

THE SILENT TREATMENT

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FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE LOC RECEIVES REPATRIATED SILENTS

By Paul Harris (excerpt. 10/21/10)

Digitally preserved copies of 10 American silent films were presented to the **Library of Congress** on October 21st, 2010, by the Russian film archive **Gosfilmofond**, where they have been stored since their initial release more than 80 years ago.



They represent the first of what was described as a “mother lode” of some 200 silent films missing from U.S. film archives and ultimately will be repatriated by the Russian archive.

The initial cache includes the 1923 picture *The Call of the Canyon* directed by Victor Fleming, the 1924 film *The Arab* helmed by Rex Ingram, and two films featuring actor Wallace Reid, *Valley of the Giants* and *You're Fired*, both from 1919.

In a ceremony at the library, the digital copies were formally present-

ed to Librarian of Congress James H. Billington by Vladimir I. Kozhin, head of management and administration of the President of the Russian Federation. Billington praised the spirit of cooperation demonstrated by the Russian team during brief remarks at the ceremony.

Unlike in the U.S., where the vast majority of silent film reels and negatives were destroyed or lost through neglect and mishaps, films distributed to Russia for the most part were carefully maintained and stored.

During the past 20 years, the Library of Congress and others have sought to locate and repatriate missing U.S.-produced movies from a variety of foreign archives, and the LOC is currently working with film archives in France, Czechoslovakia and the Netherlands to uncover lost American titles believed to be housed in those countries.



The digital copies will become available for viewing at the library's Packard Campus for Audio Visual Conservation.

(www.variety.com/index.asp?layout=print_story&articleid=VR1118026104&categoryid=13)



VOICES OF LIGHT: *The Passion of Joan of Arc*

OAKLAND, CA. The Pacific Film Archive, Paramount Theatre, and the Silent Film Festival are thrilled to announce a presentation of *Voices of Light /The Passion of Joan of Arc*, an Oratorio with Silent Film on **Thursday, December 2nd** at Oakland's Paramount Theatre.

This event combines the performance of Richard Einhorn's choral and orchestral work *Voices of Light* with Carl Theodor Dreyer's 1928 classic *The Passion of Joan of Arc*.

Dreyer's depiction of the trial and execution of Joan of Arc is rightfully canonized as one of cinema's masterpieces. The film combines the actual written records of the trial with a style that draws on French Impressionism, German Expressionism, and Soviet Montage to create a visually breathtaking and emotionally intimate portrayal of the young woman's interrogation and last moments. As Joan, Maria Falconetti gives what Pauline Kael claims “may be the finest performance recorded on film.”

The composition *Voices of Light*, scored for soloists, chorus, and orchestra, “sublimely matches one of the great films of all time” (Chicago Sun-Times). *Voices of Light* will be conducted by Dr. Mark Sumner and performed by a chorus of 200 voices and a twenty-two piece orchestra. (Tickets available online at Ticketmaster.com and at the Paramount Theatre)

2011 SILENT CALENDAR The Swimsuit Issue

The **2011 Silent Movies Benefit Calendar** heads to the beach for a swim-suit edition! The silent film era spanned the time ranging from all-covering suits where even the ankles don't show, through some of the raciest swimwear ever not taken in the water. Unlike some swim-suit calendars, attention is given to the bathing costumes of both genders and feature stars such as Clara Bow, Gloria Swanson, Douglas Fairbanks, and Rudolph Valentino. In addition to the photography, notable dates in silent film history, births, deaths, and marriages are also included.



This calendar is a benefit project, and all proceeds after printing expenses go to silent film preservation. Past beneficiaries have included various archives and organizations as the Niles Essanay Silent Film Museum, the San Francisco Silent Film Festival,

Film Preservation Associates, Lobster Films, and George Eastman House. The cost of the calendar has dropped to \$12 this year (plus shipping) and can be ordered through the Mont Alto Orchestra website at www.mont-alto.com/Calendar.html.

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE EXPANDS

Opens January 15th, 2011



By Nathan Duke (excerpted 7/15/10)

NEW YORK. Astoria's **Museum of the Moving Image** will become one of the world's largest film museums when it reopens its doors on **January 15th, 2011** following a \$67 million expansion that includes a redesigned first floor, an elevated movie theater, a three-story addition and a new gallery for exhibits.

