

# THE SILENT TREATMENT

ALL THE NEWS FIT TO HEAR • VOLUME 05 • NUMBER 03 • MAY/JUN 2011

## SILENT FILMS STEAL SPOTLIGHT AT CANNES



### COLOR VERSION OF "MOON" RISES

A fully restored color version of Georges Méliès' sci-fi masterpiece *A Trip to the Moon* (1902) was presented at the Cannes Film Festival on its opening night—109 years after its initial release. After Georges Méliès shot the fantasy-adventure in May 1902, it was distributed both in black & white and hand painted color versions that ran around 14 minutes long. The film turned out to be a worldwide success making it the first blockbuster in the history of cinema; unfortunately, it soon fell victim to piracy and plagiarism. The hand painted color version that circulated in 1902 was considered definitively lost until 1993 when a copy surfaced in Barcelona, Spain and was donated to the FilMOTECA de Catalunya.

The nitrate print had been severely damaged and was in such poor condition that attempting any restoration work seemed futile. Following a film exchange with the FilMOTECA, Lobster Films received the color print and began the tedious task of peeling off and unrolling the nitrate

to digitize the images. It was a project that took two years to complete, and the scans were stored on a hard drive for eight years until technological advances allowed the restoration to continue.

In 2010, a project team involving Lobster Films, Groupama Gan Foundation for Cinema and the Technicolor Foundation for Cinema Heritage launched the most complex and ambitious restoration project in the history of cinema, with a budget equivalent to a high-end feature restoration (more than 400,000 euros). Thanks to the advanced technologies available today, the fragments of the 13,375 frames were reassembled and restored one by one.



The digital restoration of *A Trip to the Moon* took place at Technicolor's laboratories in Los Angeles, utilizing a black and white original nitrate print belonging to the Méliès family and a positive print belonging to the Centre National du Cinéma. ([www.technicolorfilmfoundation.org](http://www.technicolorfilmfoundation.org))

### CANNES RAVES ABOUT "ARTIST"



Michel Hazanavicius's modern silent picture *The Artist* was a last minute addition to the Cannes Film Festival competition; and while it proved to be a crowd-pleaser, it also met with high critical acclaim. *The Artist* transports a 2011 audience to the Hollywood of 1927, where a pompous matinee idol George Valentin (Jean Dujardin) is trying to cope with the demise of the silent picture and the arrival of the talking picture.

With a supporting cast that includes Argentinian-born actress

Bérénice Bejo, and U.S. actors John Goodman, Penelope Ann Miller, and James Cromwell, this black & white comedy-drama became the talk of the festival. Dujardin's understated and powerful performance as Valentin was impeccable and he walked away with the best actor award during the festivals closing ceremony.



The Weinstein Company wasted little time acquiring the U.S. and partial international rights to this unique French-financed, American-made production that is both a love letter to silent cinema and a magnificent piece of filmmaking. Current plans include a limited theatrical release of the film in fall 2011.

## The Summer of Silents

Monday Nights at the Samuel Goldwyn Theatre



BEVERLY HILLS, CA. Some of the great classics of the silent film era will be returning to the big screen when the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences presents a

program of films chosen as recipients of the **Photoplay Magazine Medal of Honor**. With thousands of readers sending in their votes, this award predated the establishment of the Oscars and reflects the films that contemporary audiences of the 1920s thought were the best films of each year. Today these films tell the story of the American film industry's first true Golden Age, and offer work by some of Hollywood's most influential directors and performers.

The nine evenings running Monday nights from **June through August** will feature the best available prints, music performed and composed by a variety of accompanists specializing in the period, a comedy short featuring a different silent screen comedian each week, and surviving fragments of lost films from the era, introduced by film historians including recent Honorary Award recipient Kevin Brownlow.



Examples of feature films running all summer long include *Tol'able David* (1921) on June 20th, *The Covered Wagon* (1923) on July 11th, *Beau Geste* (1926) on July 25th, and *Four Sons* (1928) on August 8th. (Visit [www.oscars.org](http://www.oscars.org) for complete schedule)



## THANHOUSER LIBRARY NOW ONLINE

Free Access to 56 Films

The **Thanhouser Company Film Preservation, Inc.** recently announced that 56 of the Company's films produced in New Rochelle, New York between the years 1910-1917 are now accessible to the online community free of charge. The selection of titles available on the Thanhouser website is a representative cross section of the company's output during this important era in early film development.

