

THE SILENT TREATMENT

ALL THE NEWS FIT TO HEAR • VOLUME 04 • NUMBER 01 • JAN/FEB 2010

METROPOLIS

Reconstructed Original Cut Premieres at Berlinale

GERMANY. Fritz Lang's original cut of *Metropolis* from 1927 will return to the screen at the **60th Berlin International Festival** at a gala presentation in the Friedrichstadtpalast on **Friday, February 12th, 2010**. The classic silent film, reconstructed and restored by the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau Foundation, will celebrate its premiere 83 years after the original version had its world premiere. Based on the original score by Gottfried Huppertz, the screening will be accompanied by the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin under the direction of conductor Frank Strobel.

For decades crucial scenes from the film were considered lost. Due to the sensational discovery of a 16-mm negative in Buenos Aires in 2008 and its current restoration, *Metropolis* can now be shown in its almost completely restored – more than 30 minute longer – original version.

The restoration and reconstruction of *Metropolis* is currently one of the world's most important film preservation projects. It is being carried out by the Wiesbaden-based

Murnau Foundation in cooperation with ZDF and arte, and the Deutsche Kinemathek – Museum für Film und Fernsehen, and with the Museo del Cine Pablo C. Ducros Hicken (Buenos Aires). The original music by Gottfried Huppertz will be re-edited by the European FilmPhilharmonic / Die Film-Philharmonie GmbH.

Even today, *Metropolis* still fascinates and affects contemporary film artists. The legend surrounding the film has been kept alive by the fact that for decades, from a large number of sources, people had known about a longer version, but no prints of it could be found. Until footage – totaling some 30 minutes – was discovered in Buenos Aires, essential scenes from *Metropolis* were still missing.

This monumental film was first shortened a brief time after its premiere at the Berlin Ufa-Palast am Zoo on January 10, 1927. Approved by the Film Board, the 4189-meter-long version screened at this venue without success for four months; as a consequence, the Ufa withdrew the film and produced a much shorter

version, 3241 meters in length, for release to movie theaters in the summer of 1927.

"The unwavering desire and unflagging efforts to restore what was believed to be Fritz Lang's lost original cut of *Metropolis* epitomize the Murnau Foundation's commitment to save and preserve our rich filmic heritage and make it accessible to the public. With the restoration and re-screening of *Metropolis* a dream has been fulfilled," comments Eberhard Junkersdorf, Supervisory Board Chairman of the Murnau Foundation. (www.berlinale.de)

D.W. GRIFFITH B-DAY CELEBRATION

JANUARY 22nd, 2010



David Wark Griffith

LA GRANGE, KY. The **Oldham County History Center** is celebrating the 135th Birthday of "the father of modern film" and Kentucky native, D.W. Griffith on **Friday, January 22nd, 2010**. The annual celebration will commence at 10am

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and offer visitors a chance to enjoy popcorn and birthday cake while catching a glimpse of a selection of pictures directed by Griffith in the 15 seat mini movie theater that opened just a year ago on the first floor of the History Center.

Special requests will be considered from attendees who can select from the History Center's DVD library that includes popular favorites *Sally of the Sawdust* (1925), *Intolerance* (1916), *Way Down East* (1920) and *Broken Blossoms* (1919). Activities conclude at 8pm on Friday so movies will be playing until then. (www.oldhamcountyhistoricasociety.org)

PARAGON RAGTIME ORCHESTRA PLAYS THE CLOWN PRINCES

JANUARY 29th, 2010



In an abandoned warehouse in 1985, Rick Benjamin discovered a long-lost collection of orchestra scores of the Victor Talking Machine Company, and with it came the inspiration for the formation of the **Paragon Ragtime Orchestra**. Mr. Benjamin gathered together fellow Juilliard colleagues to perform these turn-of-the-century treasures, and the PRO was born. The Paragon Ragtime Orchestra is the world's only

year-round, professional ensemble specializing in the authentic recreation of the sounds of early musical theater, silent cinema, and vintage ballroom dancing, all played from its vast archive of original orchestrations ranging from the 1870s to the 1920s.