The museum closed down in February 2008 to allow for the massive reconstruction project. But Rochelle Slovin, the Moving Image's founder and director, said the museum would open its doors Jan. 15th with a full slate of film series, exhibits and artwork.

The upgrade has doubled the size of the museum's existing building as well as added a courtyard garden, an education center, on-site collection storage, a cafe and a museum store. It has expanded the cultural institution from 50,000 to 97,700 square feet.

The Moving Image's screenings and film series will now be held in an elevated 264-seat theater or a 68-seat screening room. The museum will screen films in super 8mm, 16mm and 35mm and digital projection.

The museum's inaugural screenings will include a slate of 20 newly restored rediscovered films, an avant-garde series, a showing of 1928's *L'Argent*, a silent cinema festival and retrospectives of French director Alain Resnais, documentarian D.A. Pennebaker, Italian maestro Vittorio De Sica and American maverick Arthur Penn. (www.movingimage.us)

Lillian Gish Film Series November 26th - December 13th

NEW YORK CITY. American film actress **Lillian Gish** (1893–1993) enjoyed a seventy-five-year career with roles in over one hundred films—about half of which are included in the **Museum of Modern Art Motion Picture Collection**.

Though she is frequently characterized as a waifish portrait of fragility, Gish's characters in films such as *Way Down East* (1920), *Orphans of the Storm* (1922), *The Scarlet Letter* (1926), and *The Night of the Hunter* (1955) embodied female resilience in the face of abandonment, persecution, and mortal peril. This exhibition examines the breadth of Gish's career and represents MoMA's early and steadfast dedication to collecting seminal works of film history.

Organized by Jenny He, this film series is presented in conjunction with MoMA's publication of **Modern Women: Women Artists at The Museum of Modern Art** and kicks off on Friday, November 26th, with Lillian Gish's film debut in *An Un-*

seen *Enemy* (1912) under the tutelage of director D. W. Griffith; then works its way through later Biograph shorts that documents Lillian maturing in her craft as she branches out to play both seductresses and saintly mothers in films like *A Woman in the Ultimate* (1913) and *The Mothering Heart* (1913).



An Unseen Enemy

The retrospective culminates in a selection of feature length films beginning on the evening of Saturday, November 27th showcasing Gish's great leaps in popularity when cast in the World War I epic *Hearts of the World* (1918), about Americans living in France as the war breaks out, then shares top billing in *The Greatest Question* (1919) with Robert Harron, in a supernatural morality tale that casts Gish in the character of the dutiful country girl who suffers for the sake of those she loves. (www.moma.org/visit/calendar/films/1084)

MARE NOSTRUM

TCM Broadcast in December

Be sure to mark your calendars for Sunday, **December 5th**, as **Turner Classic Movies** rebroadcasts the Rex Ingram epic *Mare Nostrum* that has not appeared on the network since 2004. This tragic and haunting tale of love and espionage in the Mediterranean during World War I is

considered the last important film of director Rex Ingram's career.

Ingram, driven in desire to repeat the commercial success he had with *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1921), took pain staking steps to remain faithful to Vicente Blasco-Ibáñez's novel whose writings were filled with anti-German sentiment. When *Mare Nostrum* released in 1926, it was met with stern criticism by the first International Film Congress who condemned inflammatory films, and the President of the National Association of German Cinema-owners called for a ban on the film in all European countries.

Despite the political controversies, the critics wrote extensively about the the film's exquisite photography set in locations such as the ruins of Pompeii and Paestum, and the brilliant acting of Antonio Moreno as the captain who falls in love with Freya, portrayed by Alice Terry.



