



True art transcends time.

SAN FRANCISCO
SILENT
FILM FESTIVAL

JULY 18-21, 2013
CASTRO THEATRE

SAN FRANCISCO SILENT FILM FESTIVAL

Welcome to our 18th summer festival. The San Francisco Silent Film Festival is a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating the public about silent film as an art form and as a culturally valuable historical record. Throughout the year, SFSFF produces events that showcase important titles from the silent era, often in restored or preserved prints, with live musical accompaniment by some of the world's finest practitioners of the art of putting music to film. 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 all 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, but these films were never meant to be viewed in silence and it is often obvious that music was a part of the production as well as the exhibition. The

absence of recording on the set, though, meant that the camera was free to move with a grace and elegance that allowed visual storytelling to flourish and made film more than just an adjunct to the stage.

It is through these films that the world first came to love movies and learned how to appreciate them as art. They have influenced every generation of filmmakers and continue to inspire audiences nearly a century after they were made.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Stacey Wisnia

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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THURSDAY JULY 18

7:00pm PRIX DE BEAUTÉ

Musical Accompaniment by Stephen Horne
Copresented by Consulate General of France, SF
Underwritten by an Anonymous Friend
Introduced by Rob Byrne

FRIDAY JULY 19

11:00am AMAZING TALES FROM THE ARCHIVES

Guest Presenters: Robert Byrne and Céline Ruivo
Musical Accompaniment by Stephen Horne
Underwritten by Iron Mountain Entertainment Services
Copresented by Berkeley Art Museum/Pacific Film Archive

2:00pm THE FIRST BORN

Musical Accompaniment by Stephen Horne

4:30pm TOKYO CHORUS

Musical Accompaniment by Günter Buchwald
Copresented by Center for Asian American Media
Introduced by Stephen Gong

7:00pm THE PATSY

Musical Accompaniment by the Mont Alto
Motion Picture Orchestra
Introduced by Mike Mashon

9:30pm THE GOLDEN CLOWN

Musical Accompaniment by the Matti Bye Ensemble
Special Support provided by the Barbro Osher
Pro Suecia Foundation
Copresented by the Film Noir Foundation and
MiDNiTES for MANiACS
Introduced by Eddie Muller

SATURDAY JULY 20

10:00am WINSOR McCAY: HIS LIFE AND ART, A Special Presentation by John Canemaker

Musical Accompaniment by Stephen Horne
Copresented by the Cartoon Art Museum and the
Walt Disney Family Museum

12:00noon THE HALF-BREED

Musical Accompaniment by Günter Buchwald
Introduced by Tracey Goessel

2:15pm LEGONG: DANCE OF THE VIRGINS

Musical Accompaniment by Gamelan Sekar Jaya and the
Club Foot Orchestra, conducted by Richard Marriott

4:00pm GRIBICHE

Musical Accompaniment by the Mont Alto
Motion Picture Orchestra
Special Support provided by the French American Cultural
Society; the Consulate General of France, SF; and
Ken and Marjorie Sauer
The SFSFF Award will be presented to the Cinémathèque
française at this program

6:30pm THE HOUSE ON TRUBNAYA SQUARE

Musical Accompaniment by Stephen Horne
Copresented by Berkeley Art Museum/Pacific Film Archive
Introduced by Susan Oxtoby

8:30pm THE JOYLESS STREET

Musical Accompaniment by the Matti Bye Ensemble
Copresented by the Goethe-Institut
Special Support provided by the Barbro Osher
Pro Suecia Foundation

SUNDAY JULY 21

10:00am KINGS OF (SILENT) COMEDY

Musical Accompaniment by Günter Buchwald
Copresented by the Exploratorium
Introduced by Leonard Maltin in a pre-recorded message

1:00pm THE OUTLAW AND HIS WIFE

Musical Accompaniment by the Matti Bye Ensemble
Underwritten by Fandor
Special Support provided by the Barbro Osher
Pro Suecia Foundation
Copresented by the Consulate General of Sweden, SF
Introduced by Jonathan Marlow

3:30pm THE LAST EDITION

Musical Accompaniment by Stephen Horne
Underwritten by McRoskey Mattress Company
Copresented by the California Historical Society and
San Francisco Film Society
Introduced by Robert Byrne

6:00pm THE WEAVERS

Musical Accompaniment by Günter Buchwald
Special Support provided by German Consulate General, SF
Copresented by the Goethe-Institut

8:30pm SAFETY LAST

Musical Accompaniment by the Mont Alto
Motion Picture Orchestra
Underwritten by Montine Hansl
Introduced by Suzanne Lloyd and Craig Barron

silentfilm.org

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MUSICIANS AT THE FESTIVAL

Günter Buchwald

Günter Buchwald is one of the pioneers of the renaissance of silent film music and one of the most experienced practitioners in the world. He has accompanied silent films for more than 25 years with a repertoire of 2000 titles and counting. He is director of the Silent Movie Music Company and conducts the Freiburg Filmharmonic Orchestra, which he founded in 1992. His experience in music, ranging widely from Baroque to Jazz, allows him a generous stylistic variety in musical improvisation. Since 1984, he has appeared regularly at film festivals from Berlin to Zurigo.

Gamelan Sekar Jaya and Club Foot Orchestra

Called the “the finest Balinese gamelan outside of Indonesia” by Indonesia’s *Tempo* magazine, Gamelan Sekar Jaya is native to the San Francisco Bay Area. The score for *Legong: Dance of the Virgins* calls for string quartet, trumpet, clarinet, and a variety of traditional gamelan instruments and was written by Richard Marriott, founder of Club Foot Orchestra, and Balinese composer and gamelan musician I Made Subandi, currently a guest artist with Sekar Jaya. Club Foot Orchestra joins Gamelan Sekar Jaya to accompany the film, with Marriott conducting.

Stephen Horne

Stephen Horne has long been considered one of the leading silent film accompanists. He is based at London’s BFI Southbank but plays at all the major UK venues and at numerous festivals in Europe and North America. Although principally a pianist, he often incorporates flute, accordion, and keyboards into his performances, sometimes simultaneously. In addition to his work in silent film, he occasionally collaborates with a small group that re-creates magic lantern shows.

Matti Bye Ensemble

Matti Bye has been a composer and silent-movie piano performer at the Swedish Film Institute since 1989. He performs regularly at the Giornate del Cinema Muto, Bologna’s Il Cinema Ritrovato, the Berlin International Film Festival, and the Midnight Sun Film Festival in Sodankylä, Finland, as well as at other European film festivals. The ensemble consists of Bye, Lotta Johansson, Kristian Holmgren, and Leo Svensson on a variety of instruments, including the piano, glockenspiel, violin, cello, and musical saw.

Mont Alto Motion Picture Orchestra

Based in Colorado, the Mont Alto Motion Picture Orchestra revives the sound of the silent film orchestra. Using an extensive library of “photoplay music” that once belonged to movie theater orchestra leaders, Mont Alto compiles film scores by carefully selecting music to suit each scene in the film. The quintet—cellist David Short, clarinetist Brian Collins, trumpeter Dawn Kramer, pianist Rodney Sauer, and violinist Britt Swenson—is versatile enough to play music ranging from Tchaikovsky to the Charleston. (See the interview with Rodney Sauer on page 56.)



PRIX DE BEAUTÉ

Musical Accompaniment by Stephen Horne

Directed by Augusto Genina, France, 1930

Cast Louise Brooks (Lucienne Garnier) Georges Charlia (André) Jean Bradin (Prince Adolphe de Grabovsky) Augusto Bandini (Antonin) André Nicolle (Assistant editor) Yves Glad (The maharajah) Gaston Jacquet (Duke de la Tour Chalgrin) Alex Bernard (The photographer) Marc Zilbousky (The manager), with Raymond Sonny and Fanny Clair **Production** Sofar (La Société des Films Artistiques) **Producer** Romain Pines **Story** Augusto Genina, René Clair, Bernard Zimmer, and Alessandro De Stefani **Scenario** René Clair and G.W. Pabst **Photography** Rudolf Maté and Louis Née **Editor** Edmond T. Gréville **Sets** Robert Gys **Costumes** Jean Patou **Print Source** Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna

Arguably no movie star has ever been so thoroughly rehabilitated in popular esteem—going from footnote to icon—as Louise Brooks. In her brief career heyday, she was a Hollywood up-and-comer whose career self-sabotage came too early to afford her the protection an established star might have had from executive wrath. The European films she traipsed off to do, now considered masterpieces, were neither critical nor commercial successes at the time; the “natural” acting in them that rivets us now was dismissed as monotonous and inexpressive. The last and least known of them, *Prix de beauté*, wasn’t even seen in the U.S. until nearly three decades later.

At the time it was hard to imagine *Prix de beauté* would be Brooks’s final starring role. The extent to which she’d burned her bridges back in Hollywood was not yet clear. In late 1928, as she finished *The Canary Murder Case* (playing the singing “canary” who’s murdered), her Paramount contract came up for renewal, and she fully expected her salary—which was minuscule compared to well-known flappers like Clara Bow and Colleen Moore—to get at least the minimum bump-up. Instead, the studio played hardball, saying she could stay at her current level or leave. They certainly didn’t expect her to do the latter. But then Brooks had always been an impetuous, hot-tempered type. She’d entered movies reluctantly, preferring stage work, and scrambled back to the East Coast every chance she got.

The advice to quit came from her wealthy then-lover, George Marshall (a laundry business tycoon, not the actor). Out of work, she accepted an offer—purportedly because Marshall wanted a European vacation—to make Pandora’s Box in Berlin for G.W. Pabst, an esteemed director with a famous property. (Though the Americans had, in fact, heard of neither.) That movie ultimately made Brooks a legend, but not for some time. When it was completed, she returned to the U.S., ignoring frantic messages from Paramount. The still-unreleased *Canary Murder Case* was being reworked as a part-talkie to cash in on the sudden sound craze. Brooks was urgently needed in California to shoot and loop dialogue. Though much money was dangled, she was still in a peevish (and travel-weary) mood. Her refusal forced the studio to dub another actress’s voice, and the fallout got her unofficially blacklisted.

Not that she cared, for the moment. Her beloved Pabst, the only director she’d ever enjoyed working for, bade her return to Europe to make a film for René Clair, which the French director had written specifically for her. But upon her arrival in Paris, Clair greeted her with the news that the film’s financing was in disarray and might never come together; he was quitting the project. Forced to wait it out by the contract she’d signed, Brooks got another bailout from Pabst, this time offering immediate work in the quickly put together *Diary of a Lost Girl*. Shortly after that film was finished, *Prix de beauté* came to life

again, with accomplished Italian expatriate Augusto Genina now directing a version of Clair and Pabst's screenplay.

It was a role perfect for Brooks's fresh, indelible "look" and for her natural high spirits. She plays Lucienne, a Parisian typist who enters a newspaper beauty contest as a lark and is informed she's won just as she's begging to pull out because of the furious objections of her beau André (Georges Charlia). Competing against women of other nationalities for the title "Miss Europe" (also one of the film's release titles), she enjoys all the glamour, excitement, and opportunity that had been absent from her humdrum life, including the amorous attentions of a prince (Jean Bradin). But André's jealousy and possessiveness know no bounds and ultimately take the film down a darker road.

Beauty pageants were still a relatively novel object of public curiosity at the time, and Genina brings a near-documentary feel to much of the early film.



More novel still was the ambitious script's gender dynamic. While a typical movie of the era (and for many years after) found the career girl coming to her senses and realizing that all she really wants is to stay home and do hubby's washing, here Lucienne is clearly oppressed by André's controlling love.

The production went smoothly enough, despite Genina's frequent exasperation with his star who saw no reason to slow down her partying just because she was working all day. In his memoirs he recalled that they "set her up in a big chair and made her up [for the scene] while she was still sleeping." Nonetheless, she looks gorgeous and is guilelessly appealing. Friends later said it was the performance that most resembled her offscreen personality.

Even that didn't get said until much, much later, however. Astonishingly, *Pandora's Box* and *Diary of a Lost Girl* had been dismissed by press and public, in part because these silent features had arrived just in time to be considered passé in a new "all-talking, all-singing, all-dancing" world. Released in mid-1930, *Prix de beauté* seemed even more anachronistic. Its creakily pasted-on sound effects and few, awkwardly post-synched dialogue scenes were so two-years-ago. (Brooks's voice was dubbed by a French actress.) Even as Brooks earned some kudos for her performance, particularly from the French critics, the film was a quick flop in Europe and didn't even merit a U.S. release.

Never a wise guardian of her earnings, Brooks was soon in need of a job and glumly traipsed back to

Louise Brooks, Georges Charlia and Augusto Bandini

her detested Hollywood. Now it was Hollywood's turn to show its disdain. The best she could do was a dreadful two-reel comedy (playing a scandalized movie star in *Windy Riley Goes Hollywood* under the pseudonymous direction of scandal casualty Fatty Arbuckle), supporting roles in two mediocre programmers (*It Pays to Advertise*, *God's Gift to Women*), and nondescript leading lady roles in two grade-Z westerns (opposite Buck Jones in *Empty Saddles* and the pre-Stagecoach John Wayne in *Overland Stage Raiders*). She was still her own worst enemy, career-wise. When *Beggars of Life* director William Wellman wanted her again against all odds for an important role in the gangster classic *Public Enemy*, she blew off that golden opportunity to visit yet another boyfriend in New York. By 1940, the situation was dire enough that she moved back to a hermit-like existence in her native Wichita, Kansas. A few years later she returned to the Big Apple.

She had truly been forgotten. Then, starting in the early 1950s, *Pandora's Box* began being dusted off and hailed as a masterpiece—and its MIA star as a revelation. Painstakingly trying to remake herself as a writer (she wrote, and burned, two complete memoirs), Brooks was variably amused, grateful, and typically cranky about a gradual resurrection that fast developed elements of cult adulation. For her, the best aspect was finding new creative expressions hotly sought after—several of her jewel-like, autobiographically tinged articles on Hollywood, Pabst, and fellow stars are preserved in the collection *Lulu in Hollywood*, which underwent a second printing before her death in 1985 at age 78.

Less frequently revived than her other European films, *Prix de beauté* has been recently restored in a silent version by the Cineteca del Comune di Bologna from a silent copy with Italian intertitles from the Cineteca Italiana and a French sound copy from the Cinémathèque française.

—Dennis Harvey



Courtesy of Thomas Gladysz



AMAZING TALES FROM THE ARCHIVES

Céline Ruivo discusses PHONO-CINÉMA-THÉÂTRE

Curator of the film collection at the Cinémathèque française, Céline Ruivo has been instrumental in the restoration of the sound components of Phono-Cinéma-Théâtre, an attraction at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1900 that featured live and synchronized music to moving images of actors, dancers, singers of opera and operetta, and stars of the music hall famous at the time. A holder of two master's degrees from the Sorbonne and a Certificate of Film Preservation from the L. Jeffrey Selznick School of Film Preservation at George Eastman House, Ruivo is currently finishing her Ph.D. She has done extensive research on the history of Technicolor and been involved in maintaining the collections of the Associated Press, the National Gallery of Art's 16mm educational films, Gaumont's silent films, and the Centre Pompidou's avant-garde works. She has written film notes for the Cinémathèque française's public programs and Lobster Films' Europa Film Treasures online releases, as well as provided subtitle translations for the Cinematheque Ontario (since renamed the TIFF Cinematheque).

Robert Byrne on restoring THE HALF-BREED

An independent film preservationist and president of the board of the San Francisco Silent Film Festival, Robert Byrne discusses the recent restoration of Douglas Fairbanks's *The Half-Breed*, directed by one of Hollywood's most prolific directors, Allan Dwan, for Triangle Film Corporation. Specializing in silent-era film restoration, Byrne has worked in conjunction with EYE Film Institute Netherlands, the Cinémathèque française, Photoplay Productions, and the Niles Essanay Silent Film Museum on restoration projects that include: *Shoes* (1916), *The Spanish Dancer* (1923), *Twin Peaks Tunnel* (1917), and most recently *The Last Edition* (1925) and *The Half-Breed* (1916), all of which have shown at the Silent Film Festival. His articles and reviews have been published in the *Journal of Film Preservation*, *The Moving Image*, and *Nisimazine*. He has also contributed program notes for the Silent Film Festival and le Giornate del Cinema Muto in Pordenone, Italy. He holds a master's of arts in Preservation and Presentation of the Moving Image from the University of Amsterdam and was the 2011 recipient of the Haghefilm Foundation Fellowship and a 2010 preservation grant from the National Film Preservation Foundation.



Left: *The Half-Breed*

Opposite Page: Cléo de Mérode



MILES MANDER
MADELEINE CARROLL

DEN FÖRSTFÖDDA

EN  FILM

THE FIRST BORN

Musical accompaniment by Stephen Horne

Directed by Miles Mander, Great Britain, 1928

Cast Miles Mander (Sir Hugo Boycott) Madeleine Carroll (Madeleine, his wife) John Loder (David, Lord Harborough) Ella Atherton (Mme. Nina de Landé) Margot Armand (Sylvia Finlay) Ivo Dawson (Derek Finlay) Marjorie Roach (Phoebe Chivers) John St. John (Dickie) Naomi Jacobs (Dot) Bernard Vaughan (Butler) Walter Wichelow (Mr. Imprett) Beryl Egerton (The maid) Theodore Mander (Stephen, the first-born) **Production** Gainsborough Pictures **Producers** C.M. Woolf and Michael Balcon **Scenario** Miles Mander and Alma Reville, adapted from the novel *Oasis* and the play *Those Common People* by Miles Mander **Photography** Walter Blakeley **Titles** Ian Dalrymple **Art Direction** C.W. Arnold **Editor** Arthur Tavares **Print Source** BFI, courtesy of Park Circus, LLC

A sexually provocative melodrama of upper-class decadence with surprisingly sophisticated stylistic flourishes, *The First Born* is the collaboration of two key players in the British film industry of the 1920s and '30s whose work has largely fallen into obscurity, Miles Mander and Alma Reville.

Best known as a character actor in Hollywood films of the 1930s and '40s, Mander appeared in more than 100 films between 1920 and his death in 1946. Yet that is only part of his story. He lived a colorful and varied life, according to a recent *Guardian* article, with "a background in boxing promotion, aviation, and sheep farming." In the 1920s, he was a dynamo, writing and publishing novels and plays,

as well as directing, producing, writing, and acting in films. In 1912, Mander married Princess "Pretty" Pretiva, sister of the maharaja of Cooch Behar. Ten years later in 1922, they had a scandalous divorce. A one-time race car driver, Mander was charged twice with "driving at high speeds dangerous to the public," while directing 1936's *The Flying Doctor* in Australia. In Hollywood, Mander often played the same kind of upper-class cads that he portrayed in *First Born*. (He died of a heart attack at the Brown Derby restaurant at the age of 57.)

**"a tragic and rather
morbid presentment of
the troubles that await a
woman who falls in love
with a dissolute man"**

Alma Reville is best known as Mrs. Alfred Hitchcock. She began working in film at the age of 16, in 1915—a five-year head start on her future husband. Her first job was editor, or what was called "rewind girl," at the London Film Company. Its leading director, Maurice Elvey, promoted her to second assistant director, her main duties to oversee editing and continuity of his films. As Nathalie Morris wrote in her 2006 article *The Early Career of Alma Reville*,

"At this time, cutting and continuity represented an obvious combination of duties and was instrumental in enabling a number of female editors to get onto the studio floor and thereby advance their careers."

In 1921, Reville moved to the British branch of Famous Players-Lasky, which had studios in Islington, continuing in her dual role as editor and continuity as well as serving as second assistant director on films such as the Donald Crisp-directed melodrama *Appearances* (1921), for which Alfred Hitchcock designed the intertitles. The next year, Famous Players-Lasky closed its London studio and Michael Balcon re-opened it as Gainsborough Pictures. The now legendary producer gave Hitchcock the opportunity as assistant director on *Woman to Woman* (1923). Hitchcock immediately contacted Reville, who was

now between jobs, to offer her the editor-continuity position on the film.

By then, Reville had already made a name for herself within the industry. She wrote "Cutting and Continuity" for the January 1923 edition of *The Motion Picture News*, an American industry trade paper. In it, she advised professionals how best to prepare for the editing phase of a film: "If Mr. Producer would give just a little more forethought to the continuity and cutting of his production before commencing it—and keep these two words continually in his mind whilst he is building it up—how much worry and time

he could save in the cutting-room." *Pictures and the Picturegoer*, a British movie magazine, published a profile of her in December 1925 titled "Alma in Wonderland: An interesting article, proving that a woman's place is not always in the home."

British film historian Charles Barr identifies Reville as a key player at Gainsborough Pictures. After *Woman to Woman*, Reville and Hitchcock collaborated on *The White Shadow* (1924), *The Passionate Adventure* (1925), and *The Prude's Fall* (1926), with Reville on continuity and editing and Hitchcock as assistant director, although she is only credited on *The White Shadow*. They also worked together at Berlin's Ufa studios on the British-German coproduction *The Blackguard* (1925). As they sailed home to England, with Reville horribly sea sick, Hitchcock asked her to marry him.

The duo teamed up on their next three films, with Reville as assistant director and Hitchcock in the director's chair. Gainsborough offered Hitchcock the chance to direct 1925's *The Pleasure Garden*, followed by *The Lodger* (1926) and *The Mountain Eagle* (1927). After the release of *The Lodger*, the two were married. Reville continued to work officially on Hitchcock and non-Hitchcock films throughout the 1930s, including on *Sally in Our Alley* (1931), *Nine Till Six* (1932), and *The Passing of the Third Floor Back* (1935), starring Conrad Veidt. Later in her career, she is credited as screenwriter on the Richard Wallace-directed film *It's in the Bag!* (1945) and a handful of Hitchcock's such as *Suspicion* (1941), *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), *The Paradine Case* (1947), and *Stage*

Fright (1949). Starting in the late 1940s, Reville began to work almost solely on her husband's films, becoming Hitchcock's most significant, yet uncredited, collaborator. Her work was absorbed into Alfred Hitchcock's persona and motion picture output.

The First Born is one of Reville's most striking non-Hitchcock films. She and director Miles Mander adapted the film from the novel *Oasis* and the play *Those Common People*, both written by Mander. The *New York Times* said about the film, which was released at the end of the silent era, "The most interesting film, whether sound or silent, I have seen this week is 'The First Born,' a tragic and rather morbid presentment of the troubles that await a woman who falls in love with a dissolute man."

Some Hitchcock-like elements can be detected in *The First Born*. Objects, for example, are used to convey meaning, as when an overhead shot of a dinner table dissolves into a record spinning on a Victrola or when an upper-class woman carelessly knocks over a delivery bicycle as she drives away. Instead of reflecting a single influence, however, it is more likely that British filmmakers, working together as a community at studios in London or meeting through mutual colleagues, socialized and exchanged ideas. Mander formed the Atlas Bioscope company with actor Ivor Novello in 1922. Novello later appeared as the mysterious tenant in *The Lodger* and acted in a number of other Hitchcock and Reville films in the 1920s and '30s. Mander worked with the Reville-Hitchcock team a number of times before directing *The First Born*. He appeared in *The Pleasure Garden*, *The Prude's Fall* (1926), and, later, in *Murder!* (1930) and *Mary* (1931).

Hitchcock and Reville worked with screenwriter Eliot Stannard, who wrote eight of Hitchcock's first nine films. Stannard provided very detailed scripts containing numerous and detailed descriptions of camera shots, movement, transitions, and even effects. As film historian Ian W. Macdonald concluded in 2007, "British screenwriters had a more substantial

"The experienced Reville almost certainly supplied the film's Hitchcockian touches."

and detailed creative role in the conceptualization of the film than they are conventionally credited with." Hitchcock and Reville's experience working with Stannard surely helped to develop their voice as filmmakers.

In turn, it is likely Reville's contribution to Mander's *The First Born* extended beyond the duties of a scriptwriter, considering her then 12 years in the film industry. Bryony Dixon, curator at the British Film Institute, writes, "...there are layers of complexity in Mander's original story, subtly told and honed by the experienced Reville, who almost certainly supplied the film's 'Hitchcockian touches.'" Coming at the end of the silent era, *The First Born* stands out as a high point in British silent cinema and in the careers of both Miles Mander and Alma Reville.

