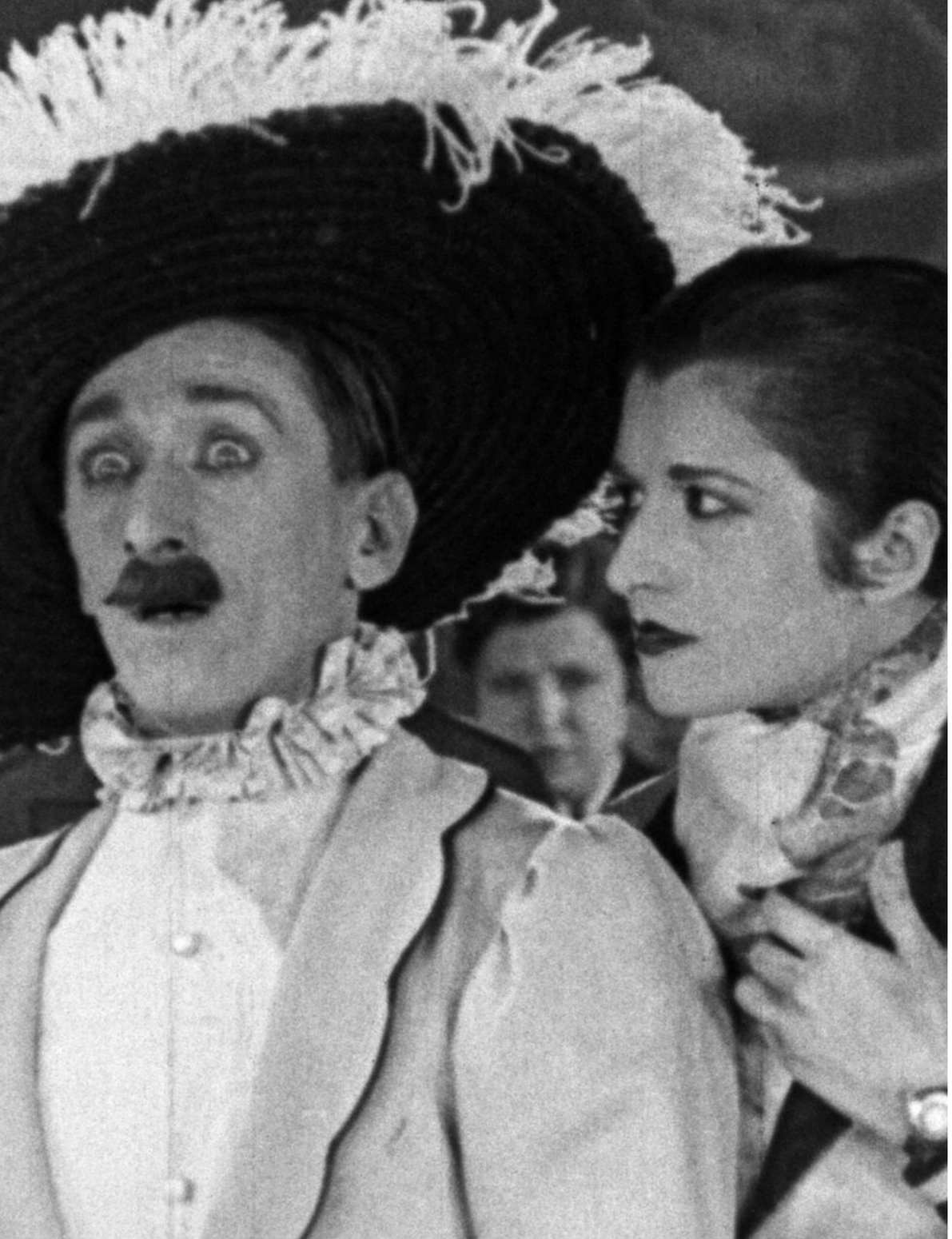
LES SIX SOEURS DAINEF (The Six Sisters Dainef)
Director unknown, France, 1902

LE VOYAGE SUR JUPITER (A Trip to Jupiter)
Directed by Segundo de Chomón, France, 1909

LE ROI DES DOLLARS (The King of Dollars)
Directed by Segundo de Chomón, France, 1905

BUONA SERA FIORI! (Good Evening Flowers!)
Directed by Giovanni Vitrotti, Italy, 1909

All films from the EYE Filmmuseum in The Netherlands



Clyde Cook and Laura De Cardi

GIRLS WILL BE BOYS

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY MAUD NELISSEN AND FRANK BOCKIUS

I DON'T WANT TO BE A MAN

Directed by Ernst Lubitsch, Germany, 1918
Cast Ossi Oswalda, Kurt Götz, Ferry Sikla, Margarete Kupfer, and Victor Janson
Production Produktions-AG Union **Print Source** George Eastman Museum

WHAT'S THE WORLD COMING TO?

Directed by Richard Wallace, USA, 1926
Cast Clyde Cook, Katherine Grant, James Finlayson, Laura De Cardi, and Martha Sleeper
Production Hal Roach Studios **Print Source** SFSFF Collection

In 1918, things are beginning to change for women and their place in society, but not fast enough for Ossi Oswalda in Ernst Lubitsch's **I DON'T WANT TO BE A MAN (ICH MÖCHTE KEIN MANN SEIN).** The high-spirited teenaged niece of a stuffy bureaucrat longs for the freedom to be herself outside the social proscriptions for her gender. Her governess asks "And you want to be a proper young lady?" To which she responds "I don't want that at all." Can she enjoy the privileges afforded to men simply by wearing a suit? Ossi has just enough naiveté and gumption to find out.

In the silent era, female characters in trousers and waistcoats were acceptable and even expected, just as men in drag were a source of comedy. In her book *Girls Will Be Boys* film scholar Laura Horak writes that females playing male roles have a long history in the theater, Shakespeare is filled with examples of gender-reversal (Portia suits up to argue in court and Viola is, for most of *Twelfth Night*, Cesario). Horak cites seventeen films released in the U.S. that feature female-to-male cross-dressing in 1918 alone; feature films showcasing transplants from the stage like *Danger, Go Slow* with former Ziegfeld Girl Mae Murray and *Revelation* with Alla Nazimova, whom Metro Pictures billed as "The Great Nazimova." "By importing a centuries-old performance tradition from theater," Horak writes, "they connected moving pictures with the more legitimate art form."

Kurt Götz and Ossi Oswalda

As women joined the workforce and volunteered for non-combat roles during wartime, it was acceptable that they adopt certain items from men's wardrobes. The clothing was not just less cumbersome and restrictive but resembled male business-like attire—clothes that commanded respect. "During the First World War," Diana Crane writes in her book *Fashion and Its Social Agendas*, "Englishwomen served in the armed forces, wearing men's uniforms, including jackets, ties, and caps, with long skirts. In civilian

life, they took over a variety of men's jobs, often with the uniforms that went with the jobs." Not everyone enjoyed the new freedoms, social or sartorial. Laura Doan, in her book *Fashioning Sapphism*, quotes a sergeant in the Royal Flying Corps: "The days are so strange now when women are doing their best to become like men in dress, smoking and drinking, that one wonders where it will ever stop."

I Don't Want to Be a Man was produced in Germany during the last months of World War I. Berlin was already known for its nightlife and a liberal climate that allowed arguments for individual freedoms and gay rights. Reviewing Robert Beachy's *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity* in the *New Yorker* magazine, Alex Ross writes: "In the eighteen-eighties, a Berlin police commissioner gave up prosecuting gay bars and instead instituted a policy of bemused tolerance, going so far as to lead tours of a growing demimonde."

Berlin's cultural spirit could only be dampened by the announcement that Germany had lost the war, a surprise to many at home. According to Scott Eyman's *Ernst Lubitsch: Laughter in Paradise*, "The night and for the next several nights, all movie, cabaret, and burlesque performances were canceled." *I Don't Want to Be a Man* was a light-hearted, romantic precursor to the wild intensity that escalated during the Weimar Republic, the liberal government established one month after its release. Tasting the city's temptations in the early 1920s, screenwriter Anita Loos wrote: "… the night life was pretty decadent. Any Berlin lady of the evening might turn out to be a man; the prettiest girl on the street was Konrad Veidt."

