

THE SILENT TREATMENT

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STAR POWER: *Edward Steichen's Glamour Photography*

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. When the models in Edward Steichen's "Vogue" and "Vanity Fair" cover photographs of the 1920s and 1930s were posing in fashions by Chanel and the House of Worth, the women of Reynolda were likely perusing the pages of those same publications, finding inspiration for their own wardrobes.

In February, when Reynolda House Museum of American Art opens **Star Power: Edward Steichen's Glamour Photography**, the museum will display dresses, hats, shoes and jewelry from the museum's costume collection alongside Steichen's iconic gelatin silver prints. The exhibition will be on view **Feb. 23-May 19, 2013**.

"Katharine Smith Reynolds and Mary Reynolds Babcock had great appreciation for haute couture," said Allison Slaby, the museum's curator. "I think visitors will enjoy seeing images of gorgeous dresses, shoes and hats in Steichen's

photographs, and then seeing the actual dresses, shoes and hats that the Reynolds and Babcock women were wearing here in North Carolina."



Gloria Swanson



Walt Disney

Considered some of the most striking creations of 20th-century photography, the more than 100 selected photographs in "Star Power" constitute a body of work of unequalled brilliance. The exhibition brings together Steichen's Condé Nast portraits of luminaries from the worlds of politics, literature, government, journalism, dance, theatre, music, and fashion. Steichen was already a famous painter and photographer on both sides of the Atlantic when, in early 1923, he was offered one of the most prestigious and lucrative positions in photography's commercial domain—that of chief photographer for Condé Nast's influential and highly-regarded magazines, "Vogue" and "Vanity Fair."

For the next 15 years, Steichen would take full advantage of the re-

sources and prestige conferred by the Condé Nast empire, putting his exceptional talents, prodigious energies and modernist sensibilities to work dramatizing and glamorizing celebrities such as Gloria Swanson, Katharine Hepburn, Gary Cooper, Martha Graham, Walt Disney, Greta Garbo, Fred Astaire and others.

Several events are planned in conjunction with the exhibition, including extended hours to 8 p.m. on the first four Thursdays the exhibition is open. (www.reynoldahouse.org)

FASHION IN FILM FESTIVAL

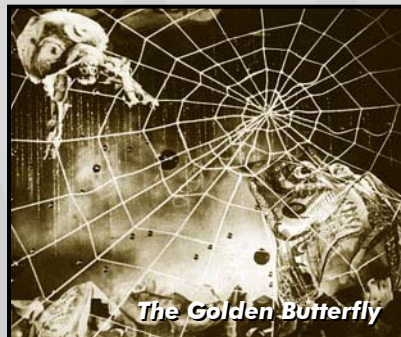
DENMARK. **Fashion in Film Festival** (FFF), launched in 2005, takes a look back in time and focuses on fashion in film and its interplay throughout film history.



The Orchid Dancer

With a different theme selected every other year, FFF has been successful with its displays at prominent venues such as the Tate Modern and the British Film Institute. The popularity of FFF has sparked tour destinations from London to Prague, New York to Montreal, and now has reached Copenhagen as a part of their Fashion Week in February. The festival offers a large variety of genres in its programs such as silent films, documentaries, and video art with the

intent to promote new ideas and experiments with film-art and fashion, while also showcasing older film-artists perspectives on the genre.



The Golden Butterfly

Silent film enthusiasts will bask in the fashion-forward offerings of *Rhapsodia Satanica* (1915) on February 1st, a prime example of the diva genre with Lyda Borelli in a Faustian tale of a woman's search for eternal youth and worldly pleasures; February 3rd offers the sensual and sorrowful picture *The Golden Butterfly* (1926), directed by Michael Curtiz and starring Lili Damita; and *The Orchid Dancer* (1928) rounds out the festival on the 13th as dancer Luicha showcases her famed 'orchid dance.' (www.fashioninfilmcph.dk)

VOX LUMIERE TOURS WITH PETER PAN



Betty Bronson as Peter Pan

The theatrical rock concert group Vox Lumiere hits the road this spring to add their special pinch of fairy dust to the thoroughly captivating adventure film *Peter Pan* (1924).

Prior to the Disney animation classic produced in 1950 came an earlier live action version in 1924 that author J.M Barrie actually had a hand in making. It is a remarkable piece of silent film history that this company could not resist and the show is filled with stunning costumes, soul-pumping original music, bewitching vocals and unexpected twists.