—Aimee Pavy



Miles Mander and Madeleine Carroll

Alma in Wonderland

AN INTERESTING ARTICLE, PROVING THAT A WOMAN'S PLACE IS NOT ALWAYS IN THE HOME

A man glancing at a passing girl observes that she is pretty, attractive, or ugly as the case may be, but a woman, obtaining the same fleeting glance, will be able to describe with terrible exactitude every garment she was wearing, how long she has had them, of what material they were made, where they were bought and at what cost.

Women, who comprise the vast majority of picturegoers, subject every screen play they see to this swift and unerring scrutiny. "If the heroine really did that rough house-work," they say, "she could never have kept her finger-nails in such perfect condition." "Don't tell me that girl is rich, why—you could buy her vanity bag at the bargain counter of a fifth-rate emporium!"

Mere man, even if he be a high and mighty film director, cannot hope to escape the lash of feminine criticism, unless he has as his assistant a super-woman, whose eye is sharper than an eagle's, whose patience is greater than Job's, whose staying-power is such that it makes the labours of Hercules look like golf as played by an obese retired chartered accountant!

There is only one such girl in England, and (on the principle that all good things are done up in little packets), she is only four foot eleven and, having bobbed hair, could travel half fare on any railway, were she not too rich to be tempted to cheat even a railway company by passing as under fourteen.

Little Alma Reville is nothing like as unsophisticated as she looks, as some tough film guys have discovered to their cost. A glance at her past career explains why she to-day occupies so unique a position in European films.

When sixteen, Alma suffered, in common with every girl of that age, from a bad attack of filmitis. This disease must not be confused with flicker mania, the chief symptom of which is a wild desire to become a

leading lady, and can be cured by three days' work in a film crowd, after haunting the agents' offices for three years.

Filmitis is far more deadly—in fact, incurable. It feeds upon scenarios, the glare of arc lamps, the click of the camera, and the snip-snip of the editing scissors. It is technical rather than emotional, it organises, it shoulders responsibility, it ends in the patient becoming either a film

director or the inmate of a lunatic asylum.

In the days of the old London Film company, Alma entered Wonderland, the result of a deep laid conspiracy between her father and Harold Shaw, the famous producer. The latter assured the distraught parent that he would effect a magical cure by dumping the head-strong child in the Editing department, which is where films are cut and joined, and which is far apart from all the supposed glamour and excitement of the studio itself.

There, to their surprised dismay, Alma remained as happy as a child with a new toy, and by the time Harold Shaw returned to America, she had reached a technical proficiency so expert that she was entrusted with the cutting of the actual negatives,

which represented the expenditure of many tens of thousands of pounds.

Director succeeded director. George Loane Tucker, after making a brilliant cycle of films, returned to America to direct *The Miracle Man*, and to die, and Maurice Elvey was left to carry on. It was he who realised that Alma's technical talents were being wasted in the laboratories, and who transposed her to the studio as his floor secretary.

And now the girl's true film sense and feminine critical faculty had full scope. Always smiling, calm and efficient, her aptitude to assume successfully those heavy responsibilities which fall upon those grouped round the director, soon led her to get a further promotion and she became second assistant director.

It was in this capacity that she joined Lasky's British producing unit, and during the pictures made by George Fitzmaurice and Donald Crisp she followed the camera into nearly every country in Europe. These journeys abroad continued after Lasky ceased to produce in England [when] she joined Michael Balcon and Graham Cutts, and worked on such pictures as *Woman to Woman*, *The Passionate Adventure*, and *The Blackguard*.

With the extension of Michael Balcon's film activities came her latest step up the ladder of film fame. When under his auspices Alfred Hitchcock set out for Munich to make that costly and elaborate production *The Pleasure Garden*, Alma went also, but this time in the capacity of chief Assistant Director.

During this production, she crossed Europe alone to meet Virginia Valli and Carmelita Geraghty at Cherbourg, and conducted them to Paris to buy dresses for the picture, and then on to Lake Como, where Alfred Hitchcock had already commenced the taking of the film.

There remains but two deadly secrets to be told to complete this study of a young girl still in the middle twenties. The first is that she possesses (but never wears) a pair of horn-rimmed glasses; the second that she has never had the time to get married!

Originally printed in the British film magazine *Picture and the Picturegoer's* December, 1925 edition



Alma and Hitch on the set of *The Mountain Eagle*



TOKYO CHORUS

Musical Accompaniment by Günter Buchwald

Directed by Yasujiro Ozu, Japan, 1931

Cast Tokihiko Okada (Shinji Okajima) Emiko Yagumo (Sugako, his wife) Hideo Sugawara (Okada's son) Hideko Takamine (Okada's daughter) Tatsuo Saito (Omura Sensei) Choko Iida (Mrs. Omura) Reiko Tani (Company president) Kemichi Miyajima (Secretary) Isamu Yamaguchi (Employee) **Original Language Title** *Tokyo no gassho* **Production** Shochiku Kinema **Scenario** Kogo Noda **Photography** Hideo Mohara **Art Direction** Yoneichi Wakita **Editor** Hideo Shigehara **Print Source** Janus Films

"I was getting sick of failure," recalled Yasujiro Ozu of his early career, "and decided to make a film in a nonchalant mood." The result was the Depression-era comedy *Tokyo Chorus* (1931), already the young Japanese director's 22nd film and the one that marks the beginning of his "mature style." "From this point on," observes film historian David Bordwell, "Ozu is a major director."

Having debuted as a director in 1927, Ozu had already churned out 21 films for the Shochiku studio by 1931, or about five a year, with some filmed in less than a week. (According to Ozu—a noted liquor aficionado—and his frequent collaborator and

drinking buddy, the screenwriter Kogo Noda, each also took about "one hundred bottles of sake" to finish). Surprisingly for the man who later became the observational, patient dramatist of *Tokyo Story* and *Late Spring*, the majority were modern slapstick comedies, created under the influence of Ozu's first mentor, the veteran director Tadamoto Okubo, who specialized in successful *nonsense-monu* for Shochiku. These "nonsense comedies" were barely coherent narratives loosely held together by an assortment of Charlie Chaplin and Harold Lloyd-inspired sight gags.

By 1930, however, a new house style began to emerge from Shochiku and its main Tokyo site in the Kamata district. As the only film production studio left in Tokyo after the Great Kanto earthquake of

1923, Shochiku Kamata became the center for films addressing modern Japanese life, and the changes it brought: mass urbanization, rapid industrialization, and the rise of a new generation of middle-class office workers. A new genre blossomed, led by filmmakers like Yasujiro Shimazu, Heinosuke Gosha, and Hiroshi Shimizu: *shoshimin-eiga* or *shomin-geki*, "working-class" or "common-class" dramas, born to reflect the new lives and worried dreams of the suddenly urbanized, increasingly harried citizenry that were not only Shochiku Kamata's target audience, but its neighbors as well.

"From this point on Ozu is a major director."

Requiring no elaborate sets or costumes (a must, considering Kamata, like most studios of

the time, had only one filming stage), this new genre of modern troubles was a perfect fit for Shochiku Kamata's forward-thinking chief. Shiro Kido had already tapped into the power of modern Hollywood-like tools of commercial promotion (with his own print publication, *Kamata*, crowing the virtues of his various heroes and heroines) and mass media (drawing many stories from already popular, serialized newspaper stories and novels). He also had a soft spot for the rising talent Yasujiro Ozu, and, after an early attempt at the genre (1929's appropriately titled *The Life of an Office Worker*), Ozu rewarded Kido with the ground-breaking *Tokyo Chorus*, which begins with a foot firmly in the slapstick realms of pratfall-driven student comedies then morphs into one of the defining creations of not only the working-class genre, but of all silent Japanese cinema.



Long before his 1950s masterpieces, Yasujiro Ozu became “Yasujiro Ozu” with this film while remaining—like all those in their late 20s—a bit rowdy at heart.

“Ozu tried to show his characters conversing in a serene manner, nodding gently as they talk,” notes the respected Japanese critic Tadao Sato on one of Ozu’s most characteristic aesthetic choices, but *Tokyo Chorus* bristles with both the chaos of his *nonsense-monu* origins and the class malaise of the time. Gentility and serenity are as impossible to achieve as a clean home, a happy work space, or dutiful children. Conversations quickly degenerate from orderly requests into slap-happy fan show-downs between workers and bosses, or impolite shrugs between teachers and students. In later Ozu films, fathers and their children speak politely and with a becalmed physical stillness (even if their words mask devastating emotions). However, here, in *Tokyo Chorus*, constant physical and psychological battles between fathers and sons disrupt the home; no matter who wins, it’s the adult who will always lose. (Any parent will recognize the hero’s hangdog post-argument expression. It’s a foolish thing to find yourself engaged in a battle of wits with a four-year-old, and even more tragic to lose it). Serene walks along sea walls or city streets mark later Ozu, yet here the streets are filled with homeless scrounging for cigarettes, or individuals desperately pacing up and down the same block, sweating and brow-beaten, handing out restaurant ads to disinterested

locals. Here, neat rows of students overseen by a spectacularly mustachioed teacher are broken by the mocking Chaplinesque stagger of a late-arriving student, and every row threatens to break down into chaos. It’s Ozu with the modern world’s troubles, especially Depression-era troubles, still highly visible (“Hoover’s policies haven’t helped us yet,” notes one character).

As different in action, tenor, and movement as *Tokyo Chorus* is from his later works, the Ozu that matured into “Ozu” emerges. “To elicit a performance from the form of movement without explaining how the character feels has always been Ozu’s approach as a director,” recalled the actor (and Ozu regular) Chishu Ryu. Here, a simple game of hand-clapping moves from a mother’s realization of her family’s plight to a shared glance with her husband to, finally, something far more powerful. A hand slowly fans a sickly child, followed by a young son, now no longer selfish, continuing the action. Ozu’s famous “pillow shots,” scenes of everyday objects and the landscapes around the characters and their actions, also appear. Clocks, trees, the tops of buildings, desks, food. A student’s view of trees blowing softly against a sunlit sky cuts into an industrial skyline spitting out smoke—that same student’s view, now that he’s joined the adult workforce.

And, of course, Ozu’s devastating echoes and repetitions, his circular return to earlier moments, frames, and images that are almost the same yet have changed because of something missing, or something learned. *Tokyo Chorus* offers many similar touches, but none more so than the student groups that open and close the film. In one, the giddiness and disorder of youth is on full display; in another, the uncertainty of adulthood has seeped in, and, with it, all the doubt over the meaning of life’s chorus.

Long before his 1950s masterpieces, Yasujiro Ozu was—like all those in their late 20s—a bit rowdy at heart.

Tokyo Chorus earned Ozu third position on *Kinema Jumbo*’s list of Best Films of 1931; a year later, he finally won the top spot with *I Was Born, But....* Ozu continued making silent films until 1936, loyally waiting until his director of photography Hideo Mohara finished perfecting his own sound-camera design. He went on to collaborate with Kogo Noda, the scriptwriter for *Tokyo Chorus*, through much of his career and continued to drink with him throughout each process. Shiro Kido stayed at Shochiku for a half century, although Shochiku Kamata closed in 1936, putting an end to “Kamata flavor.” Tokihiko Okada, the hero of *Tokyo Chorus* and a frequent silent-Ozu actor, died three years after filming from tuberculosis; his daughter at the time, Mariko Okada, one year old at the time, later starred in Ozu’s *Late Autumn* and *An Autumn Afternoon*. And the child actor that plays Miyoko, the family’s little daughter whose sweet tooth endangers her life? None other than Hideko Takamine, who grew into one of the finest actors of her generation.

—Jason Sanders

Opposite page: Tokihiko Okada
Below: Tokihiko Okada and Tatsuo Saito





THE PATSY

Musical Accompaniment by the Mont Alto Motion Picture Orchestra

Directed by King Vidor, USA, 1928

Cast Marion Davies (Patricia Harrington) Orville Caldwell (Tony Anderson) Marie Dressler (Ma Harrington) Dell Henderson (Pa Harrington) Lawrence Gray (Billy Caldwell) Jane Winton (Grace Harrington) **Production** Cosmopolitan Pictures Corporation and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures Corporation **Scenario** Agnes Christine Johnston, based on the 1925 play by Barry Connors **Titles** Ralph Spence **Photography** John Seitz **Set Design** Cedric Gibbons **Costume Design** Gilbert Clark **Editor** Hugh Wynn **Print Source** Library of Congress

King Vidor once said that the director was the channel through which a motion picture reaches the screen. With *The Patsy*, Vidor was tuned just right. It is a perfect film. There is not a scene, gesture, joke, intertitle, gag, bit of detail, or character out of place. Everything about it contributes. It is well paced and wonderfully acted. True to life and full of humanity, this energetic comedy of manners convinces—it's a sparkling Cinderella story for the Jazz Age.

Acknowledged as one of the great filmmakers of the 1920s, Vidor was on a historic roll by the time he came to helm *The Patsy*. Each of his four previous films—*The Crowd* (1928), *Bardelys the Magnificent* (1926), *La Bohème* (1926), and *The Big Parade* (1925)—was somehow significant. *The Crowd*, for example, garnered Vidor an Academy Award nomination as Best Director, while *The Big Parade* is accepted as one of the two highest grossing films of the silent era. *The Patsy*, also a success, was followed by the even more popular *Show People* (1928), another star vehicle for actress Marion Davies and today her best remembered work. Remarkably, these six classic films were followed by Vidor's first sound movie, *Hallelujah!* (1929), a musical drama featuring an all black cast for which the director received another of his five Oscar nominations.

Vidor came to make *The Patsy* at the insistence of newspaper publisher William Randolph Hearst. The famous media mogul was head of Cosmopolitan Pictures, a small production company whose films were

then distributed by the larger Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Hearst used his influence with MGM head Louis B. Mayer to enlist Vidor, then under contract to the studio, to direct a picture starring Davies, his mistress. Hearst, who also oversaw the actress's career, envisioned Davies as a great dramatic star and had insisted she play serious roles in a series of costume dramas and historical epics. However, some of these films prior to *The Patsy* had fizzled at the box office. The media mogul was in search of a sure-fire hit.

Vidor may have impressed Hearst and Davies when he helped Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle (then working as "William B. Goodrich") with direction on the Davies film *The Red Mill* (1926). Hearst had also admired *The Big Parade*, a film Davies later remarked was her favorite. Undoubtedly, Hearst envisioned Davies in a dramatic role like the celebrated one played by Renée Adorée in Vidor's World War I blockbuster.

The Patsy was the first of three Davies comedies directed by Vidor, followed by *Show People* and 1930's *Not So Dumb*, a talkie. Nothing Vidor had done before prepared filmgoers for his light touch, and little Davies had performed thus far suggested her considerable skill at frothy comedy. Offscreen, Davies was known for her playfulness and mugging, entertaining friends at Hearst Castle house parties with imitations of fellow actors. Years later in an interview, Vidor recalled, "I didn't want to do one of the films as she had been doing...[at] the Hearst ranch I noticed that Marion Davies was a darn good comedienne."

Vidor's prior efforts were mostly socially conscious dramas. Some, like *The Crowd*, had even been described as gloomy. With his gift for rhythm and gesture, however, Vidor was able to draw out Davies's natural talent as a lighthearted comedienne. Years later Orson Welles, who burlesqued the actress in *Citizen Kane*, admitted, "She would have been a star even if Hearst had never happened."

The 30-year-old actress's screwball energy dominates *The Patsy*, though the film's charm derives as well from its situational humor and ensemble cast. Here, the Cinderella motif is applied to the story of an upper-middle-class family with aspirations as they push one daughter forward at the expense of the other. Film veterans Marie Dressler and Dell Henderson, who play the parents, had both been away from screen acting for a decade before returning prior to *The Patsy*. In the Vidor film, each display the broad gesture and mastery of timing learned, in part, while working for Mack Sennett in the 1910s. The older sister, played by Jane Winton, known as the "green-eyed goddess of Hollywood," is the perfect foil to Davies. Bay Area natives Orville Caldwell (born in 1896 in Oakland, he was elected deputy mayor of Los Angeles in 1940) and Lawrence Gray (born in San Francisco in 1898, he worked for the *San Francisco Chronicle* before entering films) play the two romantic interests with admirable sincerity and benign caddishness, respectively.

The Patsy was a success for MGM, and an artistic triumph for Davies. The film turned a healthy profit and earned accolades. Vidor, perhaps acknowledging the distribution agreement that practically ensured favorable coverage in Hearst newspapers, quipped that it "even got some good reviews outside of the Hearst press." The *Berkeley Daily Gazette*, reflecting the widespread praise the film received, termed the Davies-Vidor combination "especially auspicious." *Variety* called it "a dandy laugh picture." Even more

flattering, the Hearst rival *New York World* described it as a "fresh," "ingenious," and "unusual" film comedy.

In an interview published in the *New York Times* just before the film's release, Davies described it as one of the most pleasant experiences of her career. The actress went on to note, "I believe *The Patsy* is the best comedy I have ever had. And largely because of King Vidor. Mr. Vidor inspires the players who are associated with him. Not only has he a fine imagination and a philosophic turn of mind but he consistently refuses to take himself too seriously."

Davies added, "A good motion picture, according to Mr. Vidor, should not be an imitation of the stage, which is inevitably an interpretation of life. It should be, on the contrary, a copy of life, and the director a sort of reporter who transcribes on celluloid ... Vidor's philosophy is to observe, to remember what he has seen and then reproduce it with a true human touch ... We were natural and we contributed ideas which would best bring out our naturalness."

The Patsy is perfectly attuned to its times, yet it is timeless. Naturalness, pep, good-natured humor, and well-timed

sight gags fill the film. There are also numerous witty title cards, so many that the critic for the *Oakland Tribune* said the title writer had "run riot." In a sense, *The Patsy* is the "talkiest" silent picture Vidor or Davies ever made, possessing in abundance what its title character set out to acquire, *personality*.

—Thomas Gladysz

It's a sparkling Cinderella story for the Jazz Age.



Marion Davies

MARIE DRESSLER: IMPROBABLE SCREEN GODDESS

by Matthew Kennedy

Marie Dressler had perhaps the most unexpected stardom in all of movie history. At the apex of her popularity during the Great Depression, she was well past 60 and overweight and described her careworn and jowly face as “a mud fence.” Even so, exhibitors declared her the most profitable movie star in the world, besting Gable, Cagney, Garbo, and all the rest. How did this not so lovely woman become so beloved? In the years immediately prior to her death in 1934, she was cinema’s strongest antidote to a world sick with anxiety and uncertainties.

Leila Marie Koerber was born in Canada on the north shore of Lake Ontario in 1868, the second daughter of a Crimean War veteran turned music teacher and his dutiful, sacrificing wife. Her father’s temper alienated entire communities, and the Koerbbers moved frequently, while Leila discovered her love of the stage in amateur productions. By 14, she dropped out of school, took the name Marie Dressler after an aunt, and was touring in stock companies.

With an agreeable singing voice, Dressler excelled in light opera early on, but vaudeville, burlesque, and revues proved a better fit for her comic gifts. She had an evangelical dedication to making people laugh by exploiting her large, agile body and rubbery face to scene-stealing effect. By the early 1900s, she was a leading comedienne, headlining with fabled names such as Lillian Russell, Joe Weber and Lew Fields, Anna Held, and Eddie Foy, appearing in *Hotel Topsy Turvey*, *Higgledy-Piggledy*, *Twiddle-Twaddle*, and other similar fare. Her greatest stage triumph was *Tillie’s Nightmare*, which debuted on Broadway in 1910 and featured “Heaven Will Protect the Working Girl,” a song Dressler as Tillie made famous.

Mack Sennett loosely adapted *Tillie’s Nightmare* for the 1914 film *Tillie’s Punctured Romance*. Costarring Charlie Chaplin and Mabel Normand, it ran six reels, making it the first feature-length comedy. Despite huge box office, Dressler’s early movie career flickered and died with a spate of lukewarm one- and two-reelers, and her stage career likewise suffered as tastes in comedy changed following World War I. Her passionate advocacy for the Actors’ Equity union during the theater strike in 1919 got her blacklisted in New York. To compound her misfortunes, her marriage to manager James Dalton proved bogus when he turned out to be a bigamist.

With stage and screen offers gone, Dressler slid toward oblivion through much of the 1920s, relying on wealthy society friends for housing and handouts. She took whatever “old-timer” vaudeville tours she could get while contemplating an alternative career as a hotelier. Her astonishing comeback began with good friend and MGM screenwriter Frances Marion, who pitched her to production chief Irving Thalberg as star of the rollicking 1927 comedy *The Callahans and the Murphys*. Unfortunately for Dressler, the Irish loudly protested the film for its stereotypes, inciting studio head Louis B. Mayer to order all prints and negatives incinerated.

Dressler trudged onward in minor roles until another savior, actress and producer Marion Davies, cast her as the comic harridan mother in *The Patsy*. Davies was so taken with Dressler’s performance that she insisted none of her scenes be cut. Davies’s generous instincts paid off and Dressler was a hit. Her performance works on at least three levels—as a screamingly funny portrait of a battle-axe, as a pathologically dedicated social climber, and as a colossally bad mother playing one daughter against

SHE HAD AN EVANGELISTIC DEDICATION TO MAKING PEOPLE LAUGH.

another. Her Ma Harrington in *The Patsy* is easily her best surviving silent film performance.

Dressler’s warm stage voice registered well on sound, and the talkies were very, very good to her. Her earthy, heartrending turn as sodden Marthy in *Anna Christie* was revelatory and vaulted her from character actress to leading lady. *Min and Bill* earned her an Academy Award, while her low-budget comedies with raucous, buck-toothed Polly Moran (*Caught Short*, *Reducing*, *Politics*, *Prosperity*) were huge profit turners. *Emma*, *Tugboat Annie*, and *Christopher Bean* capitalized on Dressler’s self-deprecating humor and throbbing sentimentality. Her dilapidated actress Carlotta Vance in *Dinner at Eight* is for the ages—among its highlights a priceless double take and knowing comeback line. With supreme wisdom and sly wit, Dressler assures satin-sheathed sex kitten Jean Harlow she “need never worry about” machinery replacing “every profession.”

Dressler was always more than a comedienne mugging until the audience surrendered to her manic energy. Her comedy was infused with heart and pathos; she could make you cry as easily as she could make you laugh. At the height of her fame, a 1931 article in the *Hollywood Spectator* summed up her appeal, “There is something universal about her, something magnificent, something fine and altogether human.”

Top to bottom:

The Patsy, *The Callahans and the Murphys*, *Tillie’s Punctured Romance*





THE GOLDEN CLOWN

Musical Accompaniment by the Matti Bye Ensemble

Directed by A.W. Sandberg, Denmark, 1926

Cast Gösta Ekman (Joe Higgins, the clown) Maurice de Féraudy (James Bunding, circus director) Kate Fabian (Graciella, Bunding's wife) Karina Bell (Daisy, Bunding's daughter) Robert Schmidt (Marcel Philipe) Erik Bertner (Pierre Beaumont) Edmunde Guy (Lilian Delorme) **Original Language Title** *Klovnen* **Production** Nordisk Films Kompagni **Scenario** Poul Knudsen and A.W. Sandberg **Photography** Chresten Jørgensen and Einar Olsen **Production Design** Carlo Jacobsen and Poul Kannerworff **Print Source** Danish Film Institute, courtesy of Nordisk Films

Alone in the center ring, a white-faced clown sings. Rather than making the crowd laugh, he draws tears. This trope is as familiar today as it was in cinema's earliest days, when the circus and the cinema were more closely linked. According to Italian scholar Carlo Piccardi, "In its first decade the cinema had installed itself in carnivals, sharing its wonderful performances with the coarse spectacles presented by jugglers, acrobats and clowns. It was an often vulgar spectacle among even more vulgar spectacles...."