Lubitsch uses cross-dressing as a vehicle for a sweet fish-out-of-water story in *I Don't Want to Be a Man*. The film playfully thrusts the tomboyish Ossi into a man's world. But being a man isn't as liberating as she thought: there are tricky shirt buttons, misunderstandings on public transportation, confusion over the powder room. These are only minor tests in the whole challenge of "passing"—successfully convincing others that you've the right to go out unescorted, flirt brazenly, smoke a cigar, and get sloppy drunk in public.

Dapper Ossis existed off the screen as well. A police report from August 1897 gives a brief sketch of Babe Bean, also called Jack, a woman living in Stockton, California, who had to explain her choice of a blue suit, white silk shirt, and hat pulled down over her eyes: "I have been wearing men's clothing off and on for five years, for as a man, I can travel freely, feel protected and find work … How I yearned for that freedom I dreamed of and how often I wished I could enjoy the liberty that the world sees fit to allow a boy."

Donning a tux paves the way for Ossi's long-imagined emancipation but when she discovers romance, it makes her think twice about leading life as a man. In what has become society's code for "growing up" she gives it up for a chance at love. In *Tomboys*, Michelle Ann Abate sums up the sudden restrictions, "Young girls were now expected to slough off tomboyish traits when they reached a specific age or stage of life: usually, the beginning of adolescence or the onset of puberty." Now that she wants to kiss a boy, Ossi is happy to conform.

WHAT'S THE WORLD COMING TO? (1926) takes on cross-dressing by both sexes, also in an upper-class world. Written in part by comedy's up-and-coming genius Stan Laurel, the script is set a hundred years in the future when women and men have switched roles. Women are the dominant sex, sporting waistcoats and close-cropped hair, and the men have become not so much feminine as ruffle-draped buffoons. In this imagining of 2026, it's a zero-sum game, in which any power gained by women is a loss for men.

The Hal Roach-produced no-holds-barred comedy hinges almost entirely on a mash-up of masculine and feminine fashion (and stereotypical mannerisms) with a focus on the fussier elements of women's outfits worn by the men—bushy mustaches paired with giant hats trimmed with marabou and the like. Laughs also rely on the idea that while everyone looks good in a well-tailored suit, flouncy shirts emasculate. Anticipating the famous Marilyn Monroe scene from *Seven Year Itch*, Clyde Cook finds himself trying to have a serious conversation while standing over a sidewalk grate in the largest of shirts. As Horak says, "While men's clothing could make women more attractive to both men and women on-screen, women's clothing most often made men undesirable to everyone."

The comedy in both films comes from the unexpected and both play with twists on societal norms. Society's rules and fashions for women shifted dramatically in the first two decades of the twentieth century, from the Victorian age of hobble skirts and corsets to clingy, revealing garb of the flapper, giving women a new freedom of movement, in a literal sense, but also some freedom to experiment with new outward identities. Changes continue today, with public battles over gender identity and which bathroom to use. As notions of gender burst out from the binary of male and female, society continues to both relent and restrict. If only everyone would play along like in a Lubitsch comedy.

— Aimee Pavy

Laura De Cardi and Clyde Cook

ABOUT THE RESTORATION OF WHAT'S THE WORLD COMING TO?

The vast majority of motion pictures created during the silent era no longer exist in any form. Another large percentage only survive as copies on smaller gauge film formats, typically 7.5mm, 9.5mm, 16mm, and 24mm. *What's the World Coming To?* is one such case—the only known surviving copies are 16mm duplicates, which Carleton University film scholar Laura Horak found scattered at archives, including at New York University and San Francisco's Oddball Films.

The restoration performed in partnership with Carleton University and NYU is based on a 2K scan of a 16mm print preserved in NYU's William K. Everson Collection, named for the silent film scholar and private collector who bequeathed his holdings to the university. According to the manufacturer's edge code of this 16mm copy, the print was created around 1944. Because of the inherent lower resolution of a 16mm frame (approximately twenty-five percent of a 35mm frame) the film's images will appear somewhat softer than would be expected from 35mm source material.

The digitally scanned material was cleaned up and the Library of Congress laboratory generated a new 35mm preservation negative and positive, both of which have been deposited to the San Francisco Silent Film Festival Collection at the Library of Congress.

— Robert Byrne

Allakariallak (left) as Nanook and Allee

NANOOK OF THE NORTH

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY THE MATTI BYE ENSEMBLE

Directed by Robert Flaherty, USA, 1922
Print Source The Robert Flaherty Film Seminar

In the language of the Inuit people, "nanook" or "nanuq" means "polar bear," as in the greatest hunting animal of the north, a thousand pounds, aggressive but stealthy, and a spiritual ideal for the Inuit. Yet in the movie *Nanook of the North* there are no polar bears. One reason for that has to be the most obvious: filming bears in the northern reaches of Quebec, on the eastern shores of Hudson Bay, was downright dangerous. There's a first lesson in how this documentary on the life of "the most cheerful people in all the world—the fearless, lovable happy-go-lucky Eskimo" (to quote the film's rapturous titles) is somewhat compromised.

But compromised movies can have immense potency and impact. *Nanook of the North* is not just "a classic," voted the seventh greatest documentary of all time in *Sight and Sound*'s 2014 poll, it is universally acknowledged as a landmark in the pioneering attempt to film "reality." Robert J. Flaherty (1884–1951) is as revered a father figure of that scheme as Georges Méliès, D.W. Griffith, and Sergei Eisenstein are in fiction—and all those directors are too complicated to deserve mere reverence.

But compromised movies can have immense potency and impact.

Flaherty was born in Michigan, son of an Irishman and a German mother, but raised in Canada. Once he had graduated college, he began as a prospector in the north. That sentence employs two vague but poetic words—what does a prospector seek? It can be gold or other precious things, which could be fish, fur, and food; or it could be nothing less than "prospects," views of a real world mixed with an imagined or anticipated one, the future, the frontier, the secret desires of the beholder.

And the north? Anyone needs to find a map to realize how much of Canada there is beyond the southern strip of population. The titles of *Nanook* speak of "illimitable places which top the world," though its northern Umqua is still short of the Arctic Circle (and many live beyond that). The U.S. and Canada have approximately the same land mass: 3.8 million square miles each. But Canada has only a tenth of America's population. So going north in Canada is venturing into emptiness, and *Nanook of the North* is profoundly impressed by that Romantic isolation and how it looks on film.

In 1910, Flaherty went to the Hudson Bay area prospecting—he was making maps and seeing what was there. He was given a Bell & Howell 16mm camera, and encouraged to film the unknown. So he accumulated and then lost thirty thousand feet of coverage when a cigarette he was smoking set fire to the nitrate film stock. But he was enthused by the enterprise and in 1920–21 he went back, funded by the Revillon Frères Fur Company, with two more sophisticated cameras. What did he want or expect? He didn't know—explorers and imaginers seldom do know.

In August 1920, Flaherty was in Port Harrison in northern Quebec intending to film the life of the Inuit. As he set out, he was doing this for its own sake in a spirit of inquiry. But he could not stay open-minded. He saw the Inuit and the epic simplicity of their lives

(that's not necessarily what they felt) and the endless challenge to survive. That meant finding fish, seal, or walrus to eat, and avoiding polar bears, devastating cold, starvation, illness, and an apparent lack of what we might call introspection.

Flaherty adored these "noble savages"—you can feel it in Nanook's sturdy grins for the camera and in the efforts these fur-clad nomads make to abide by terrible nature. Moreover, Flaherty developed his film on location and then showed it to the Inuit. He cherished water, snow, and the sight of lone figures trudging along. But he cheated: he could not help that because he loved the idea of these people and knew too little about their thought. Yet we revere him as a discoverer of reality.

