

THE SILENT TREATMENT

ALL THE NEWS FIT TO HEAR • VOLUME 02 • NUMBER 04 • JULY/AUG 2008

CANADIANS FROM EARLY HOLLYWOOD HONORED

The Canada Post has recently introduced its second installment of their commemorative stamp series *Canadians in Hollywood: The Sequel* to collectors and motion picture aficionados alike. Among the four honorees selected to this follow up series include silent film siren Norma Shearer and revered comedy trouper, Marie Dressler.

The collectible stamps use images created by Neal Armstrong. The background of each stamp is evocative of each star's career: Dressler's shows a scene inspired by a photograph of the tugboat *Arthur Foss*, featured in the film *Tugboat Annie*, while Shearer's features an art deco scene that is reminiscent of many of her films. In keeping with the desire to bring the audience into the design, the cancels depict a bag of popcorn and a soft drink with a straw.

Born in Montréal's upper-middle class Westmount area, Norma Shearer's lifestyle took a turn for the worse during the Great Depression. Norma and her sister were taken to New York City by their mother who hoped the girls could earn money acting. Times were hard, and Norma

took whatever small parts came her way, but her luck changed when she landed a role in the 1920 movie *The Stealers*. The film brought her to the attention of MGM's general manager, Irving Thalberg, who tracked her down and gave her a role in *The Wanters* (1923).

Norma's career triumph came in 1930 after winning the Academy Award for her performance in *The Divorcee*. Today, she continues to be remembered as a classically poised and elegant star of the silver screen.

Marie Dressler was born Leila Marie Koerber in Cobourg, Ontario. Dressler was destined to become the first

female star of film comedy as her show business career began with the Nevada Stock Company. Followed by work with opera companies, stage work in the US and appearances on Broadway, she reached the pinnacle of her stage career with a performance for King Edward VII in London, after which she made her move into film comedy, starring in *Tillie's Punctured Romance*, the first feature-length comedy ever made. (For further details and purchasing info visit www.canadapost.ca)



EMIL JANNINGS OFFERS "THE LAST COMMAND"

The Alloy Orchestra is pleased to announce they will be premiering a new original score to director **Josef von Sternberg's** *The Last Command* this September. Paramount Pictures has struck a gorgeous new print of this rarely seen masterpiece of silent cinema for the orchestra's upcoming tour.

The Last Command tells the story of a former Russian general forced to flee his country during the onset of the revolution, and now finds work as an extra in Hollywood reenacting his career. The film followed hot on the heels of von Sternberg's impressive cornerstone classic, *Underworld*, and both features received "best of" awards in the first ever



Academy Awards ceremony for pictures released 1927/28. *The Last*

Command's principal star, **Emil Jannings**, won for best actor, while writer Lajos Biro received a certificate of honorable mention in the Original Story category.

The 35mm print and Alloy's score will tour the country beginning with screenings in New York, Maryland, Michigan, and many more. Upcoming performances scheduled so far are: **September 4th** at the Maryland Film Festival in Baltimore, **October 3rd** at the New York Film Festival inside the Walter Reade Theater, **Oct 24 - 26th** at the Detroit Institute of Art, and **November 7 & 8th** at the Cornell Cinema, Ithaca NY.

(More info at www.alloyorchestra.com)

EUROPA FILM TREASURES NOW ONLINE

Internet surfers can rejoice at the news that the first Europe-wide video-on-demand service streaming public domain motion pictures is now operational. **Europa Film Treasures** (www.europafilmtreasures.eu) is a collaborative effort of 37 film archives and cinemathèques across the continent offering content previously unavailable outside their institutions to a world wide audience.



At the heart of this initiative is Serge Bromberg, founder of **Lobster Films** in Paris, who in addition to convincing European archives to par-

ticipate in this collective streaming service, will also supply original music to films without soundtracks. All films will be made available in their original language with the options of translations into English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish where needed. EFT plans to have 100 titles available for free on its initial launch, gradually expanding on up to 500 titles once fully loaded. No title is available to download, but extending the service to associated DVD sales will be under consideration in the future.

SAVING WHARTON STUDIO

by Colleen Corley

(excerpted article 3/12/08)

NEW YORK. Before Hollywood was Hollywood, Ithaca was a place where imaginations came alive on screen and two brothers shared their waterfront studio with some of Hollywood's biggest names. Now, that same studio sits in Stewart Park, filled with lawnmowers, scattered piles of equipment and logs of wood stacked below the original camera tracks still attached to the ceiling. But it won't remain a shadow of itself for long, if Connie Bruce and Diana Riesman have their way.

