

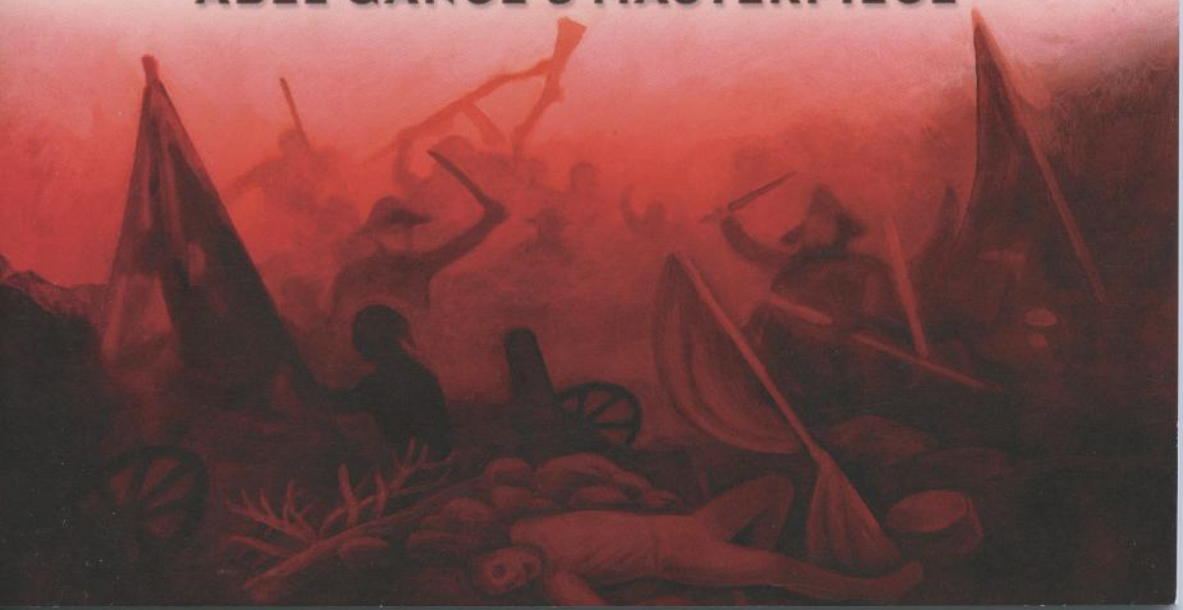


Paulo Davis III

SAN FRANCISCO SILENT FILM FESTIVAL PRESENTS

NAPOLEON

ABEL GANCE'S MASTERPIECE



NAPOLEON

ABEL GANCE'S MASTERPIECE

PRESENTED BY

SAN FRANCISCO SILENT FILM FESTIVAL

PARAMOUNT THEATRE, OAKLAND

MARCH 24, 25, 31, APRIL 1, 2012

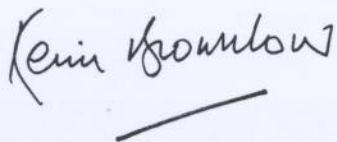
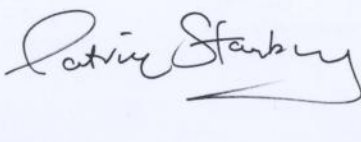


March, 2012

The first presentation of Napoleon with Carl Davis's magnificent score took place in London in November 1980. Since then, the restoration has been revisited several times, lengthened with newly discovered footage, and tinted and toned to match the original prints. We believe it is now as close to Abel Gance's original vision as is currently possible.

Throughout this time it has been our ambition to one day present this extraordinary work, complete with Carl's score, in the US. Now, thanks to the enthusiasm, dedication and courage of the San Francisco Silent Film Festival, that dream has become a reality. And what better venue to host it than the wonderful Paramount Theatre in Oakland? We are deeply grateful to the Festival and their team for making this happen, and to American Zoetrope and The Film Preserve for their support.

Although we were not to know it at the time, that first screening back in 1980 changed our lives. We fervently hope that this will also be true for everyone lucky enough to be part of these presentations in Oakland, and that in years to come, like the survivors of the battle of Agincourt, you will proudly declare "I was there!"

Kevin Brownlow and Patrick Stanbury,
Photoplay Productions

NAPOLEON

**PRESENTED BY THE
SAN FRANCISCO
SILENT FILM FESTIVAL**

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
AMERICAN ZOETROPE
THE FILM PRESERVE
PHOTOPLAY PRODUCTIONS
BFI

**SCORE CREATED AND
CONDUCTED BY
CARL DAVIS**

MUSIC COMMISSIONED
BY THAMES TELEVISION FOR
CHANNEL 4, AND MUSIC
PERFORMED BY ARRANGEMENT
WITH FABER MUSIC LTD, LONDON
ON BEHALF OF CARL DAVIS

**PERFORMED BY
OAKLAND
EAST BAY SYMPHONY**

**MARCH 24, 25, 31, APRIL 1
PARAMOUNT THEATRE
OAKLAND**

PROGRAM

ACT I 1:30 - 3:30

INTERMISSION

ACT II 3:50 - 4:50

DINNER BREAK

ACT III 6:45 - 8:35

INTERMISSION

ACT IV 8:55 - 9:40

DIRECTOR
Abel Gance

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS

Henry Krauss
Vladimir Tourjansky
Henri Andréani
Alexandre Volkoff
Mario Nalpas
Pierre Danis
Anatole Litvak

ART DIRECTION

Alexandre Benois
Pierre Schildknecht
Alexander Lochakoff
Georges Jacouty
Vladimir Meingart
Eugène Lourié

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Jules Kruger
Joseph-Louis Mundviller

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Léonce-Henry Burel

AUXILIARY CAMERAMEN

Fedote Bourgasoff
Georges Lucas
Emile Pierre
Paul Briquet
Roger Hubert
Emile Monniot
Marcelle Eyvinge

PRODUCTION MANAGERS

William Delafontaine
Edouard De Bersaucourt
Noë Bloch

EDITING ASSOCIATES

Marguerite Beaugé
Henriette Pinson

TECHNICAL SPECIALISTS

Michel Feldman
Simon Feldman
Maurice Dalotel
W. Percy Day
Edward Scholl
Paul Minine
Nicolas Wilcke