How did he cheat? He cast an Inuit to be "Nanook"—his name was Allakariallak, which didn't work in a movie title. He began to make a scenario for *Nanook*: by 1920, the real Inuit had rifles to get food, but Flaherty said, please, use harpoons, spears, and bows and arrows such as noble savages might do. He got the family to do the funny "How many Inuit fit in a kayak?" routine. There is another scene where Nanook and company come to a "trading post." It is there that Nanook sees a gramophone and—in the film—picks up a record and tries to eat it, in a way audiences would have relished, "Oh, these innocent savages!" That must have been a splendid laugh moment in 1922, but Allakariallak already knew very well what a record was. So he acted up for Flaherty's movie and grinned at the camera to show he could take it. No one knows how much, but these people were paid to be real.

When it came to building the igloo—a set-piece event—Flaherty realized that he couldn't get a camera and lights inside the ice house, so he built a "set" igloo and filmed it that way. Why not? What would you have done? But all through the film, there are these compromises. And surely nearly a hundred years later we need to be candid about them, even if *Nanook* has the sacred status of a silent classic.

Do these things matter? Of course they do, but they don't detract from the way, in 1922, *Nanook of the North* seemed like a cold blast from places beyond ordinary coverage or understanding. The picture had the originality that images from the Moon had in 1969, and every movie deserves to be judged first in the mood of its opening. Whatever his adjustments of fact, Flaherty had a superb eye for the windswept desert of snow, for the way flurries on the surface were like music chasing away silence, and for the revelation that people lived here. Even as "Nanook," Allakariallak was the real thing. The leather of his face bespoke a life of exposure, and there was nothing fake in the physical persistence that endeared him to the world.

Flaherty cherished water, snow, and the sight of lone figures trudging along.

Audiences marveled at his struggle to haul a walrus from the sea or a seal from a fishing hole. They understood how to build an igloo and they were happy hero-worshippers in contemplating the Inuit as they gnawed at raw meat and clung for warmth beneath furs and blankets. Flaherty was making a portrait for public consumption, but he had been there for months and years himself, going to live in the "wilderness" and leaving his wife, Frances, behind (they married in 1914).

But as we honor the way *Nanook* moved people in 1922—and the film was a worldwide sensation as no nonfiction movie had been before—still we have to admit its shortcomings. Some of the most moving scenes are of Nanook's family, sleeping together in an igloo that must stay below freezing point so that the walls do not melt. As we see them wake and dress (rehearsed, no doubt), we see the naked breasts of Nanook's wife. This is not salacious; it is nowhere near exploitation. Still, the wife—a character named Nyla—was not the wife to Nanook or Allakariallak. She was Flaherty's mistress as he lived up in the north. There is another woman in the film, Cunayou, and she was Flaherty's lover, too.

We do not need to be shocked: movie directors do sometimes sleep with actresses in the course of a location shoot. But this situation is more complicated. As the English academic Melanie McGrath described in her 2006 book, *The Long Exile: A True Story of Deception and Survival Among the Inuit of the Canadian Arctic*, the woman who played Nyla—we think her name was Alice Nuvalinga—had a child by Flaherty, a son named Josephie, who lived from 1921 to 1984. In turn, the movie director never acknowledged this child or chose to answer questions about him. In the 1950s, after Flaherty's death, that son was in a group of Inuit forcibly removed from their homeland by the Canadian government and sent to live in a bleaker place farther north.

The McGrath version of history is not proved beyond doubt, because that territory and the life there are more open to a movie camera than they are to careful judicial investigation. It is not the end of the world if a movie director behaved badly, but in the interest of the process we call documentary it is up to us to look carefully at evidence. *Nanook of the North* is a title known to millions who have never seen the film. It comes from another age: Flaherty approved of the British Empire. At a mere seventy-nine minutes, it is a fascinating experience and a confrontation with wilderness as intense as *The Revenant*. But the theory of "the noble savage" bears constant reexamination, for savagery is everyone's birthright just as nobility can be a misuse of our longing for reverence.

— David Thomson

Allakariallak as Nanook

How I Filmed Nanook of the North
THE WALRUS HUNT

by Robert Flaherty

As luck would have it the first film to be made was the walrus hunt. From Nanook, I first heard of the "Walrus Island" which is a small island far out at sea and inaccessible to the Eskimo during the open water season since it is far out enough so as not to be seen from land.

On the island's south end, a surf-bound beach, there were, in summer, Nanook said, many walrus, judging from signs that had been seen by a winter sealing crowd of Eskimo who, caught by a break up of the ice, had been forced to live there until late spring, when, by building an umiak of driftwood and sealskins and by digging out the open water lands of ice which had not yet cleared from the coast, they succeeded in getting on to the mainland. Nanook was very keen about my going, for, as he said, "It is many moons since I have hunted the summer walrus."

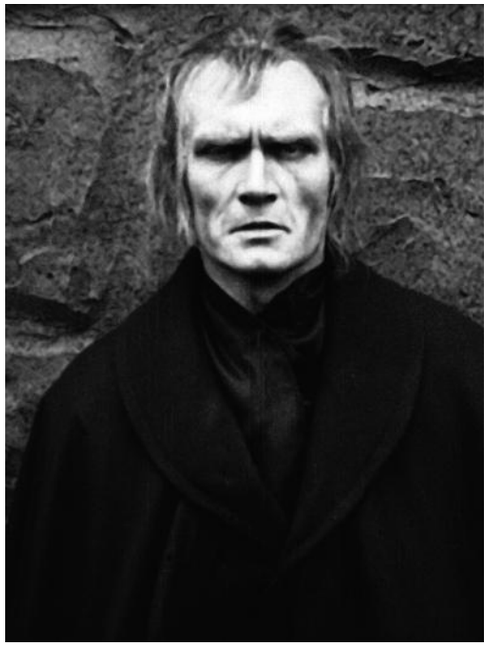
When I had decided upon taking the trip the whole country-side was interested. There was no lack of applicants for the trip. Everyone gave me some particular reason why he should be included in the expedition. With an open-seas boat twenty-five feet long rigged with a leg-o'-mutton sail we started, a throng of Eskimo, their wives, children and dogs assembled on the beach to see us off.

A few miles from the Post we reached the open sea when for three days we waited on the coast for easy weather in order to undertake the crossing. We finally reached the island one day at nightfall, and landed on what was nothing but a low waste of bed rock and boulders a mile and a half long and the whole of its shoreland ringed with booming surf. Around the luxury of a driftwood fire (driftwood is rare on the mainland) we lounged far into the night, speculating mainly on what chances there might be for walrus. As luck would have it just as we were turning in, from Nanook suddenly came an exclamation "Iviuk! Iviuk!" and the bark of a school of walrus resounded through the air. When early the next morning we went over, we found much to our disappointment that the walrus herd had gone into the sea again but presently one after another and near the shore the heads of a big school of walrus shot up above the sea, their wicked tusks gleaming in the sun. As long as they were in the water no films could be made and we returned again to the camp. For the next two days we made almost hourly trips to that beach before finally we found them—a herd of twenty—asleep and basking in the sand on the shore. Most fortunately, they lay at a point where in approaching, we could be screened from their view by a slight rise in the ground. Behind the rise I mounted the camera and Nanook, stringing his harpoon, began slowly snaking over the crest. From the crest to where they lay was less than fifty feet and until Nanook crawled to within half that distance toward them none took any alarm. For the rest of the way, whenever the sentinel of the herd slowly raised his head to look around, Nanook lay motionless on the ground. Then when his head drooped in sleep, once more Nanook wormed his way slowly on. I might mention here that the walrus has little range of vision on land. For protection he depends upon his nose and so long as the wind is favorable one can stalk right into them. When almost right in amongst them, Nanook picked out the biggest bull, rose quickly and with all his strength landed his harpoon. The wounded bull, bellowing in rage, his enormous bulk diving and thrashing the sea (he weighed more than 2,000 pounds), the yells of the men straining for their lives in their attempt to hold him, the battle cry of the herd that hovered near, the wounded bull's mate which swam in, locked tusks, in an attempt to rescue—was the greatest fight I have ever seen. For a long time it was nip and tuck—repeatedly the crew called to me to use the gun—but the camera crank was my only interest then and I pretended not to understand. Finally Nanook worked the quarry toward the surf where he was pounded by the heavy seas and unable to get a purchase in the water. For at least twenty minutes that tug-o'-war kept on. I say twenty minutes advisedly for I ground out 1,200 feet of film.