The films were assembled over the past 25 years with the cooperation of archives around the world, including the Library of Congress, the British Film Institute, George Eastman House, the Museum of Modern Art, the Academy Film Archive, the EYE Film Institute Netherlands, and from the Thanhouser collection itself.

"Making these films accessible for online viewing is intended to expand viewership and academic study of this pioneering studio," said Ned Thanhouser, grandson of Thanhouser Company founders Edwin and Gertrude Thanhouser.

Each film includes a summary and analysis written by film historian Victor Graf. Andrew Crow, Raymond A. Brubacher and Ben Model composed and performed original musical accompaniment commissioned exclusively for this collection.

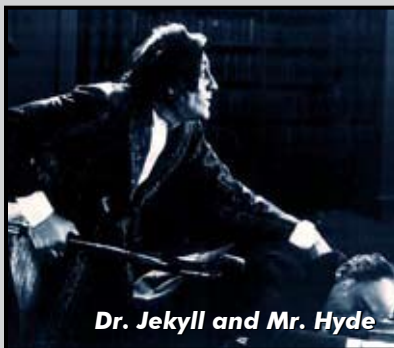


*Cinderella*

Samples of titles now available online include *The Actor's Children* (1910), the first Thanhouser film released on March 15, 1910; *The Winter's Tale* (1910), the first of six Shakespeare plays brought to the screen by Thanhouser; *Cinderella* (1911), an elaborately produced version of the well known George O. Nichols fairy tale; and *The World and the Woman* (1916), notable for Jeanne Eagel's film debut as a prostitute turned faith healer in this five reel feature. ([www.thanouser.org](http://www.thanouser.org))

## SILENTS AT THE STRAND

GEORGIA. In the early days of cinema, going to the movies was a way to escape from reality and to daydream about other worlds. This tradition continues at the historic **Earl Smith Strand Theatre** in Marietta, Georgia, which first opened its doors in 1935 and operates today as a multi-use performing arts and events facility.



*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

Among the variety of upcoming motion pictures that will screen at the Strand are the silent features *Flesh and the Devil* on August 28th, and the original *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* on October 30th—both with live organ accompaniment by Ron Carter on the Mighty Allen Theatre Organ.

As a Strand board member and active member of the Atlanta Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society, Carter is keen to replicate the 1920's movie experience for the patrons since the Strand is one of only four historic theatres in Georgia with the ability to showcase silent films with live organ.



*Flesh and the Devil*

*Flesh and the Devil* (1926) is about two lifelong friends Leo (John Gilbert) and Ulrich (Lars Hanson) who have their friendship tested by the irresistible vixen Felicitas (Greta Garbo). It is a breathtaking romance fraught with passion and betrayal and a dramatic gem of the silent era.

*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1920) is the classic story of Dr. Henry Jekyll (John Barrymore) who experiments with scientific means of revealing the hidden, dark side of man—ultimately releasing the murderer within himself. ([www.EarlSmithStrand.org](http://www.EarlSmithStrand.org))

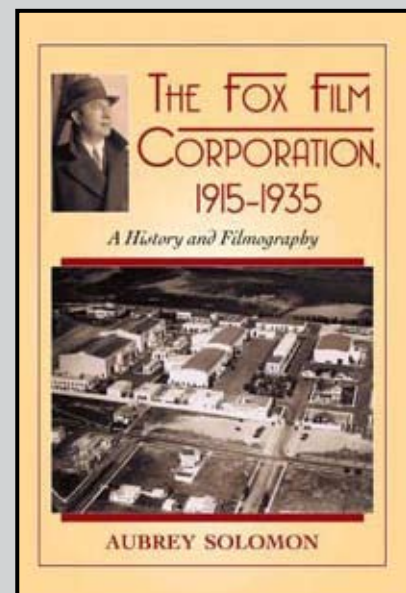
## BOOK CORNER

### THE FOX FILM CORPORATION 1915-1935 A History and Filmography

By *Aubrey Solomon*

In 1929, Hollywood mogul William Fox (1879-1952) came close to controlling the entire motion picture industry. His **Fox Film Corporation** had grown from a \$1600 investment into a globe-spanning \$300 million empire; he also held patents to the new sound-on-film process. Forced into a series of bitter power struggles, Fox was ultimately toppled from his throne, and the studio bearing his name would merge in 1935 with Darryl F. Zanuck's flourishing 20th Century Pictures.