CASTING DIRECTOR

Louis Osmont

PRODUCTION SECRETARY

Simone Surdieu

STAGIAIRES/TRAINEES

Jean Mitry
Jean Arroy
Sacher Purnal
Blaise Cendrars

COSTUMES

Charmy, Alphonse Sauvageau
Mme Augris, Mme Neminsky
Mme Manès's costumes by
Jeanne Lanvin
Costumes supplied by
Muelle & Souplet
Footwear supplied by Galvin

MAKE UP

Wladimir Kwanine
Boris de Fast

WIGS

Pontet-Vivant

EXPLOSIVES

Ruggieri

WEAPONS

Lemirt



CAST

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

Albert Dieudonné

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE AS A BOY

Vladimir Roudenko

TRISTAN FLEURI

Nicolas Koline

PICOT DE PECCADUC

petit Roblin

PHÉLIPPEAUX

petit Vidal

CAMILLE DESMOULINS

Robert Vidalin

LUCILLE DESMOULINS

Françine Mussey

ROUGET DE LISLE

Harry-Krimer

DANTON

Alexandre Koubitsky

MARAT

Antonin Artaud

MAXIMILIEN ROBESPIERRE

Edmond Van Daële

LA "MARSEILLAISE"

Maryse Damia

JOSÉPHINE DE BEAUHARNAIS

Gina Manès

BARRAS

Max Maxudian

THÉRÈSE CABARRUS (MME TALLIEN)

Andrée Standard

MME RÉCAMIER

Suzy Vernon

MADemoiselle LENORMAND

Carrie Carvalho

LOUIS XVI

Louis Sance

MARIE ANTOINETTE

Suzanne Bianchetti

ELISA BONAPARTE

Yvette Dieudonné

LÆTITIA BONAPARTE

Eugénie Buffet

JOSEPH BONAPARTE

Georges Lampin

LUCIEN BONAPARTE

Sylvio Cavicchia

SANTO RICCI

Henri Baudin

POZZO DI BORGO

Acho Chakatouny

PASCALE PAOLI

Maurice Schutz

CHARLOTTE CORDAY

Marguerite Gance

VIOLINE FLEURI

Mlle Annabella

MARCELLIN FLEURI

Serge Freddy-Karl

GÉNÉRAL CARTEAUX

Léon Courtois

SALICETTI

Philippe Hériat

THOMAS CASPARIN

M. Caillard

GÉNÉRAL DUGOMMIER

Alexandre Bernard

GÉNÉRAL DU TEIL

M. Dacheux

SERGEANT JUNOT

Jean Henry

MUIRON

Pierre Danis

MOUSTACHE

Henry Krauss

CORSICAN SHEPHERD

Felix Guglielmi

ADMIRAL HOOD

W. Percy Day

LOUIS SAINT-JUST

Abel Gance

COUTHON

François Viguier

HORTENSE DE BEAUHARNAIS

George Hénin

GÉNÉRAL LAZARE HOCHÉ

Pierre Batcheff

VICOMTE DE BEAUHARNAIS

G. Cahuzac

LA BUSSIÈRE

Jean d'Yd


JEAN LAMBERT TALLIEN

Jean Gaudray

GÉNÉRAL SCHÉRER

Alexandre Mathillon





NAPOLEON BONAPARTE was born August 15, 1769 in Ajaccio, Corsica, the second son of Letizia Ramolino and Carlo Bonaparte. He attended military school at Brienne from 1779 to 1784, completing his training at the *Ecole Militaire* in Paris in 1785 and graduating as a second lieutenant in the artillery.

1789: France is in turmoil, suffering governmental impotence, social injustice and economic hardship. The urge to reform is rife, giving rise to the Revolution. In the summer the National Assembly is formed to draw up a constitution. Prefaced by the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, it is founded on the abolition of feudal usage, the breaking down of social caste and the secularization of society. By 1791, the National Assembly has overturned and rebuilt institutions at every level of French life, making way for the modernization of France.

1792: France goes to war with Austria and Prussia. The French overthrow their monarchy. The Convention is formed to create a republican constitution. Even time is reconstructed in the urge to replace the old France. The New Era begins on September 22, 1792, renamed in the revolutionary calendar, 1 Vendémiaire, Year 1. On October 15, Bonaparte goes to Corsica to spread the revolutionary gospel and is made lieutenant colonel of the National Guard. He breaks with Pasquale Paoli, leader of Corsican independence, when he sees a conflict between Paoli's aims

and those of France. the execution of the king. Thus begins the Terror, a period during which intimidation is used to assure the survival of the Revolution. In June Bonaparte and his family flee Corsica for France. In December he leads an army command to victory over the English at Toulon. He is made brigadier-general at the age of twenty four.

1794: July 27 – Thermidor. The Terror ends. It has taken some 35,000 victims, the majority killed in civil war conditions, the minority by the guillotine. Robespierre is executed and the Jacobin dictatorship replaced by a group led by Barras, which will call itself the Directory. Bonaparte is placed under arrest and deprived of his rank.

1795: October 5-12 Vendémiaire. A Parisian mob threatens the convention. Napoleon, reinstated but without command, is called upon to quell the riot. The Convention orders the disarmament of Paris. The sword of the executed general Alexandre de Beauharnais is confiscated. His son



ABOVE: The first shot taken on *Napoleon*: Roudenko and Michel, the eagle

and those of France.

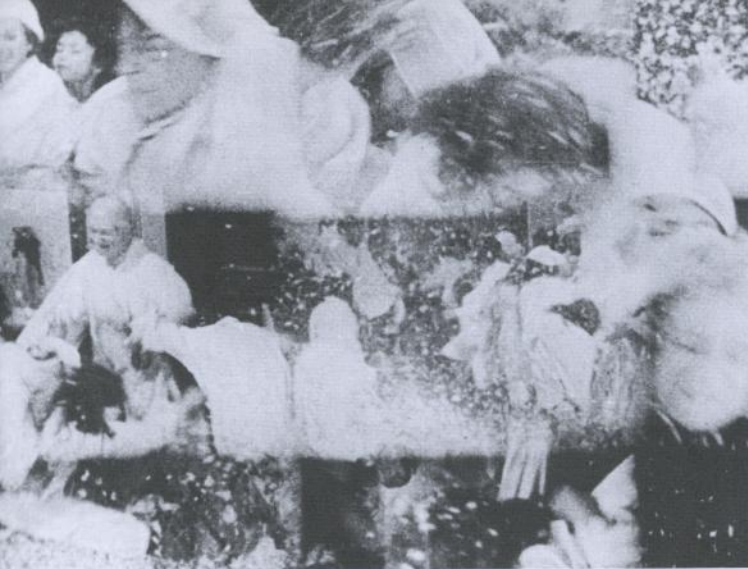
1793: January. The Convention votes for

Eugène begs Napoleon to return the sword. The request is granted and his mother, Joséphine, mistress of Barras, calls on Napoleon to express her thanks. They fall in love.