Our boat, laden with walrus meat and ivory—it was a happy crew that took me back to the Post, where Nanook and his fellows were hailed with much acclaim. I lost no time in developing and printing the film. That walrus fight was the first film these Eskimos had ever seen and, in the language of the trade, it was a "knock-out."

The audience—they thronged the post kitchen to the point of suffocation, completely forgot the picture—to them the walrus was real and living. The women and children in their high shrill voices joined with the men in shouting admonitions, warnings and advice to Nanook and his crew as the picture unfolded on the screen. The fame of that picture spread through all the country. And all through the year that I remained there every family who came wandering into the Post begged of me that they be shown the "Iviuk Aggie." After this it did not take my Eskimo long to see the practical side of films and they soon abandoned their former attitude of laughter and good-natured ridicule toward the Angercak, i.e., the White Master who wanted pictures of them—the commonest objects in all the world! From that time on they were all with me. When in December the snow lay heavy on the ground the Eskimo abandoned their topecks of sealskin and the village of snow igloos sprung up around my wintering post. They snow-walled my little hut up to the eaves with thick blocks of snow. It was as thick walled as a fortress. My kitchen was their rendezvous—there was always a five-gallon pail of tea steeping on the stove and sea biscuit in the barrel. My little gramophone, too, was common property. Caruso, Farrar, Ricardo-Martin, McCormick served their turns with Harry Lauder, Al Jolson and Jazz King orchestras. Caruso in the Pagliacci prologue with its tragic ending was to them the most comic record of the lot. It send them into peals of laughter and to rolling on the floor.

Excerpted from the September 1922 issue of THE WORLD'S WORK, which also included "Is the Gorilla Almost a Man" by Carl E. Akeley, inventor of the pancake camera, and "American History in Moving Pictures" by Hawthorne Daniel.



DESTINY

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY THE STEPHEN HORNE ENSEMBLE

Directed by Fritz Lang, Germany, 1921
Cast Lil Dagover, Walter Janssen, Bernhard Goetzke, Rudolf Klein-Rogge, Hans Sternberg, Karl Rückert, Karl Platen, Eduard von Winterstein, Louis Brody, Karl Huszár-Puffy, and Paul Biensfeldt
Production Decla-Bioscop **Print Source** Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation

It's estimated there were 525,000 war widows in Germany the year before Fritz Lang made *Destiny* (*Der müde Tod*) in 1921. In each of those households there was an empty place at the dinner table, just as there were hundreds of thousands of empty places in the homes of parents, siblings, and lovers. When Lil Dagover, draped in a Persian cat and cradling a dachshund in her arms, enters the dining room of a tavern early in the film and notices the vacant spot where her fiancé was just moments before, audiences of the time would have felt their own pang of loss. *Destiny* is about a young woman trying to reverse that loss, to negate the void that a reluctant Death has created. It's a film of visual mastery brimming with fantasy, anchored by stunning sets and peppered with whimsical humor, which provides some relief but also knows loss cannot really be cancelled. It is also Lang's first truly great movie.

IT IS ALSO LANG'S FIRST TRULY GREAT MOVIE.

He'd already demonstrated his skill as a director, notably with the exciting two-part adventure film *The Spiders* (*Die Spinnen*), clearly influenced by the detective series of Louis Feuillade, and *Four Around the Woman* (*Vier um die Frau*, a.k.a. *Kämpfende Herzen*), the movie he made just before *Destiny*. Both show stylistic flourishes that signal a master in the making. However, *Four Around the Woman*'s plot, written in collaboration with soon-to-be wife Thea von Harbou, is disjointed (in the surviving incomplete print) and doesn't have much of an emotional impact. The same can't be said for *Destiny*, in which Lang first tackled a theme he'd return to again and again: the inexorability of Fate.

Pioneering film critic (and Lang confidante) Lotte Eisner provocatively wrote in her now classic 1952 study of German cinema, *The Haunted Screen*, that "the German is obsessed by the phantom of destruction and, in his intense fear of death, exhausts himself in seeking means of escaping Destiny." While such a broad statement is debatable, Lang seemed to be preoccupied with this phantom of destruction throughout his career, even before 1921. At the age of twenty-seven, in 1917, he wrote the script for *Hilde Warren and Death* (*Hilde Warren und der Tod*), directed by Joe May, which features a heroine visited by the Grim Reaper. At the time, Europe was aflame with the First World War, and Lang was hardly alone in turning his thoughts toward death. Yet he later also admitted that he fell under the kind of Romantic spell of death not uncommon in the artistically disposed: "Young people engaged in the cultural fields, myself among them, made a fetish of tragedy, expressing open rebellion against the old answers and outworn forms, swinging from naïve nineteenth-century sweetness and light to the opposite extreme of pessimism for its own sake."

Is *Destiny* a pessimistic work? That depends on your point of view, but it still offers great comfort. Love is not *stronger* than death, as the young woman

Clockwise from top left: Bernhard Goetzke, Walter Janssen, Walter Janssen and Lil Dagover, Lil Dagover

in the film initially hopes, but like the passage she reads in the Song of Solomon, "love is as strong as death." Reuniting with a loved one can be possible, though not in this world. And while Death, when first introduced, is a forbidding figure (played to eerie perfection by Bernhard Goetzke), he's tired of his role: "Believe me, my office is hard! It is a curse!" he tells the young woman and, indeed, the film's German title translates as "Weary Death." (Could Alberto Casella have seen *Destiny* before writing his play *Death Takes a Holiday* three years later?)

Lang and von Harbou conceived of the film in chapters spanning time and place yet anchored in a traditional, if mythic, Teutonic context: the subtitle is "a German folksong in six verses" (although conservative critics of the time complained the film wasn't German enough). While structurally indebted to Griffith's *Intolerance* and Murnau's *Satanas*, the movie's style and theme reflect the influence of German Romanticism, with occasional nods to Expressionism in terms of lighting and certain elements of the art direction. The sets were a collaborative effort by the best production designers of the Weimar era: Walter Röhrig (*Caligari*, *Faust*), Hermann Warm (*The Spiders*, *Caligari*), and Robert Herlth (*Faust*, *The Last Laugh*), and their fantastical creations are one of *Destiny*'s delights.

There's the forbidding, unbroken wall enclosing Death's realm, its irregular rock-face like petrified dinosaur skin; the Orientalist vision of the Caliph's City of Believers, Arabian Nights in miniature; a simplified, cruel Renaissance Venice whose empty

Carnival in Venice

spaces create a sensation of agoraphobic danger; and the delightful whimsy of the China section, full of stylized curlicues and exaggerated natural forms. And then there are the special effects, from ghostly apparitions passing through Death's door-less wall to the flying carpet said to have inspired Douglas Fairbanks for *Thief of Bagdad*. Much remarked upon was the animated Chinese scroll that apparently Lang himself meticulously shifted on a black velvet wall eight hundred times in order to make it seem alive (the film was then rewound in the camera, to create the multiple-exposure effect).

It took three years to get the film released in the U.S., where it was retitled *Between Worlds* and cut down—exactly how much is unclear, since the trade papers of the time list it variously as 6,940 feet and 6,400 feet, while *Variety* placed it at sixty-nine minutes (the original release length was approximately 7,568 feet). Oddly, the English intertitles changed a key element of the storyline, making Dagover's character into an egotistical young woman whose lover is killed in each episode because of her selfishness: a trait precisely opposite to how Lang and von Harbou conceived her. Despite such a spectacularly misguided move, and the undoubtedly injudicious trimming, the film was not solely panned by the critics, as many later commentators claim. Leading critic and philosopher Benjamin De Casseres declared in *Motion Picture Magazine*, "It is one of the greatest pictures ever put on the screen. It kept me 'outside of myself' for ninety minutes by its instant and overwhelming appeal to my imagination, my sense of beauty, my instinct for the weird, and my love for pictorial beauty and fine characterizations on the screen." Unfortunately, the public didn't agree, and New York's Capitol Theater reported its worst week of the year during the film's run.