The two women are working on a plan they've coined the "Ithaca Motion Picture Project," a center dedicated to remembering Ithaca's silent film history through photographs, film showings, workshops, seminars and other ideas, explained Riesman. "It's fascinating that so many films were made around Ithaca and around Central New York, and that needs to be celebrated...and promoted," Bruce added. "In creating a center around

Wharton Studio we'd be able to bring that to life."

The Whartons' studio - last used in the 1920s - is still in good condition, albeit overdue for a paint job and some basic maintenance. The city would have to agree to lease, sell the building or pursue another option, the first major obstacle to getting the project off the ground. But Bruce and Riesman say that the existence of the original building - and the fact that there is still a lot of under-explored film history in New York and the East Coast - is impetus enough. "We don't have to start from scratch. The history is right here," Riesman said.



The two have been working with community groups - including a presentation made to the City of Ithaca Board of Public Works - to drum up support and spread the word about the opportunity to do something new with the old building. They've spoken to Terry Harbin, founder of Ithaca Made Movies, who has worked diligently to preserve remnants of Ithaca's role in early filmmaking.

"We're really trying to reach out to everyone who has an interest in film, historic preservation and in Stewart Park. People are going to talk about Stewart Park being revitalized and being a destination again. This is one piece of the puzzle." (Full article: http://www.zwire.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=19383238&BRD=1395&PAG=461&dept_id=546876&rfi=6)

FESTIVAL CIRCUIT

CAPITOLFEST

August 8-10, 2008

ROME, NY. *Capitolfest*, now in its sixth year, will be held at the historic 1,741-seat movie palace, the Capitol Theatre, in Rome, New York. The Capitol was built as a movie house and opened December 10, 1928 with an all-movie program including the **First National** feature, *Lilac Time*. The theatre remains the only building in Rome constructed for the specific purpose of exhibiting motion pictures.



This year the theatre celebrates its 80th birthday by showing movies originally screened at the Capitol during the first six years of operation (1928-1934) with silent and early talking films in 35mm prints from archives throughout the country.

Highlights to this seasons three day festival include a drama woven in blackmail and prostitution *Romance of the Underworld* (Fox, 1928), directed by Irving Cummings, starring Mary Astor and John Boles, originally shown at the Capitol on February 3, 1929.

The program continues with *Show Folks* (Pathe, 1928), a backstage story about the trials and tribulations of a couple of vaudeville hoofers (Eddie Quillan and Lina Basquette). Originally released with a soundtrack (including one talking sequence), although only the silent version survives.

The weekend closes out with *The Shakedown* (Universal, 1929), directed by **William Wyler** with stars James Murray and Barbara Kent about the life of a less-than successful professional boxer that changes when he takes in an orphan, originally screened at the Capitol on June 23, 1929. (Visit www.romecapitol.com for complete festival details)

The Opotiki Silent Film Festival

September 5-7th, 2008

NEW ZEALAND. Bringing a whiff of the 1920's and 30's to Opotiki, the **Silent Film Festival** is coming to town again in September, with a tantalizingly titillating program of silent movies to appeal to young and old alike. There could be no more a fitting home for the Festival than its art deco venue, the **De Luxe Theatre**, which is redolent of the era when silent movies were in their heyday.

Superb entertainment is on offer with live accompaniment to the main features from pianist Nick Giles-Palmer at the Bechstein grand piano, reflecting the high drama, romance and passion which are the hallmarks of silent film; a period which created Hollywood stars such as **Douglas Fairbanks** in *The Mark of Zorro*. Also featured is **Clara Bow**, known as the 'It Girl', starring in the film 'It'

a delightful comedy/romance. One of the greatest films of the silent era, *Intolerance*, directed by **D. W. Griffith** is also screening plus *Venus of the South Seas*, filmed in Nelson and Christchurch.

Another dimension to this years event is a compilation program, **Films of Opotiki**. A fascinating insight into Opotiki life, the films were made between 1950 and 1974.



The festival has become an occasion for dressing up in period costume and dining out as part of the experience. Please mark the dates, the **5th, 6th, & 7th of September** in your diary for this is a wizard event not to be missed! (Full festival details at: www.silentfilmfest.org.nz)

THE RANCH ROUNDUP

Kick off a western style weekend by moseying on up to the **William S. Hart Museum** in Santa Clarita, CA, on **Saturday, August 16th at 5:30 pm** for an evening you will not forget. Begin with a tour of Hart's retirement mansion, **La Loma de los Vientos**. Then join the posse for a delicious dinner under the shade of the Oak Trees. After the sun sets over the horizon, enjoy a classic W. S. Hart silent film, *Three Word Brand* with live musical accompaniment. Tickets are \$40 and include tour, dinner, and movie. Tickets often sell out and reservations are required.