But unlike cinema, the clown's lineage is ancient. Since ridiculing humanity's foibles in Greek, Roman, and medieval literature, the clown has diversified into several distinct stock characters whose origins have been subsumed over time. From Pagliacci to Chaplin's Little Tramp, from Bozo to Crusty, the clown in all its variety continually pops up in our literature, on our stages, and in our moving images. The white-faced version was first introduced as Pedrolino, in the Italian commedia dell'arte, and popularized in France in the 16th and 17th centuries as Pierrot. At Paris's Théâtre des Funambules, an innovative Bohemian émigré with the naturalized name of Jean-Gaspard Debureau dressed in baggy white clothes and silently, sometimes violently, mooned over Columbine, introducing mid-19th century Europe to the lovesick clown. The absinthe-soaked poets of the Romantic period like Verlaine

transformed him from pathetic to demented in a few stanzas. Russian playwright Leonid Andreyev set the 20th century bar to the grotesque with 1919's *He Who Gets Slapped*, about the slighted clown out for revenge. Victor Sjöström and Tod Browning via their changeling Lon Chaney brought the new, mad clown to an international audience.

A.W. Sandberg's *The Golden Clown* fits somewhere between the lovelorn and the macabre, its story mirroring in many ways that of the real-life Debureau, or at least his myth. Working the hinterlands in a tight-knit, family-owned circus in France, Joe Higgins (Gösta Ekman) plays a version of Pierrot, surprising the local crowd

THE GOLDEN CLOWN fits somewhere between the lovelorn and the macabre.

with his talent by singing a sad and beautiful song inspired by his love for the circus owner's daughter. A Somebody from the Big City happens to be in the audience and the clown goes from sideshow to star in an instant, changing the entire family's fate. They are thrust into the high life of Jazz Age Paris. Swanky hotels, fine dining, and all the couture money can buy are not enough, and the clown's once easy-to-please girl, finally his wife, seeks out other urbane pleasures. (The real-life Debureau's trouble began when he murdered a man who insulted his wife. Crowds turned out for his trial to hear the great mime finally speak. Marcel Carné later told a version of his story in 1945's *The Children of Paradise*.)

Shot in Denmark and France, the film is beautifully photographed by Chresten Jørgensen, with imagery ranging from naturalistic landscapes in the countryside to stunning modernist sets on the Paris stage. But *The Golden Clown* might owe its visual flair more to its director, a former press photographer who started at Nordisk as a cameraman in 1914. Anders Wilhelm Sandberg's career then followed the highs and lows of the Copenhagen-based studio where he worked most of his professional life.

During the years from 1910 to 1916, Nordisk produced 736 fiction films and Danish movies became synonymous with the salacious—and box-office gold. Beginning with *The White Slave* and Asta Nielsen's racy star turn in *Afgrunden*, Danish exports kept movie censors busy around the world. "From no

other country is there sent out such a dung-heap of improper and morally damaging film as from Denmark," one small-town editor complained in 1913.

Similar films were fertilizer for Nordisk's fortunes and, before World War I, the studio had a sales presence on every continent and began spending money on higher production values, location shoots, big-name actors, and literary adaptations. In July 1918, the Danish author and screenwriter Aage Barfoed exhorted the film industry to follow a neighbor's example: "Sweden has accomplished the feat of creating a distinctive film genre. Now it is our turn, if we want to make our mark in the world market. And what is to be done? One thing! We must imprint our films, like all art, with Danish distinctiveness ... Our literature, our painting, our music has a rich, a deep

and genuine cultural tone. Seize that and make it come alive on the screen!"

Sandberg soon became Nordisk's leading director, having come up on comedy shorts and detective serials (five installments of *The Man with Nine Fingers*). His breakthrough film, 1917's *Klovnen* (*The Clown*), starred Denmark's renowned Valdemar Psilander, whose prodigious output totaled 83 films before he committed suicide at age 32. Released two months after Psilander's death, the original *Klovnen* was an enormous hit. The studio then gave Sandberg free rein to adapt Dickens novels, which film historian Graham Petrie says were the director's true passion. He made *Our Mutual Friend* (1921), *David Copperfield* (1922), *Great Expectations* (1922), and *Little Dorrit* (1924). Britain's *Pall Mall and Globe*

Gazette called *Our Mutual Friend* "worthy representation of one of our best classics," but the cost of these faithful screen versions became too much for the now ailing studio. A world economy, crippled in the aftermath of war, coupled with disappointing receipts ended Sandberg's run of lavish adaptations.

In an attempt to resuscitate Nordisk's former vitality, the studio reverted to the tried and true. Remakes now filled Sandberg's schedule, including *Klovnen*, this time with Swedish import Gösta Ekman in the lead role, Danish diva Karina Bell as his sweetheart, and, playing her father, Maurice de Féraudy, who had made his name in Comédie-Française, cast, no doubt, with an eye to the French market. The film itself is steeped in nostalgia, eulogizing in sweet, reverent tones the tranquil days of touring the French country-

side in a horse-drawn wagon. Success and city life tear all that asunder, of course, and the parallel to Sandberg's own rise and fall must have added some personal poignancy to what turned out to be the director's last Nordisk film.

He left for Berlin, making a couple films there for Terra, working again with some of his old colleagues: cameraman Jørgensen, scriptwriter Poul Knudsen, and stars Bell and Ekman. Talkie assignments came in stutters, his directing career petering out in 1937. According to the biography provided by the Danish Film Institute, he died in 1938 at a spa in Bad Nauheim, Germany, after a long illness. Assessing Sandberg's films in 1944, critic Harald Engberg surmised that the director's style had served him well in Nordisk's heyday but it might have kept him from greatness. While praising him for his craftsmanship, sensitivity, and "photographic superiority," Engberg thought he simply did not have the stuff of fellow Danes Carl Dreyer and Benjamin Christensen. "He was not a rebel and experimenter," concluded Engberg, "and altogether prey to the tastes of his time."

The white-faced clown, on the other hand, has endured, albeit as permutations that suit the time and the creator. Marcel Carne politicized him in *The Children of Paradise*. Jean-Luc Godard modernized him in *Pierrot le fou*. Christopher Nolan eulogized him in *The Dark Knight*. But we've not seen his end—his appeal at once his venerable ancestry and his eternal capacity for renewal.

—Shari Kizirian

Our screening of the restored 35mm print is in collaboration with the Danish Film Institute





WINSOR McCAY: HIS LIFE AND ART

A Special Presentation by John Canemaker

Musical Accompaniment by Stephen Horne

By 1910, live-action short films and hand-colored magic lantern slides ruled the movie screen, but animation, maybe not so surprisingly, was in eclipse. Expensive and time-consuming, cartoon work was not terribly well suited to the hectic pace of the nickelodeon's insatiable demand for product. Nevertheless, two extraordinary men stand out. One, in Paris, was Émile Cohl. The other, in New York, was Winsor McCay.

At the time, McCay was best known for his brilliant *Little Nemo* comic strip. In each fantastical episode, Nemo is caught in an escalating tangle of weirdness amid a psychedelic succession of ice caves, Italian palaces, and Art Nouveau gardens. The strip made McCay a celebrity, Nemo becoming so famous that Victor Herbert even composed a Broadway operetta about him. And so, in 1910, having conquered the Sunday comic page, McCay set his sights on drawing him for the screen.

McCay's first idea was to take Nemo and his friends on the vaudeville stage where he animated them as part of a live act, introducing them on stage with quickly drawn "lightning" sketches and then speaking over hand-colored moving images. Within a year, he returned to the stage with a far stranger, delightfully gruesome insect-giant. This was a bloodthirsty New Jersey mosquito called the Jersey Skeeter, another veteran comic strip character who had appeared in several pre-Nemo series by McCay. As with Nemo, this film also had an elaborate live-action prologue, now lost. But it's the animation of the blood-sucking mosquito that provided the revelation, putting McCay's uncanny feel for weight and comic timing on display. As John Canemaker notes in his biography of McCay, this is an insect who thinks and considers

solutions to problems. Just as remarkable, McCay gives him a certain amount of comic charm, as he hesitates and makes eye contact with us before gleefully quenching his thirst. Here, it can be argued, is the freakish origin of personality animation.

Within a year, however, the Jersey Skeeter was eclipsed by McCay's masterpiece, the inimitable *Gertie the Dinosaur*, who was a sensation from the start. A genial dinosaur inspired by the skeleton on display at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, Gertie is unique in early animation for her charm and temper. Film historian Scott Bukatman calls her a loveable rogue —"prankish, unruly. *Unruly* rather than *monstrous* ... Gertie the Dinosaur, not King Kong."

True, Gertie was, like Nemo's friends and the Jersey Skeeter, originally part of yet another McCay vaudeville act. But as Donald Crafton and David Nathan have noticed, the film was conceived differently from McCay's earlier cartoons. The earlier shorts are part of illustrated lectures; Gertie is part of a multimedia dramatic performance, with McCay playing the part of her trainer. They interact and indulge in back-chat: he talks to her, she responds like a mischievous pet. He cracks his whip; she cries. He tosses her a pumpkin (or apple); she gobbles it up.

Spatially, too, Crafton and Nathan note, *Gertie* was McCay's most complex film to date. In *Little Nemo*, characters romp on black-and-white backgrounds; in *The Story of a Mosquito* (a.k.a. *How a Mosquito Operates*), the only background is the body of the sleeping victim. But in *Gertie*, his protagonist is anchored in a mountainous environment that resembles a theatrical stage set, rendered in depth and in some detail. Working with rice paper rather

than transparent cels, McCay and his assistant were obliged to provide those backgrounds in each of the drawings, retracing them somewhere between 2,500 and 3,500 times.

McCay the workaholic insisted on animating the hard way, taking a minimal number of shortcuts. Yet his singular genius for design and timing sometimes obscures his pioneer work in creating standard techniques today, including the pose-to-pose system whereby sequences are divided into "extremes" and "in-betweens" (he called it the "split system") for more clarity of movement. Nor was he immune from cycling movements (as when Gertie dances on her hind legs) or filming on "twos" and "threes" (shooting the same image twice or three times) when the occasion called for it.

Gertie became a star, and McCay not only took his act on the vaudeville circuit but also performed with her in banquet halls for large gatherings of newspaper colleagues and socialites. William Fox, the fledgling film distributor, was sufficiently taken with *Gertie* that he contracted with McCay to enlarge the film by adding a live-action framing narrative, more than doubling the running time of McCay's original. This is the version that survives today, in which a live vaudeville audience is replaced by a cast of comic strip artists who attend a banquet and watch McCay take on a bet by fellow Hearst cartoonist George McManus. We then see McCay with his assistant (played by his son Robert) in what became a scene—later revered by Disney—showing the epic labor involved in creating a cartoon. It is this version that opened at the Wonderland Theater in Kansas City on Saturday, December 19, 1914, toured Kansas, and then spread across the country.

After the success of *Gertie the Dinosaur*, McCay continued to make handcrafted, highly individualized animated shorts built around cartoon characters. But his last great short marked a startling change, part of the direction his career as a newspaper cartoonist had taken at *The American*. By the time the

First World War came to America, McCay not only dominated Hearst's Sunday comic page, he had also become one of Hearst's leading political cartoonists, satirizing slumlords, political bosses, and plutocrats. Most notably, though, even before the United States entered the war, he followed Hearst's lead in making the eagle scream, attacking Germany and its allies. When he returned to animation, McCay was determined to dramatize what was considered the Kaiser's most notorious atrocity to date—the sinking of the *Lusitania* by a German submarine.

He threw himself into his work, pouring his own money into the movie and taking two years to complete it. He also devised a new technique. Instead of rice paper for character drawings, which required backgrounds drawn on each sheet, McCay, for the first time, drew on celluloid, soon to be the preferred medium of commercial animators. Canemaker estimates that by the time McCay finished the film he had completed about 25,000 drawings (little more than ten times the amount, according to the most recent estimates, of what was required for *Gertie*). In the process, it is arguable that he became the first to use animation for political propaganda.

McCay's work embodies the road rarely taken—that of the individual artist, working more or less by himself outside the studio system. The road American animation did take, of course, was chosen by the Hollywood studios, which treated it as an entertaining novelty made to precede the feature—so-called "Grouch Chasers," populated mainly with comic strip characters like Maggie and Jiggs, the Katzenjammer Kids, Buster Brown, and folks from Fontaine Fox's *Toonerville Trolley*. In retrospect, McCay occupies a unique position: America's first animation *auteur*, the peerless draftsman who made manifest the artistry lurking behind comic and not-so-comic American cartoons.

—Russell Merritt

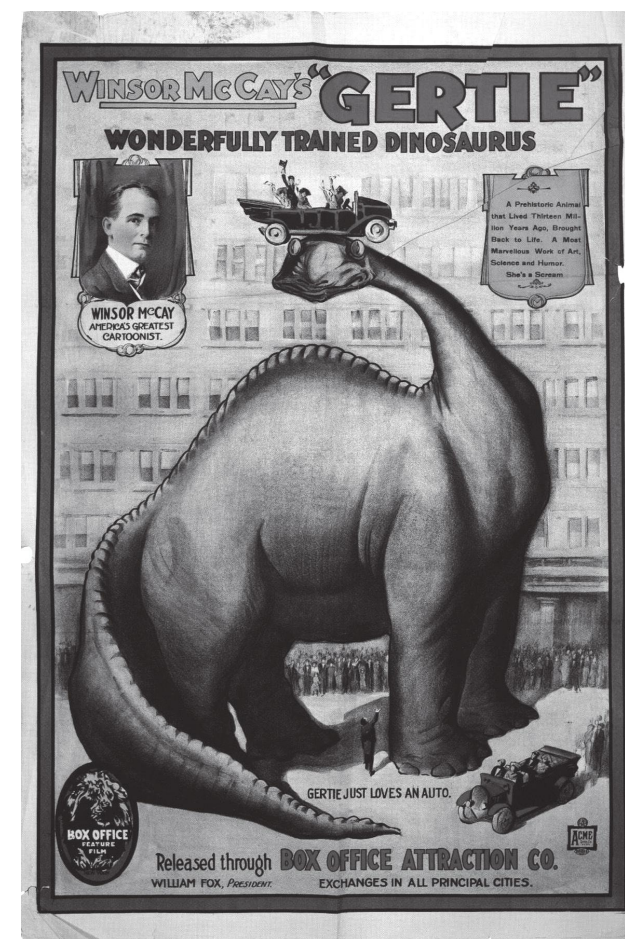
THE FILMS

Little Nemo (Vitagraph, 1911) Animated, written, hand-colored, and directed by Winsor McCay. Characters adapted from McCay's Sunday comic strip, *Little Nemo in Slumberland*, which ran in the *New York Herald*. Live-action sequence director unknown. With John Bunny, George McManus, and others.

How a Mosquito Operates (Vitagraph, 1912) Animated sequence animated, written, and directed by Winsor McCay. Based on a character taken from McCay's comic strips, including *Dream of the Rarebit Fiend*.

Gertie the Dinosaur (Box Office Attractions, 1914) Animated sequence animated, written, and directed by Winsor McCay. Backgrounds by John A. Fitzsimmons. Live-action sequence director unknown. Camera room assistant: Robert McCay. With Winsor McCay, George McManus, Tad Dorgan, Roy McCardell, and Tom Powers.

The Sinking of the Lusitania (Jewel Productions, 1918) Animated, written, and directed by Winsor McCay. Assistants: John A. Fitzsimmons and William Apthorp Adams.



John Canemaker: The Pied Piper of Animation

by Margarita Landazuri

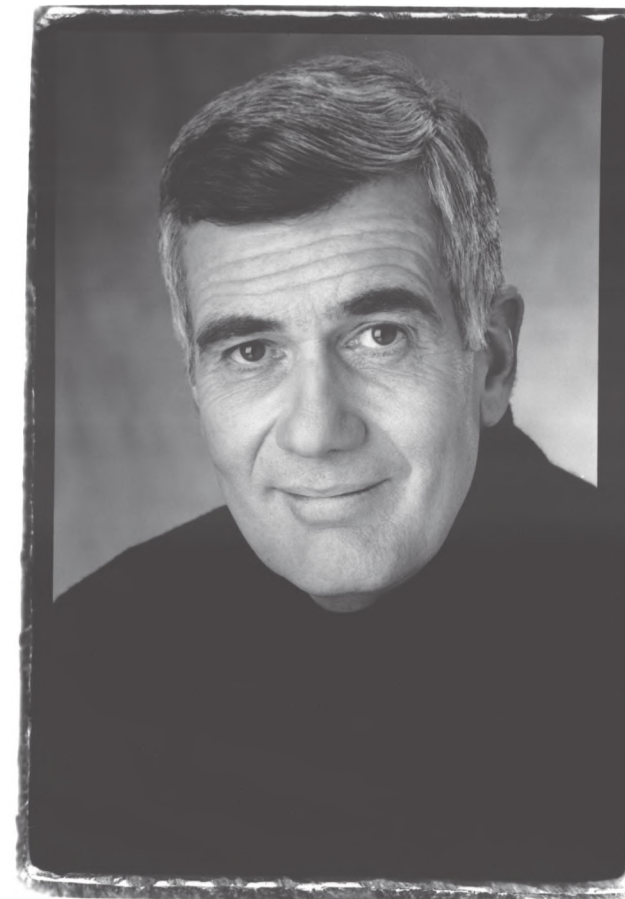
Award-winning animator, historian, and educator John Canemaker was 12 years old when he first heard about Winsor McCay. Watching the *Disneyland* television program in 1955, he was fascinated by a re-creation of McCay's live shows, featuring an actor playing McCay interacting with the animated Gertie the Dinosaur. Even then, Canemaker was a budding artist who had been drawing all his life. His interest aroused, he began experimenting with animation, using as cels old X-rays that his parents—who both worked in a hospital—brought home for him. He even filmed a short about the history of animation, even though he knew little about it.

The way Canemaker tells it, he stumbled into his career. Born John Cannizzaro to a working-class family in upstate New York, he moved to New York City after high school and embarked on an acting career, changing his name professionally to John Canemaker. He worked in off-Broadway theater and achieved success in television commercials, eventually saving enough money to go to college in the early 1970s. A teacher who knew about his interest in animation offered him college credits if he would go to California and interview the original Disney animators, the so-called "Nine Old Men." He did and was so intrigued that he delved more deeply into the history of animation, writing dozens of articles and making two films, *Remembering Winsor McCay* (1976) and *Otto Messmer and Felix the Cat* (1977). His book *Winsor McCay: His Life and Art* was first published in 1987, and he's since written critically acclaimed books on other idols such as Tex Avery as well as six richly illustrated books on Disney animation.

After getting his master's degree in film at New York University, Canemaker began teaching there and was one of the founders of the animation department. At the same time, he was making his own animated films. Several of his personal projects are in the permanent collection of New York's Museum of Modern Art, and his autobiographical film, *The Moon and the Son: An Imagined Conversation* (2005), won an Oscar for best animated short. He has created animated segments for *Sesame Street*, the feature *The World According to Garp* (1981), and several social-issue documentaries. When the Giornate del Cinema Muto awarded him its prestigious Jean Mitry Award in 2007, the catalog said of Canemaker's work: "Whether writing, teaching, or making film, Canemaker's work is saturated in loving homage to the great masters of silent and classic animation."

Canemaker closes *Winsor McCay: His Life and Art* with tributes to the pioneering artist from generations of animators that McCay influenced, from Chuck Jones, who stated flatly that "The two most important people in animation are Winsor McCay and Walt Disney, and I'm not sure who should go first," to Garry Trudeau, who praised "the validity of ordinary reality" in McCay's work. Canemaker's own accolade speaks for himself, and for all of them: "The physical act of putting pencil or pen to paper—to use lines to separate the dark from the light, in order to make the invisible visible and reveal a private vision—filled McCay with a joy experienced only by other graphic artists."

"Canemaker's work is saturated in loving homage to the great masters of silent and classic animation."



Those interested in learning more about Winsor McCay or any of the other animators that Canemaker has written about can visit the John Canemaker Collection at New York University's Fales Library, where the author has deposited the documentation for his various books.



THE HALF-BREED

Musical Accompaniment by Günter Buchwald on the Mighty Wurlitzer

Directed by Allan Dwan, USA, 1916

Cast Douglas Fairbanks (Lo Dorman) Alma Reubens, a.k.a. Rubens (Teresa) Sam De Grasse (Sheriff Dunn) Tom Wilson (Curson) Frank Brownlee (Pastor Winslow Wynn) Jewel Carmen (Nellie Wynn) George André Beranger (Jack Brace) Winifred Westover (Belle the Blonde) **Production** Triangle Film Corporation **Production Supervisor** D.W. Griffith **Scenario** Anita Loos, based on the story "In the Carquinez Woods" by Bret Harte **Photography** Victor Fleming **Print Source** The Silent Film Festival Collection at the Library of Congress

"Lo, the poor Indian," wrote Alexander Pope in 1733, "whose untutor'd mind/sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind." Thus begins the poet's famous contribution to the 17th century notion of the Noble Savage, a creature of the European enlightenment who is at once inferior and superior to the white European; uncivilized, but also uncorrupted by civilization. The quote was so well known by the time Bret Harte wrote "In the Carquinez Woods" in the early 1880s that "Lo" had become shorthand in the American West for any Native American, and Harte's half-white, half-Native-American hero uses it as his name—a pun on the French version of his Indian name, "L'Eau Dormante," or "Sleeping Water."

When Douglas Fairbanks, Allan Dwan, and Anita Loos adapted Harte's novella as *The Half-Breed* in 1916, the poetic idea of the Noble Savage was perhaps less in vogue than the 19th century notion that Native Americans were just plain savage. Ishi, the last "wild" Indian died that same year after spending his last years as a living exhibit in an anthropological museum in San Francisco. The year before, Ernest Dench had published his book about the growing film industry, *Making the Movies*, which included a chapter on "The Dangers of Employing Redskins as Movie Actors," warning, "the work affords them an opportunity to live their savage days over again, and they are not slow to take advantage of it." The 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee at the close of the Indian Wars was most likely fresh in the minds of some of the Native American actors Ince employed in 1912's *War on the Plains*; they were Lakota

Sioux from the Pine Ridge Reservation where the massacre had taken place. Ince, in fact, had to sign a contract with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in order to hire them; the Sioux extras camping on the Santa Monica hills of Inceville were considered wards of the state. Not until 1924 were all Native Americans granted citizenship.

While the subjugation of North America's indigenous inhabitants was more or less complete before movies were invented, the role the Native American played on the silver screen was contested for cinema's first few decades. As Angela Aleiss points out in her 2005 book *Making the White Man's Indian*, "the Indian as a noble hero actually preceded the cowboy star." Films like *The Red Girl and The Child* (1910) and *A Redskin's Bravery* (1911) focused on interracial friendship, continuing the romantic tradition popularized by James Fenimore Cooper in his Leatherstocking novels. Native Americans were noble, savage, exotic, and complex in Thomas Ince's *The Invaders* (1912). Even as confirmed a racist as D.W. Griffith wavered between the two poles, directing 1908's *The Redman and the Child*, whose Indian hero rescues a white boy and avenges the boy's murdered grandfather, and then following it a few years later with *The Battle of Elderbush Gulch* (1913), in which a villainous Indian murders an infant by crushing his skull. As far as stereotypes went, the early western (or what the trade papers labeled "Indian and western subjects") was a wide open town.

But already critics and filmmakers were circling the wagons. *Moving Picture World* warned viewers away from 1911's *Red Deer's Devotion* (believed lost), because it "represents a white girl and an Indian falling in love with each other. While such a thing is possible ... still there is a feeling of disgust which cannot be overcome when this sort of thing is depicted as plainly as it is here." Possibly the movie's gravest offense was that its heroine runs away to join her Indian lover, breaking the unspoken rule that all interracial romances end tragically. Mixing the races was still taboo, hence the western cliché of white settlers under attack reserving their last bullets to kill the womenfolk, saving them from the fate worse than death. This scene appears in countless movies from Griffith's *The Battle of Elderbush Gulch* to 1950's *Winchester '73*. As Kevin Brownlow wrote, "the moment that the Noble Savage procreated with a white woman, the offspring became a vicious character."