1796: March 9. Napoleon and Joséphine are married in a civil ceremony in Paris. Two days later, 21 Ventose, Bonaparte waves farewell to his bride. He has been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Italy. The French plan to advance on Vienna via northern Italy, then part of the Austrian Empire. His men are ragged and demoralized but Napoleon arouses their fighting ardor.

Napoleon and his soldiers of the new republic, missionaries of the revolutionary gospel, defeat the Austrians at Montenotte and Dego, and the Piedmontese at Millesimo and Mondovi. The campaign ends in April 1797. The glories of his Italian victories allowed Napoleon to overshadow the Directory. In 1799 it was swept away in a coup d'état.

The political machinery of the Revolution—The Assembly, the Convention, The Committee of Public Safety, The Directory—had disappeared as had the revolutionary figures of Danton, Robespierre, Barras, Sieyes, Hoche, Joubert, Moreau, etc. There remained the single figure of Napoleon Bonaparte.



A MAN WHO GREW UP AMIDST UNPRECEDENTED TURMOIL, WAS STRONG ENOUGH TO MASTER THIS TURMOIL, TO ORGANIZE IT ACCORDING TO HIS OWN RHYTHM AND LAUNCH IT AT THE CONQUEST OF SPACE AND THE FUTURE. THIS IS THE MEANING OF ABEL GANCE'S VISUAL SYMPHONY. HERE HISTORY AND FABLE MEET.

—ELIE FAURE

IN 1921 Abel Gance was in New York where he had an introduction to his cinematographic hero D. W. Griffith, director of the American epics *The Birth of a Nation* and *Intolerance*. It was the centenary of Napoleon's death and Gance resolved to make a French epic based on the Emperor's life. Returning to France, he amassed more than 80 works on Napoleon and a pictorial reference library of some 3,000 pictures. He was helped by Elie Faure, the author of a psychological portrait of Napoleon. Gance completed a 600 page scenario dividing Napoleon's life into six films: *Arcole* (1782–98); *18 Brumaire* (1798–1800); *Austerlitz* (1804–1808); *Retreat from Moscow* (1809–1813); *Waterloo* (1814–1815); *St. Helena* (1815–1821). He submitted the scenario to Georges d'Espèrès, the curator of the Palais National de Fontainebleau and a novelist and

historian of the Napoleonic era. D'Espèrès wrote: "The result is amazing. If you continue in the same way you will have created a picture of Napoleon that will permit no one to change a single characteristic. I get the impression of something monumental but perfectly balanced ... This is the opinion of a man who has lived with the image of Napoleon before his eyes for thirty years of his life." Gance insisted on historical authenticity: "With Napoleon I take on the greatest drama of all time. I am held, by this very fact, to rigorous historical accuracy and I must sacrifice nothing to this immortal truth." However, he allowed himself artistic licence to interpret the spirit of his hero and the age. This has detracted from the film's reputation as an historical document.

ABEL GANCE: HOW I SAW NAPOLEON

It was not to make a banal historical drama that I attempted to restore to life the prodigious visage of one who described himself as a piece of rock cast into space. My early research revealed the need for technical developments in photography to stretch the cinematographic style. The triple screen is one such development. I used it to combine three expressions: physiological, cerebral and emotional. It demands an effort of comprehension to fuse these three elements in a sixteenth of a second. Open your hearts, spirits and eyes! My method in *Napoleon* has been to make an actor of the spectator. Napoleon is the perpetual conflict between the great revolutionary who wanted the Revolution in peace and made war in the vain hope of finding lasting peace. Napoleon is a climax in his own time, which was a climax in time itself. And the cinema, for me, is the climax of life.

From Gance's program note,
COMMENT J'AI VU NAPOLEON, 1927



N A P O L E O N

PLAYED BY ALBERT DIEUDONNÉ

GANCE intended to use four actors to play Napoleon through the six episodes—cadet, young artillery officer who would last until the Coronation, another for the Spanish and Russian campaigns, another for the exile on St. Helena. Physical appearance was more important than acting ability. Gance imagined his young Napoleon as the surprisingly slim figures in Antoine-Jean Gros's portrait, "Napoleon sur le pont d'Arcole". The main contender for the part was the Russian actor, Ivan Mosjoukine. He was ten years too old for the part but was very popular in France. He demanded a high salary. Gance hesitated and continued his search, testing, among others, his friend Albert Dieudonné. Gance said, "His makeup was poor, and when he put on a wig he looked like an old woman." Dieudonné wanted the role of Napoleon more than anyone. He had been fascinated by him since childhood. Now, at thirty five years old, he was too old and had put on too much weight to play the young officer. He went on an intensive slimming diet, eating only green beans, then went to Fontainebleau where Gance was working. "I mightn't have recaptured my youth," said Dieudonné, "but I had regained my slim figure." A uniform was made for him by Grenier, the theatrical costumier, and he did some screen tests for Gance. Dieudonné remembered that the curator of Fontainebleau, d'Esparbès, suggested he try out his costume on the nightwatchman. "The old man was sleeping on a bench. I flung open the door. 'Asleep on duty, Mathard?', I demanded. The poor fellow woke up, completely bewildered. He rubbed his eyes and stared at me. I disappeared. The next day he said to d'Esparbès, 'I'm not joking, sir, yesterday I saw Napoleon. I've kidded you in the past but this time I really saw him.' The poor soul died eight days later. But at least he died having seen Napoleon. His dream had come true, as had mine when I played Napoleon for Abel Gance."