Lang's follow-up, *Dr. Mabuse, the Gambler* (*Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler*) had a broader impact, but among budding filmmakers, *Destiny* left a profound mark. Hitchcock told Truffaut that it was an early influence, and Buñuel specifically singled it out in his memoirs: "When I saw *Destiny*, I suddenly knew that I too wanted to make movies … Something about this film spoke to something deep in me; it clarified my life and my vision of the world." Now that it's been lovingly restored, with the best surviving elements from six different archives and approximating the tints used in the period, the film's striking visuals are clearer than they've been in many decades. Equally enhanced is the emotional power, particularly at the beginning and the end, when Lang and von Harbou's tale is stripped of its allegory and what remains is the story of a bereft young woman who challenges Death in a race against the clock to be with her loved one again.

— Jay Weissberg

THE SCRIPTWRITER AND THE MOVIEMAKER: THEA VON HARBOU WRITES FRITZ LANG

1920 Das wandernde Bild (The Wandering Shadow)
1921 Vier um die Frau (Four Around the Woman), a.k.a. Kämpfende Herzen
1921 Der müde Tod (Destiny)
1922 Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler (Dr. Mabuse, the Gambler)
1924 Die Nibelungen: Siegfried
1924 Die Nibelungen: Kriemhild's Rache (Die Nibelungen: Kriemhild's Revenge)
1927 Metropolis
1928 Spione (Spies)
1929 Frau im Mond (Woman in the Moon)
1931 M
1933 Das Testament des Dr. Mabuse (The Testament of Dr. Mabuse)

Thea von Harbou and her husband Fritz Lang were one of the most successful director-screenwriter teams of Germany's Weimar-era cinema, until the political and personal conspired to end their partnership of more than a decade. Born in 1888 to an aristocratic family of dwindling fortunes, the precocious von Harbou published a book of poems at thirteen and later turned her writing talent into a storied career. In 1906, she began acting on the professional stage, where she met her first husband, the actor-director Rudolf Klein-Rogge, who plays two sinister roles in *Destiny* and appeared in several other Lang-Harbou films. By the time she began scriptwriting, von Harbou already had her allegorical stories serialized in newspapers and republished as books. With the outbreak of the First World War she encouraged women to do their part in the war effort in volumes such as 1915's *Die deutsche Frau im Weltkrieg*. Her 1917 novel *Der belagerte Tempel* ("The Besieged Temple") has an autobiographical flavor, telling of unemployed stage actors who move to Berlin and make the transition to film acting.

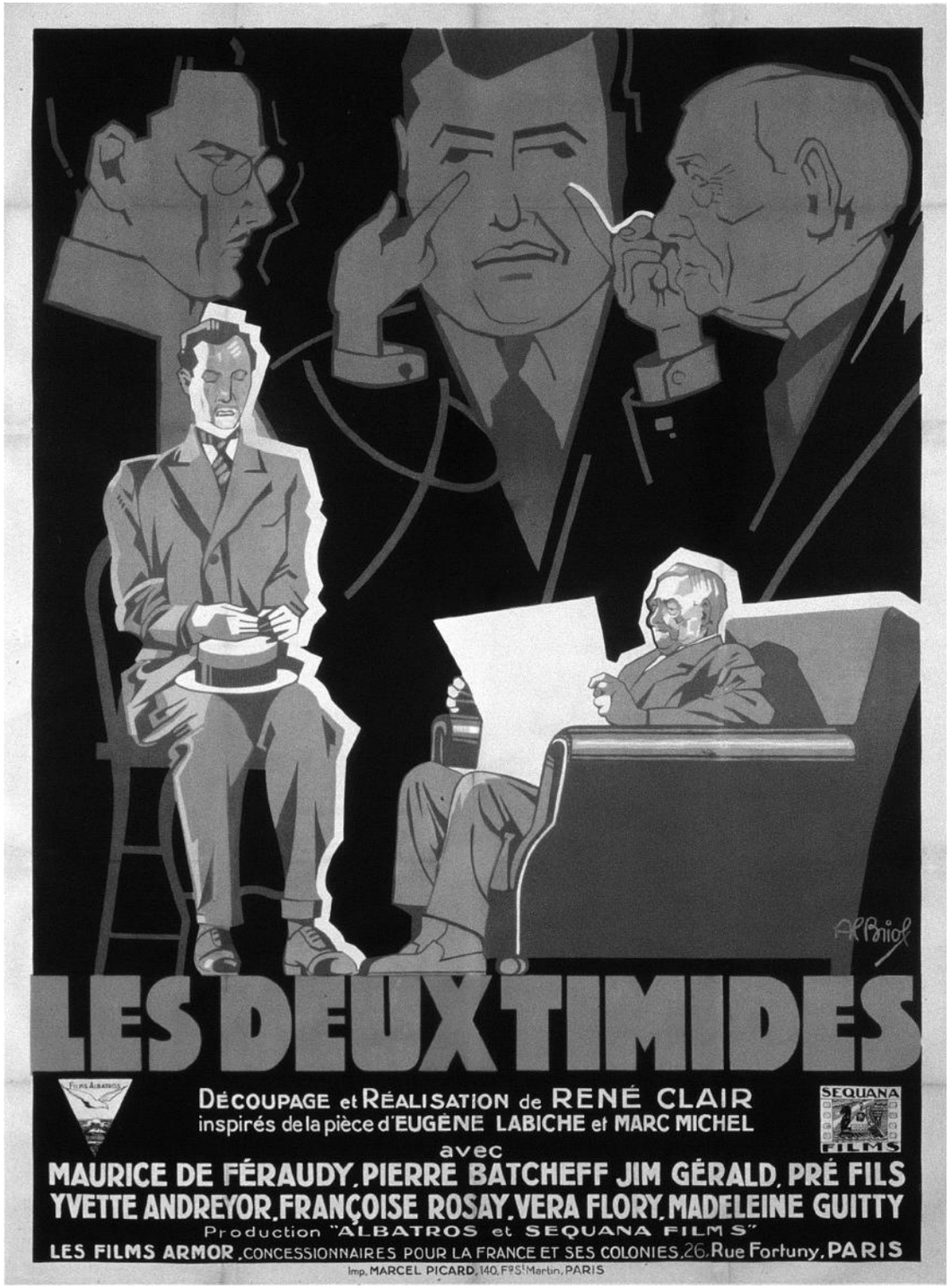
When one of her stories was sold to director Joe May's production company in 1918, she broke into scriptwriting and met Fritz Lang who had recently left Decla-Bioscope after finishing his two-part adventure epic, *The Spiders*. The scriptwriter and the moviemaker were immediately drawn to each other. Her adaptation of her own 1917 fantasy novel set in India, *Das indische Grabmal*, was intended for Lang but May delayed production on the two-part film in order to direct it himself. The pair's first collaboration was *Das wandernde Bild* ("The Wandering Shadow"), originally titled *Madonna im Schnee*, in which a statue of the Virgin Mary comes to life on a mountainside (after several attempts to get it right in the Bavarian Alps, the miracle ended up being shot on a film stage in Berlin). Von Harbou soon became one of the primary writers for Germany's top Expressionist directors, ranking alongside compatriot Carl Mayer (*The Last Laugh*) as someone adept at creating scenarios for the moving image. In his 1928 book on filmmaking, Russian director Vsevolod Pudovkin praised von Harbou for exploiting the "possibilities of the camera such as shots, framing, editing, [and] intensification through visually striking details."

She was prolific, adapting texts for two F.W. Murnau films: the Gerhart Hauptmann novel for *Phantom* (1922) and one of Frank Heller's popular Swedish detective stories for *The Finances of the Grand Duke* (1923). She adapted the Hermann Bang novel *Michael* for the eponymous 1924 film by Carl Dreyer (who of course rewrote it). She transformed difficult and dear German texts into film scenarios, including the epic poem *Nibelungenlied* that dates back to the fifth century. She developed scripts from original ideas for Lang's *Metropolis* (1927), *Spione* (1928), and *Frau im Mond* (1929), which she also published in book versions. Together Lang and von Harbou manifested their mutual affinity for intricate plots, framing stories, the underworld, the East, and fantastic settings, from fiery netherworlds to the Moon.