The 25-year lifespan of the Fox Film Corporation, home of such personalities as Theda Bara, Tom Mix, Janet Gaynor and John Ford, is chronicled in this thorough illustrated history. Included are never-before-published financial figures revealing costs and grosses of Fox's biggest successes and failures, and a detailed



filmography of the studio's 1100-plus releases, among them *What Price Glory* (1926), *Seventh Heaven* (1927) and *Cavalcade* (1933). ([www.mcfarlandpub.com](http://www.mcfarlandpub.com))

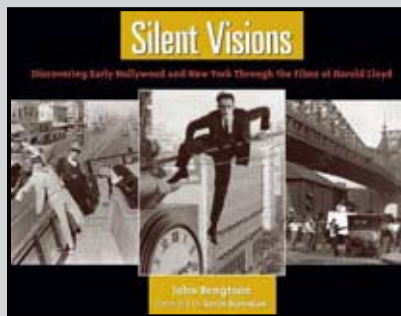
## SILENT VISIONS

Discovering Early Hollywood & New York Through the Films of Harold Lloyd

By John Bengston

Highlighting visions of a bygone age preserved in the background of Harold Lloyd's films, this history explores the urban landscapes of Hollywood, Los Angeles, and New York--popular settings for his films--through archival photographs, vintage maps, and scores of then-and-now photographs.

From Coney Island to Catalina Island and from Brooklyn to Beverly Hills, Lloyd's timeless movies reflect visions of early 20th-century America unequalled on the silver screen and exemplified in the historical settings found in such classics as *Safety Last* (1923), *Girl Shy* (1924), *The Freshman* (1925), and *Speedy* (1928).



Tracing Lloyd's career from his early work to owning and operating his own studio, this account illuminates Lloyd's mastery of his oeuvre--an actor and film-maker who sold more tickets than any other comedian of his era, as well as a comedic genius whose expert staging and editing have influenced films for decades. ([www.santamonicaexpress.com](http://www.santamonicaexpress.com))

ON DVD

## PEOPLE ON SUNDAY



*People on Sunday* (Menschen am Sonntag) represents an astonishing confluence of talent--an early collaboration by a group of German filmmakers who would all go on to become major Hollywood players, including eventual noir masters Robert Siodmak and Edgar G. Ulmer, and future Oscar winners Billy Wilder and Fred Zinnemann.

This effervescent, sunlit silent film about a handful of city dwellers enjoying a weekend outing (a charming cast of non-professionals), offers a rare glimpse of Weimar-era Berlin.

A unique hybrid of documentary and fictional storytelling, *People on Sunday* was both an experiment and a mainstream hit that would influence generations of film artists around the world. ([www.criterion.com](http://www.criterion.com))

## SILENT DISCOVERIES

*Silent Discoveries* is comprised of two feature films, the Old Testament spectacle *After Six Days* and the 1950's documentary *Yesterday and Today*.

Touted at the time as a "3,000,000 Entertainment for the Hundred Millions," *After Six Days* was first released in the USA in 1922 by Weiss Bros. Artclass distributors as an 11 reel biblical epic sourced from a massive Italian production from 1920 known as *La Sacra Bibbia*.

Following the 11 reel release, it was later reissued in a condensed 7-reel version with added music, effects, and narration. This VCI release is of the 7 reel version as only miscellaneous footage survives from the 1922 version. *Yesterday and Today* released by United Artists in 1953, is a silent movie compilation covering the period 1900-1910 with commentary by veteran funnyman George Jessel. Unfortunately several of the films profiled were misidentified at that time, so a supplemental track was produced and narrated by film historian Richard M. Roberts for updated accuracy. ([www.vci-entertainment.com](http://www.vci-entertainment.com))



## MOMENTS IN SILENCE

June 1, 1913 - D.W. Griffith begins filming *Judith of Bethulita*.

June 28, 1927 - Greta Garbo renews MGM contract at \$5,000 per week.

July 10, 1916 - Chaplin's *The Vagabond* debuts.

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