T H E F I

In 1923 Gance produced his first budget for "five [later eight, then six] super-films." He speculated that, for an outlay of 7,238,000 francs, the film would earn a total of 75,600,000 francs. Charles Pathé agreed to participate but was unable to provide total finance. The project was saved in 1924 when the Russian entrepreneur Vladimir Wengeroff and German industrialist Hugo Stinnes became interested and formed Westi, the Consortium Wengeroff-Stinnes. Negotiations were interrupted when the French press fanned the flames of post-war nationalism by reporting that the memory of France's greatest hero was to be polluted by German involvement. They exaggerated the extent of German investment but the story unsettled Charles Pathé. When the contract was signed in May 1924, Pathé's investment was down by half a million francs. Westi was the major investor. Gance committed to complete

LEFT: Dieudonné, age 4, already Napoleonic

CENTER: Dieudonné as Napoleon

RIGHT: Dieudonné and Gance



ON L M I N G

the first film by December 31, 1924, and the series by March 31, 1926.

Gance chose as his headquarters Billancourt Studios just outside Paris. The studios were the base for Russian filmmakers in France, many of whom worked on Gance's film. The making of the film was chronicled by the journalist René Jeanne, Jean Arroy (also responsible for the making of film *Autour de Napoléon*), Jean Mitry, and Stéphane Vernes—the pseudonym of Simone Surdieu, Gance's secretary and script girl. Kevin Brownlow included these memoirs and more in his book *Napoleon—Abel Gance's Classic Film*.

Gance produced two scenarios: the *découpage littéraire*—the continuity of the film—and the *découpage* technique, written in a vivid style to inspire his technical staff. Billancourt's chief engineer, Russian-born Simon Feldman, was attached to the production. Gance's insistence on camera movement made the generator truck Feldman's most valuable invention. Made from a stripped down Sima Violet cycle car and powered by a Homelight dynamo, it provided power for the motors that cranked the cameras when filming on location. The camera that solved most of Gance's mobility problems was a Debrie. Lighter than most cameras, it was equipped with a wide-angle lens—35mm—for working in confined spaces. For hand-held work Gance used Debrie's Photociné Sept. Other photographic developments were: the Brachyscope, an extreme



wide angle lens—an attachment designed to be placed in front of the 50mm lens converting the field of view to the equivalent of 20mm—and the Wollensak soft-focus lens, used to give iridescent shimmer to scenes at the Hotel Chantierine or the Bal des Victimes.

The first scene, Napoleon's garret at Brienne, was shot at Billancourt studios in January 1925. The first shot was a closeup of Napoleon talking to his pet eagle. The next scenes were in the dormitory and are recorded in Jean Arroy's film *Autour de Napoléon*; the camera is mounted on a moving platform and sweeps down the entire length of the dormitory. Then the portable camera films the boys in their beds from the point of view of the angry Napoleon. Mundviller, the cameraman, is pushed by Simon Feldman on a platform like a skateboard with the camera on his chest. Then came the pillow fight. One of the boys, Emile Billoré, recalled that stagehands threw down handfuls of feathers. The filming lasted for three days as the fight had to be repeated many times to achieve the checkerboard effect of four then nine separate images. Except for the minute area being photographed, the whole frame was matted out by a system of shutters. The film was then wound

back and the next image exposed. In February 1925 a telegram arrived: SNOW HAS FALLEN. The company set off for Briançon in the Hautes-Alpes to film the snowball fight. For a week there was no school at Briançon as the children were to appear as extras. René Jeanne recalled that the children froze between takes and their parents demanded that they go back to school. However, Gance managed to persuade parents and the boys alike to do three more days filming, an example of what Jeanne described as Gance's "charm of dynamite".

The scene was full of technical achievements: the portable camera was mounted on a sledge allowing it to move round the action, or speed through the middle of it; it was strapped to director of photography Kruger's chest; a camera had been adapted to pan in a circle by remote control, its cables buried in the snow. The *'ascenseur de prise de vues'*—a crane mounted on a sledge inspired by the guillotine—was tried out here. The camera was hauled up and the sledge pushed towards the action as the camera descended on a rope.

In March '25, Pierre Bonardi and Henri Andréani went to Corsica to

ABOVE: Filming over, the combatants in the famous snowball fight pose for the camera.

'VIVE BONAPARTE! VIVE LA RÉPUBLIQUE!'

arrange official permission to film there. The island was in the throes of an election campaign, the Bonapartists fighting to regain power from the Republicans. The Republican mayor was against parading a Bonaparte look-alike through the streets of Ajaccio. He capitulated when reminded of the economic benefits the film would bring to Corsica. Gance's company arrived in April. Simone Surdieu wrote, "The troupe has been the focal point of everyone in the town ever since they filed onto a bus to the outskirts of town in their historical costumes. When Dieudonné passes by, the crowd runs to see him and wonders at his resemblance to Bonaparte." The filmic tour de force to be shot here was the chase of Napoleon by Paoli's men. It was shot in extreme long shots, pit shots with the camera buried in a hole, and rapid traveling shots. Feldman explained, "They were shot from an open passenger car with three cameras. Two on tripods, one facing back, one sideways, the third fixed to the running board by a special clamp. This filmed the legs of the

horses. The dynamo was fixed beside the driver and I stood up, operating the switchboard." A camera was put on the back of a horse. "You couldn't use a battery," said Feldman, "I used two steel bottles of compressed air either side of the saddle. The camera was a Debie Parvo. The motor was for a steam engine, but I used compressed air instead of steam. We had two horses; on one was the saddle, with the camera, on the other was Kruger, who had to open and close the valves on the cylinders to make the motor work." The sequences filmed in Corsica are among the most beautiful in the film. Shot in the springtime, the island was an Arcadian idyll for Gance's company.

They were jolted back to reality in Paris when, on June 21, Westi withdrew its investment. Gance had already spent 5 million francs. On August 29 the company received dismissal notices assuring them that they would be recalled when circumstances permitted. Months went by. Gance wrote, "The rocks of St. Helena are further away than ever, I am like



Don Quixote tilting at the windmills of finance." Rescue came when the Société Générale de Films offered to finance the first episode of the film. Gance agreed to a completion date of October 12, 1926. The film was financed piecemeal by the efforts of Jacques Grinieff, another Russian who Gance described as, "the father of my Napoleon, the only one who understands me."

During this period of financial insecurity Gance, still at Billancourt, filmed the storm at sea in which Napoleon escapes from Corsica in the studio swimming pool. Ten 500 litre barrels of water supplied the waves, fire hoses the rain and airplane propellers the wind. Arroy wrote, "There is no need to explain what courage and stamina are needed when 1,000 lbs. of water are falling on you . . . Dieudonné emerged from his boat—almost literally dead . . ." The Siege of Toulon was tackled once production was resumed. Gance had decided to shoot this in the studio where he would have control over lighting and rainfall. The armourer, Lemirt, was in charge of explosives but left an assistant in charge for one day. Anxious to keep the explosive dry his assistant placed a kilo of magnesium under a canopy where the cameramen were filming. It ex-





ploded, injuring nine people including Gance, who was put out of action for eight days.