Their collaboration, both professional and personal, ended after two sound films, *M* (1931) and *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse* (1933), when, in a twist of fate, philanderer Lang caught von Harbou in bed with a young Indian journalist. The National Socialists were already on their implacable rise. After the couple divorced, Lang took refuge in Hollywood while von Harbou remained in her native Germany (secretly marrying her lover), and, according to film scholar Briggita B. Wagner, scripting lighthearted entertainments for the Third Reich's most prominent directors. After World War II, she was held four months by the British because of her Nazi Party membership and, during her internment, directed a staging of *Faust*. She returned to writing, including screenplays, and, because of chronic health problems, often dictated from her sickbed, a dachshund by her side. A portrait of Mahatma Gandhi and one of Adolph Hitler hung on the walls of her home.

The guest of honor at a 1954 revival screening of *Destiny*, von Harbou tripped and fell outside the movie theater, sustaining a hip injury from which she never recovered. She died that July at age sixty-five. Lang, who directed his last film in 1960, was still collaborating with her in the years after her death, finally adapting her novel *Das indische Grabmal* into a two-part epic released in 1959. Some official credits still neglect to name von Harbou for several of their films written together.

— The Editors



LES DEUX TIMIDES

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY THE MONT ALTO MOTION PICTURE ORCHESTRA

Directed by René Clair, France, 1928
Cast Pierre Batcheff, Jim Gérald, Maurice de Féraudy, Véra Flory, Françoise Rosay, Yvette Andreyor, Madeleine Guitty, Louis Pré fils, and Anna Lefeuvrier
Production Films Albatros **Print Source** SFSFF Collection

René Clair's final film of the silent era was not the film he'd planned to make. When Films Albatros renewed Clair's contract in 1927 after the success of *The Italian Straw Hat*, the director began work on a realist crime film to be called *Une Enquête est ouverte* ("An Investigation Is Begun"). The prospect of censorship derailed it (Clair was forbidden from showing even a guillotine), so he returned instead to a scenario he'd written earlier, based, like *Straw Hat*, on a theater piece by the prolific mid-nineteenth-century playwright Eugène Labiche. Unlike the Labiche five-act comedy *Straw Hat*, the original *Deux Timides* is a one-act "comedy-vaudeville." Charles de St. Cyr, in his review of the film version, dismissed Labiche's play as "a trinket … lighter than a dead leaf." To many contemporary critics *Les Deux Timides* was merely a pleasant variation in a minor key on the achievements of *Straw Hat*. However, closer examination reveals a film that Clair's biographer Celia McGerr calls, "one of the most visually ambitious—and successful—films of the silent era."

"one of the most visually ambitious—and successful—films of the silent era"

Labiche's fluffy one-act swiftly outlines a love triangle between a timid lawyer, his overbearing rival, and an ingénue with a mind of her own. The comedy lies in the contrast between the determined heroine and her shy suitor. The punch line is that the timid lawyer has some damning information about his rival—if only he realizes it in time. The piece seems intractably theatrical; characters recount events and explain their feelings in a series of speeches and songs. Clair develops this slight material into an ever expanding series of misunderstandings and misinterpretations; firecrackers become gunshots, a man coughing into a handkerchief a masked bandit.

Designer Lazare Meerson had collaborated with the director since *Proie du vent* (1926) and many of the cast of *Les Deux Timides* were Clair regulars. Jim Gérald, who plays Labiche's self-centered suitor as a Bluto-like blusterer, was making his fourth film with Clair (he'd most recently played the cuckolded husband in *Italian Straw Hat*). Newcomer Véra Flory plays the ingénue Cécile and Théâtre-Français actor Maurice de Féraudy—who had originally been hired for Clair's crime film—is Cécile's retiring father. In the lead role as timid lawyer Frémissin (*fremissement* means "a shiver") was rising star Pierre Batcheff, who, like Clair, had strong ties with the Paris avant-garde. Batcheff followed *Deux Timides* with Buñuel's surrealist *Un Chien Andalou* the following year.

As cast and crew shot the film in the summer and early fall of 1928, moving from the studio at Billancourt to the countryside, a seismic shift in the film world was taking place. "The monster," as Clair called sound technology, invaded France that fall, with two exhibitions of sound shorts, including one of Maurice

Clair mixes visual virtuosity with a new simplicity.

Chevalier singing. Clair, who was convinced that sound would destroy film's poetic qualities, told film writer Charles Samuels in 1972 that *Deux Timides* gave him "the opportunity … to render speech through images rather than sound—because it was precisely at this time that the silent era was coming to an end."

Clair was throwing down a silent gauntlet in the face of sound's onslaught, much like Ethel Merman singing "anything you can do, I can do better." He makes his point in the film's opening sequence. The camera tracks into a gloomy domestic interior where a woman bends over a sewing machine. She glances up anxiously, and a low-angle shot reveals a menacing man. We viewers wonder if we have wandered into a melodrama by mistake, as an exaggerated scene of domestic abuse unfolds before us. Then a dissolve to a courtroom reveals that the director has tricked us; we have been watching an unreliable flashback, an illustration of a prosecutor's speech as he details the supposed crimes of the accused husband on trial. When the defense lawyer (one of the title's *timides*) rises to present his side, we see the same domestic interior (now brightly lit) and the same husband (no longer viewed from a low angle) who enters to present his wife with a bouquet. An equally extravagant scene of domestic bliss ensues, until an errant mouse disrupts the courtroom and the lawyer's speech. By the time order is restored, the nervous lawyer has lost his place. We watch the happy domestic scene repeat and then freeze as the lawyer struggles to pick up the thread of his argument; the scene runs jerkily forward and backward, the image literally stuttering—speech is rendered visually.

Jim Gérald, Véra Flory and Pierre Batcheff, Maurice de Féraudy

It's not the last of the film's visual delights. "Clair," writes McGerr, "uses just about every unusual pictorial device extant in filmmaking: freeze frames, flashbacks, hand-held shots, reverse motion, exceptionally soft-focused photography, split-screen—even small jump cuts." Historian Dimitri Vezyroglou says *Les Deux Timides* can be seen as a summation and sendup of the entire breadth of silent film. "It combines melodrama (at the start) with action adventure (the mock battle) and incorporates a nod toward the avant-garde as the audience sleeps while the singer sings at a soiree organized by Frémissin's aunt, this being a possible reference to L'Herbier's *L'Inhumaine*." Clair himself told historian Naomi Greene that "the split-screen at the end of the picture was a parody of *Napoleon*, an out-and-out gag that had no other reason for being there than affectionate kidding."

Clair mixes this visual virtuosity with a new simplicity. The scenes of Frémissin pursuing Cécile through the rural countryside and finally kissing her in a meadow are gag-free, shot in long takes and smoothly edited. "It is in the nature of every beginner to be tempted … by startling effects of editing," Clair wrote in 1970; but eventually "you come to wish that every filmed sequence, no matter how intercut it is with different shots, looked as if it had been cast in a single piece." Also new is the director's interest in character. Whereas the cast members of *Straw Hat* operate as so many cogs in a well-oiled comedy machine, Frémissin (especially in Batcheff's subtle performance) has depth and complexity. Clair uses both split-screens and long takes to reveal the timid lawyer's inner life, whether illustrating Frémissin's fantasies of bravery or lingering on him as he hesitates over whether or not to follow Cécile.

After railing against sound in countless articles and even considering quitting film altogether, Clair resigned himself to the change. "We must cut our losses," Clair wrote in May of 1929. Seeing *The Broadway Melody* (1929) in London was a turning point for him: sound could be used as inventively as images. His surrender led to three classic comedies of the early sound era, in which church bells toll popular songs, flowers appear to speak, and dialogue is sung. This last technique, writes film historian Lucy Fischer, "was suggested to Clair by the verse structure of certain Labiche light comedies." Clair's sound films fed off his silents.

