

THE SILENT TREATMENT

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HOUDINI: ART AND MAGIC

First major exhibition exploring the life, career, and influence of the legendary magician and escape artist

LOS ANGELES. Through impossibly daring feats, magician and escape artist **Harry Houdini** (1874–1926) captivated audiences worldwide. His gripping theatrical presentations and heart-stopping outdoor spectacles continue to inspire awe.

On view at the **Skirball Cultural Center** from April 28 through September 4, 2011, **Houdini: Art and Magic** documents Houdini's rise to celebrity, his lasting cultural influence in the decades beyond his death, and the iconic status he still holds today.

Featuring more than 150 artifacts, the exhibition illuminates Houdini's compelling story through historical photographs, dramatic Art Nouveau-era posters, playbills, theater ephemera, memorabilia, and archival and silent film footage. Also featured is an exquisite recreation of Houdini's famous Water

Torture Cell built by well-known illusion designer John Gaughan (much of the original Water Torture Cell was destroyed in a fire). Gaughan's replica will be shown exclusively at the Skirball.

In conjunction with **Houdini: Art**

& Magic, the Skirball has organized an original companion exhibition, **Masters of Illusion: Jewish Magicians of the Golden Age**, which spotlights magicians who were once celebrated innovators in America and Europe but whose rich stories have largely been forgotten.

In support of both exhibitions, a number of supplemental programs will be offered at the Skirball, including a fun-filled evening on Friday, **July 8th** with live music, magicians, a screening of the Houdini serial **The Master Mystery** (1920), poetry readings, and late night gallery tours; then on Sun-

day afternoon, **July 10th**, another double-feature of two more Houdini serials **Terror Island** (1920) and **Haldane of the Secret Service** (1923) are scheduled to run. (For more info visit www.skirball.org)

TCM FRAGMENTS EVENING

April 3rd, 8 PM (EST)

Turner Classic Movies (TCM) will take viewers on an eye-opening cinematic journey with a night of rarely seen gems on **Sunday, April 3rd**. **Fragments: Surviving Pieces of Lost Films** is a 2-hour program of surviving bits and pieces of films that have otherwise been lost to history.



Cleopatra 1917

Of the thousands of films made before 1930, as much as 80 percent are believed to be gone forever in large part to the highly flammable nitrate cellulose film stock in which early film was manufactured on, and through studio neglect due to the perceived obsolescence of the silent medium after the advent of sound pictures. Fortunately for all cinema fans, many film archivists today are

constantly working to locate and restore as much of this important footage as possible.

This prime-time showcase features nine thematically arranged segments and case studies of clips preserved by some of the leading US film archives, including the Academy Film Archive, the UCLA Film & Television Archive, and the Library of Congress.

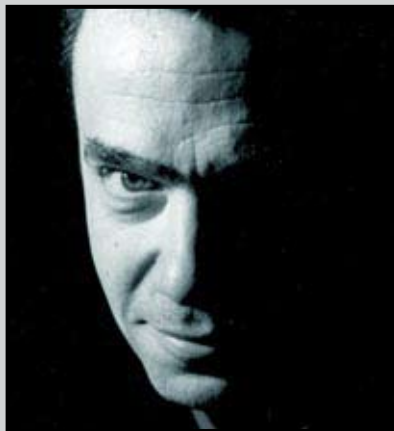
Among the pieces rescued from lost films are the final reel of John Ford's *The Village Blacksmith* (1922) and a glimpse at Emil Jannings in *The Way of All Flesh* (1927), the only Oscar-winning performance in a lost film. **Fragments** also features clips from such lost films as *Cleopatra* (1917) starring Theda Bara; *The Miracle Man* (1919) with Lon Chaney; *He Comes Up Smiling* (1918) starring Douglas Fairbanks; an early lost sound film, *Gold Diggers of Broadway* (1929) filmed in early Technicolor; and *Red Hair* (1928), featuring the only color footage of Clara Bow. (www.tcm.com)

SFIFF TO HONOR SERGE BROMBERG

The San Francisco International Film Festival, which runs **April 21st through May 5th**, will present the Mel Novikoff Award to Serge Bromberg, in recognition of his invaluable contributions as cinematic enthusiast, collector, preservationist, exhibitor and programmer.