Striking workers at the Renault car factory at Billancourt were employed as the revolutionary hordes at the Club des Cordeliers. Seven hundred and seventy-one were crammed on to the set for the introduction of *La Marseillaise*. "You only had to walk on the stage to feel the electric atmosphere," said Harry-Krimer, playing Rouget de Lisle. An automatic camera glided on a wooden trail overhead, other cameras were propelled on dollies. Gance asked them to sing the *Marseillaise* twelve times, getting louder each time. They were led by the celebrated singer, Koubitsky, playing Danton. Simone Surdieu wrote, "The transfiguration in the hearts of the extras could be seen on their faces. Many amongst them cried."

Gance asked Feldman to translate into visuals Victor Hugo's phrase, "To be a member of the Convention is to be a wave on the ocean." Feldman explained, "I decided to give the camera the movement of a wave. I ordered three sets of parallel beams connected to little camera platforms. The devices swung in an arc overhead, like a trapeze, but to keep the crowd below continuously in view,

the platforms were supported by metal arms on ball bearings, and were always parallel to the floor. The device was called '*le pendule parallélogrammique*'."

René Jeanne was present at the final location during a heatwave in August 1926: "Toulon and its outskirts, Tamaris and la Valette, from la Garde to Pauline, are at fever pitch. The little town of LaGarde is humming, its casino having become a refectory, its cafés dressing rooms, its squares artillery depots. Camera-men and actors have arrived so let the filming begin! The scenes to be filmed are the siege of Toulon and the arrival of Bonaparte, three years later, at the headquarters of the Army of Italy and the army's departure for Lombardy. The army and navy have lent their support for all these scenes. In a few words Abel Gance explains their roles to his actors. He reads to the crowds of young soldiers a page of Victor Hugo, some lines of Stendahl and a fragment of a letter by Joubert, then gives the signal for action. The day the scenes are shot that make us feel the privation of the army, tears run down the soldiers' cheeks. For the march-past, two thousand men are amassed under a blazing sun. Bonaparte appears on his white horse, followed by Murat

and LeMarois. He passes at a gallop then disappears in a cloud of dust. A spontaneous cry unfolds, 'Vive Bonaparte! Vive la République!' The faces, running with sweat, turn towards the silhouette of their general whose pale face contorts with uncontrolled emotion. Suddenly a voice calls *La Victoire en chantant...* the whole army sings and the crowd massed at the sides of the road join in. The filming was complete.

Returning to Paris, Arroy wrote, "Our eyes are full of dreams, and modern Paris seems dull, lifeless... Suddenly we are all projected into the 20th century. We are no longer of our time and we live in the past." Gance had overshot his deadline and his budget—the final cost was estimated at 17 million francs. His Napoleonic epic could go no further. He had 400,000 metres of film which he set about editing with Marguerite Beaugé. The film was premiered at the Paris Opéra on April 7, 1927, at a gala in aid of the war wounded.

OPPOSITE: On location near Ajaccio: Eugénie Buffet, Felix Guglielmi, Yvette Diedudonné, Simone Surdieu, Albert Dieudonné, Abel Gance, Emile Pierre, Annabella, Marguerite Gance, Rauzena, Morlas

ABOVE: *Napoleon* in polyvision

KEVIN BROWNLOW AND NAPOLEON

I first encountered the film when I was a schoolboy. I saw two reels on my 9.5 mm home movie projector. I was stunned by the cinematic flair—I had never seen anything comparable—and I set out to find more of it, and more about it. I was puzzled by the antipathy the film aroused among critics and historians who remembered the original release. I expected with each rediscovered sequence that they would be proved right, and the quality would take a plunge. But the more I added to the film, the better it became. And eventually I discovered that most of those writers had seen one of the butchered versions.

When I became a feature-film editor, I began to earn enough to do a proper restoration. I was given facilities by the National Film Archive (who eventually took the project over). Whenever the work-in-progress was screened at the National Film Theatre, the place was always packed, the reaction always very strong. People stayed up all night to watch it at the Telluride Film Festival, Colorado, in 1979, even though it was projected outdoors in freezing temperatures. Watching from his hotel window was Abel Gance himself, then in his ninetieth year.

The climax came in 1980, when David Gill and I staged the first performance with live orchestra for Thames Television and the British Film Institute at the Empire Theatre, Leicester Square, London. Carl Davis created the massive score in three months and he conducted the Wren Orchestra. We were all intensely nervous before the show. What right had we to expect the public to sit still for an old silent film lasting five

hours? Of course, they did not sit still. They rose to their feet and gave it a standing ovation. It was the most moving occasion I have ever attended in the cinema.

This is the third full-scale restoration of *Napoleon*. Based on the 1980 version, an extended version was produced by Bambi Ballard using all the material held by the Cinémathèque Française. This extra material was brought over to the National Film and Television Archive and copied by João Oliveira. Thanks to the financial support of Erik Anker-Petersen, a new restoration was begun in 1999.

The material imported from France has been copied and cut into the cutting copy. It makes a difference—the additional footage is of high quality and with the additional titles make the narrative easier to follow, and more absorbing.

The titles for the old restoration were made very cheaply and had no connection with the bold 18th century typefaces used in



the original. We have re-shot (and re-translated) all the titles using the original typefaces—Roman for descriptive and italic for dialogue—and this makes a considerable difference to the look of the film. We have found the original main titles and most of the credits and can reproduce these exactly. We are sticking to the French title *Napoleon vu par Abel Gance* as it is difficult to translate.

The first episode—Napoleon's schooldays in Brienne—were photographed by a different cameraman to the rest of the film, and several people complained that we were running it slightly too fast. So we are now projecting Brienne at 18 frames per second and the music has been adjusted accordingly. (The remainder goes at 20 frames per second.)

Where we have found better quality material for the identical scene, we have used it—but in some cases we have found scenes of superior photographic quality, but the performance is inferior. These have not been used. For instance, in the Toulon section, Napoleon is seen dismounting from his horse twice—a bad piece of editing by an assistant trying to make up yet another negative. We have remained with the better scene—in which



he dismounts once, very professionally—even though it is marred by having the soundtrack area blanked out. In the wedding, the new material is of much better quality and we have used it for the first half—but Dieudonné's performance is not as good in the latter half of the sequence and we have returned to the original, despite the signs of decomposition.