So, clap your hands for Tink, battle Captain Hook and lose yourself with all The Lost Boys in this magical journey of epic live rock concert and silent film. Vox Lumiere has lined up two show stops so far in 2013; visiting the Eccles Center in Park City, UT on March 23rd and Fort Hays State University in Hays, KS on April 9th – more tour dates will be announced soon. (www.vox-lumiere.com)

SILENT SPOTLIGHT

GEORGE W. HILL: LOST HERO OF CINEMA

By Philip H. G. Ituarte (exclusive to The Silent Treatment).

When he died at age 39, George W. Hill (1895-1934) was an A-list director at MGM studios with a sterling reputation for making profitable films, produced on time and under budget. More significantly, his films were both critically acclaimed and highly popular. He directed some of the most celebrated actors of the silent and early talkie period including Wallace Beery, Lon Chaney, Marion Davies, Marie Dressler, John Gilbert, Ramon Navarro, and Mary Pickford. D. W. Griffith, Samuel Goldwyn, William Randolph Hearst, and the brothers Warner sought Hill's services as a cameraman and as a director.

George William Hill was born in Douglas, Kansas, on April 25, 1895 to an upper middle class family of Irish heritage with deep roots in the Midwest. Known professionally

as "George," his family called him "Bill" or "Willy." According to his younger brother Boyd, Bill excelled at everything he did. He was actively interested in radio, photography, and was an accomplished pianist. Because of his height (6'3") and his profession, he earned the nickname "Tripod," and could readily be described as tall, dark and handsome.



George W. Hill

In his adolescence, Hill had planned to study engineering in college, but the filmmaking bug bit him harder. In 1908 Hill began working at D.W. Griffith's Biograph Company as the "fifth assistant to an assistant carpenter" and worked his way up the ranks to cameraman. He subsequently worked for Hobart Bosworth's production company photographing adaptations of Jack London stories, including *The Sea Wolf* (1913), *The Adventures of Burning Daylight* (1914), *Martin Eden* (1914), and *Buckshot John* (1915).

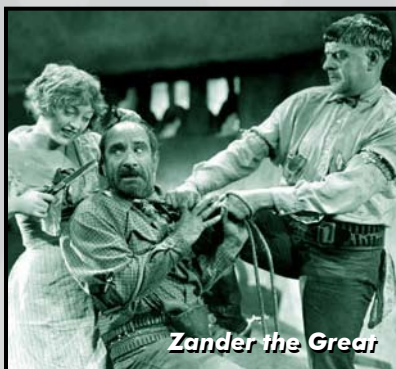
Hill also served as cameraman for director Lois Weber's *Hypocrites* (1915), then returned to work with D. W. Griffith on the epic *Intolerance* (1916) as 2nd cameraman for Billy Bitzer. Many of Hill's fellow cameramen on *Intolerance* would also become distinguished directors, including Tod Browning, Jack Conway, Allan Dwan, Victor Fleming,

and Erich von Stroheim.

From the very start, reviews of films that Hill photographed noted the realism of the scenes, and particularly his fidelity in recording action sequences. Boyd Hill wrote of his brother, "One thing about Willy: he would go anywhere and do anything to get the right camera shot."

Hill is also credited as cinematographer on *Less Than the Dust* (1916) starring Mary Pickford, and *His Picture in the Papers* (1916), starring Douglas Fairbanks. Hill signed a long-term contract with Goldwyn Pictures Corp, where he was Mae Marsh's preferred cameraman. Upon the entry of the United States into the war in Europe, Hill resigned from Goldwyn Pictures to serve with the U.S Army in WWI, where he learned how to fly and worked as an aerial cameraman in the Signal Corps. He was promoted to Captain, and served in Italy and Turkey.

According to screenwriter Frances Marion, Hill returned from war to a new career in radio. But by 1922, "he had grown bored with the repetitious daily routine and was eager to return to our hectic business."



Zander the Great

Hill's first directorial credit was for Fox Pictures' *Get Your Man* (1921), followed by *While the Devil Laughs* (1921). In 1925, Hill completed a Cosmopolitan picture starring Marion Davies (*Zander the Great*), and one film for Warner Brothers (*The Limited Mail*), for which many



Tell It to the Marines

reviewers noted the breathtaking runaway train action scenes. MGM became Hill's home studio starting with *The Barrier* (1926) and *Tell It to the Marines* (1927) starring Lon Chaney and William Haines. His last silent film was *The Flying Fleet* with Ramon Novarro, released in early 1929. By his own account, Hill enjoyed making what he called "mud" pictures, which he defined as "something simple and elemental, close to the soil, dealing with primal instincts and emotions of man."