The award, named for the pioneering San Francisco art and repertory film exhibitor Mel Novikoff, acknowledges an individual or institution whose work has enhanced the

filmgoing public's knowledge and appreciation of world cinema. Bromberg will receive the award on **May 1st** at the Castro Theatre, followed by a screening of his collection dedicated to stereoscopic works, **Retour de Flamme: Rare and Restored Films in 3-D**.



Bromberg's passion for old movies began in 1969, on the night that his father brought home a Super-8 projector and Charlie's Chaplin's *A Night in the Show* (1915). In 1985, he cofounded Lobster Films with Eric Lange to collect, preserve, restore and share rare film treasures. The archive now contains over 20,000 rare, unknown and classic films. (www.sffs.org)

MUSIC BOX THEATRE SILENT FILM SERIES

CHICAGO. For the last two decades, the **Music Box Theatre** has been the premiere venue in Chicago for independent, foreign, and classic films. The building was designed by Louis A. Simon, a local architect who was known for his Depression-era WPA Post Offices and homes for the nouveau riche.

At a time when the movie palaces in downtown had seating capacities of around 3,000 people, the Music Box with just 800 seats, was considered an elaborate little brother to those massive theatres when it opened its doors in the summer of 1929.

As part of their commitment to screening classic films, the Music Box is delighted to announce what they hope to be an annual series of silent film presentations. Thanks to a number of improvements during the past year, there's no better place in Chicago to see a silent film from their bi-monthly silent series of beloved favorites.



Upcoming selections include Clara Bow's *It* (1927) on **May 14th**, a title that encapsulates the spirit of the sexually-liberated youth of Prohibition-era America. Continuing on with the swashbuckling adventure *The Black Pirate* (1926) on **July 9th**, the first feature film to use very early two-strip Technicolor process; and become spellbound on **September 10th** with one of the best examples of early German expressionism, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919) that will plunge you into the insanity

of a demented doctor and a carnival sleepwalker who perpetuate a series of murders in a small community.



Organist Dennis Scott will be accompanying all scheduled films. (www.musicboxtheatre.com)

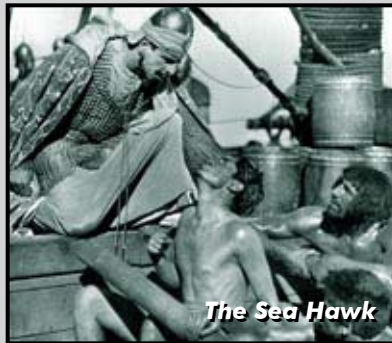
CATALINA ISLAND Silent Film Benefit

AVALON. The Catalina Island Museum (incorporated in 1953) has focused their collection on historical and cultural items from and about Santa Catalina Island. Highlights include a large and comprehensive collection of Catalina pottery and tile manufactured on the island from 1927-1937 and over 10,000 photographs of island life from the early 1880s until the present day.

For the **24th Annual Silent Film Benefit** the museum has selected *The Sea Hawk* (1924) to run in the historic Avalon Theatre of the Casino building on **May 14th**, with live accompaniment on the Page organ by

Robert D. Salisbury. *The Sea Hawk*, preserved by the UCLA Film & Television Archive, is a stirring tale of romance and deception staged on an epic scale by director Frank Lloyd and captures the majesty and vigor of silent cinema at its most spectacular.

The ocean scenes were filmed off the coast of Catalina Island, which was frequently used as a stand-in for exotic locales and according to production manager Harry E. Weil, 150 tents were erected in order to house and support the 1,000 extras, 21 technicians, 14 actors and 64 sailors on the island.



The Sea Hawk

The museum will welcome Isabelle Faulk, the daughter of actor Lloyd Hughes, and silent film historian Joe Yranski as special guests to the benefit this year. (www.catalina-museum.org/events.asp)

ON THE WEB

UNKNOWN SILENTS ON FLICKR

One of the reoccurring issues that most film archives face today are unidentified films in their collection. Going through books & researching reviews makes identification a possibility but can be time consuming.

Thankfully, the popularity of photo sharing websites has made this a much easier task with their ability to pool the massive film knowledge that exists in cyberspace. By utilizing flickr, the AMIA (Association of Moving Image Archivists) Nitrate Film Interest Group believes it is now possible for these mysterious prints to be identified in record time. Film enthusiasts around the world have helped solve the puzzles surrounding many of the unidentified films since the site has been opened to everyone—collectors, archive employees, and film buffs alike. Any unidentified images can be submitted to be uploaded—of films, actors, locations, film stocks, color processes, etc.