Clair continued making films until 1965, including a sojourn in Hollywood where he directed the Veronica Lake vehicle *I Married a Witch* (1942) and the bloodthirsty comedy *Ten Little Indians* (1945), and he continued to write prolifically on film his whole life. However, his later films never achieved the renown of his early French comedies. These five films from 1928–1931, whether silent or sound, seem to belong to a single aesthetic, to have burst forth from the same blast of youthful, creative energy. Film historian Richard Abel credited these films (among others) with reviving the French film industry. Clair alone showed little reverence for his work, telling Samuels: "I don't like to see my old pictures. I always think, 'why wasn't that better done?'"

— Monica Nolan

ABOUT THE RESTORATION

The restoration of René Clair's second comedy for Films Albatros, Russian émigré Alexandre Kamenka's Paris studio, is based on a 4K digital scan of the original title negative and the original French camera negative, a rarity in silent-film preservation. Both elements are preserved in Paris in the vaults of the Cinémathèque Française.

In line with ethical standards of restoration, digital intervention and cleaning was strictly limited to the removal of dirt and scratches and the repair of external damage such as film breaks and perforation tears. As with all San Francisco Silent Film Festival restoration collaborations, a new 35mm negative and new 35mm preservation prints are housed in partner collections, in this case at the Cinémathèque Française and as part of the SFSFF Collection at the Library of Congress.

— Robert Byrne

WHEN THE CLOUDS ROLL BY

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT BY GUENTER BUCHWALD AND FRANK BOCKIUS

Directed by Victor Fleming, USA, 1919
Cast Douglas Fairbanks, Albert MacQuarrie, Ralph Lewis, Frank Campeau, Herbert Grimwood, Daisy Robinson, and Kathleen Clifford
Production Douglas Fairbanks Pictures Corp. **Print Source** Lobster Films

When the Clouds Roll By is a dazzling comic spree of action and fantasia. The second film Douglas Fairbanks released through his own distribution company, United Artists, it was one of the last of his "Coat and Tie" films, made before he transformed himself into the screen's most popular swashbuckler.

Throughout 1918 and 1919 Douglas Fairbanks, the biggest male star in the film industry, had been on the hunt for good scripts. While his popularity was unabated, he had felt the tugs of negative criticism at his sleeve for his most recent spate of films. In fact, it was predominantly the negative reviews he pasted into his personal scrapbook, and which he studied. He set out to do something different.

made before he transformed himself into the screen's most popular swashbuckler

To understand the story behind the making of *Clouds*, it is necessary to know the backstory behind his first release for UA, *His Majesty, the American*. It was a Ruritanian romance/comedy scripted and directed by Joseph Henabery who, along with cameraman Victor Fleming, had recently returned from the war. "Doug promised to include in his next release some favorable propaganda in behalf of President Wilson's League of Nations idea, which was hailed as world lifesaver," Henabery recalled in his 1997 autobiography, *Before, In and After Hollywood*.

"Doug wanted me to write a story that would incorporate some of the President's ideas in the upcoming picture. The Government wanted some emphasis given to each of Wilson's proposed Fourteen Points. The danger was that propaganda could easily overburden the story, unless great care was taken to weave it in subtly." Then political reality set in. "Wilson's Fourteen Points went down the drain, and I, in a way, went with the Fourteen Points. I could conceive of no way to salvage the picture without doing damage by the removal of material relating to the propaganda, but the job had to be done. Luckily, some excess material, for which there was no room in the first cut, was available."

But pro-League of Nations material wasn't all that was removed from the first edit of *Majesty*. For some reason, the team elected to cut one of the best parts of the film: a wildly funny nightmare sequence. Happily, they didn't discard it but worked it into their next release.

When the Clouds Roll By is the story of a comically superstitious young man slowly being driven mad by his evil-scientist neighbor. The memorable and striking nightmare scene graces the first reel. Film historians have been lavish in handing credit to fledgling director Victor Fleming for this witty, surreal sequence, not knowing that this section was directed by Joseph Henabery for Fairbanks's previous film.

Douglas Fairbanks as Daniel Boone Brown (image courtesy of Tracey Goessel)

Doug pulled out all stops in the last reel of the film.

The press book for *Majesty* referenced the "wild and delirious nightmare," including the slow-motion chase and the moment when Fairbanks enters a ballroom full of matrons clad only in his underwear. A correction slip had to be published and included with each press kit, urging exhibitors to eliminate any reference to the nightmare. Henabery's recollections were specific:

> *The revolving room—that was my idea. I made this barrel-like thing, had the hawsers around it to revolve it so that when he was running on the ceiling he was really running on the floor. The camera was upside down. It wasn't used because we had too much film. Another thing we had in that ... where Bull Montana is socked in the nose and fell down and comes up again .... I had a counterweight on him so he was pivoted on the floor. You'd push him down—course he was aided by a wire—but the weight below would bring him right back up. In other words, Fairbanks couldn't knock him down.*

The revolving room innovation, where the set was an open cube, with both floors and ceilings, which rotated much like a hamster wheel, created the illusion that Fairbanks was walking the walls and cutting capers on the ceiling. The effect has been reproduced twice since (without attribution)—in *Royal Wedding* with Fred Astaire and in certain shots in the modern thriller *Inception*. A sharp eye will note the pajamas from *His Majesty* and the right side of the bedroom set from the first film to the second. The omission of the nightmare from *His Majesty* deprived Henabery of some rightful credit, but the sequence fits in splendidly with the story of *When the Clouds Roll By*.

The opening credits set the loopy tone—Fleming filmed scenarist Geraghty, himself, the cameramen, and Fairbanks with the actor's favorite Alaskan malamute, Rex, to accompany the names. The intertitles followed suit. The one introducing Fairbanks's character reads:

> *It is midnight along New York's water front. It is also midnight in the Wall Street district. However, this has nothing to do with our story, except it is likewise midnight uptown where we first meet Daniel Boone Brown—an average young man.*
>
> *Our tale proper opens with the eating of an onion—*

The title card backgrounds were painted by popular illustrator Henry Clive and written by Thomas Geraghty. The issue of authorship came into brief contention shortly after the film's release. Louis Weadock was a newspaperman and short story author who reportedly joined the scenario staff before *Clouds* was produced. He leaked a story to *Variety* that both he and Thomas Geraghty were "rather incensed over the fact that the employer-star failed to give them credit for having evolved what seems to be the greatest hit that Fairbanks has had in a year." This was met with a quick denial by United Artists, also published in *Variety*:

> *The story was the original idea of Douglas Fairbanks and the scenario was written by Tom Geraghty ... Weadock, it is declared, was engaged by the Fairbanks organization as an apprentice at a small salary, and was present at the studio during the making of the story. His ideas, however, did not come up to the standard required by Fairbanks and before the completion of the production he was removed from all affiliation with the company.*

Douglas Fairbanks

This, for all intents and purposes, appeared to settle the hash of the disgruntled writer, who was not heard from again. (Possibly because his palm was appropriately greased. Fairbanks biographer Jeffrey Vance notes that the star paid Weadock $500 to settle a claim of libel.)

Fairbanks pulled out all stops in the last reel of the film. Four enormous electric pumps drew more than a million gallons of water from the Sacramento River into an elevated reservoir in the Cascade mountains. Once released, the flood washed out the town: a convincing combination of miniatures and life-sized buildings. For the post-flood sequence, a flooded plain near Seal Beach was filled with trees, houses, and even a floating church (handy for providing the minister at the film's happy ending).

When the Clouds Roll By was a tremendous success, earning the second highest returns of any of his productions to date. And it was a critical darling, to boot. *Photoplay*'s critic wrote: "If he had begun his United Artists' career with it he would have given that new connection a boost which *His Majesty the American* failed to impart."