Perhaps unusual for A-list directors of the silent period, George Hill's films consistently celebrate the working class, the impoverished, or reform-minded criminals who redeem themselves at the end of the film by making a sacrifice that spares the lives of others. Consequently, Hill's films lack the polished sets and glamorous trappings associated with the top flight films of the era, and have a realism one associates with Warner Bros. films of the early sound era. Hill's focus on the working classes would continue in his talking pictures, the most famous of which include *Min and Bill* (1930), earning Marie Dressler the Best Actress Academy Award, and the first gritty, realistic prison film *The Big House* (1930), starring Wallace Beery and Chester Morris.

For all the outward appearances of success, Hill had a dark side. He was regarded as a very sensitive man

and often battled bouts of depression. He was described as high strung, and actress Lillian Gish remarked on his violent temper. He was easily frustrated and had a reputation for quitting a picture in a huff, only to contritely return to work the next day. He was a binge drinker, and his behavior was reputedly the cause for his brief marriage to and divorce from screenwriter Frances Marion.

Back in 1927, Hill told an interviewer that he was deeply interested in filming a story focused on wheat farming. "It seems to me there is one of the biggest themes to be found in the raising of grain for the world, in the 4 seasons and their effect upon the people of the country and their work."



Hill's wish was granted in the early 1930s when he was assigned to direct MGM's feature *The Good Earth*. After returning from China with location footage and props to be used in the film, he learned that producer Irving Thalberg had overruled his plans to cast Chinese actors as the leads. Given the pressures of a making this big budget film, combined with setbacks in his personal life and his temperament, Hill tragically committed suicide in August 1934. Had Hill lived to complete *The Good Earth*, a story and setting that was sympathetic to his oeuvre up to this point, it is possible he might be more highly regarded—and remembered—today. (*Anyone with information about George W. Hill's life and work is encouraged to contact the author at: phituarte@gmail.com*)

TST BOOKCORNER

Mr. Griffith's House with Closed Shutters

By William M. Drew

Although volumes have been written about the great director D. W. Griffith, he remains one of the most enigmatic figures in cinema history. Even the biographers he chose to chronicle his life were denied access to many facts in his personal history.

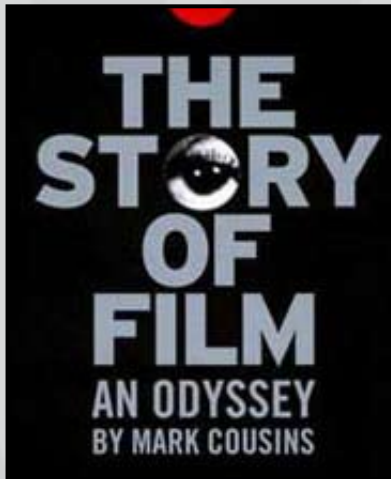


This book reveals a hereto-unexplored phase of the pioneer director's life that the author maintains would have a profound influence on his work. Based upon solid research, the book not only presents a scholarly analysis of the nexus between Griffith's life experience and his interpretation of women's roles, it also contains within its pages a compelling mystery that will fascinate its readers. (www.amazon.com)

HOME ENTERTAINMENT

The Story of Film: AN ODYSSEY

The Story of Film: An Odyssey is an unprecedented cinematic event,



an epic journey through the history of world cinema that is a treat for movie lovers around the globe. Guided by film historian Mark Cousins, this bold 15-part love letter to the movies begins with the invention of motion pictures at the end of the 19th century and concludes with the multi-billion dollar globalized digital industry of the 21st. It heralds a unique approach to the evolution of film art by focusing on the artistic vision and innovations of filmmaking pioneers.

Filmed at key locations in film history on every continent, from Thomas Edison's New Jersey laboratory, to Hitchcock's London; from post-war Rome to the thriving industry of modern day Mumbai--this landmark documentary is filled with glorious clips from some of the greatest movies ever made and features interviews with legendary filmmakers including Stanley Donen, Kyoko Kagawa, Gus van Sant, and Lars Von Trier. (www.musicboxfilms.com)

The Red Lantern

The Red Lantern tells the story of a Eurasian, Joan of Arc-like heroine, set against the background of China's 1900 Boxer Rebellion. The film was an instant success, thanks to an unprecedented advertising cam-

paign and the star qualities of diva Alla Nazimova.

Essays sketch the historical outline of the Boxer Rebellion, while special features on the DVD include early cinematic actualities that evoke the way in which the Boxer Rebellion was portrayed in the Western media around the turn of the century, true to the myth of the 'Yellow Peril.'

Extras on the DVD tentatively reconstruct a Chinese programme from the time of the film's premiere and show how 'authentic' portrayals of Chinese life were combined with cartoons and Oriental musical fantasies. Many contemporary film reviewers saw **The Red Lantern** as a film marked with the "stamp of historical and ethnological authenticity" thanks to Nazimova's mastery of the art of metamorphosis. (www.cinematek.be)



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