Over 120 films have been submitted so far with 64 of those identified. There have been unidentified films with actors ranging in popularity from Mary Pickford and Lon Chaney, to the lesser known performers such as Ella McKenzie, Martin Kinney and John Cumberland.



Unidentified Ben Hur

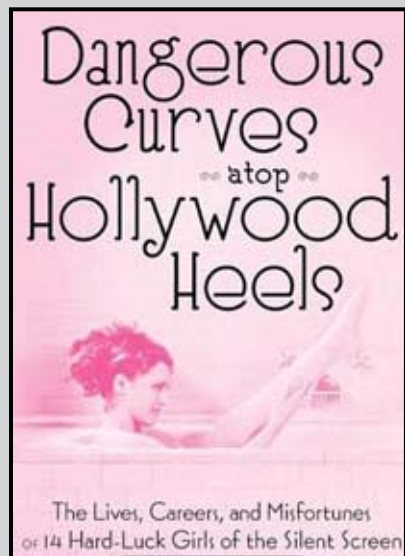
To help identify films, visit <http://www.flickr.com/photos/nfig/> and navigate by the sets on the right instead of the individual pictures. If you have any films you would like to submit, email images and any information to nitratefilminterestgroup@yahoo.com

BOOK CORNER

DANGEROUS CURVES atop HOLLYWOOD HEELS

The Lives, Careers, and Misfortunes of 14 Hard-Luck Girls of the Silent Screen

In *Dangerous Curves atop Hollywood Heels*, author Michael G. Ankerich examines the lives, careers, and disappointments of 14 silent film actresses, who—despite the odds against them and warnings to stay in their hometowns—came to Hollywood to make names for themselves in the movies.



On the screen, these young hopefuls became Agnes Ayres, Olive Borden, Grace Darmond, Elinor Fair, Juanita Hansen, Wanda Hawley, Natalie Joyce, Barbara La Marr, Martha Mansfield, Mary Nolan, Marie Prevost, Lucille Ricksen, Eve Southern, and Alberta Vaughn.

Dangerous Curves follows the precarious routes these young ladies took in their quest for fame and uncovers how some of the top actresses

of the silent screen were used, abused, and discarded. Many—unable to let go of the spotlight after it had singed their very souls—came to a stop on that dead-end street, referred to by actress Anna Q. Nilsson as Hollywood's Heartbreak Lane.

Pieced together using contemporary interviews that the actresses gave, conversations with friends, relatives, and co-workers, and exhaustive research, *Dangerous Curves* offers an honest, yet compassionate, look at some of the brightest luminaries of the silent screen. The book is illustrated with over 150 photographs. (<http://bearmanormedia.biz-land.com>)

ON DVD

SIREN OF THE TROPICS

Josephine Baker's Feature Debut

Available only as a fragment for decades, *Siren of the Tropics* (*La Sirène des tropiques*) is Josephine Baker's feature film debut. Made in 1927, around the time Josephine was making a Paris splash as a Folies Bergère star, *Siren* establishes the rags to riches fairy tale template from which her subsequent films would be cut.

Josephine plays Papitou, a free-spirited, animal-loving native girl who falls in love with Andre, a sophisticated young man who has been sent to the Parisian Antilles as a prospector. She is unaware that he is betrothed to another, or that his work assignment is actually a perilous ruse concocted by his scheming boss. As the truth becomes known, Papitou finds herself pursuing Andre back to Paris, where fate intervenes.

Though silent, *Siren of the Tropics* abounds with musical energy, aided in no small part by Josephine Baker's innate screen magnetism. The film contains perhaps her greatest dance work on celluloid, the frenetic "Charleston." Among the crew was a very young Luis Buñuel. Music composed and performed by Donald Sosin (www.kino.com)



MOMENTS IN SILENCE

March 28, 1920 – *Mary Pickford weds Douglas Fairbanks.*

April 7, 1917 – *Final chapter of Judex released.*

April 12, 1922 – *Roscoe Arbuckle acquitted of manslaughter charges.*

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