Given this context, *The Half-Breed* is a daring film. It opens with the tragic end of an interracial romance—the suicide of a Native American woman who has been seduced and abandoned by a white man. She leaves behind a son, Lo, or Sleeping Water (Douglas Fairbanks), who is raised by a white naturalist. When his adoptive father dies, white miners force Lo from his home at gunpoint. The role was a departure for Fairbanks, who reputedly wanted to stretch his acting chops with the part. "Fairbanks has infrequent opportunities here for his talented smile," the *New York Times* review noted, in what is essentially a story condemning racism and hypocrisy. Early on, the viewers, although not the characters, learn the identity of Lo's father: he is the local sheriff (played by the perennial villain of Fairbanks's films, Sam De Grasse). The audience alone is privy to the irony of Sheriff Dunn's contempt for Lo—and of their rivalry for the love of preacher's daughter, Nellie Wynn.

The real story is not Lo's parentage, but the triangle of Lo, Nellie, and Sheriff Dunn. "Although the film runs through the standard white woman-Indian man plot points, it rewrites them with sharp satire," says scholar Scott Simmons in his 2003 history of the genre, *The Invention of the Western Film*. Anita Loos, who wrote *Half-Breed's* scenario, might have been at least partially responsible for turning the stereotype of the virginal white woman and the rapacious redskin on its head. Nellie's brazen pursuit of Lo seems to belong to the flapper frankness of the 1920s rather than to pre-World War I Victorian morality.

The film follows a common strategy of exposing racism and then evading a real confrontation with its consequences—in this case, by revealing Nellie

to be a heartless coquette and providing Lo with a more worthy love interest, Teresa, who, as both a Mexican and an outlaw, is his social equal. Yet it's unfair to condemn the film for its inability to transcend its time period's prejudices. As late as 1990, cavalry refugee Kevin Costner is provided with a white captive to marry rather than a Native American bride in the Oscar-win-

ning *Dances with Wolves*. *The Half-Breed* is still, as Frederic Lombardi writes in his 2013 book *Allan Dwan and the Rise and Decline of the Hollywood Studios*, "the most original and risky of Fairbanks' Triangle features."

Fairbanks may have been attracted to the controversial material because of his own partial Jewish heritage, which, in the context of his time, was almost as problematic as his character's parentage (and a heritage he shared with author Bret Harte). However, Fairbanks's departure from the effervescent persona he'd developed in previous features and his attempt to engage with more serious material was not a success. The film was a box-office disappointment,



and the reviews were positive but tepid, with critics saving their enthusiasm for the scenery—the film was shot at locations in Sequoia National Park and near Santa Cruz—and the dramatically staged forest fire. "A most acceptable production," wrote the *New York Mirror's* reviewer, while *Variety* commented, "the wonderful forest locations used in the picture make it seem most impressive." Writing about the film two years later in *Photoplay* magazine, Fairbanks admitted, "We, who had a hand in its making, regarded it as a 'knockout' ... but the public, again using the more expressive vernacular, couldn't see it."

—Monica Nolan

About the restoration

A Library of Congress print of *The Half-Breed's* original Fine Arts Corporation Pictures release in 1916 came from the infamous 1978 Dawson City find, when hundreds of pre-World War I films at the end of their distribution line were uncovered buried in a swimming pool in the former Gold Rush town in the Canadian Yukon. While closest to the original release, this nitrate print could only be used for intertitles and a small number of indispensable shots, including portions of Jack Brace's pursuit of Teresa through the redwoods. The only other surviving 35mm source of the film is a 1924 re-release of the film held by the Cinémathèque française, which contributed 90 percent of the photographic shots used in the reconstruction. Finally, a 16mm abridgement print, provided by France's Lobster Films, filled in some missing scenes, such as the fight between Lo Dorman and the group of drunken Indians in front of Nellie Wynn's house.

—Robert Byrne

ALMA RUBENS: A Marked Woman

by Thomas Gladysz

Today, Alma Rubens is remembered not for her films or versatility as an actress, but for the demons that plagued her and ultimately ended her life. Born in San Francisco in 1897, Rubens appeared in nearly 60 films for the Triangle, Famous Players, Cosmopolitan, and Fox studios. Early roles include *The Narcotic Spectre* (1914), as well as bit parts in *Peer Gynt* (1915), *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), *Intolerance* (1916), and the Douglas Fairbanks cocaine comedy *The Mystery of the Leaping Fish* (1916). Bigger roles alongside Fairbanks in *Reggie Mixes In* (1916), *The Half-Breed* (1916), and *The Americano* (1917) got her noticed. While still a teen, Rubens went from supporting player to acclaim as a leading lady.

In 1917, she starred in the box-office smash *The Firefly of Tough Luck* and *The Regenerates*, a drama about drug addiction, both directed by E. Mason Hopper. In 1918, Rubens had top billing in every film in which she appeared. By 1920, she was a major star. The hits that followed include the original *Humoresque* (1920), *The World and His Wife* (1920), *Enemies of Women* (1923), *The Price She Paid* (1924), and *East Lynne* (1925).

After a busy 1925–1926, this dark-eyed beauty found it difficult to get roles, but not because her star had dimmed. Rubens's cocaine and morphine use had begun to take its toll. She became increasingly unreliable, and colleagues noted her "drifting speech and glassy eyes" on set. In 1926, newly signed MGM actress Greta Garbo replaced her as the female lead in *The Torrent*.

Rubens's earnings, as much as \$3,000 a week at the height of her career, were squandered in search of her next high. William Randolph Hearst, who had produced several of her films, helped support her at

Marion Davies's request. It wasn't enough. By the late 1920s, Rubens had been in trouble with the law, attempted to get clean, was hospitalized, escaped from a sanatorium, and was in and out of the headlines. She was also briefly and unhappily married to three well-known Hollywood figures, including actor Ricardo Cortez.

Over the course of her career, Rubens worked with some of the best directors of her time: Raoul Walsh, D.W. Griffith, Henry King, Victor Sjöström, and Frank Borzage (four times). She appeared in melodramas, crime stories, and westerns alongside the likes of William S. Hart, Lon Chaney, Lionel Barrymore, John Gilbert, Bela Lugosi, and George O'Brien. One of her last films was the part-talkie *Show Boat* (1929), in which she received fifth billing as the tragic Julie. Soon, however, all her accomplishments were eclipsed.

In 1931, Rubens's sensational confession detailing her troubled life was serialized in newspapers across the country. The *New York Daily News* shouted its headline: "Why I Remain a Dope Fiend: The Most Amazing Confession Ever Told! Alma Rubens' Own Story, Written Personally by the Once Great Movie Star Who Was Ruined by Drugs." In poor health, Rubens died shortly after its publication. She was only 33.

ALMA RUBENS: IN HER OWN WORDS

Excerpts from an article by Malcolm H. Oettinger in *Picture-Play* magazine, April 1922

"[Bill Hart] was watching Chet Withey direct Doug Fairbanks and me in one of those light Manhattan-cocktail comedies that Doug made famous. He asked me to do the vamping señorita in his next picture. I didn't want to, but I was loaned to the Ince branch, and lured Bill Hart in a Mexican border affair. Louise Glaum, still

camping in the old vamp ground, was my rival in the same picture."

"I had a shawl-and-comb part, romantic, dashing, picturesque—the kind you know that always figures extensively on the posters in front of the theater... and from then on I was a marked woman."

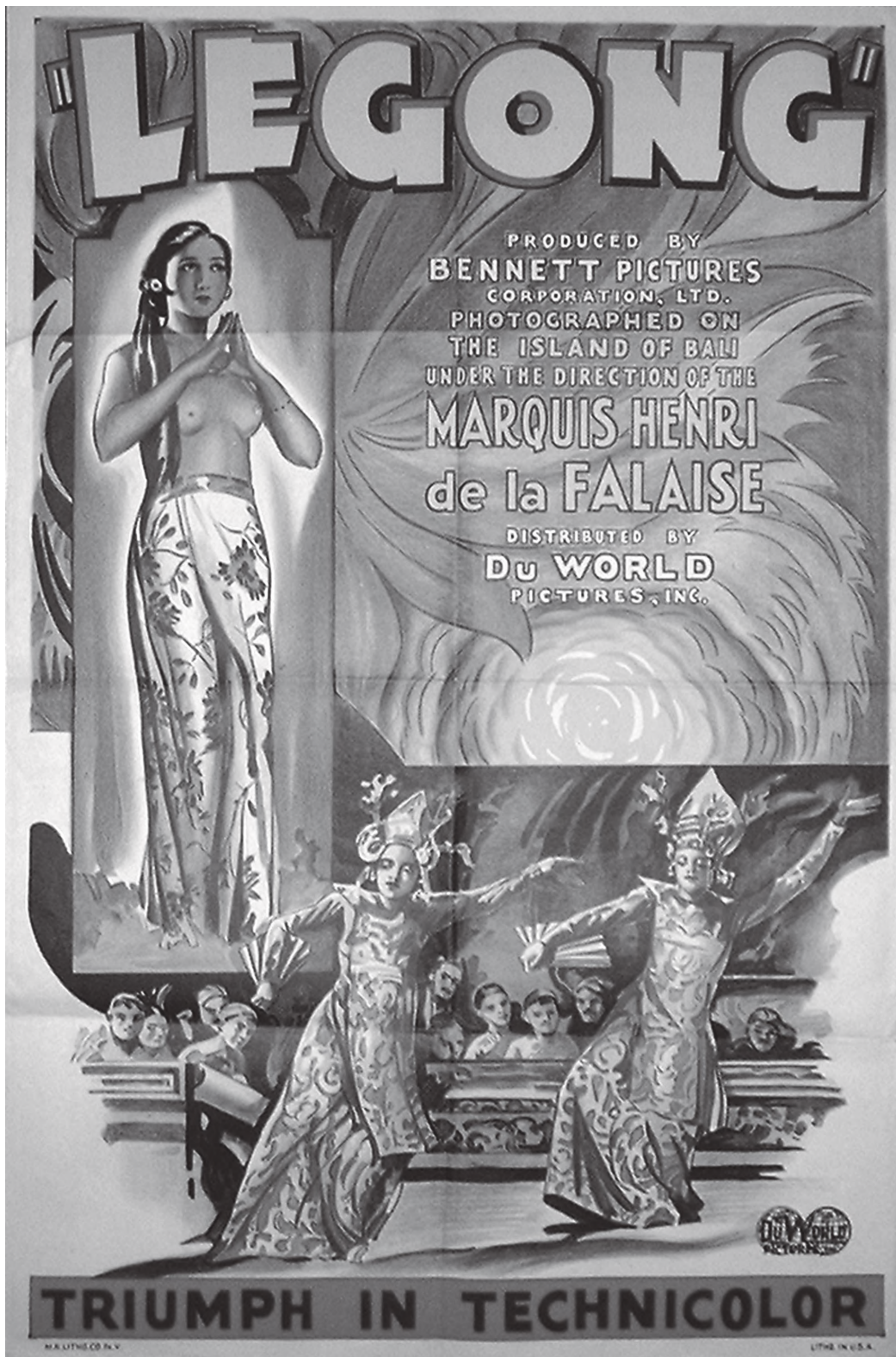
"When Doug Fairbanks put on Bret Harte's story ... he insisted upon my playing the exotic passion flower, another fandango lady... I was definitely established as a 'furriner.'"

"To escape the rôle fate had thrust upon me I went East ... and made so-called society dramas, yes, but paper-covered dramas, all of it."

"Frank Borzage was looking all over New York and outlying territory for his 'Humoresque' girl. He had to find a Semitic type of considerable beauty, he told me, and he was kind enough to choose me."

"After 'Humoresque,' I signed a lovely 'know-all-men-by-these-presents' contract with Cosmopolitan, and I've been in New York ever since."





LEGONG: DANCE OF THE VIRGINS

Musical Accompaniment by Gamelan Sekar Jaya and the Club Foot Orchestra

Directed by Henry de la Falaise, Bali, 1935

Cast Goesti Poetoe Aloes (Poutou) Njoman Nyong Nyong (Nyong, the gamelan musician) Goesti Bagus Mara (Bagus, Poutou's father) Njoman Saplak (Saplak, Poutou's half-sister) **Production** Bennett Pictures Corporation **Story** Henry de la Falaise and Gaston Glass **Titles** Hampton Del Ruth **Photography** William Howard Greene **Editing** Edward Schroeder **Print Source** 35mm restored print courtesy of the UCLA Film and Television Archive

Legong: Dance of the Virgins was shot on location in the village of Ubud in Bali, Indonesia, between May and August 1933, and featured an all-Balinese cast. Directed by Henry de la Falaise, whose full name was Henri Marquis Le Bailly de la Falaise de la Coudraye, *Legong* was one of two films produced by Bennett Pictures, for which La Falaise—Gloria Swanson's third husband—served as the principal along with his then-wife, screen star Constance Bennett, founder of Bennett Pictures Corporation. La Falaise traveled to Bali with Gaston Glass and cameraman William Howard "Duke" Greene, the highly regarded Technicolor specialist who later won an Academy Award for his work on *Phantom of the Opera* (1943). *Legong* and La Falaise's now-lost *Kliou*, *The Killer* (1937), a jungle story about a deadly tiger, were among the last of the two-color Technicolor films produced in Hollywood. The "exotic" Balinese mise-en-scène contributed to the success of the film at the box office; it played for an exceptionally long ten-week run at the New York World Theater in 1935.

The title refers to one of the most celebrated of all Balinese dances. According to popular legend, Prince Karna (a Balinese prince who ruled during the 19th century) dreamed that he saw young nymphs in heaven performing a refined and graceful dance. When the prince awoke, he fulfilled his vision by teaching the dance and the music of his meditative dream to his village. The dancers are accompa-

nied by traditional Indonesian bronze instrument ensembles called gamelans. In the film, a young girl, Poutou, has been selected as one of her village's *legong* dancers. She is to remain "the chaste maiden and sacred dancer of the Temple" until she falls in love, after which she will dance for the final time in celebration of her impending marriage. Poutou is attracted to the young musician Nyong, a talented newcomer in the local gamelan, but Nyong's interest is soon diverted to young Saplak, Poutou's half-sister. The two meet each other clandestinely, in groves and on bridges, but several villagers see them together and disclose their secret. Ostensibly a tragic love story, *Legong: Dance of the Virgins* belongs to a genre of interwar narrative films shot in an exotic locale, which adapted indigenous folklore to American and European tastes.

The 1920s and 1930s saw the first wave of mass international tourist trade. Bali was becoming a popular destination for Western artists and intellectuals who believed that they had found an enchanted land faraway from war-torn western Europe. By the mid-1930s, Bali, a Hindu jewel in the Muslim crown of the Indonesian archipelago, was well established as a resort for the jet set and about 30,000 tourists visited the island each year. As historian Tessel Pollmann explained in 1990, Bali had well-paved roads, rolling rice fields, and was virtually unspoiled by the ravages of colonial agriculture. The allure of beautiful

Westerners believed they had found an enchanted land faraway from war-torn Europe.

While Western tourists and artists flocked to Bali to enjoy “the good life,” the Balinese peasantry on the island lived in near abject poverty.

young girls and willing boys was an added attraction, making Bali the “Eastern Paradise” of the 1930s.

The centerpiece of this vision was the artist colony in Ubud, whose most famous member, painter Walter Spies, served as the unofficial guide to the best-known visiting European and American artists, musicians, filmmakers, and anthropologists during the late 1920s and 1930s. Spies was a Moscow-born German expatriate artist who served as an indispensable cultural broker, facilitating long-term visits to Bali by anthropologists Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson, composer Colin McPhee and his anthropologist wife Jane Belo, and the dance ethnographer Beryl de Zoete, among others. Spies was perhaps best known for his unique style of painting, which combined surrealist techniques with Balinese scenes and myths. Spies settled in Bali in 1927, where he lived and painted in order to “free himself of the indoctrination and prejudices about taste and beauty” until his untimely death in 1942. Although no records have been found indicating whether Spies had anything to do with *Legong*, it is likely that La Falaise and his crew were indebted to Spies and other Western expatriates for access to Ubud villages and their ceremonies.

While Western tourists and artists flocked to Bali during the 1920s and 1930s to enjoy “the good life,” the Balinese peasantry on the island lived in near abject poverty, largely due to the virtual collapse of the export economy and an exploitative taxation system established by the colonial Dutch administration. American travelogue films about Bali from the 1930s implied the fantasy of female promiscuity, untainted

by disease and urban squalor, complemented by rich cultural performance traditions in an abundant landscape. The disrobed native woman was often noted in trade reviews of the films, such as *Isle of Paradise* (directed Charles Trego, 1932) and *Goono-Goono* (“Love Powder,” produced by André Roosevelt and Armand Denis, 1932), both of which were precursors to *Legong: Dance of the Virgins*. *Goono-Goono* eventually lent its name to the subgenre of exotic films set in Bali. A documentary film that Robert Flaherty had planned to make with F.W. Murnau in Bali during the late 1920s—*Bali: The Ultima Thule of Our Desires*—was abandoned in favor of *Tabu: A Story of the South Seas* (1929). (*Ultima thule* is Latin for the highest degree attainable and best describes American and European perceptions of Bali as paradise.)

Legong is punctuated by scenes of everyday Balinese life such as the marketplace, a cockfight, and extended sequences devoted to the *Djanger* and *Legong* dances. Cockfighting is the favorite sport of Poutou’s father, Bagus, and the short sequence depicting his fascination with the sport emphasizes the role of the wager and chance in the film. Perhaps the most impressive of the traditional performances in the film is the Barong temple dance, described as a myth about a prince who is turned into a lion by the evil witch Rangda. The emotional intensity of this ritualized dance reaches its pinnacle when Barong, a mythical beast who protects the community, performed by two dancers, confronts and tries to kill Rangda, the personification of death and destruction, performed by a man wearing a frightening mask and a costume with pendulous breasts. During the mock battle,

the followers of Barong receive protective powers from him as they attack Rangda. They demonstrate how strong these powers are when, in trance, they turn their ritual swords upon themselves without injury. The film’s intertitles make exaggerated claims here about “sham suicides,” asserting that, “through courage born of madness—they set out to slay Rangda, the witch. But in accord with the grotesque legend they must fail. And having failed, must sham suicide.” The Barong-Rangda ritual, a centuries-old tradition that serves to reenact the balancing forces of nature, is considered a stabilizing event by the Balinese rather than an uncontrolled display of primitive passions.

Legong: Dance of the Virgins was reconstructed in 1992 by the UCLA Film and Television Archives

Below: Goesti Poetoe Aloes

using censored prints from the United States, Britain, and Canada. At the time of the film’s distribution by Paramount Pictures Corporation, scenes of nudity were trimmed for domestic release in the U.S. and shots of cockfights excised from the British prints. By duplicating and splicing the remaining negatives, the film was restored to its complete length.

—Peter J. Bloom and Katherine J. Hagedorn



TECHNICOLOR TIMELINE

BY SHARI KIZIRIAN

Whether painstakingly hand-painted frame by frame, stenciled scene by scene, or bathed in single-color tints and tones, silent films were not always in black and white. “[Y]ou see them again natural size, in color, with perspective, distance, skies, houses, with a perfect illusion of real life,” wrote one lucky audience member at the Grand Café in Paris the night the Lumière brothers debuted their actualities. That same year, the *New York Times* reported: “Edison’s Vitascope has made a sensation at Koster and Bial’s, and promises to remain for a long time on the bill. It showed its pictures in colors last night, and was applauded vigorously....” The ultimate goal of inventors and tinkerers, however, had always been to capture a “natural” palette of color in camera, which MIT alums Herbert Kalmus, Daniel Frost Comstock, and W. Burton Wescott eventually achieved in the 1930s with their enterprise, Technicolor. Before then, the company brought two-color verisimilitude to American movie screens, with three experimental processes.

1917

The Gulf Between premiered on September 17 in New York City. Working out of train car converted into a laboratory, Technicolor made the film to showcase its color system, which used its patented beam splitter to capture red and greens in camera and required two filters during projection. Trouble keeping the filtered images in sync led Process I to be immediately abandoned.

1922

The Toll of the Sea, notable as Anna May Wong’s first leading role, was also the first film made with Process II, which cemented a thinner red and a thinner green print together for smoother projection. Joseph Schenck produced the hour-long film for Technicolor, releasing it

through Metro Pictures. Cecil B. DeMille’s *The Ten Commandments* (1923) featured Process II color in its Exodus sequence. *Wanderer of the Wasteland* (1924), entirely in color, was the first Technicolor film financed by another studio. Samuel Goldwyn’s *Cynthrea* (1924) was the first shot using artificial lighting. Temperatures on set reportedly reached as high as 100 degrees.

1926

A breakthrough for Technicolor, *The Black Pirate*, the Douglas Fairbanks big-budget film, promised the company big business for its Process II. *The Big Parade*, *Ben-Hur*, *The Merry Widow*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Stage Struck*, *Michel Strogoff*, and many other major releases featuring Technicolor Process

II sequences followed. However, the cemented prints tended to cup and separate and had to be sent back to the lab for fixing.

1927

Big-budget films like *The Wedding March* featured sequences in Technicolor’s new dye transfer process, which eliminated the need for red and green positives to be cemented together for release prints. The following year, Technicolor financed *The Viking* (1929), which had an optical soundtrack in addition to Process III. Many of the industry’s first musical sequences were shot in this color and sound system, including 1930’s *Whoopie!*, which launched the film career of Busby Berkeley. Both of Henri de la Falaise’s silent Balinese pictures were shot in Process III, some of the last films released in the two-color process.

1932

Disney’s eight-minute animated movie *Flowers and Trees* debuted Technicolor’s Process IV, which added blue to the red and green mix to achieve a full range of colors. Disney negotiated an exclusive contract with Technicolor to film all the Silly Symphonies in Process IV and forbid other animation studios from releasing their own Technicolor films through 1935.

1934

Pioneer Pictures, owned by two Whitney-Vanderbilts, entered into an agreement with the ailing Technicolor to produce color films in Process IV, including the short *La Cucaracha*

and *Becky Sharp* (1935), the studio’s first feature. But it was Disney’s highly successful *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and the Selznick production of *A Star Is Born*, both released in 1937, that mark the beginning of Technicolor’s color-filled reign over Hollywood. *Snow White*’s pastel tones seemed more natural and the William Wellman-directed feature was the first fictional story in Technicolor not set during a historical period or an imagined fantasy land. It was shot on a contemporary set, attempting a realism not yet seen on screen.

...a realism not yet seen on screen.



GRIBICHE

Musical Accompaniment by the Mont Alto Motion Picture Orchestra

Directed by Jacques Feyder, France, 1925

Cast Jean Forest (Antoine Belot, called Gribiche) Françoise Rosay (Madame Maranet) Cécile Guyon (Anna Belot) Rolla Norman (Phillipe Gavary, the foreman) Armand Dufour (The chauffeur) **Production** Films Albatros **Assistant Director** Henri Chomette **Scenario** Jacques Feyder, adapted from an original story by Frédéric Boutet **Photography** Roger Forster and Maurice Desfassiaux **Sets** Lazare Meerson **Print Source** Cinémathèque française

Belgian-born director Jacques Feyder became an overnight sensation with *L'Atlantide*, his film of Pierre Benoit's postwar escapist bestseller about the mythical kingdom of Atlantis, shot on location in the Sahara. Lauded for his daring yet shunned for his prodigality, he had to go where the work was—and it was rarely in France. The films trickled in, for better or for worse, with their changing landscapes:

Belleville and Les Halles in *Crainquebille* (1922), the Swiss Alps in *Visages d'enfants* (1923), the Hungarian plains in the Austrian production *L'Image* (1924). Back in Paris, Feyder saw the hope of regular work with Alexandre Kamenka's Films Albatros, the Montreuil-based studio begun by Russian émigrés fleeing the Bolshevik Revolution.