Douglas Fairbanks was on the cusp of his move to swashbuckling costume films in the 1920s, with the *Mark of Zorro* coming the following year. *Clouds* raises a parlor-debate question: if all his coat-and-tie films had reached this stunning standard, would he ever have donned a cape or grasped a sword?

— Tracey Goessel

Great, Best This Star Has Turned Out in a Long While

Douglas Fairbanks in
"WHEN THE CLOUDS ROLL BY"
United Artists

DIRECTOR .....Victor Fleming
AUTHORS .....Douglas Fairbanks, Tom Geraghty and Lewis Weadon
CAMERAMEN .....Harry Thorpe and William McCann
AS A WHOLE .....Best this star has turned out in long while
STORY .....Good plot holds all the stunts, romance and spectacular stuff together excellently
DIRECTION .....Generally showed imagination and presented star's stunts to best advantage
PHOTOGRAPHY .....Fine
LIGHTING .....Realistic
CAMERA WORK .....Always good; dream sequence when star is shown in slow motion excellent and brings great laugh
STAR .....Has some real work to his credit in this
SUPPORT .....Kathleen Clifford, opposite; Frank Campeau again the villain
EXTERIORS .....Varied and good
INTERIORS .....Suitable
DETAIL .....Star interpolates a lot of particularly good comedy business
CHARACTER OF STORY .....Optimistic as usual
LENGTH OF PRODUCTION .....About 5,900 feet

Douglas Fairbanks has come through with a blue ribbon winner in "When the Clouds Roll By." It's a picture that shows off the famous stunt comedian to his best advantage and he gives some remarkable demonstrations of his athletic ability, but what must concern many exhibitors even more than this is the matter of the plot. This essential has been sadly lacking in some of Doug's recent releases and the lack has been the just cause of complaint.

The picture opens with Doug eating a heavy dinner at midnight and some great laughs are registered when an "interior" of his stomach is flashed on the screen with figures representing lobster, welsh rarebit, mince pie, etc., performing gymnastics below. Subsequently Doug suffers a nightmare which is shown in the form of a weird chase. The scenes showing Doug fairly floating through the air (ultra-rapid camera stuff) and the flashes of him running around on the ceiling are uproarious.

A lot of comedy is introduced due to Doug's various superstitions and the action goes along merrily on this track for a while until he meets the girl. Here enters some fine rapid-fire romance stuff and quick preparations on Doug's part for a surprise wedding. Here the villainous forces begin work, however, and in a melodramatic sequence Doug discovers that the girl believes him bent on swindling her father and that she has gone west with the idea of marrying the real swindler.

Despair takes hold of him at first but he succeeds in bringing his optimism to the top and, forgetting all about his superstitions, he gives pursuit. The manner in which he catches the train is a fine thrill and then comes the big flood scene which provides a climax of many thrilling sensations and lots of comedy. The story concludes with Doug and the girl married on the roof of a house after a preacher has floated into view on his church steeple.

This is certainly going to get every audience and there's not a disappointment in all its footage. An air of optimism pervades the story, the titles are bright and bring good laughs and the plot provides a real sustaining interest to hold everything together.

You Can Safely Call This One of Doug's Best

Box Office Analysis for the Exhibitor

This can safely be called one of Doug's best in your advertising and you won't be stretching the point or splitting hairs for it's so far ahead of anything he has done recently that everyone is going to be tickled to death with it.

The title offers a scheme of attractive advertising which has been adhered to in the advertising matter furnished by the distributors. Additional publicity may be derived from the fact that the star also had a big hand in the story and scenario.

However, by terming this one of Doug's best and by a good display of the title you're just naturally going to pack them in. And after the first crowd has gone its way from your theater you'll have to get out the ropes and the old S.R.O. sign for "When the Clouds Roll By" is going to advertise itself by word of mouth. And when a picture does that you can bet your bottom dollar it's there.

Douglas Fairbanks (image courtesy of Tracey Goessel)

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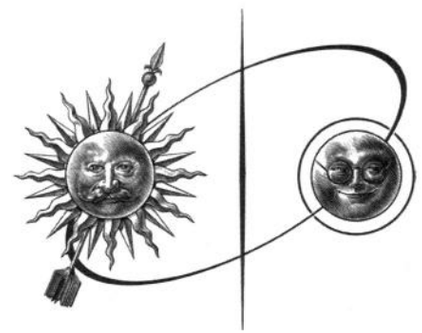


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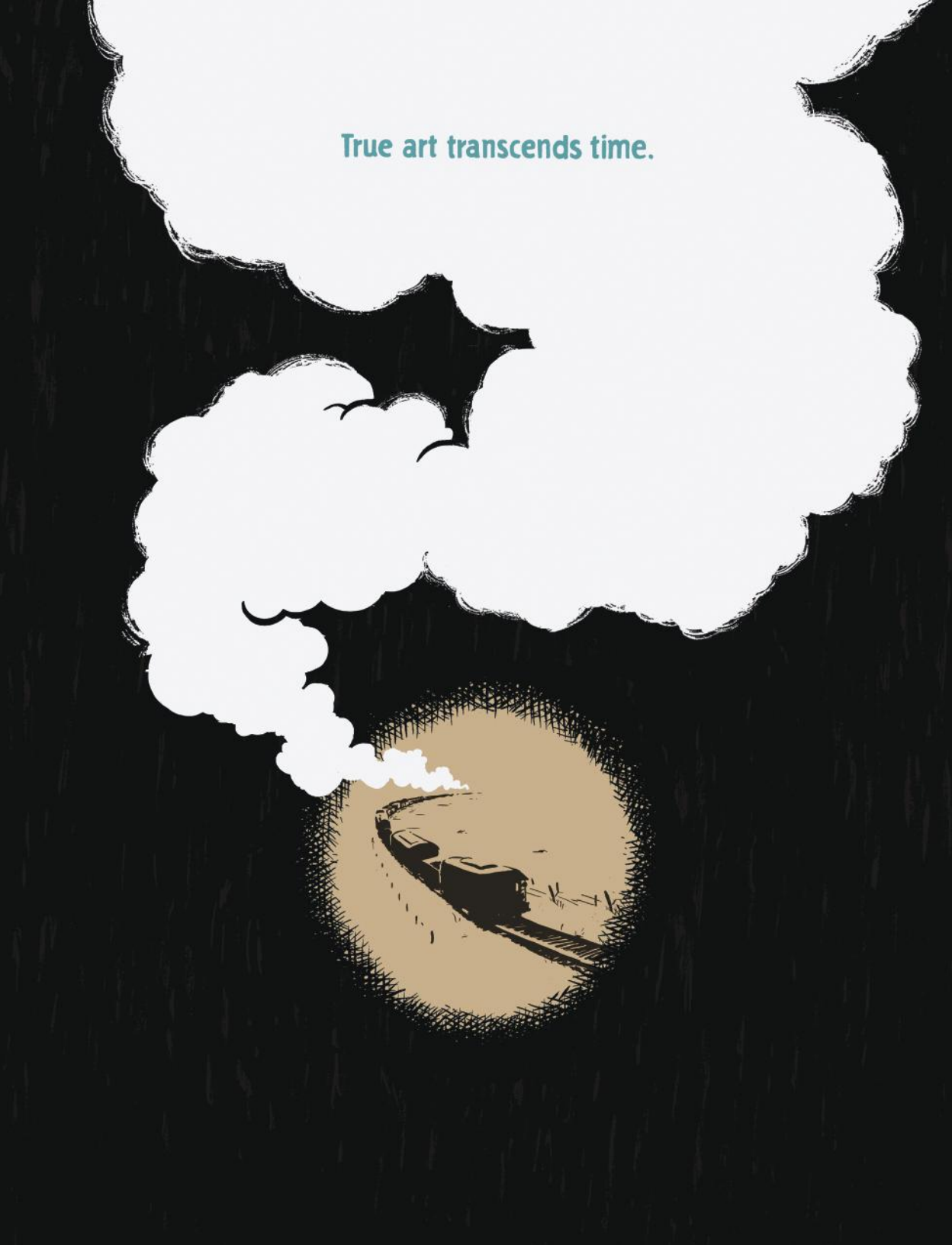
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