There are some substitutions of complete sequences—such as the Marseillaise—because the reels discovered are clearly definitive. These reels also indicated where tinting should start and end and provided samples so we can reproduce these exactly.

Some of the new material simply did not fit. How can you use the Corsican *gendarmerie* chasing Napoleon uphill at the opening of the chase across Corsica sequence when the opening we have shows the horsemen in completely different terrain? In the *Double Storm*, it is odd how the new negative matches the old one shot

for shot, yet with each one differing by a few frames.

The first time I did the restoration, I felt lucky to find anything extra. This time I often had three versions of the same scene, but played or directed in a slightly different way. Sometimes, the decision was made for me. Mme Tallien arrives at the *Bal des Victimes* and simply stands there, looking elegant. In another—probably reshot—version, Mme. Tallien arrives and is showered with rose petals. Sometimes the playing was better, but the camera angle slightly inferior, or vice versa. I therefore had enormous difficulty in deciding which to use. The most taxing of these sequences was a brand new "Death of Marat" sequence—twice as long as the old one. I decided to go with this new one, but when we projected it, we realized there was something seriously wrong with the makeup on Marat, which obviously had caused Gance to cut it down himself. In one or two other places, Gance had made cuts rather than

additions, and I generally followed him. Sometimes it was necessary to use an extra scene of no particular merit in order to explain the excellent scene that follows—as with Joséphine playing the harpsichord which is followed by a delightful scene of her daughter talking to her pet parrot about her mother and Napoleon.

KEVIN BROWNLOW

Excerpted from Kevin Brownlow's introduction to *Napoleon—Abel Gance*, edited by Bambi Ballard, Faber and Faber 1990

OPPOSITE TOP: Vladimir Roudenko as the young Napoleon

ABOVE: Abel Gance and Kevin Brownlow photographed by Chris Menges during the filming of *The Charm of Dynamite*, Paris, 1967



CARL DAVIS AND NAPOLEON

Silent films are international. They have little to do with language and everything to do with images. The *Hollywood* series, on which I'd worked with Kevin Brownlow and David Gill, proved this. Thames Television found themselves with a winner that they sold worldwide. They decided to invest in a full-length silent. *Napoleon* was commissioned in August 1980 and the premier was to be November 30th. I had 3½ months to assemble a five hour score. There was not enough time to write a 100% original score and I fell back on the method of the silent era—to select from the masters music that fitted emotionally

and was the appropriate length. There was a great musical richness in Europe at the end of the 18th century. Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven were all contemporary. As well as a textbook of French history, *Napoleon* could become a textbook of European music of the time.

Beethoven had a special relationship with Napoleon. He was living in Vienna when Napoleon shelled the city, he wrote about him in letters and the third 'Eroica' Symphony was originally dedicated to him. Symphonic works are often too dense for film, but Beethoven composed many works that had the right character and dynamism. I also arranged revolutionary songs and Corsican folk songs for Corsican sequences. However, there are areas of the film which went beyond period music: most importantly the eagle, Gance's idea of Napoleon as an heroic leader who would forge a national identity for France. This called for a romantic theme that

did not exist in 18th century music. In other areas the montages represent the climax of an action sequence so the music must be strong and rhythmic. The music finds the rhythm of the images, the reverse of today when film editors, searching for a rhythm, cut to music.

The 1980 premiere was a huge success. Prompted by this Jeremy Isaacs took the Napoleonic decision to commission a series of silent classics for Channel 4, restored by Brownlow and Gill with music by Davis. Starting with *The Crowd*, we did 2 or 3 video productions a year. The work was heavy but joyous. The program covered the whole genre—comedies, war films, epics, and one-offs like *Greed* and *The Wind*. Some were done specifically for video but in recent years virtually all of them have been exhumed and performed.

In 1980, it never occurred to me that *Napoleon* should be treated

like any other film to be measured and short-listed. Consequently, in the 80s when it was often revived, I would open my score to find page after page with no visual clues. Now, 30 years on, I have been able to apply the technique I have developed over 30 silent features back to *Napoleon*. The new material in this restoration informs us about the characters of Violine and Joséphine. Violine is hopelessly smitten with Napoleon, like the French people themselves. She follows him and eventually is taken into Joséphine's household. Violine's theme is from a Beethoven 'Bagatelle' and the music for her suicide attempt is from his only ballet, 'The Creature of Prometheus'. Joséphine is strangely disturbed by Napoleon. She agrees to marry him and makes a deal with Barras that he will be promoted to general. This intrigue has not been clear in previous versions. She is also frivolous, capricious and extremely feminine. We see her trying on clothes and again dressing, wearing little more than lace. In a new scene she offers Violine's father a job in her household. I use the same excerpt from 'Prometheus' for both of these scenes but in the second instance, having more space, I continued with Beethoven's very triumphant orchestration. This echoes Violine's sense of achievement that she is now installed in Napoleon's household.

I was invited to conduct for the film in Paris in 1989, the bicentenary of the Revolution. During the Battle of Toulon, Napoleon orders his men to turn the cannons round saying, 'Impossible n'est pas français!' The audience rose to its feet and cheered. I suddenly knew what Gance was after.

CARL DAVIS, 2000



ABEL GANCE

AND THE MUSIC OF LIGHT

Gance was born in Paris October 25, 1889. His first film, *Le Digue or Pour Sauver la Hollande*, was made in 1911. In 1916, four years before *Caligari*, he made the experimental film *La Folie de Docteur Tube* (with Dieudonné's uncle). The story of a doctor who succeeded in distorting light rays, each scene resembled a Surrealist painting. Because of its revolutionary technique, the film was never released. A run of commercially and critically successful films, *Mater Dolorosa* (1917), *La Dixieme Symphonie* (1918) and *J'accuse* (1918), established him as the most important young director in France. His dark masterpiece, *La Roue*, in which he developed the use of rapid cutting, followed in 1923. Jean Cocteau said, "There is cinema before and after *La Roue*, just like there is painting before and after Picasso."