Gribiche is the first of three films Jacques Feyder made for Kamenka. For both it was a serendipitous encounter—Kamenka had been unable to stop the talent drain of Albatros's Russian talent to a new studio at Billancourt and was now banking on a new generation of French directors like Jean Epstein (though Warsaw-born, he and his sister Marie settled in France permanently) and (soon to come) René Clair. Never a highly commercial director, Feyder's career had not been going well and his expectations were recently dashed by the failure of his Swiss-produced *Visages d'enfants*, which belatedly opened in January 1925. Kamenka, who always considered Feyder "the greatest French filmmaker," invited

him to work at Albatros, though with a tight budget imposed on what was a "try-out."

The two men agreed on an original story entitled "Gribiche" by Frédéric Boutet, a quirky if somewhat sentimental novella about a working-class youth who, after committing a "good deed," agrees to be adopted by a wealthy American socialite. Feyder

conceived the project as a vehicle for Jean Forest, the Montmartre boy he had discovered and cast in *Crainquebille* in 1922 and again in *Visages d'enfants*—three films of varying ambition, all

illuminated by one of the silent screen's most moving child players.

Gribiche is usually regarded as a minor work. Yet despite its implausibilities and longueurs it has aged gracefully to become one of Feyder's most engaging films, full of wry observation and ironic humor. The film's lovely midsummer visuals are the work of Albatros lighting regulars Maurice Desfassiaux and Roger Forster. Albatros's new production designer Lazare Meerson conceived the studio interiors, which wittily juxtapose the extremes of urban habitat—Art Deco luxury-versus-tenement functionalism. It was Meerson's first of seven collaborations with Feyder.

Though Jean Forest dominates *Gribiche*, there is a star-making performance by Feyder's wife, Françoise

Kamenka always considered Feyder "the greatest French filmmaker."

Given Feyder's eclecticism and hard-earned fluency, it was no surprise that Hollywood came knocking.

Rosay, in her official screen debut as the American socialite. Until then she had been glimpsed in cameos in her husband's films since his directing debut in 1915—and she had contributed to the scenario of 1923's *Visages d'enfants*. From *Gribiche* on, she remained his principal muse and advisor, as well as the mother of his three sons. Jean Forest never again found the roles and sensitive direction he received from Feyder, although he continued in supporting parts for some of the most important French directors until 1935, after which he abandoned cinema for a distinguished career in radio.

The success of *Gribiche* nearly led to yet another film by Feyder about a lonely child, but this one had a literary pedigree, Jules Renard's *Poil de Carotte* (1894). Julien Duvivier eventually made the film in 1925, but discarded Feyder's script. Instead, Feyder accepted Kamenka's offer to direct Spanish-born international stage star Raquel Meller in a lavish production of *Carmen*, which became Kamenka's, and Feyder's, costliest folly. The failure of *Carmen* again left Feyder unemployed. The collapse of a personal, long-nurtured Indo-Chinese project, *Le Roi lépreux*, left him in despair. Then came the providential reprieve of a Franco-German production of *Thérèse Raquin* (1927). Based on the Émile Zola novel about an adulterous couple who plot murder, the film, which stars France's Gina Manès, restored Feyder's critical status. In April 1928, he came home to France, now granting him citizenship, to make one last French film before embarking on a new adventure: Hollywood.

Given his eclecticism and hard-earned technical fluency, it was no surprise that Hollywood came knocking. Irving Thalberg had seen *Thérèse Raquin* and was impressed. Feyder, disgusted with the

unstable economics of the French and European film industries, accepted an invitation from MGM. But he had agreed to do one last picture for Kamenka, whose Albatros company was in an artistic and economic bind. Promised total artistic freedom, Feyder returned to a genre he had not practiced since his journeyman days during the war.

The New Gentlemen, adapted from a 1925 boulevard comedy about two politicians (one right-wing, the other left) competing for the attentions of the same young woman, remains one of the wittiest, most sophisticated comedies ever to come out of France. Like fellow Albatros director René Clair's *An Italian Straw Hat* (1927), it was also based on a play, starred Albert Préjean, and was designed by Lazare Meerson. While Clair's film is better known, both films solved the problems of adaptation with sheer visual imagination. Feyder wrote the script with his former secretary and fellow Belgian, Charles Spaak, soon to become one of France's greatest scriptwriters. Most memorably, they invented an enchanting tour de force during a session at the Chamber of Deputies, where a bored MP falls asleep at his bench and dreams that his fellow deputies have all been turned into nubile young ballerinas who dance up and down the aisles with ballot urns. After the film's first trade screening, however, the parliamentary world was up in arms and the film was banned. A number of MPs claimed to recognize themselves in some of the more unflattering portraits, and the scandal swelled ludicrously, only to subside months later. When *The New Gentlemen* finally opened in April 1929, after some unkind cuts, its potential had

been seriously diminished by the imminent arrival of sound.

As for Feyder, he had already sailed for America, in December 1928. Dismayed by the reactions to his film, he was soon to discover greater disillusionment in Hollywood, during what was to be another period of missed opportunities, directing MGM's most prestigious star Greta Garbo in her last silent, *The Kiss*, and the German version of her first talkie, *Anna Christie*. Feyder also directed the French version of *Unholy Night* and two English-language sound features, *Daybreak* and *Olympia*. He then returned to France for a period of relative stability, which

produced a final handful of wonderful films, most famously *La Kermesse héroïque* (*Carnival in Flanders*, 1935), his last contribution to great film comedy.

—Lenny Borger

This article has been condensed from the notes accompanying Flicker Alley's release of *French Masterworks: Russian Émigrés in Paris* (1923–1929).

This film has been restored by La Cinémathèque française with the collaboration of The Franco-American Cultural Fund—DGA MPA SACEM WGA



SAVING CINEMA À LA CINÉMATHÈQUE FRANÇAISE

By the time 20-year-old Henri Langlois and his 23-year-old poster-designer friend, Georges Franju, began collecting films in late 1935, silent cinema was officially over. Only two theaters remained in Paris to show the great masterworks that less than a decade earlier filled movie screens, but even they had to show talkies to survive. Fearing that all the prints of silent films might soon also be gone, sold off for their valuable silver components or merely destroyed to make space, Langlois and Franju, with the help of film theorist Jean Mitry, began approaching film producers to donate copies of their films, both for safe-keeping and for regular screenings at their newly established ciné-club on the Champs-Élysées. Film Albatros's Alexandre Kamenka was the first producer they approached, and he agreed. Prints were stored in an old building that Georges Méliès found near where he was staying. Thus, the Cinémathèque française was born. Throughout its 77-year history, the Cinémathèque has been on the forefront of collection and exhibition, protecting films during the German occupation of World War II and educating generations of filmmakers, most famously those of France's New Wave, with its eclectic and numerous film programs. When critic Georges Sadoul matter-of-factly introduced the less-than-year-old institution to the world in this November 1936 article for *Regards* magazine, it had already done invaluable work, safe-guarding many silent-era masterpieces, including a print of the film shown at this year's Silent Film Festival.

In a preceding article, I reported on how the masterpieces of the cinema are vanishing one after another, sold by the kilo to the manufacturers of toys and knickknacks, and how the cinema, although

an important part of our culture, is threatened with a disappearance more total than that of Assyrian literature.

In just a few months, the Cinémathèque française, which was organized by several young men passionately in love with the cinema, has succeeded in rescuing more than two hundred and fifty French and American films from the trash bins. Thanks to this institution, the best of the French cinema since the war has been saved from ruin. From now on, as their production progresses, today's directors will be depositing one copy of their new works with the Cinémathèque française.

All of Delluc is at the Cinémathèque. We can rescreen *Fièvre* and *La Femme de nulle part* as well as Epstein's *Coeur fidèle*, which was one of the great moments of cinema. All of Feyder is there, including *L'Image*, which was bought for 400 francs precisely at the moment when it threatened to end its career as scrap on the rounds of a mobile cinema. Along with *L'Image*, *Gribiche*, *Carmen*, *Visage d'enfants*, and other works will again reveal the path Feyder followed in order to arrive at *Pension Mimosas* and *La Kermesse héroïque*.

La Fille de l'eau and *Nana* by Jean Renoir are also saved. The other day I rescreened the work of Renoir's which Zola inspired, and despite the inevitable dating of its technical qualities and certain performances, the work retains a magnificent power. Its loss would have been irreparable. The current production of Renoir would have had to console us for any past disappearance. That's not the case with M. Marcel L'Herbier, for a young man today would find it hard to believe that this director formerly produced remarkable works. *El Dorado* and other works by L'Herbier are saved, as are the interesting films produced by Germaine Dulac during the same period.

Buñuels's *Un Chien andalou* and *L'Âge d'or*, those masterpieces of the period of the avant-garde film, are also preserved at the Cinémathèque; and we

CINEMA IS THREATENED WITH A DISAPPEARANCE MORE TOTAL THAN THAT OF ASSYRIAN LITERATURE.

can rescreen them after the upcoming release of *Terre sans pain* (the new title for *Hurdes*). Most of René Clair's work has also been rediscovered.

Finally, thanks to the collaboration of the Cinémathèque française with the American Cinémathèque*, and thanks to the fortunate purchase of French versions of the sought-after films, the best of the foreign production has been collected: the American films of Griffith (*Intolerance*, *Way Down East*), William S. Hart, Rex Ingram, Stroheim (*Greed*, his masterpiece); the Swedish films of *Sir Arne's Treasure* and *The Phantom Carriage*; the German films of *Caligari*, *Nosferatu*, Pabst, Dreyer And let's not forget the first Chaplin films and those singular prewar works by Emile Cohl and Méliès.

Up to now, these works have been projected in the [private] programs of the ciné-clubs. In collaboration with the Cinémathèque, the Cercle du cinéma and the Ciné-Liberté have organized [public] programs which people who want to know something about the evolution of cinema are following passionately. We will be giving the schedule of these programs to our Paris readers weekly. It's hoped that Ciné-Libertés branches in the provinces will organize similar screenings.

* A reference to the Film Library at New York's Museum of Modern Art

Translation reprinted with the permission of the Princeton University Press and Richard Abel, editor of *French Film Theory and Criticism 1929–1939*.

Above: *L'Âge d'or*



PAST AWARD RECIPIENTS

2003

La Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film (FIAP)

2004

George Eastman House

2005

National Film Preservation Foundation

2006

Library of Congress and Melissa Chittick

2007

Turner Classic Movies

2008

David Shepard of Film Preservation Associates

2009

China Film Archive

2010

Kevin Brownlow and Patrick Stanbury of Photoplay Productions

2011

UCLA Film and Television Archive

2012

Telluride Film Festival

* 2003–2006, the award was sponsored by Haghefilm.

“IT JUST HAS A SOUND”

RODNEY SAUER AND THE MONT ALTO MOTION PICTURE ORCHESTRA

Interview by Roberto Landazuri

Rummaging through a collection of musical scores at the University of Colorado for his ballroom dance band, Rodney Sauer came across some silent-era music cues donated by the widow of music director Al Layton. Leader at the time of the Mont Alto Ragtime and Tango Orchestra, which specialized in ballroom dance music from the first three decades of the 20th century, Sauer was so intrigued that he transformed the group into Mont Alto Motion Picture Orchestra.

Since 1989, the ensemble—currently made up of Brian Collins (clarinet), Dawn Kramer (trumpet), Rodney Sauer (piano, score compiler), David Short (cello), and Britt Swenson (violin)—has performed live and recorded for video for many silent films. Silent Film Festival goers will recognize the five-piece orchestra's deft feel for the music of the era and a full sound that can often feel like many more.

Small Orchestra, Big Sound

Everyone in the group is an excellent sight reader; that's absolutely critical for what we do together. The important thing is to get people who read well, who cope well, and who also play the music beautifully, because it's a small group. What I like about it is that it sounds a lot bigger. That has a lot to do with the silent-era orchestrations, which we almost exclusively use. It just has a sound; the piano kind of bulks up the ensemble, and we've got the strings for the romantic bits, we've got the trumpets for the exciting bits. The clarinet often behaves as a second violin, but other times adds a bit of exoticism, like when we did *The Thief of Bagdad*—our clarinetist got a real workout.

When I do a live score I usually leave some gaps where I can improvise on piano so everyone else can

get a chance to take a breather and get ready for the next piece. But we don't improvise as a group. Solo pianists and organists often improvise, but it's very rare for ensembles. There were some small ensembles—often piano, violin, and drums—who improvised and played songs they learned from the radio, never using written music. That kind of familiarity develops from playing together every day.

Digging through the Archives

Theater programs changed every week, so you had to come up with two or three hours of music every single week in addition to playing six to eight hours a day. There wasn't a lot of time left over to write music, so you'd just pull things from the library and use them, and then you'd put them back in the library and use them again later. That's what we're reviving. The performance style that survived is largely theater organ and piano—the larger orchestras pretty much vanished. It's hard to find the music; it's been out of print since at least 1928. You have to be able to track it down in the archives. Occasionally we get lucky, and original collections have fallen into our hands on three occasions. I photocopy them then donate them to an archive, which will take care of the original paper better than I can.

Gribiche: Scoring the Bastille

One collection of music came from a theater in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, and included a lot of early operetta excerpts—the equivalent of a modern Broadway musical. Back then these were light operas or operettas, and all the pieces would be published in a medley. In *Gribiche*, there's a whole sequence that takes place during Bastille Day celebrations. There's a band playing and people are dancing and colored lights are all hung up. I was looking for music that sounded like pop music from this era. We chose “The Rainbow Girl,” actually

from a bit earlier, but it has a modern 1920s feel. It was a little ahead of its time. It was no longer under copyright, so I could freely use it. There was one little snippet in there that was so pretty and it seemed to capture the feel of the movie.

The Patsy: The Doorbell Challenge

For Roscoe Arbuckle's *Leap Year*, I found a doorbell that sounded like a 1918 doorbell. Now that we've got it, we tend to use it when we have the chance. In *The Patsy*, the hero of the film keeps trying to fix the Harringtons' doorbell, so sometimes it's working and sometimes it isn't. I think that we're going to take that challenge. We want to make sure that the doorbell rings when it's working and doesn't ring when it's not working.

It can be a slippery slope; by the time you try to Foley every dog barking and every car driving by, it can get kind of noisy on the soundtrack. That's not really what people go to silent films for.

The Patsy also has a number of scenes that take place at a fancy dinner at a yacht club. We're going to be using some dance music to bring it up into the Jazz Age. A lot of the specifically silent film music sounds a little bit timeless. It's based on 19th century classical music to a great extent; they did get rather adventurous sometimes with the harmonies.

Safety Last!: A Charming Episode

Safety Last! won't be as difficult as the others, partly because it's not particularly long and partly because it's a story that has a lot of comedy sequences strung together—there's not a lot of hardcore emotion that gets into it. So, we're going to be playing much of it like ‘he's climbing a building’ or ‘he's goofing around a department store.’ But for the love story, I wanted to have a fairly recognizable piece.

Eugene Ormandy, a Hungarian-born conductor who was well known in the 1940s and 1950s got his start playing the Capitol Theatre with [another Hungarian] Ernő Rapée. When he got to America, he was supposed to have a job but the tour promoters were a bunch of flakey crooks and apparently ran off and just left him on the docks. So he went and tried to find anybody who could speak Hungarian. Rapée told him he could play at his theater, and he worked his way up. Well, it turns out he composed a little piece—the only one I've ever come across by Ormandy—it's called “Charming Episode.” With a name like that you know he wrote it for the silent films. We'll also use a lot of *misteriosos*, the sort of tense, jumpy music you use when people are sneaking around.

One of the advantages to doing *Safety Last!* at the Castro is that we are going to get a huge assist from the audience. They're going to be laughing at all the

jokes and all the gags, so we don't have to try to stay in synch with those. We can just play along and the comedy will pace itself.





THE HOUSE ON TRUBNAYA SQUARE

Musical Accompaniment by Stephen Horne

Directed by Boris Barnet, USSR, 1928

Cast Vera Maretskaya (Parasha Pitunova) Anel Sudakevitch (Marisha, a chambermaid) Ada Vojtsk (Fenya) Sergei Komarov (Lyadov) Vladimir Fogel (Golikov, the hairdresser) Yelena Tiapkina (His wife) Vladimir Batalov (Semyon Byvalov, the chauffeur) **Original Language Title** *Dom na Trubnoi* **Production** Mezhrabpom Rus **Scenario** Nikolai Erdman, Anatoly Mariengof, Vadim Shershenevich, Viktor Shklovsky, and Bella Zorich **Photography** Yevgeni Alekseyev **Art Direction** Sergei Koslovsky **Print Source** Pacific Film Archive

Soviet filmmaker Boris Barnet made his entrance into motion pictures via the boxing ring, with an improbable set of skills that ultimately proved necessary. It took a lot of rolling with the punches to maintain and sustain a career that began in the post-revolutionary period all the way through the Stalin years and beyond, and to deal with success, failure, and indifference. At the end, Barnet couldn't handle the erosion of his talents, but his tragedy is somewhat mitigated by the rediscovery and celebration of his films in the last two decades. He's the rare director whose movies and reputation have been restored to the pinnacle by subsequent generations.

Barnet was a humanist who deftly blended humor and drama without the crutch of sentimentality or the anchor of state-mandated ideology, as evidenced by his canny, clever, and vastly entertaining 1928 comedy *The House on Trubnaya Square*. Although the perception may still hold that all Soviet directors undergirded (or tempered, if you prefer) their service to political and social goals—and satisfied their artistic needs and impulses—with narrative and technical innovations, we may better appreciate Barnet as a comrade-in-arms of Jean Renoir as much as Sergei Eisenstein.

Born in 1902 into a middle-class family that hailed from England, Barnet studied architecture and painting. He was a set designer at the Moscow Arts Theatre before the Revolution arrived and he joined the Red Army as a medic. Barnet took up boxing while in uniform, and it was his footwork and athleticism that eventually caught the eye of pioneering film theorist and aspiring director Lev Kuleshov

and his actress wife Aleksandra Khokhlova. They solicited Barnet to join their ensemble and the following year cast him as a cowboy in Kuleshov's first feature, *The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr. West in the Land of the Bolsheviks* (1924).

Barnet learned a great lesson on that picture, and it had nothing to do with casting or camera placement. In a scarring episode, a tightrope mishap resulted in

Barnet hanging some 70 feet in the air. Instead of ordering an immediate rescue, Kuleshov, according to Barnet, left the unlucky thespian twisting in the wind (metaphorically, and perhaps literally) for half an hour while berating him nonstop. We can likely ascertain Barnet's future attitude toward actors from this incident, for throughout his career behind the camera he evinced adoration for his players, encouraging them to improvise, and even accepted a bit of anarchy on the set.

Barnet was a humanist who deftly blended humor and drama without the crutch of sentimentality or the anchor of state-mandated ideology.

Although he ceased working with Kuleshov after *Mr. West*, Barnet wasn't scared off of acting. He played one of the titular characters in *Miss Mend* (a.k.a. *The Adventures of the Three Reporters*, 1926), which marked his writing and directing debut (with Fyodor Otsep). The three-chapter serial about a union secretary was a huge hit, in part because it borrowed the pace and cliff-hanger thrills of early American movies.

Barnet capably took on the directing chores by himself for the wonderful *The Girl with the Hatbox* (1927), a romantic comedy that slyly satirized the rules and subterfuges that accompanied the implementation of the Soviet Union's new housing policies. His knack for portraying the sometimes absurd, sometimes tragic collision of idealism and human nature was on ample display.

Although—or perhaps because—the party heads recognized cinema's power and contribution to the Revolution, they began in 1928 to clamp down on both stylistic experimentation and any perceived echoes or sway of foreign (primarily American) culture. But it's difficult to discern the effect of any constraints or admonitions on *Trubnaya*, which imagines the migration of a naïve rural duo, a girl named Parasha (the peerless Vera Maretskaya) and her duck, to the big, chaotic city.

The literary critic Viktor Shklovsky, novelist Anatoly Mariengof, poet Vadim Shershenevich, and dramatist Nikolai Erdman all had a hand in the screenplay. While it's never a good sign when so many writers are credited on a Hollywood film, Barnet melded their contributions into a lucid and vastly entertaining whole.

In the course of the 64-minute feature, Barnet joyfully employs an array of techniques from zippy montage to freeze-frames—even stop-motion animation.

The director drolly interrupts the opening sequence of Parasha and her fowl adrift in the crowded, confusing city at the moment the girl looks up and finds herself in the path of an oncoming trolley. A perfectly placed freeze-frame, rewind, and flashback—designed to delight us rather than impress us with its cinematic sophistication—show how the country girl came to be in Moscow (and seemingly in mortal danger) in the first place.

An enthusiasm for location shooting enabled the director to stuff *The House on Trubnaya Square* with details of actual urban life, while his talent and ingenuity for devising and employing sets produced an eye-catching cutaway interior of a five-story apartment house. More than just a striking visual device, the set underscored the film's wry worldview that

good old-fashioned selfishness trumped the newly installed (but not yet instilled) communal spirit.

The newly arrived Parasha takes a job cleaning the apartment of a self-serving hairdresser (Vladimir Fogel) and his wife. In the inevitable formula laid out by Marx, employment leads to exploitation, a law of economics with unmistakable resonance in

present-day Bangladeshi sweatshops and New York fast-food franchises.

Barnet, unlike some of his contemporaries, transitioned easily to the sound era with the influential masterpieces *Outskirts* (1933) and *By the Bluest of Seas* (1936). During World War II, however, no fewer than three of his films were banned. The last one, *Once at Night*, a saga of resistance and self-sacrifice in which a terrified young woman hides a pair of downed Soviet airmen during the German siege of Stalingrad, was deemed "too gloomy" in 1945. The official thinking may have been that the time for heroic wartime sacrifices had passed, and films should direct the Soviet people to look to the future.

Barnet worked steadily through the 1950s, however, so evidently he wasn't considered persona non grata by the film office. But it must have taken every iota of the fancy footwork he mastered as a boxer, as Soviet critics, judging every film on its revolutionary bona fides, found Barnet's work lacking. Yet his films were esteemed outside the U.S.S.R. *Bountiful Summer* (1951) prompted Nouvelle Vague director Jacques Rivette to declare that Barnet was second only to Eisenstein among Soviet filmmakers.

As the rejuvenation of Barnet's reputation in the 21st century proves, generosity of spirit is a quality that ages well. The film historian Bernard Eisenschitz wrote in 1991, "His films convey more than most the intensity of happiness, the physical pleasure of meeting and contact, the inevitable tragedy of relationships."

Boris Barnet was just 62 when he committed suicide in 1965 during preproduction on the historical drama *The Ambassadors' Plot*, allegedly out of despair that his artistic gifts had faded. If that truly was the reason, he was measuring himself against some of the loftiest accomplishments in Soviet cinema—his own filmography.

—Michael Fox

This screening is in collaboration with the Pacific Film Archive





THE JOYLESS STREET

Musical Accompaniment by the Matti Bye Ensemble

Directed by Georg Wilhelm Pabst, Germany, 1925

Cast Asta Nielsen (Maria Lechner) Greta Garbo (Grete Rumfort) Gräfin Agnes Esterhazy (Regina Rosenow) Werner Krauss (The butcher) Henry Stuart (Egon Stirner) Einar Hanson (Lt. Davy) Grigori Chmara (Kellner) Valeska Gert (Frau Greifer) Alexander Mursky (Dr. Lied) Tamara Tolstoi (Lia Lied) **Original Language Title** *Die freudlose Gasse* **Production** Sofar-Film-Produktion GmbH DE **Producers** Michael Salkind, Romain Pinès, and Georg Wilhelm Pabst **Scenario** Willy Haas, adapted from Hugo Bettauer's novel **Photography** Guido Seeber, Curt Oertel, and Walter Robert Lach **Art Direction** Hans Sohnle and Otto Erdmann **Editor** Mark Sorkin **Print Source** Filmmuseum München

Melchior Street is a microcosm of Vienna just after World War I. Inflation is rampant, poverty and vice are widespread, and the division between rich and poor is vast. Outside a butcher shop, the poor and hungry wait in line, ready to barter whatever it takes to buy a scrap of meat. Among them are two desperate young women, Maria and Grete. Nearby, a dress shop is a front for a brothel where rich and powerful men have their choice of women forced to exchange their bodies for the necessities of life. Soon, Maria and Grete will be among them.