The film took fifteen months to make and the editing was a huge undertaking requiring the removal of whole sequences and subsidiary stories. Despite the drastic cuts, the abbreviated version that premiered in New York on February 15, 1926 was met with great enthusiasm, highlighting a hallmark season for MGM which also released the equally outstanding productions of *Ben-Hur*, *The Big Parade*, and *La Bohème*. (tcm.com)

BOOK CORNER

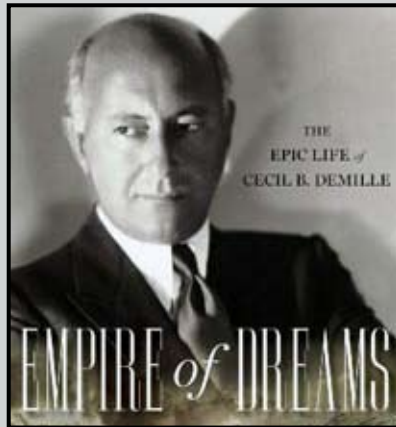
EMPIRE OF DREAMS:

The Epic Life of Cecil B. DeMille

Best known as the Director of such spectacular films as *The Ten Commandments* and *The King of Kings*, Cecil B. DeMille lived a life as epic as any of his cinematic masterpieces. As a child DeMille learned the Bible from his father, a theology student and playwright who introduced Cecil and his older brother, William, to the theater. Tutored by impresario David Belasco, DeMille discovered how audiences responded to showmanship and took this knowledge with him to Los Angeles in 1913, where he became one of the movie pioneers in partnership with Jesse Lasky and his brother-in-law Samuel Goldfish (later Goldwyn).

The Lasky Company turned out a string of successful silents, most of them directed by DeMille, who became one of the biggest names of the silent era. With films such as *The Squaw Man* (1914), *Brewster's Millions* (1914), *Joan the Woman* (1916) and *Don't Change Your Husband* (1919), he was the creative backbone of what would become Paramount Studios, and was one of

the few silent-era directors who made a completely successful transition to sound.



As author Scott Eyman demonstrates in this superbly researched biography, DeMille was much more than his clichéd image. A gifted director who worked in many genres; a devoted family man and loyal friend with a highly unconventional personal life, and a pioneering filmmaker. (www.simonandschuster.com)

ON DVD

CLASSIC SWEDISH SILENTS BOX SET

AB Svensk Filmindustri, together with the Svenska Filminstitutet, presents this six disc DVD box set of Swedish cinema's greatest silent film classics: *Terje Vigen* (Victor Sjöström, 1917), *Sir Arne's Treasure* (Mauritz Stiller, 1919), *Erotikon* (Mauritz Stiller, 1920), *The Phantom Carriage* (Victor Sjöström, 1921), *Haxän* (Benjamin Christensen, 1922) and *Gösta Berling's Saga* (Mauritz Stiller, 1924). The films are a representative sample from the so-called Golden Age from 1917-1924, when Swedish silent film was ad-

mired by audiences, critics, and filmmakers worldwide. All films have been mastered from 35mm prints restored by the Svenska Filminstitutet, and all six films feature specially composed musical scores by Sweden's foremost silent film musician, Matti Bye.

Bonus materials include unique short films, behind the scenes photographs, interviews and fragments of lost films. Each disc also includes a booklet with full production data, text about the feature as well as information about the restoration of each picture. All films have English subtitles, and some are available with French, German, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese subtitle options. (www.svalanderaudio.com)



A CHRISTMAS PAST Vintage Holiday Films

A Christmas Past offers a nostalgic peek into the Yuletide pleasures of the early 1900s. Evoking the Victorian charm of Currier and Ives prints, these picturesque comedies and tender dramas were produced as cinematic Christmas cards offered to moviegoers of the silent era

Included in this collection of archival rarities, most of which were produced at Thomas Edison's studios, are the 1910 version of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, a heartwarming melodrama by D. W. Griffith, *A Trap For Santa* (1909), and the first screen version of Clement Moore's 1822 poem "*'Twas the Night Before Christmas.*"



A Trap For Santa

These films have been digitally mastered from original 35mm elements and are accompanied by a wistful new score by Al Kryszak—performed by a variety of instruments including harp, violin, and Christmas handbells—which beautifully enhances the delicate shadings of each of these rare and fascinating treasures. (www.kino.com)

MOMENTS IN SILENCE

November 9, 1925 – *Mary Pickford signs 3 picture deal with First National.*

December 2, 1917 – *Harold Lloyd's last "Lonesome Luke" short premieres.*

December 5, 1928 – *Fire breaks out at UFA studios in Berlin.*

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