Wrap it up with another silent-showcase at the **Paramount Ranch** in Agoura Hills. See Evelyn Brent and Louise Brooks in *Love 'Em and Leave 'Em* presented by **The Silent Society** on **Sunday, August 17th at 7:30 pm**, with live piano accompaniment by Michael Mortilla. Bring along a picnic and immerse yourself in the comedy/drama of two sisters fighting over the same man and the strategies one of them adopts in retaliation for the boyfriend-stealing betrayal. Tickets are \$6 for Adults, \$5 for Silent Society members, \$3 for kids under 12, & free admission for children under 3.

For Hart Museum Tickets and Info call (661) 254-4584. For Silent Society Info please call (805) 370-2301.

TST BOOKCORNER

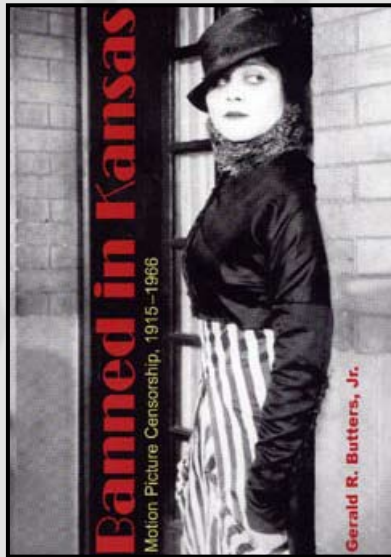
Banned in Kansas: Motion Picture Censorship 1915-1966

By Gerald R. Butters Jr.

If you caught a movie in Kansas through much of the past century, you're likely to have seen a different version than the rest of America. Theda Bara's depictions of wicked sexuality were off-limits, and a film such as *Scarface* showed far too much violence for decent folk—a threat to Protestant culture and to the morals of the general population.

In 1915, Kansas became one of only a handful of states to establish

its own film censorship board. The Kansas board controlled screen content in the state for more than fifty years, yet little is known about its activities.



This first book-length study of state film censorship examines the unique political, social, and economic factors that led to its implementation in Kansas, examining why censorship legislation was enacted, what the attitudes of Kansans were toward censorship, and why it lasted for half a century. (www.booksonstlouis.com)

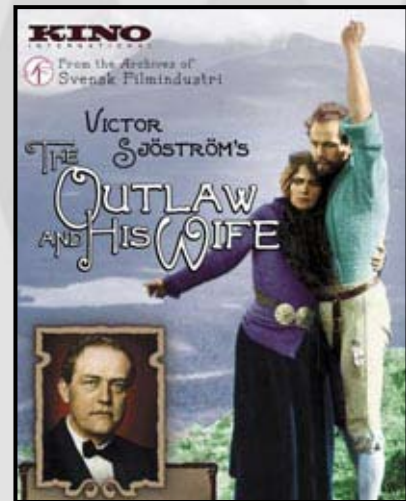
ON DVD

The Outlaw & His Wife

A masterwork of Swedish silent cinema, Victor Sjöström's *The Outlaw and His Wife* (1918) is a film of remarkable psychological complexity, which bore a profound influence on the work of **Ingmar Bergman** and **Carl Theodor Dreyer**. When a mysterious stranger (played by Sjöström) is hired on at a farm by its widowed owner (Edith Erastoff, who would

later become Sjöström's wife), a romantic bond quickly forms. But the man's troubled past foils their chances at happiness, and forces them to seek refuge in the nearby mountains.

Sjöström's use of landscape is visually and dramatically stunning, particularly in the film's latter half, as the couple battles both their pursuers and nature itself, culminating in an unforgettable climax. (www.kino.com)



MOMENTS IN SILENCE

August 11, 1911 – *Pathe Weekly*, the first American Newsreel, is released

August 26, 1930 – Actor *Lon Chaney*, *Man of a Thousand Faces*, dies of lung cancer

September 12, 1890 – Projector inventor *Augustin Le Prince* disappears

TST EDITED & PUBLISHED BY:

Brandee Brannigan:

Content Manager

Steven K. Hill:

Layout & Graphic Design

Contact us at: tstnews@yahoo.com

www.tstnews.net

TST