This is the sordid world of *The Joyless Street*, based on Hugo Bettauer's controversial 1924 novel that had been serialized in a Viennese newspaper. The 1925 film was among the first in German cinema to move away from expressionism, the stylized and abstract visual images used to portray inner turmoil. Known as "The New Objectivity" (*Die Neue Sachlichkeit*), this approach to filmmaking, art, and literature was more realistic and encompassed the distinctly German subgenre of *strassefilme*, which focused on city streets as places of violence and despair. *The Joyless Street* marked turning points in the careers of its director G.W. Pabst and its stars, veteran Danish star Asta Nielsen and 19-year-old Swedish newcomer Greta Garbo. It was also the

beginning of the end of the creative partnership between Garbo and her mentor, Mauritz Stiller.

Garbo was Stiller's discovery. The Finnish-born director had chosen her for a starring role in his Swedish film, *The Saga of Gosta Berling* (1924), and her performance caused a sensation worldwide.

Rich and powerful men have their choice of women forced to exchange their bodies for the necessities of life.

While in Berlin for the German premiere, Stiller made a deal with a German distributor for his next film with Garbo, the story of a Russian girl sold into a Turkish harem. In late 1924, Stiller and Garbo, along with costar Einar Hanson, left for Constantinople. However, the company financing the film went bankrupt, and the three returned to Germany

where Stiller juggled offers for Garbo's services. The immediate solution for their cash flow problems soon presented itself in the form of Viennese-born director G.W. Pabst.

Pabst had seen *Gosta Berling* and wanted to know if Garbo was available to play the second lead in *The Joyless Street*, his third film as director. According to Garbo biographer Alexander Walker, Stiller replied, "Beautiful pictures can be made of Greta Garbo, if you know how to make pictures; but she cannot act." He asked for and got \$4,000 (a huge sum in those days) for Garbo, in addition to a part in the film for Hanson. Stiller also insisted that Garbo be



photographed with expensive Kodak film stock, instead of the cheaper Agfa brand then used in Germany. During production, Pabst noticed that the young actress had developed a nervous facial tic in close-ups. Someone—probably cameraman Guido Seeber—came up with the idea of shooting her close-ups in slow motion. Imperceptibly slowed, her performance took on a dreamlike quality. Still, Seeber's lighting did not make the most of Garbo's beauty, and Pabst hired a lighting specialist for her, one of the first directors to use such a technician. Walker writes that Pabst was also "patiently involved in helping an intuitive actress make emotional dis-

coveries in herself and the role." Nervous about acting without Stiller's guidance, Garbo worked 12- and 14-hour days with Pabst, then spent several more hours with Stiller preparing for the next day's scenes.

According to Garbo biographer Barry Paris, Asta Nielsen was one of the few cast members "who thought Garbo was worth all the trouble." The Danish-born Nielsen, known simply as "Die Asta," was one of the first international movie stars, and, since 1912, one of the leading film actresses in Germany. Her androgynous image, independent manner—she often played liberated women and was among the first actresses to have her own production company—and naturalistic acting style made her unique at the time. In her autobiography, Nielsen wrote "I realized that one had to detach oneself completely from one's

surroundings to be able to perform an important scene in a dramatic film. The opportunity to develop character and mood gradually, something denied the film actor, can only be replaced by a kind of 'auto-suggestion.'" At 43, she was too old for the role of teenage Maria in *The Joyless Street*, but in one scene where she recalls a traumatic incident her trance-like performance is chillingly effective. An innovator throughout her career, Nielsen was quick to recognize Garbo's unique qualities, and Garbo later said that everything she knew about acting she learned from Nielsen, who retired from films in 1932 after making only one talkie.

DIE ASTA'S TRANCE-LIKE PERFORMANCE IS CHILLINGLY EFFECTIVE.

Garbo biographer Paris is among those who credit Pabst rather than Stiller for Garbo's nuanced performance. "Now, to many, [she] was Pabst's discovery as much as Stiller's ... Garbo, the 'European actress,' matured substantially in her short time with Pabst." Garbo and Pabst talked about working together on other projects, but Stiller, who had signed a contract for himself and Garbo with MGM, persuaded her to stick with him. The two went to Hollywood but never completed another film together.

The Joyless Street attracted huge crowds because of its shocking subject matter. It portrayed not only the era's economic hardship and the young women subsequently forced into prostitution but also the decadence rampant in postwar society. The film's success immediately shot Pabst to the top ranks of directors in Germany. But because of its frank depiction of corruption and vice, it was heavily censored or sometimes banned in Germany and elsewhere. According to film historian Paul Rotha, "When completed, it was ten thousand feet in length ... France accepted the film, deleting two thousand feet and every shot of 'the street' itself. Vienna extracted all sequences in which Werner Krauss appeared as the butcher. Russia turned the American Lieutenant into a doctor and made the butcher the murderer instead of the girl."

Censorship problems and edits meant that a complete version might never have existed—Pabst's editor Mark Sorkin claimed that he and Pabst made the first cuts the night before the premiere, at the insistence of the theater owner. The German censors demanded more cuts in 1926. Each time the film

was censored, the pieces had to be re-edited so that the story made sense, and multiple versions proliferated. New reconstructions appeared in 1989 and again in 1995. This current, most complete version by the Filmmuseum München dates from 2012.

Pabst's artistic reputation rests on his two silent films starring Louise Brooks, *Pandora's Box* (1929) and *Diary of a Lost Girl* (1929), as well as the sound film *The Threepenny Opera* (1931). His long career was inevitably tarnished when he returned to Germany at the start of World War II and made two films. Following the war, he returned to his hometown of Vienna and directed a series of anti-Nazi films. He retired in 1956 and died in 1967.

Today, *The Joyless Street* is best remembered as the film that launched Pabst's career and gave a major boost to Garbo's. It also provides a realistic portrait of postwar Austria and Germany. As Rotha writes: "No film or novel has so truthfully recorded the despair of defeat, and the false values after war, as *The Joyless Street*."

—Margarita Landazuri



KINGS OF (SILENT) COMEDY

Musical Accompaniment by Günter Buchwald

FELIX GOES WEST

Directed by Otto Messmer, USA, 1924

With a few exceptions—notably Winsor McCay’s 1914 *Gertie the Dinosaur*—early film animation made little impact until 1919. That’s when producer Pat Sullivan’s *Feline Follies*, starring the rowdy cat Master Tom, captured the public’s attention. A newspaper cartoonist, Sullivan had some success with a series of Charlie Chaplin cartoons in 1916, and his top animator, Otto Messmer, mastered drawing Charlie’s moves and used those skills to create a rascally cat with onscreen charisma.

For the new series starring the now renamed Felix, the modest Messmer served as its uncredited director for the next decade, producing some 70 percent of the drawings, in addition to drawing a daily Felix strip in the funnies beginning in 1923. Felix the Cat was the first great cartoon star, the progenitor of Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, and Bugs Bunny but with more adult appeal. Like his successors, Felix was heavily merchandized. Felix the Cat tie-pins, brooches, silver spoons, dolls, pillows, candy, blankets, pencils, and automobile radiator caps were available for sale throughout the 1920s. The cat even had his own theme music, “Felix Kept on Walking.”

Felix was a stubborn loner interested in food, shelter, and, occasionally, females, in roughly that order. Rudyard Kipling’s “Just-So” fable of 1912, “The Cat That Walked by Himself,” had been a key inspiration for the character, as was Chaplin’s peripatetic Tramp. Another great silent comic, Buster Keaton, both influenced and copied Felix. Felix frequently uses the deadpan comedian’s trademark hand-over-the-eyes gesture to assess a new landscape. Keaton returned the favor by borrowing Felix’s characteristic circular walk while thinking things over in his 1925 feature

Go West. Made one year earlier, *Felix Goes West* might well have been Keaton’s inspiration for his parody of the western.

As *Felix Goes West* illustrates, the lone cat occupies a stripped-down world—empty streets and stark mountains, hostile people and animals, all handsomely drawn by Messmer and associates on paper, not the newer animation cels. By the time *Felix Goes West* was made, animator Bill Nolan had already rounded out the cat’s originally angular features.

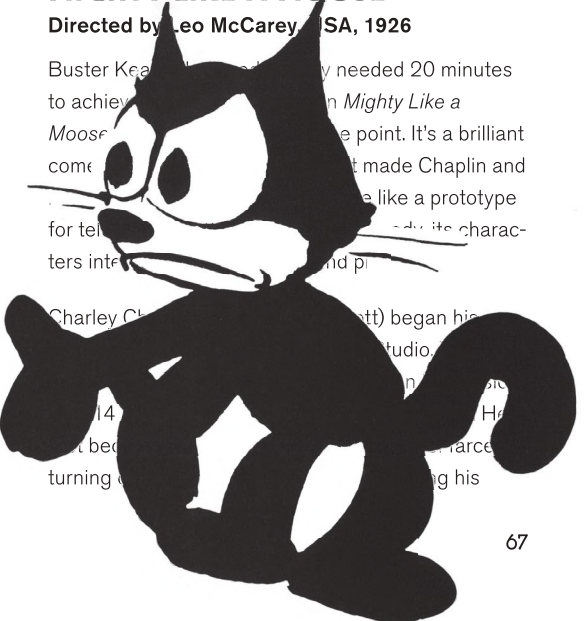
When talkies arrived, Sullivan refused to adapt to the new medium, bringing a sudden end to Felix’s enormous popularity. Pat Sullivan died in 1933, but Messmer continued to draw the Felix comic strip for many years, living long enough to be rediscovered by animation historians. At a Museum of Modern Art tribute in 1976, the 86-year-old modestly accepted thanks for his life’s work. His speech in full: “Like the cartoons, I am silent.”

MIGHTY LIKE A MOOSE

Directed by Leo McCarey, USA, 1926

Buster Keaton’s *Mighty Like a Moose* needed 20 minutes to achieve what *Mighty Like a Moose* did in 10. It’s a brilliant comic that made Chaplin and Keaton look like a prototype for the modern character.

Charley Chase (H. H. Chapin) began his career in the studio. He was in the film *Mighty Like a Moose* in 1926. He became a star after turning



brother Jimmy Parrott. For a couple years, he ran the day-to-day operations at producer Hal Roach's "Lot of Fun."

By late 1923, interest in heavily made-up buffoons had diminished and top comedians Keaton and Lloyd were deserting shorts for features. Roach had already helped Harold Lloyd to fame as a normal fellow in extreme situations and he saw a new opportunity in his right-hand man. The Charley Chase series of short comedies started in early 1924. Full-page ads featured a picture of the actor in top hat and tails. "You aren't a cartoon or a caricature," read one. "Your face ain't lopsided nor do you sport an Adam's apple the size of a pumpkin; you look like a real human being and you act like one."

Chase specialized in playing a real human being in increasingly absurd situations that followed a linear, if cracked, logic. Frequently married in his films, Chase drew humor from the perils of domesticity, and his female costars were active players in the chaos, particularly Vivien Oakland in *Mighty Like a Moose*. The morality was no longer Victorian but Jazz Age, with open acknowledgment, and open defiance, of Prohibition. Director Leo McCarey, Chase's creative partner in all this, had joined him a few months into his stardom in 1924 and stayed with him through 1926 before going on to supervise the teaming of Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy the following year. McCarey then went on to direct some of the great comedies of the 1930s, from *Duck Soup* (1933) to *The Awful Truth* (1937), the latter garnering him the first of his Oscars for directing. After Chase's early

death in 1940, McCarey said that Chase had "taught me all I know."

THE LOVE NEST

Directed by Buster Keaton, USA, 1922

The Love Nest was the last of the 19 shorts Buster Keaton made between 1920 and 1922, and the only one for which he took sole credit as writer-director. It's a deep-sea chart of Keaton's comic universe, bleak and absurd, minus the love story that softens his other films.

Keaton, a comedy veteran since his childhood as a member of his family's vaudeville act, never courts sympathy. Like Felix the Cat he just keeps moving through his black-and-white world no matter what. Buster also famously remains "stone-faced." Keaton said he shot his first three solo films before reviews pointed out that he never cracked a smile. His character is dedicated to staying alive and simply doesn't have time for it. Studio publicity released during its production declared *The Love Nest* unique in that "there is not a woman in the cast." In fact, Keaton's usual female lead, Virginia Fox, appears briefly only in silhouette to say good-bye to Buster, a lovely shot filmed at Palisades Park in Santa Monica. (Her image also appears in a photograph.)

Initially, the jilted Buster seeks oblivion in his tiny craft dubbed "Cupid." A string of black comedy jokes emphasizing life's cheapness in a hostile environment follows. The diminutive Buster's straight-faced guile is primarily set against sea captain Joe Roberts's he-man brutality. C. S. Sewell of *Moving Picture World* wrote in his review that *The Love Nest* is a "burlesque of 'virile sea stories'" suggesting that Roberts is parodying Wolf Larsen of Jack London's *The Sea Wolf*, filmed in 1920 with Noah Beery as the Survival-of-the-Fittest captain.

"Keaton Comedies in Class by Themselves"

Motion Picture News

"The Love Nest"

Buster Keaton Comedy-First National—Two Reels

BUSTER Keaton had so much fun and furnished so much amusement in a comedy about a boat on the high seas, shown some time ago, that he has evidently attempted to provide a sequel. "The Love Nest" is one of the most comic pieces which the sad face comedian has given the screen. He utilizes the dream situation in building his burlesque, yet one never suspects this bit of ancient treatment until it is shown at the finish.

Buster has rigged up a boat called "The Love Nest." He will sail the lily deep in an effort to forget an unhappy love affair. And then the fun begins. The comedian's frail craft is sighted by the skipper of a whaling boat. His anchors alongside, clambers aboard and proceeds to get in "ditch" with the powerful captain. The latter has made Buster his cabin boy. When one of the crew does something out of order he is tossed in the ocean and a ready wreath follows him. Keaton manages to avoid Mr. Jones' w. k. locker in scenes which would make a wooden Indian laugh.

We predict a raucous moment of laughter in any house anywhere, when Buster is yanked into the water by a whale. He tows the big fish back to the boat and the skipper duplicates the scene. Perhaps the most amusing touch is that which shows Buster trying to fish while standing on a target standard. The warship shoots several projectiles around him, but he mistakes them for fish and casts his rod in an effort to catch them. Then comes the dream situation and the puny of Buster's nightmare when the standard is shot to pieces.

For sheer burlesque and comic exaggeration the Keaton comedies are in a class by themselves. This is good enough to treat the blunder away from a feature unless the chief attraction is an extraordinary one—LAURENCE REID.



Joseph M. Schenck presents

Buster Keaton

in

"The Love Nest"

and 10 other 2-reel classics released through First National

"THE COPS"

"THE PALEFACE"

"THE PLAYHOUSE"

"THE BOAT"

"DAY DREAMS"

"THE BALLOONATIC"

"THE BLACKSMITH"

"THE FROZEN NORTH"

"THE ELECTRIC HOUSE"

"MY WIFE'S RELATIONS"

Written and Directed by Buster Keaton and Eddie Cline

Every show is a good show when Keaton Heads the Bill!

Distributed by Associated First National Pictures, Inc.

Foreign Rights Controlled by Associated First National Pictures, Inc. 30 Madison Avenue, New York



Pathécomedy

The First time a girl looked at him without laughing--He was thrilled!

Hal Roach presents

"MIGHTY LIKE A MOOSE"

in

CHARLEY CHASE with Vivien Oakland

REPRODUCED BY DESIGN U.S.A.

THE IMMIGRANT

Directed by Charles Chapiin, USA, 1917

It's hard today to comprehend the intensity of Charlie Chaplin's sudden, mass popularity that surged

just after he entered films in 1914. In March 1917, *Photoplay* reported that continuous laughter during two weeks' run of Chaplin comedies loosened the bolts on theater seats. According to David Robinson's definitive biography of the silent star, nine out of ten men attending costume balls that year went as Chaplin. The British-born vaudevillian was also supposedly paged in 800 hotels simultaneously across America on the night of November 12, 1916.

Chaplin's initial popularity was built on acrobatic aggression but, by 1917, he had formed his more sympathetic Tramp character, which he spoke of frankly as seeking appeal with "a pitiable expression." He needed his popularity. In April 1917, when America entered the World War, he was widely attacked for not rushing to enlist. He had tried but he didn't meet the Army's physical requirements; perhaps this first experience gives *The Immigrant* its particular edge.

Chaplin began work on what became his penultimate film for Mutual that same April, right after his 28th birthday. The film, like so many of his others, is built on his character's poverty, this one beginning with a broke diner in a fancy French restaurant. Chaplin felt his way into his movies, improvising on camera and filming take after take. Into the café scenes, he eventually folded in the appearance of Edna Purviance, his regular costar from 1915 to 1923. (She used to encourage him before shots by saying, "Go on, be cute!") As he shot and reshot the dining scenes, he substituted increasingly large men as the threatening waiter before settling on massive Eric Campbell.

The café sequence concluded, he began to shoot the shipboard scenes comprising the first half of the film, which answer the question of how Charlie and Edna came to know each other. A stage device—a rocking platform he had first used in a 1910 music hall routine about an unsteady ocean voyage—helped the ship's floors heave. Lastly, he shot the film's brief scenes linking the two parts, including the famous shot of émigrés forced behind a rope once

they arrive ashore. Once shooting was over, Chaplin's remaining challenge was to reduce 40,000 feet of exposed film to 1,800 for its release, accomplished over four straight days and nights without rest.

The Immigrant's send-up of American hostility toward huddled masses yearning to breathe free ensures Chaplin's film is as timely and as funny in 2013 as it was in 1917. According to David Robinson, this film, along with *Easy Street* and *The Cure* all made in less than six months, are "an astonishing leap forward" for Chaplin, "launch[ing] the series of masterpieces that mark [his] maturity."

—Gregg Rickman

**Newly mastered DCP of all the titles
courtesy of Lobster Films and Flicker Alley**





THE OUTLAW AND HIS WIFE

Musical Accompaniment by the Matti Bye Ensemble

Directed by Victor Sjöström, Sweden, 1918

Cast Victor Sjöström (Kári, a.k.a. Ejvind) Edith Erastoff (Halla) Valerie Alexandrow (Tota, their daughter) John Ekman (Arnes) Nils Arehn (Björn Bergsteínsson, Halla's brother-in-law) William Larsson (Bjärni Sveinbjörnsson) Artur Rolén (A farmhand) Sigurd Wallén (Farmhand who comes to claim Ejvind) Thure Holm (The parson) **Original Language Title** *Berg-Ejvind och hans hustru* **Production** AB Svenska Biografteatern **Producer** Charles Magnusson **Scenario** Victor Sjöström and Sam Ask, adapted from Jóhann Sigurjónsson's play **Photography** Julius Jaenzon, as J. Julius **Art Direction** Axel Esbensen **Print Source** Swedish Film Institute

A master of 20th century cinema, the Swedish director and actor Victor Sjöström is best remembered for his moving performance as the elderly physician reflecting on his life in *Wild Strawberries* (1957). As a director, his highly acclaimed 1921 adaptation of Selma Lagerlöf's novel *The Phantom Carriage* convinced MGM mogul Louis B. Mayer to bring him to America where Sjöström directed the prestigious projects *He Who Gets Slapped* (1924), with Lon Chaney, and two starring Lillian Gish, *The Scarlet Letter* (1926) and *The Wind* (1928), arguably the pinnacle of his Hollywood tenure. While *The Outlaw and His Wife* (1918) is not as well known, it is considered by many film historians to be Sjöström's silent-era masterpiece and, nearly a century after its release, is enjoying a revival that should elevate its stature in the director's pantheon.

The Outlaw and His Wife was produced during a renaissance in the Swedish film industry between 1916 and 1918 when the production company Svenska Biografteatern (it later became Svensk Filmindustri) decided to focus on quality over quantity. The studio reduced its yearly production schedule of around 26 films to five or less. Its first major success was Sjöström's *Terje Vigen* (*A Man There Was*), based on Henrik Ibsen's 1862 narrative poem set during the Napoleonic Wars. Unanimously praised by

critics and a box-office success, the 1917 production showcases what became Sjöström's directorial style and predominant themes: an emotional realism that transcends mere melodrama, nature's impact on human behavior, a keen interest in social issues, and a gift for capturing the essence of literary works on film.

Like a western with a romanticized renegade hero, **THE OUTLAW AND HIS WIFE** is the ballad of a thief on the run.

One year later, *The Outlaw and His Wife* confirmed the promise of *Terje Vigen* and popularized visual motifs now identified with Swedish cinema: summer representing harmony and renewal and winter, death and despair.

Adapted from the 1911 play by Jóhann Sigurjónsson, *The Outlaw and His Wife* bears the subtitle "A pictorial drama (in seven parts) of the lives of two people" and takes place in mid-18th century Iceland (though it was filmed in Sweden). Based on historical events, the narrative spans an emotional arc encompassing love, lust, jealousy, retribution, grief, and despair, all of which are played out by the main characters against the beauty and grandeur of an untamed wilderness. Like a western with a romanticized renegade hero, *The Outlaw and His Wife* is the ballad of Berg-Ejvind (played by Sjöström), an accused thief on the run who travels under the assumed name of Kári. He finds work on the farm of Halla, a generous, self-sufficient widow, and their growing attraction turns to love. When a jealous rival alerts the authorities of Ejvind's true identity, Halla willingly abandons

her prosperous life and property and rides off with her lover.

Sjöström brought a psychological realism to the acting in *The Outlaw and His Wife* that gave it an intimacy and honesty lacking in many silent melodramas. With a minimum use of title cards, Sjöström revealed the inner emotional state of his protagonists through subtle but revealing close-ups or their interaction in both claustrophobic and wide-open spaces. Another major strength was his decision to film the outdoor scenes on location, lending an authentic sense of place and time to the action. The painterly cinematography by Julius Jaenzon shows the influence of 19th century Swedish landscape artists Edvard Bergh and Alfred Wahlberg, with stunning panoramas of waterfalls, forests, volcanic hot springs, and mountains providing more than just picturesque scenery.

Nature is a mood-altering force affecting the protagonists' behavior and becomes a predominant character in the film. The majestic long shots often integrate people into the setting as if they were part of a tapestry. In one exemplary scene, Ejvind and his companion Arnes drag their fishnets in a mountain lake against the backdrop of snow-capped hills and low-hanging clouds. *The Outlaw and His Wife* is also infused with a kind of pantheism and puritanical morality that came to mark Swedish cinema. As social renegades the lovers feel their transgressions are subject to the laws of an indifferent universe and when cornered by their pursuers, Halla makes a personal sacrifice that reflects an Old Testament sense of vindication.

Portions of the movie, particularly the summer sequences, were filmed at Mount Nuolja near Abisko National Park in Swedish Lapland. Most of the interiors were shot at the Svenska Bio studios in Stockholm, including the climatic blizzard created on an indoor set. As was typical of Sjöström's working

methods, he spent several months preparing *The Outlaw and His Wife*, and, during production, his perfectionist nature demanded the reshooting of any scene that lacked the emotional truth or meaning he wanted to convey. Lillian Gish, who worked with Sjöström in Hollywood, once said of him, "His direction was a great education for me ... the Swedish school of acting is one of repression."

Despite the challenges of filming on location for *The Outlaw and His Wife*, Sjöström insisted on doing most of his own stunts. One of the most unforgettable is when Ejvind dangles from a rope beneath a mountain cliff as Arnes, his rival for Halla, ponders pulling him to safety or cutting the line. In a diary entry,

Sjöström described how he was attached to a hidden cable and pulled up by crew members out of camera range, though disaster was barely avoided: "Everything went fine, and I reached the cliff edge itself. Then a technician suddenly jumped forward and hugged me in his arms. It was at

the last moment—the hook that was holding me had straightened out as a result of rubbing against the cliff edge—and the next instant ... yes, I have never been in such mortal danger as I was then."