In 1927 *Napoleon vu par Abel Gance* was a pioneering work of technical virtuosity. Of all the silent films usually compared with it—*The Last Laugh*, *Variety*, *Metropolis*, *Battleship Potemkin*—only *The Last Laugh* went into production before it. He made a sound version of *Mater Dolorosa* in 1932 and of *J'accuse* in 1938. He made 16 other sound films, many with historical subjects: *Lucrece Borgia* (1935); *Un grand amour de Beethoven* (1936); *Austerlitz* (1960); *Cyrano et d'Artagnan* (1963) but said of his later works, "I fell into the hands of commerce and lost myself." His career never regained the epic heights of *Napoleon vu par Abel Gance* which he continued to re-edit resulting in a sonorized version, *Napoleon Bonaparte* (1934), a reworked version of this in 1955 and *Bonaparte and the Revolution* in 1971.

"With Napoleon I have made a tangible effort toward a richer and more elevated form of cinema; let yourselves go completely with the images; do not react from a preconceived point of view. See in depth; do not persist in confusing that which moves with that which trembles, discern behind the images the traces of tears which often imbue them. Only after this effort will you know whether or not the journey into history that I have given you is a lesson or a poem. My aim has been to offer all weary hearts the most wholesome, sustaining and pleasant nourishment. That bread of dreams which, in our age of harsh necessities, become as indispensable as the music of light which will transform the great cinemas into cathedrals.

"In climactic sequences, I created a new technique, based on the strength of rhythm dominating the subject and violating our visual habits. I speculated on the simultaneous perception of images, not only of a second's duration but sometimes of an eighth of a second, so that the collision of my images causes a surge of abstract flashes that touch the soul rather than the eyes. Then, an invisible beauty is created which is not apparent on the film and is as difficult to explain as the perfume of a rose or the music of a symphony."

ABEL GANCE

From Gance's note to the audience in 1927

ABOVE: *Napoleon* freeze-frame

LEFT: *Napoleon* at the Empire, Leicester Square, November 30, 1980, with the orchestra conducted by Carl Davis.

Photo: Laurie Lewis



BEHIND THE SCENES

KEVIN BROWNLOW has done more to raise appreciation of the silent cinema than anyone in the world, beginning with his landmark book *The Parade's Gone By* (1968) and with its companion series for Thames Television, *Hollywood*. Thames then sponsored a showing of Brownlow's first *Napoleon* reconstruction at the 1980 London Film Festival. That event led to other "live cinema" silent film events produced by Brownlow and his partner, the late David Gill, all with musical scores by Carl Davis.

As a film editor, Brownlow worked on Tony Richardson's *The Charge of The Light Brigade* (1968). With Andrew Mollo, he directed two feature films, *It Happened Here* (1964), and *Winstanley* (1975).

Brownlow's first documentary, *Charm of Dynamite* (1968), focuses on the career of the then-unsung French master Abel Gance. Brownlow and Gill made other critically-acclaimed documentaries, including *The Unknown Chaplin*, *Buster Keaton: A Hard Act to Follow*, *Harold Lloyd: The Third Genius*, *D.W. Griffith: Father of Film*, and *Cinema Europe*. In 2010, Brownlow was presented with an Honorary Academy Award by AMPAS for his lifetime achievements.

CARL DAVIS Composer/conductor Carl Davis (CBE) was born in New York in 1936 and moved to the U.K. in 1960. As both conductor and composer, Davis is a true music maker and all-around musician. He has changed the face of concerts as we know them, making classical music both accessible and varied, and is a consummate showman and entertainer. His career has spanned many genres, from silent film performances to his popular themed concerts such as "An Evening with James Bond" and "Oscar Winners". He is perhaps most well known for his music for television including the series *The World At War*, BBC's *Pride and Prejudice*, ITV's *Goodnight Mr. Tom*, and the award-winning film *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. For over 30 years, Davis has been a frequent collaborator with Kevin Brownlow, creating over 50 silent film scores. He considers his *Napoleon* score one of his proudest achievements. www.carldaviscollection.com.

OAKLAND EAST BAY SYMPHONY, this year celebrating its 23rd anniversary, is a critically acclaimed community-focused regional orchestra dedicated to serving the diverse population of the East Bay. Founded in 1988, OEBS moved to its present home, Oakland's Paramount Theatre, in the 1994-95 season. The Symphony's growth has resulted in such landmarks as the addition of its American Masterworks Series, including concert performances of Bernstein's *Mass*, Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, and Sondheim's *Follies*, in addition to numerous awards including ASCAP's Award for Adventurous Programming in 2006. The Symphony has gained wide recognition for its unique convergence of artistic excellence, community service

and education programs. Under the artistic leadership of Maestro Michael Morgan, it reaches over 75,000 people annually, with more than one-third of its operating budget dedicated to education and outreach programs. On the concert stage, OEBS has become an important positive force in bringing together the talents and resources of diverse artists, performing arts organizations and audiences from throughout the Bay Area. www.oeps.org.

PHOTOPLAY PRODUCTIONS, under the guiding hands of Patrick Stanbury and Kevin Brownlow, has established itself as one of the few companies specializing in the celebration of the art of silent film. Formed in 1990 with the late David Gill, Photoplay has made many landmark documentaries focused on cinema history, and produced restorations of major silent films, a large catalogue of which they offer for public screening worldwide. Their documentaries have included *Lon Chaney: A Thousand Faces* (2000), *Cecil B. DeMille: American Epic* (2003) and *Garbo* (2005). Feature restorations have included *The Chess Player* (1927), *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1921) and the project that started it all, Abel Gance's *Napoleon*. Photoplay is extremely proud to be working with the San Francisco Silent Film Festival to stage the US premiere of the full restoration of this extraordinary film. www.photoplay.co.uk

BFI is the lead body for film in the UK. Its ambition is to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive. It connects audiences to the widest choice of British and world cinema, while preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for present and future generations. It champions emerging and world-class film makers in the UK, investing in creative, distinctive, and entertaining work. BFI promotes British film and talent to the world with an eye toward growing the next generation of film makers and audiences. bfi.org.uk

THE FILM PRESERVE, under the direction of Robert Harris, specializes in problematic film restoration and reconstruction. The company has been allied with both Zoetrope and Photoplay Productions since the late 1970s, initially supplying missing *Napoleon* material only found in the 1928 M-G-M version of the film, and then as part of the joint presentation with Zoetrope Studios of numerous live *Napoleon* events around the world. The Film Preserve generally works with large format production for intricate and involved reconstruction and restoration of classic films. Restorations have included *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Spartacus*, *My Fair Lady*, *Williamsburg: The Story of a Patriot*, *To Be Alive!*, as well as *The Godfather* and *The Godfather Part II*.