On **January 29th, 2010** at 7:30 PM, the Orchestra will be performing their celebrated **Clown Princes** touring show in **Spindale, North Carolina** featuring signature comedy shorts *Cops* (1922) with Buster Keaton, *Get Out and Get Under* (1920) with Harold Lloyd, and *Behind the Screen* (1916) with Charlie Chaplin. A bonus TBA short subject starring the oft-forgotten Larry Semon is also slated for the evening's program. All short subjects will be accompanied with original cue sheet scores distributed with each film upon its release. (Tickets and info at www.isoothermal.edu/foundation/AllShows.htm#clowns)

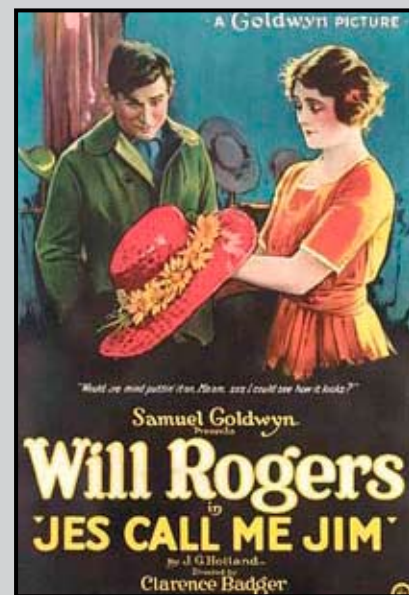
SILENTS AMONG THE REDWOODS

SCOTTS VALLEY, CA. The scenic beauty of Henry Cowell Park was often employed as a location during the silent movie era. A number of film pioneers – Mary Pickford, William S. Hart, Cecil B. DeMille, Will Rogers, Tom Mix – enjoyed their visits to the San Lorenzo Valley and made several pictures there. Besides being highly entertaining, the surviving films provide a unique record of the natural surroundings as well.

This winter, in connection with the Old Felton Film Series, the following silent movies will be shown at the **Henry Cowell Visitors Center** at 4:00 pm. Park entrance is \$10; there is no charge for viewing the

movies.

Beginning on Saturday, **January 30th**, watch Madge Bellamy and Anna May the Elephant in *Soul of the Beast* (1923). Boulder Creek provided the backgrounds for this comedy-drama about fugitives from a Canadian circus. There are scenes at Poverty Flat (on a set originally built by the California Motion Picture Co.), and a climactic chase ending at the junction pool in Boulder Creek.



On Saturday **February 27th**, is western star Will Rogers in *Jes' Call Me Jim* (1920); a romantic comedy-drama with a forest background, co-starring Irene Rich and Jimmie Rogers (Will's son). The cities of Felton and Santa Cruz appear in several key scenes.

The series concludes on Saturday, **March 27th**, with "America's Sweetheart" Mary Pickford in *A Romance of the Redwoods* (1917) playing an adult in a drama of old California, directed by C. B. DeMille. The Big Trees and the sand hills of Zayante are featured backgrounds. (http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=23110)

SILENT SPOTLIGHT

RUAN LINGYU: TRAGIC GODDESS



By Yu Wentao (excerpted article 4/13/06)

Ruan Lingyu, a silent-film actress still remembered by many, left behind 29 films and the final message, "gossip can kill," when she committed suicide in Shanghai on March 8, 1935.

Ruan's acting was so natural, accurate and graceful that, even after 70 years, her films still seem fresh. She was adept at conveying meaning through her whole body, thus overcoming the limitations of early silent films, unlike some performers today who talk and express nothing through gesture and "body language."

In 1982, when a Chinese Film Retrospective was held in Italy, audiences were amazed at Ruan's talent, especially in the film *Goddess*. They called Ruan "China's Greta Garbo." In her nine-year film career, she played many different roles, such as writer, factory worker, wealthy socialite, prostitute, flower girl, nun and beggar. Her unaffected, sensitive character portrayals contrast with the

false, exaggerated performance that predominates in many films today.

Ruan was born in Shanghai in 1910. Her father, a penniless machinist, died when she was just five years old. For a while she went to live with her mother who was working as a housemaid for a rich family. She then went to a girl's school, but as soon as she had finished primary school, she began to look for a job to lighten her mother's load. She saw an advertisement for film actors, went for an interview and was given a job.

Her first screen appearance in 1927 was in the film *Husband and Wife in Name*. In spite of her lack of formal education, she was diligent and scrupulous in every detail of her acting. These qualities, combined with her beauty, made her screen images very impressive.