Film critic David Thomson noted a recurring quality in Sjöström's best work of "wild feelings bursting through moral and social inhibition" and that is an apt summation of the universe of *The Outlaw and His Wife* where passion and intolerance coexist. In the title role, Sjöström enjoys an undeniable chemistry and soulful rapport with Edith Erastoff (as Halla), which could be more than just acting. They met and fell in love during the making of *Terje Vigen* when he was still married to his second wife, actress Lili Beck. During *The Outlaw and His Wife* shoot, Erastoff became pregnant and later had a daughter, though the couple was not able to marry until 1922.

Under contract to MGM, Sjöström directed nine films in seven years under the name Victor Seastrom. But he missed working in the Swedish film industry. After completing *A Lady to Love* (1930), his final U.S. production, the homesick director returned to Stockholm to resume his filmmaking career. No one could have predicted how quickly it would stall and end. Sjöström, however, went on to find great satisfaction acting for the stage and screen. While serving as head art director of Svensk Filmindustri (1942–43), he met and became a mentor to young aspiring director Ingmar Bergman, who later cast

him in *To Joy* (1950) and *Wild Strawberries* (1957). Sadly, of the 43 features that Sjöström directed, only 15 survive. Yet, what remains is enough to ensure his enduring legacy as one of the greatest silent film directors not just in Sweden but worldwide.

—Jeff Stafford



Victor Sjöström



THE LAST EDITION

Musical Accompaniment by Stephen Horne

Directed by Emory Johnson, USA, 1925

Cast Ralph Lewis (Tom McDonald) Lila Leslie (Mary McDonald) Ray Hallor (Ray McDonald) Frances Teague (Polly McDonald) Rex Lease (Clarence Walker) Lee Willard (Aaron Hoffman) William Bakewell ("Ink" Donovan) Lou Payne (Jerome Hamilton) David Kirby ("Red" Moran) Tom O'Brien ("Bull" Collins) Wade Boteler (Mike Fitzgerald) **Production** Emory Johnson Productions **Story and Scenario** Emilie Johnson **Photography** Gilbert Warrenton and Frank Evans **Print Source** The Silent Film Festival Collection at the Library of Congress

Emory Johnson entered the film business strictly by chance exactly 100 years ago. While a sophomore studying architecture at the University of California in Berkeley, he took a drive through Niles Canyon and came upon a curious sight: a gang of cowboys on horseback firing their guns at a stagecoach. It was the Essanay Film Company making one of their famous Broncho Billy westerns. The captivated Johnson pleaded for a job and was thrilled when Gilbert M. "Broncho Billy" Anderson offered to hire him for eight dollars a week assisting the cameraman. Within a short time, Johnson stepped in front of the camera to act in dozens of films.

Johnson's enthusiasm spread to his mother, Emilie Johnson, and her friend, Sadie Lindblom, who decided to produce movies in San Mateo, California, in 1914. The two women pooled their \$8,000 savings and rented a warehouse at 312 Fifth Avenue. Emilie wrote scenarios, and as the Liberty Film Company they completed several movies. However, their releasing agent, the Kriterion Film Service, went bankrupt and left the company \$40,000 in debt. The company struggled on with a new distributor for a year, but Emory had already left for Hollywood and was hired by Universal Film Company where met Hobart Bosworth, a noted actor and director, who mentored him for the next few years.

From 1917 to 1921, Johnson acted opposite some of Hollywood's biggest stars, among them Mary

Pickford, Bebe Daniels, Betty Compson, Constance Talmadge, Bessie Love, and Wallace Reid. He married Ella Hall, an actress who started in films with Biograph at the age of 15 and then became a popular actress at Universal.

Johnson's career took a new direction in 1921. He had just finished *Prisoners of Love* (1921) with Ralph Lewis, another distinguished veteran actor, and returned to the San Francisco Bay Area for *The Sea Lion* (1921), starring Hobart Bosworth, from a story written by Johnson's mother.

THE LAST EDITION was especially popular with news reporters who knew fact from fiction.

While driving down Market Street on his way to visit her, Johnson failed to stop at an intersection and was pulled over. He noticed the policeman's cheerful attitude and became curious about the man's life and how it affected

his work. Johnson talked about the incident with his mother and she wrote a story that became 1922's *In the Name of the Law*, the first feature of Emory Johnson Productions, about a police officer and his troubled family.

The film proved to be a hit and led to *The Third Alarm* (1922), with Ralph Lewis as an old fireman struggling to master the transition from horse-drawn vehicles to new motorized technology. The movie was even more profitable than the last and four more successes followed, including *Life's Greatest Game* (1924), which featured the sinking of the Titanic and a World Series baseball scandal.

With *The Last Edition* (1925), Johnson returned to his working-man theme. A behind-the-scenes look at a newspaper, it was filmed on location at the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Ralph Lewis took the pivotal role as a pressman running one of the big machines that churn out a seemingly endless line of finished newsprint. Most newspaper-themed films before and since *The Last Edition* have concentrated on crusading or investigative reporters pursuing the big story, but few have shown the physical process of getting out a newspaper in such detail. The film was especially popular with news reporters who knew fact from fiction. A reviewer for the *New York Morning Telegraph* summed up the general opinion best, saying that it "has the merit, uncommon in most newspaper pictures, of being accurate in every detail.

It is the best picture he [Johnson] has made and may be called a box-office success."

Johnson remained in San Francisco for his next production, *The Non-Stop Flight* (1926), based on a failed attempt by U.S. Naval aviators to fly from San Francisco to Honolulu. Like other Emory Johnson Productions, it was distributed by the Film Booking Office of America, known as F.B.O., a company that specialized in low-budget westerns and minor action melodramas until merging with the Keith-Albee-Orpheum vaudeville circuit of theaters in 1928 to become RKO Pictures.

Harboring higher ambitions, Johnson and his mother signed an eight-picture deal with Universal in 1926. The first of these films was *The Fourth*

Commandment (1926), a domestic melodrama of a mother's sacrifice, which capitalized on a recent hit, *Stella Dallas*. Belle Bennett, who had played Stella, also plays the central role in *The Fourth Commandment*. Johnson quickly followed up with *Flight*, a World War I aviation film that faced box-office competition from the Paramount release *Wings* (1927). Universal made several changes to the title before settling on *The Lone Eagle* (1927), a name closely associated with Charles Lindbergh and his historic Atlantic Ocean flight, although the film had nothing to do with it. The confusion may have reduced revenues rather than boosting them.

The Shield of Honor (1927), a return to the successful formula of Johnson's first effort, *In the Name of the Law*, was his last film for Universal, despite having good reviews and supposedly six films to go on his contract. Even as the police picture was breaking into theaters, he and his mother were negotiating with Tiffany-Stahl Productions for a new producing deal. Why they suddenly moved to a Poverty Row studio with fewer resources than Universal is unclear, but there were indicators in the Johnsons' private lives that hinted at trouble.

Johnson and his wife separated in 1924 following conflict between her and his live-in mother, who reportedly was domineering. The couple reconciled two years later, but then their oldest son died after getting hit by a gravel truck while crossing a street. Another separation in 1929 led to divorce in 1930.

Johnson remade his biggest money-earner, *The Third Alarm*, as a talkie with Tiffany in 1930. It fea-



tured impressive firefighting sequences, as well as a respectable cast that included Anita Louise, James Hall, Jean Hersholt, and Hobart Bosworth. Despite the film's merits, Johnson continued his downward spiral, directing one last film, *The Phantom Express* (1932), for Majestic Pictures (not to be confused with 1932's *The Hurricane Express*, a John Wayne serial with a similar storyline of mysterious train wrecks).

At the age of 38, Johnson was essentially finished in motion pictures and was soon forgotten by the public. In 1944, three years after his mother's death, Johnson returned to San Mateo to open a photography studio, which closed in 1950. Two of Johnson's



four children became film and television actors with modest careers, but they distanced themselves from a connection to their once-famous father, billing themselves as Richard Emory and Ellen Hall.

In 1959, a reporter for the *San Mateo Times* found Johnson living in a rooming house and interviewed him about his tumultuous career. "Making movies was a thrilling business," Johnson said in the article, "I have no regrets." The next year there was a fire in his room, started by his cigarette. Another tenant pulled him from the flames, but he died 19 days later from his injuries at the age of 66, the kind of tragedy that could have come from a film by Emory Johnson.

—David Kiehn



ABOUT THE RESTORATION

Early in 2012 the Silent Film Festival learned that the EYE Film Instituut Netherlands holds in their collection the only known surviving print of *The Last Edition*. This restoration posed a unique challenge to the team, as no other documentation for the film, scripts, continuity, or otherwise, survived. In particular, the English intertitles had to be translated from Old Dutch. The Dutch titles, in this case, were literal translations from the original English as evidenced by the presence of numerous American colloquialisms, making it somewhat easier. The original tinting and toning of the film was determined by careful examination of the original nitrate print and then re-created in the new prints, which are fully tinted

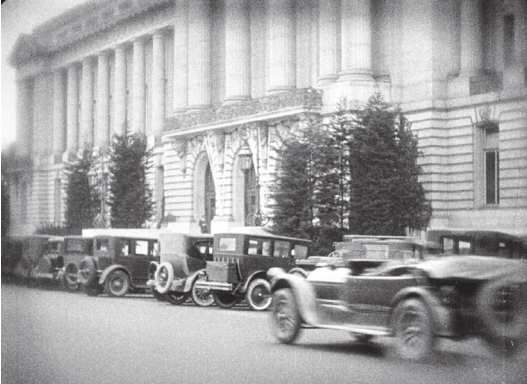
and toned. Recipient of the 2013 Silent Film Festival Fellowship, Simon Manton Milne tracked the progress of the restoration, details of which can be found at thelasteditionfilm.com.

—Robert Byrne

THE STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO, 1925
AS SEEN IN THE MOTION PICTURE THE LAST EDITION



Pacific Avenue at Gough Street



San Francisco City Hall



The original Chronicle Building, Market Street at Kearny



S.F. Fire Engine Company #1 at the corner of Mint and Jessie alleys



Turning from Grove Street onto Larkin



Clarence Walker (Rex Lease) near 8th and Market



THE WEAVERS

Musical Accompaniment by Günter Buchwald

Directed by Friedrich Zelnik, Germany, 1927

Cast Paul Wegener (Dreissiger) Valeska Stock (Frau Dreissiger) Hermann Picha (Baumert) Hertha von Walther (Emma Baumert) Camilla von Hollay (Bertha Baumert) Arthur Kraussneck (Hilse, a weaver) Hans Heinrich von Twardowski (Gottlieb Hilse) Dagny Servaes (Luise Hilse) Wilhelm Dieterle (Moritz Jäger) Theodor Loos (Bäcker) Georg John (Ansorge) Georg Burghardt (Pastor Kittelhaus) Hanne Brinkmann (Frau Kittelhaus) Julius Brandt (Neumann) Emil Lind (Kontroller Pfeiffer) **Original Language Title** *Die Weber* **Production** Zelnik Film **Producer** Friedrich Zelnik **Scenario** Fanny Carlsen and Willy Haas, based on the 1892 play *Die Weber* by Gerhart Hauptmann **Art Direction** Andrej Andrejew **Title Design and Masks** George Grosz **Photography** Frederik Fuglsang and Friedrich Weinmann **Print Source** Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung

In 1927 Weimar Germany, amid escalating social conflict, Friedrich Zelnik, known only for his genteel musicals, was the last person anyone figured to direct a film version of Gerhart Hauptmann's classic *The Weavers*, a contentious and controversial play about a proletarian uprising. The story of the 1844 Silesian Weavers revolt was akin to a roman à clef about the current state of affairs.

The Weimar Republic, Germany's postwar experiment with parliamentary democracy, proved incapable of solving the overall crises of the nation, yet it at least allowed for great freedom and creativity in the arts. In the aftermath of the First World War's unprecedented destruction, escapism flourished and Zelnik's cheery musicals were as popular as the dark, expressionist films of Murnau, Lang, Pabst, and Wiene, which are better remembered today.

In many ways Zelnik was the cosmopolitan man of the world he portrayed on stage and screen. Born in 1885, he became a debonair leading man in German cinema in the 1910s and rose to stardom over the next few years playing high society gentlemen. In 1915, he began to produce his own starring vehicles with his own company and went on to great success

as a director and producer of period operetta films in the 1920s and early 1930s.

In 1918 he married the singer and dancer Lya Mara and cast her as his leading lady. He then gradually withdrew from acting to focus on starring vehicles for Mara. His series of costume melodramas invariably featured his lovely wife, with her onscreen lover played by established stars, including Wilhelm Dieterle in *The Bohemian Dancer* (*Die Försterchristl*, 1926). The film he made immediately prior to *The Weavers* was *The Gypsy Baron*, a tale of Gypsy fortune tellers and hidden treasure, based on the operetta by Johann Strauss Jr.

The story of the Silesian weavers was a radical departure for Zelnik. The revolt of the weavers in 1844 in the mountain settlement of Peterswald (now in Poland) has become a flash point in German history. The weavers worked in their own homes on primitive looms weaving the yarn the manufacturer gave them into cotton cloth, which they then sold back. A financial crisis led to a fall in the price of cotton. To become more competitive, the manufacturer used the arrival of new mechanical looms as a pretext to pay the weavers even less. Pushed to the brink of starvation, the weavers stormed the boss's

The weavers were a key inspiration for the ideas that led to *The Communist Manifesto*.

offices and mansion and destroyed everything inside. They then went to the neighboring town and, with the help of those workers, destroyed the machines that had ruined their lives.

The poet Heinrich Heine saw the revolt as a harbinger of a coming revolution against the “Old Germany” of monarchy and conservatism, a patchwork country of kingdoms and duchies, and immortalized the weavers’ rebellion in what has become his most famous poem, “The Silesian Weavers” (1844), written in the voice of the weavers. The young Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels saw the revolt as an indication that the nascent working class was going to rise and fight for its interests; the weavers were a key inspiration for the ideas that led to *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848.

Hauptmann’s play depicted the downtrodden weavers as they gradually come to condemn not only their greedy employer, but also religion, the king, and capitalism itself. There were some stage productions, but relentless opposition from the authorities resulted in the play being repeatedly banned until 1902, after which it was staged hundreds of times to enthusiastic audiences.

While the film closely follows Hauptmann’s work, Zelnik created an engaging cinematic experience, not just a filmed play. He used crosscutting between locales and action to intensify the pace. And more significantly, while the crowd scenes in the play have to take place offstage, in the film they can take place on camera.

For the role of the manufacturer Dreissiger, Zelnik cast the prominent actor and director Paul Wegener, who had become indelibly imprinted in the minds of the German moviegoing public as the Golem, the massive humanoid formed from mud. Wegener’s relentless Dreissiger has a dismissive answer for every complaint of *The Weavers*. If, for example, a child is going hungry, it’s due to bad parenting. Yet behind the façade of Wegener’s ruthless capitalist, a little furrow of the brow reveals a deep fear of the masses he has wronged.

Just as the murmur of resistance begins to spread among the weavers, stooped and listless from overwork and undernourishment, in steps a brash and pugnacious youth, Moritz Jäger, who has just returned to his hometown from military service. The energy and magnetism of young Jäger sparks the

They gradually condemn not only their greedy employer, but also religion, the king, and capitalism itself.

action. He immediately steps to the fore, and the weavers suddenly come to life. For the critical role of Jäger, Zelnik cast the well-known actor and director Wilhelm Dieterle. Some might call it typecasting.

Dieterle had been born in poverty, but through sheer energy and ambition he became successful as a stage actor and was recruited by Max Reinhardt for his legendary theater company in Berlin. Before long, Dieterle left Reinhardt to form his own company. He financed his own first film *Der Mensch am Wege* (1923), starring Marlene Dietrich. A decade later he went on to a great career in Hollywood, although it ended with his being “graylisted” during the McCarthy witch hunt and his return to Germany.

As art director, Zelnik used his collaborator of many years, Andrej Andrejew. The versatile Andrejew had become one of the most distinctive and sought-after designers in German cinema. His style was more typically expressed in the atmospheric sets for classics, including *Pandora’s Box*, *The Threepenny Opera*, and *The Golem*.

The Weavers was the sole film credit for the man nicknamed “the bright-red art executioner.” Iconoclastic artist and caricaturist George Grosz was responsible for the hand-painted, angular, expressionist intertitles, a unique and memorable title style that seemed to “yell” when the characters raised their voices. Grosz was a radical leftist who delighted in deflating German pomposity, especially that of the reactionary rich and powerful. The weavers themselves couldn’t have chosen a more kindred soul to memorialize their words.

The film was well received and is considered to be one of the most politically and socially significant films to come out of the Weimar Republic. However, in 1927 the leftist government, unable to find a way out of its perennial financial crises, became increasingly polarized between political extremes and crumbled within a few years.

After *The Weavers*, Zelnik made *Dancing Vienna*, starring his wife Mara. It is often regarded as an early *heimatfilm*, sentimental paeans to rural life and family values. When sound came to cinema, Mara was unable to make the transition, but Zelnik embraced it. He was the first director in Europe to post-synchronize a film (*The Crimson Circle*, 1929). In 1930, he paid a visit to Hollywood, and on his return directed his first sound film, a remake of his *The Bohemian Dancer* (1931). After the Nazis came to power in 1933, Zelnik’s *Weavers* was once again banned. Zelnik and Mara emigrated to London, where he directed and produced *Happy*, an English-language version of his last German film, *Es war einmal ein Musikus* (1933).

His British directing efforts in the mid-1930s failed to match his earlier successes. He also made two films in the Netherlands in 1938 and 1939. He became a British citizen and remained in London after the war and continued to work as a producer until the late 1940s.

—Miguel Pendás





SAFETY LAST!

Musical Accompaniment by the Mont Alto Motion Picture Orchestra

Directed by Fred Newmeyer and Sam Taylor, USA, 1923

Cast Harold Lloyd (The Boy) Mildred Davis (The Girl) Bill Strother (The Pal) Noah Young (The Law) Westcott B. Clarke (The Floorwalker) **Production** Hal E. Roach Studios **Producer** Hal E. Roach **Assistant Director** Robert A. Golden **Story** Hal Roach, Sam Taylor, and Tim Whelan **Photography** Walter Lundin **Editor** Thomas J. Crizer **Titles** H.M. Walker **Technical Staff** Fred L. Guiol, C.E. Christensen, and John L. Murphy **Print Source** Janus Films

Harold Lloyd will forever be associated with *Safety Last!* because of a single image. Even people who have never seen a Lloyd film are familiar with the iconography of a bespectacled man hanging off the hands of a collapsing clock on the side of a skyscraper high above teeming city streets. It is one of the most celebrated images in cinema.

Safety Last! was Harold Lloyd's fourth and most complex "thrill" comedy. He came upon the idea for the film after witnessing a so-called "human fly" climb up the side of a tall building—a typical spectacle in the stunt-crazed America of the 1920s. Nearly 40 years later Lloyd recalled the genesis of the film:

"Without too much ado he started at the bottom of the building and started to climb up the side of this building. Well, it had such a terrific impact on me that when he got to about the third floor or fourth floor I couldn't watch him anymore. My heart was in my throat and so I started walking up the street ... but, of course, I kept looking back all the time to see if he was still there. Finally, I went around the corner. Silly as it is, I stood around the corner so I wouldn't watch him all the time, but every once in a while I'd stick my head around the corner and see how he was progressing. I just couldn't believe he could make that whole climb, but he did ... So I went back, went into the building, got up on the roof and met the young man, gave him my address,

and told him to come out and visit Hal Roach and myself. His name was Bill Strother."

Hal Roach (Harold Lloyd's producer) placed Bill Strother under contract and devised a rough idea of a story involving a daredevil climb. The film was constructed around this comedy sequence and introductory material was later built around it.

The plot of the film has Lloyd as a country boy who sets out from his hometown of Great Bend to make good in the big city. His sweetheart (Mildred Davis, Lloyd's real-life wife) promises to marry him once

he is a success. Lloyd is only able to get a position as a lowly dry goods clerk in a department store, although he writes his girl at home telling her he is one of the store executives and that it will only be a matter of time before he will send

for her. His chance to succeed arrives when he overhears the general manager pledge to pay \$1,000 to anyone who can draw a large crowd to the store. Lloyd successfully proposes that the general manager hire his roommate (Bill Strother), who works as a steeplejack, to be a human fly and climb the side of the department store building. On the day of the publicity stunt, Strother is forced to dodge a disgruntled police officer (Noah Young) who has been after him, and Lloyd has to make the climb himself.

The excellence of *Safety Last!* is not confined to Lloyd scaling the skyscraper; the five reels that lead

"Each new floor is like a stanza in a poem."

up to the climb provide the necessary context for it. Lloyd's impersonation of the store manager sets up one of the film's dominant themes, illusion, which is conveyed not only through Lloyd's role, but also through the camera's role in making the audience believe the impossible. The idea is set up in the film's first shot: Lloyd depicted behind bars, until the camera backs up to reveal the truth.

Lloyd's scaling of the building is a classic sequence in which comedy at its most inspired and suspense at its most excruciating are ingeniously interwoven—the climb is the grand finale to the superb gags that precede it. As he climbs higher and higher, more complex obstacles confront him, from a flock of pigeons to entanglement in a net, to a painter's trestle, to a swinging window, to the clock itself.

"Each new floor is like a stanza in a poem," wrote Pulitzer Prize-winning author, poet, and critic James Agee. While Lloyd navigates these travails, the audience's hysteria escalates. It was not uncommon for 1920s spectators to hide their eyes or even faint when watching these portions of the film. Many cinemas reportedly hired a nurse or kept ambulances on call outside the theater.

Lloyd never revealed exactly how his most famous sequence was achieved, but a report by journalist and writer Adela Rogers St. John, Lloyd's autobiography, later interviews with Lloyd, still photographs, and Los Angeles topography reveal how the climb was accomplished. Few special effects were available at the time, and the techniques that could be employed—such as mirrors, double exposure, glass shots, or hanging miniatures—were not used. The production worked from three different buildings at various stages of the climb (Broadway and Spring Street, Broadway and 9th, and Broadway and 6th) and shot from angles that could accomplish an over-emphasis of perspective and distance.

Lloyd was a good athlete and did many of the climb shots himself, but there were limits. His insurance company did not allow him to do the entire sequence; an injury to the star could shut down the entire production and jeopardize the studio. Also, Lloyd had only one complete hand—the result of an accident in 1919 in which he lost his right thumb and forefinger. (The disfigurement was concealed in films with a specially made flesh-colored glove).

The long shots of Lloyd climbing the building were not Lloyd but Bill Strother (who climbed the International Bank Building in Los Angeles on September 17, 1922, with four cameras covering the action, under the supervision of Roach). For a few additional moments (such as the two shots in which Lloyd swings the length of the building by a rope) a circus

acrobat was used. For one shot—in which Lloyd hangs from the building edge as a result of a mouse crawling up the leg of his trousers—assistant director Robert A. Golden (who routinely doubled for Lloyd from 1921 to 1927) "hung in."

Audiences naturally assume that Harold Lloyd was actually hanging off the clock hands many stories

above the street, and they are correct. However, Lloyd was hanging on a clock built on a platform near the edge of the top of a building at 908 South Broadway. Again, the crew used in-camera tricks designed to conceal the platform—which was approximately 15 feet below, out of frame—and perspective shots to make the clock appear on the side, not on top, of the building. High angle shots of the busy streets below contributed to the illusion of height. To this day, the effect is remarkable. Although many techniques of silent cinema appear dated, the climb is still completely convincing. The clock sequence remains one of the most effective and thrilling moments in film comedy—a visual metaphor for the upwardly mobile everyman of the 1920s

and the extent to which he climbs to achieve the American Dream.

Safety Last!—and the genius of Harold Lloyd—continues to dangle over all who attempt to fuse comedy and thrills in the movies. In celebration of the film's 90th anniversary, a special 2K digital version has been prepared so that this classic comedy can be enjoyed for a second century.