BEHIND THE SCENES

AMERICAN ZOETROPE Francis Ford Coppola decided he would name his future studio "Zoetrope" after receiving a gift of zoetropes from Mogens Scot-Hansen, founder of a studio called Lanterna Film and owner of a famous collection of early motion picture making equipment. While touring Europe, Coppola was introduced to alternative filmmaking equipment and inspired by the bohemian spirit of Lanterna Film. He decided he would build a deviant studio that would conceive and implement creative, unconventional approaches to filmmaking.

Upon his return home, Coppola and George Lucas set up the studio in a warehouse on San Francisco's Folsom Street in 1969 before moving to its North Beach home in the historic Sentinel Building in 1972.

In its first 30 years Zoetrope produced some of the most important films in American cinema, receiving fifteen Academy Awards and sixty-eight nominations. Four Zoetrope-produced films are included in the American Film Institute's top 100 American films.

In 1981-82, Francis Ford Coppola presented and toured the most complete extant version of *Napoleon*, with a score composed and conducted by Carmine Coppola.

www.zoetrope.com

SAN FRANCISCO SILENT FILM FESTIVAL was founded in 1994 to demonstrate the artistry, diversity, and enduring cultural value of silent movies, and to make sure these rare and vulnerable films remain accessible to current and future audiences. Today, SFSFF is an internationally recognized presenter of silent film with live music, renowned for the artistic and technical quality of its presentation, and for its masterful blend of art, scholarship, and showmanship. The organization produces the largest annual silent film festival outside of Italy, and has become a destination for filmmakers, historians, archivists, and other industry professionals and continues to attract thousands of film fans every year. While its annual July festival remains its flagship event, the SFSFF now hosts "live cinema" productions throughout the year. *Napoleon* is its most ambitious undertaking yet. www.silentfilm.org.

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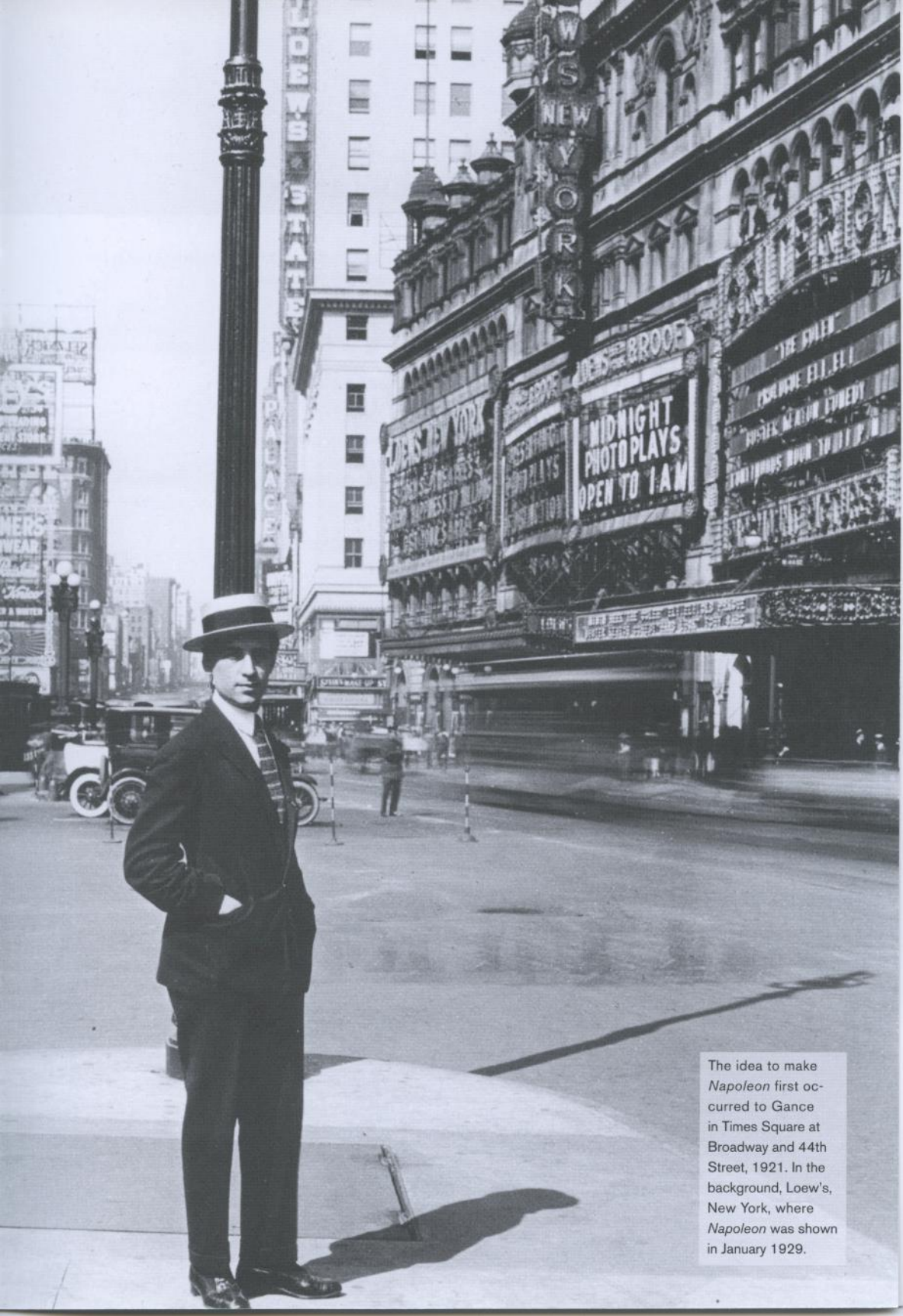


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The idea to make *Napoleon* first occurred to Gance in Times Square at Broadway and 44th Street, 1921. In the background, Loew's, New York, where *Napoleon* was shown in January 1929.

NAPOLÉON

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True art transcends time.

OPPOSITE: 'Les Ombres'—the ghosts in the Convention.
Gance regarded this sequences as the best in the picture.
Left to right: Louis Saint-Just (Abel Gance), Robespierre
(Edmond Van Daële), Danton (Alexandre Koubitsky), Marat
(Antonin Artaud), and Couthon (François Viguier)