In 1935, during the shooting of her last film, a divorce suit and slanderous stories in unscrupulous local newspapers caused her a great deal of mental anguish. She finally decided to take her own life to prove her innocence. The whole of Shanghai wept when the news of her death was heard. When she was buried at Lianyi Villa outside Shanghai, several hundred thousand mourners lined the road to watch her funeral procession. (www.chinadaily.com.cn/bjweekend/2006-04/07/content_562388.htm)



ELLA CINDERS AT ORPHEUM THEATRE MARCH 20th, 2010

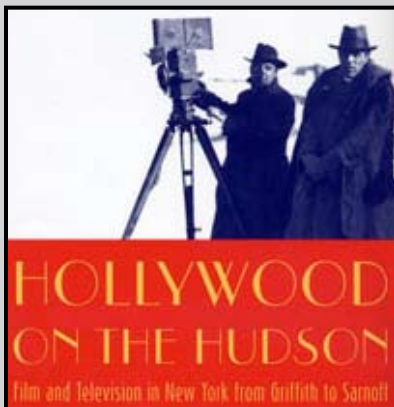
PHOENIX, AZ. When the Orpheum Theatre opened on January 5, 1929, it was the pride of Phoenix. With 1,800 seats and "air conditioning," the theatre was the place to go and be seen. The theatre was designed to accommodate talking pictures, vaudeville, and touring shows. Artists like Rubenstein, Jose Iturbi, and others graced the massive 101 foot wide stage. The showplace was designed in the "atmospheric style," with the audience sitting in a garden surrounded by Spanish-style buildings and murals of mountains and forests.

The Orpheum Theatre, recently restored at a cost of \$14.5 million in 2003, has risen from its long sleep and re-emerged as a state-of-the-art performing arts center. On **March 20th**, the theatre will be screening the modern day fairy tale *Ella Cinders* (1926), with live accompaniment on the mighty Wurlitzer pipe organ by Ron Rhode. Watch Colleen Moore transform from a simple house worker into a woman-of-the-world after winning a local beauty contest. (<http://silentsundays.vots-atos.org>)

BOOK CORNER

HOLLYWOOD ON THE HUDSON

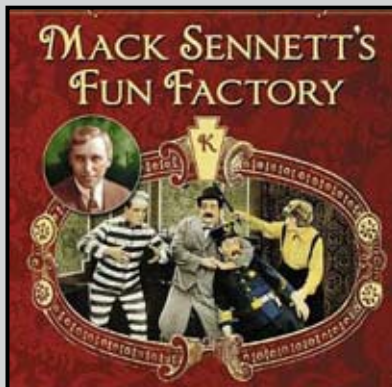
Rutgers University Professor and film historian Richard Koszarski's recent book **Hollywood on the Hudson** offers an intriguing study of the film industry on the East Coast that has not been well documented over the years. When the film industry left for California there remained a vibrant and active film community in the New York City / Fort Lee, NJ area. Professor Koszarski uncovers the facts and details of this interesting chapter of American film history. (<http://rutgerspress.rutgers.edu>)



MACK SENNETT'S FUN FACTORY

Mack Sennett's Fun Factory, by Brent E. Walker, is a comprehensive career study and filmography of the pioneering film producer and Academy Award winner Mack Sennett, cofounder of Keystone Studios, home of the Keystone Kops and other vehicles that showcased his innovative slapstick comedy. The filmography covers the more than 1,000 films

produced, directed, written by, or featuring Sennett between 1908 and 1955, including casts, credits, synopses, production and release dates, locations, cross-references of remade stories and gags, footage excerpted in compilations, identification of prints existing in archives, and other info.



The book also contains biographies of several hundred performers and technical personnel connected with Sennett. There are 280 photographs and a huge index. (www.mcfarlandpub.com)

ON DVD

DANISH FILM CLASSICS: ASTA NIELSEN

Asta Nielsen is perhaps the greatest Danish film star, although she only starred in four Danish films: *The Abyss* (1910), *The Ballet Dancer* (1911), *The Black Dream* (1911), and *Towards The Light* (1919), all of which are included on this DVD. Most of Asta Nielsen's career took place in Germany where she starred in almost 70 films between 1911-1932, and only 40 are known to survive either complete or in fragments.

In the Danish films, she starred with the greatest Danish male pro-

tagonists of the period: Poul Reumert, Valdemar Psilander and Alf Blütecher. *The Abyss* is regarded by many as not only the important debut of Asta Nielsen, but also the film that marks the early 1910's as the golden age of Danish cinema. It is presented here in a digitally restored version with the inclusion of the Swedish censorship outtakes that dramatically improves the quality of the central erotic dance sequence. (www.edition-filmmuseum.com)



MOMENTS IN SILENCE

January 28, 1925 – Actress *Gloria Swanson* marries *Henri Marquis de la Falaise*

February 8, 1915 – *The Epoch Producing Corporation* founded

February 26, 1925 – Director *Louis Feuillade* dies from peritonitis

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