—Jeffrey Vance



HOW HAROLD LLOYD MADE "SAFETY LAST"

ADELA ROGERS ST. JOHNS

That's one of the questions that keeps show business moving. The public is obsessed with a great desire to take its illusions apart and see what makes them tick.

Our latest celluloid exponent of the "How Does He Do It?" school of art is none other than Harold Lloyd.

Harold has made thrill pictures before.

But when he screened "Safety Last" he evolved the final word in cinematic convulsions.

And awoke one flood tide of demands as to how he worked it.

The audience recovers from its laughter, gets the kink out of its side, and begins to speculate. Then it writes letters asking that simple question.

You know. Hanging by his heels on a six-inch ledge with the street cavern yawning twelve stories below. Nonchalantly pulling gags on the horrific edge of a tall brick precipice. Twirling with an eyebrow caught in the hands of a clock, ten stories above the dear old Mother Earth.

All very well in its way. Nobody has time to wonder while the amazing and rib-tickling thing is going on.

But when you get out—oh, boy, how you wonder.

A lot of people have answers. Some people have answers for everything—even politics. Rumors run from double exposure, trick cameras, and doubles in acting, into theories that would make a poor but honest cameraman's hair turn white.

To hear most of the tales circulated, even on Hollywood Boulevard, you can only visualize Harold going forth to photograph "Safety Last" with as much hardware as the A.E.F.*—at least a fleet of aeroplanes, a battery of tanks and a regiment of chemists and chemical supplies.

In the first place, Harold Lloyd gives you his word of honor that there is not one foot of double exposure in the thrill sequence of "Safety Last."

Not one foot of the picture was shot with a trick camera of any sort. It was shot entirely with a regulation motion picture camera, the same kind they use for pictures like "Bella Donna,"** though it doesn't seem possible.

If you watch closely you will see that Harold's face is right in the camera in almost every scene. So common sense proves the utter falsity of the theory that a double was used to any extent. As a matter of fact, a double was used twice—once when he swung clear of the building by a rope. A circus acrobat did that.

There was never a time when Harold wasn't working at least one and sometimes four stories above anything solid. And while he doesn't like to have it mentioned, there was hardly a moment when a slip or a fumble wouldn't have given him a mighty tough fall.

Here's how they did it.

First, they selected a building on North Spring Street in Los Angeles. It is a brick building, twelve stories high, and constructed in such a way that it has easy footholds on which to climb.

I HAVE BEEN UP ON ONE OF THOSE SETS WITH HAROLD AND IT GAVE ME THE WILLIES.

The entire climb of that twelve-story building was made—during the sequence. And in part of it, the long shots, Harold used a double.

Then they found three other buildings, of differing heights, all shorter than the main building. On the tops of these, they built sets exactly producing and paralleling the real building. Thus, the set where Harold was working corresponded exactly in height and position to the story where he was supposed to be on the real building.

But these sets were built in just far enough so that the fall could be broken and so that a platform could be erected for the camera. Yet they were close enough to the edge so that by shooting with the camera at the proper angle the drop to the street looked absolutely straight down.

I have been up on one of those sets with Harold and it gave me the willies. You can look straight down to the pavement below and that little ledge of roof didn't mean a thing in my life. Not a thing.

A big insurance company sent a man down to watch Harold work one day and then refused him life insurance.

As a matter of fact, there is only one secret, or trick, in the whole picture.

Harold and his cameraman have worked out certain angles for the camera that give the desired effect of height and of sheer drop. These cannot be explained on paper and besides Harold refuses to part with the exact details. They are however, technical and

entirely legitimate. Simply the angle at which the camera is placed from the scene.

A replica of the bottom of the building was also erected on the studio lot, to avoid working in the crowded streets.

The most interesting part of the answer to that question about how does he do it is that it's so simple. All theatrical effects are illusions, all we desire is the perfect illusion. And this sequence gives an illusion that is complete and perfect and satisfying.

"There's just one thing I'd like to tell them," said Harold. "I went to a fortune teller down at the beach just after I finished making the picture. She felt the calluses on my hands and said I earned my living by hard manual labor. I'll say I did. At first, I was just scared to death. But after I'd worked up there a few days, I got just as goofy as anybody. And I'll add this—no more thrill air pictures. My wife won't let me."

*A.E.F is the American Expeditionary Forces created in 1917.

***Bella Donna*, from 1923, is a romance and adventure from Famous Players-Lasky, directed by George Fitzmaurice, and starring Pola Negri and Conrad Nagel.

Originally published in the July 1923 issue of *Photoplay*

THE ELEVENTH YEAR trailer

A Special Presentation

Ken Winokur of the Alloy Orchestra made an amazing discovery while the orchestra was traveling in the Ukraine—a two-minute trailer for Dziga Vertov's *The Eleventh Year*. As a special gift to San Francisco, Winokur and Beth Custer will perform the world premiere of their score to accompany Vertov's trailer. The 35mm print of *The Eleventh Year* trailer is courtesy of EYE Film Institute Netherlands.

Winokur describes his find:

In May of this year, while traveling in the Ukraine with Alloy Orchestra, I had the great pleasure of visiting the National Oleksandr Dovzhenko Centre (the Ukrainian National Film Archive). Located in a building that once, during the Soviet Era, housed a massive film processing lab, the archive has rapidly developed into an impressive collection of films, particularly films of the Ukraine. The curators at the archive have a special interest in silent films, and also run the Mute Nights Silent Film Festival every June in Odessa.

*Shortly before we left the archive, curator Stas Menzelevskyi called me over to look at a film he had on his computer. He explained that it was a trailer for the Dziga Vertov film *The Eleventh Year* and that it is believed to be animated and directed by Aleksander Rodchenko, noted graphic designer and one of the founders of the Constructivist movement in the Soviet Union.*

I was stunned! This two-minute film is like nothing I have ever seen from the silent era. Swirling circles, and dancing stick figures—the film looks more like something from the summer of love in San Francisco than a film from the 1920s.



Upon returning the U.S., I started talking to SFSFF about showing this short gem. My colleague, Beth Custer of the Clubfoot Orchestra (who preceded Alloy in composing new scores for silent films), and I decided that we would collaborate on a score. We decided to do it as a duet using traditional instruments, found percussion, and sampled background tapes. Once again the Dovzhenko Centre came to our aid, sending us a digital version of the film to work from and permitting us to sample the music concrete score of Enthusiasm (Dziga Vertov's first sound film), which the Dovzhenko had recently released as a DVD.

The Eleventh Year trailer will screen on Sunday, July 21 at the 6:00 pm screening of *The Weavers*.

PROGRAM BOOK CONTRIBUTORS

Associate Professor of Film and Media Studies at UC-Santa Barbara, **Peter J. Bloom** is the author of *French Colonial Documentary: Mythologies of Humanitarianism* (University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

A former Paris correspondent for *Variety*, **Lenny Borger** has newly subtitled many French cinema classics and served as consultant on numerous restorations.

President of the Silent Film Festival board of directors, **Robert Byrne** is also a preservationist who worked on the restorations of *The Half-Breed* and *The Last Edition*.

Michael Fox is a San Francisco film critic and journalist for KOED.org/Arts and Fandor's Keyframe blog. He is also a teacher and programmer.

Thomas Gladysz is a Bay Area arts journalist and editor of the "Louise Brooks edition" of *The Diary of a Lost Girl*. He is also the director of the Louise Brooks Society, which he founded in 1995.

Associate Professor of Music at Pomona College in Claremont, California, **Katherine J. Hagedorn** is the author of *Divine Utterances: The Performance of Afro-Cuban Santería* (Routledge, 2001).

A member of the San Francisco Film Critics Circle, **Dennis Harvey** is the Bay Area correspondent for *Variety* and a regular contributor to the *San Francisco Bay Guardian* and Fandor.

Matthew Kennedy is the author of *Marie Dressler: A Biography* (McFarland, 1999) and the upcoming *Roadshow! The Fall of Film Musicals in the 1960s* (Oxford, 2013).

David Kiehn is the author of *Broncho Billy and the Essanay Film Company* (Farwell, 2003) and historian for the Niles Essanay Silent Film Museum in Fremont, California.

A freelance writer and editor, **Shari Kizirian** is a regular contributor to Fandor's Keyframe blog and coedits the Silent Film Festival program book.

Coeditor of the Silent Film Festival program book, **Margarita Landazuri** writes about cinema for Turner Classic Movies, among other outlets.

Roberto Landazuri is the corporate archivist at Dolby Laboratories Inc. and has written on historical topics for the Smithsonian, the San Francisco Public Library, and UC-Berkeley, among other institutions.

Russell Merritt teaches film history at UC-Berkeley and has cowritten two books about Walt Disney cartoons.

Monica Nolan is a novelist who has written about film and culture for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Release Print*, *Bitch* magazine, *Frameline*, and the San Francisco Film Society.

Aimee Pavy has written for the Silent Film Festival for the past 12 years. She also has contributed film notes to *Noir City* Festival and articles to *Moholy Ground* magazine.

Miguel Pendás is a film historian and freelance writer and editor. He is a board member of the San Francisco Historical Society.

Gregg Rickman edited *The Film Comedy Reader* (Limelight, 2004) and is currently writing a book about Buster Keaton. A writer and research archivist at the Pacific Film Archive, Jason Sanders is also the editor of the San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival catalog.

A writer and research archivist at the Pacific Film Archive, **Jason Sanders** is also the editor of the San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival catalog.

Jeff Stafford is a freelance writer and former managing editor of the Turner Classic Movies website and their official blog, *Movie Morlocks*.

Jeffrey Vance is a film historian, producer, archivist, and lecturer as well as the author of acclaimed books such as *Douglas Fairbanks*, *Chaplin: Genius of the Cinema*, and *Harold Lloyd: Master Comedian*.

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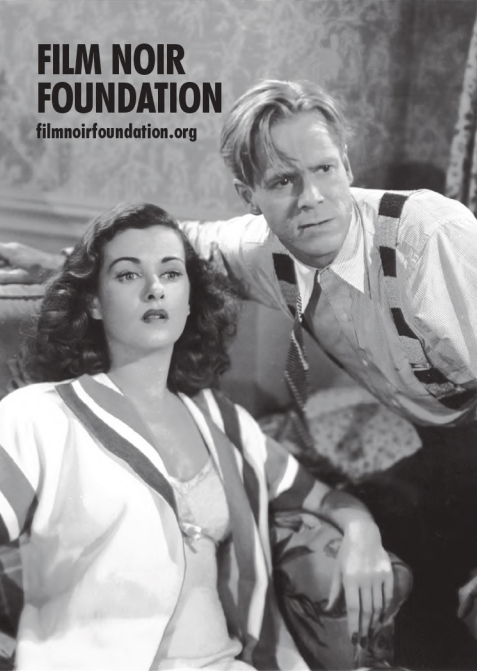
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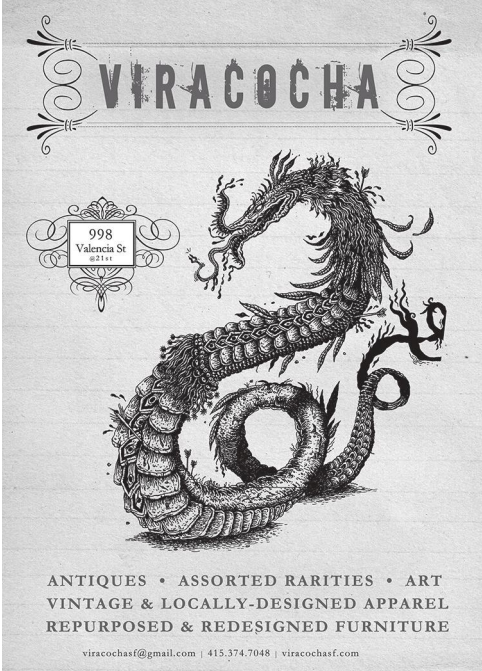
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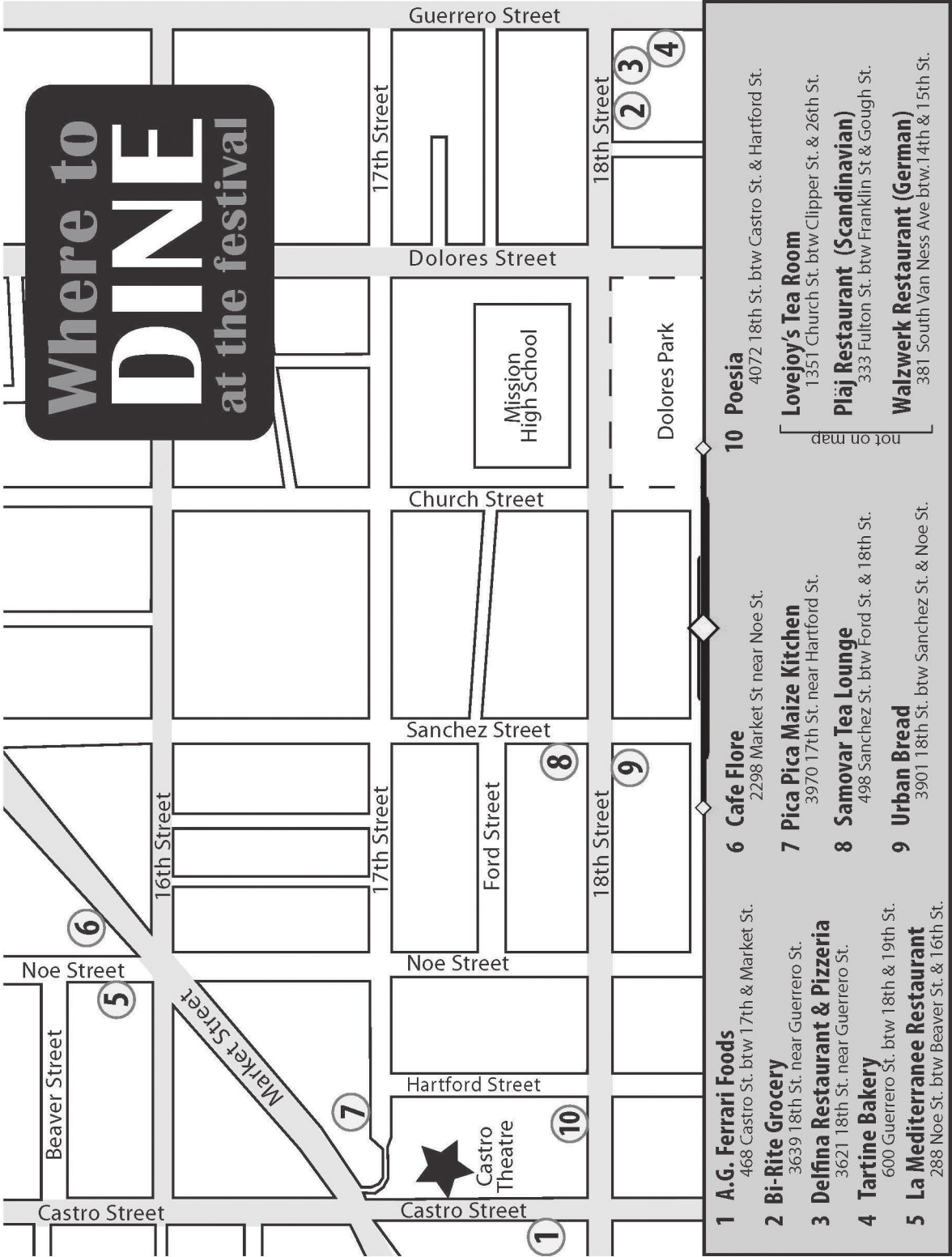
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600 Guerrero St. btw 18th & 19th St.

5 La Mediterranean Restaurant

288 Noe St. btw Beaver St. & 16th St.

6 Cafe Flore

2298 Market St near Noe St.

7 Pica Pica Maize Kitchen

3970 17th St. near Hartford St.

8 Samovar Tea Lounge

498 Sanchez St. btw Ford St. & 18th St.

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10 Poesia

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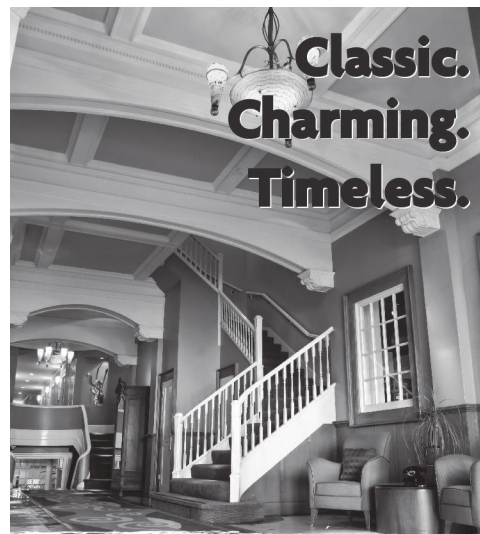


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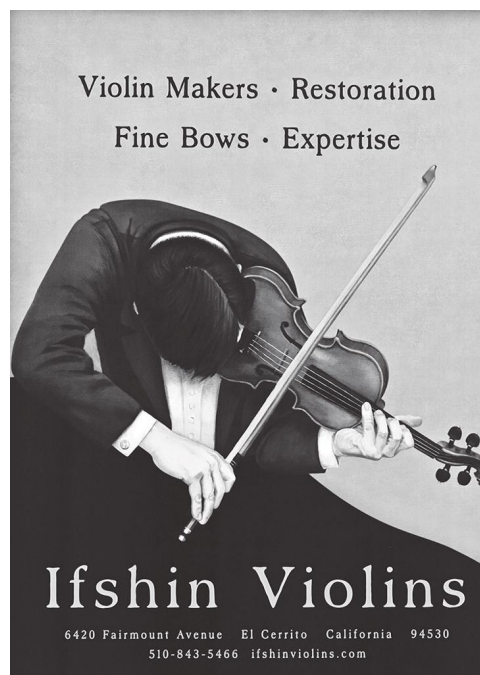
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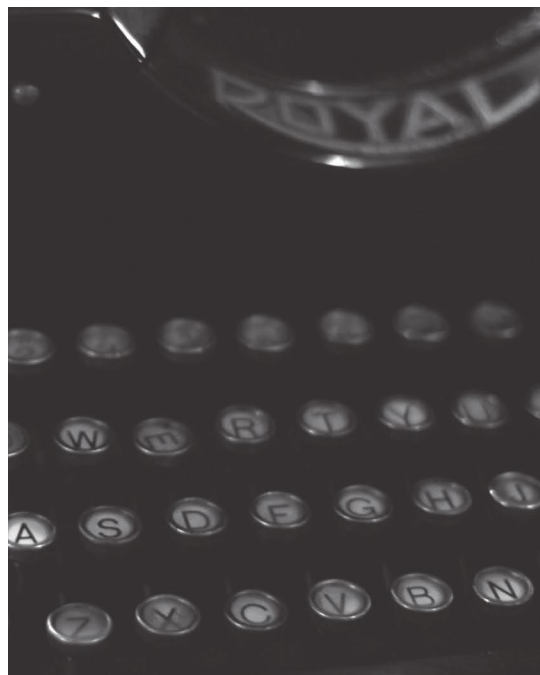
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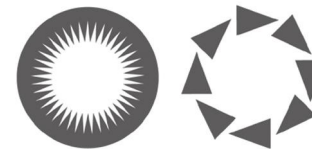
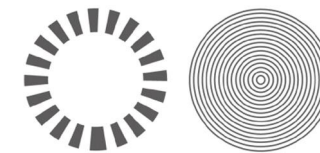
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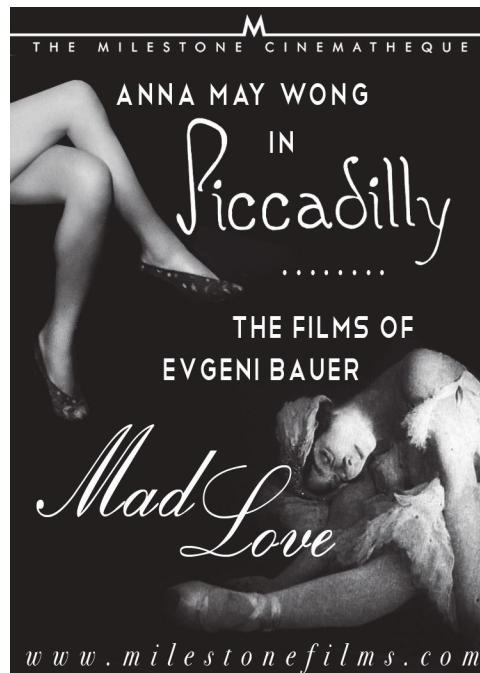


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on the Mezzanine

THURSDAY JULY 18

Kim Deitch *The Amazing, Enlightening And Absolutely True Adventures of Katherine Whaley*

Hugh Neely *Louise Brooks: Looking for Lulu (DVD)*

Thomas Gladysz *The Diary of a Lost Girl*

FRIDAY JULY 19

After **THE PATSY**

Hugh Neely *Captured on Film: The True Story of Marion Davies (DVD)*

William Wellman, Jr.

SATURDAY JULY 20

After **WINSOR McCAY**

John Canemaker *Winsor McCay: His Life and Art*
Winsor McCay: The Master Edition (DVD)

SUNDAY JULY 21

After **KINGS OF (SILENT) COMEDY**

John Bengtson *Silent Traces: Discovering Early Hollywood Through the Films of Charlie Chaplin*

After **THE LAST EDITION**

Scott O'Brien *Ruth Chatterton, Actress, Aviator, Author*

William Wellman, Jr.

Before **SAFETY LAST!**

John Bengtson *Silent Visions: Discovering Early Hollywood and New York Through the Films of Harold Lloyd*

Suzanne Lloyd

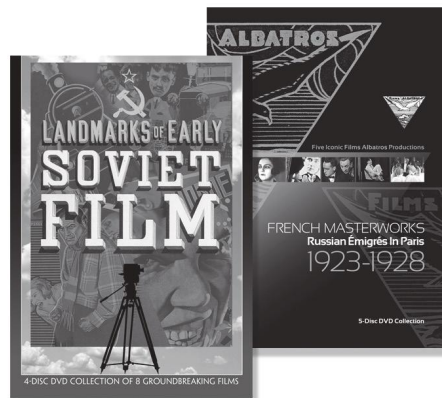


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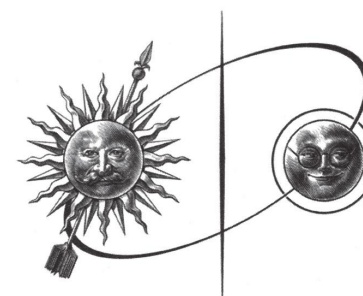


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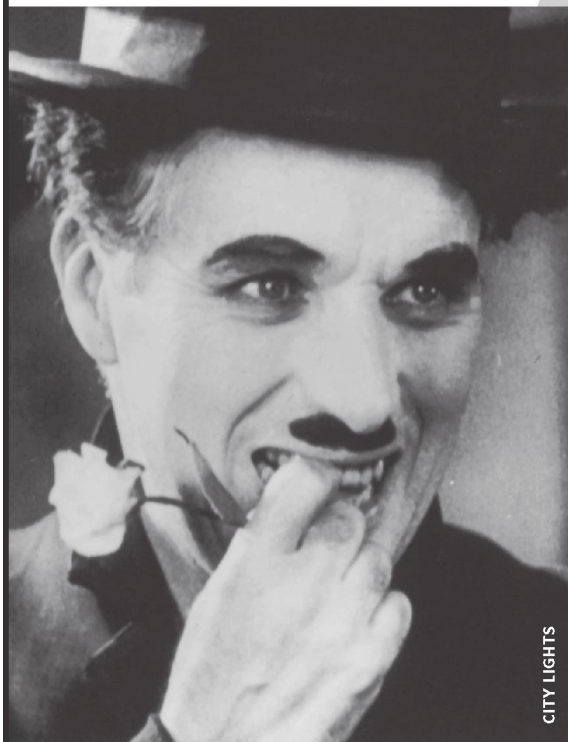




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