

THE SILENT TREATMENT

ALL THE NEWS FIT TO HEAR • VOLUME 07 • NUMBER 03 • MAY/JUNE 2013

SILENT FILM SOCIETY CHICAGO SUMMER SERIES at the DES PLAINES THEATRE



ILLINOIS. The Des Plaines Theatre was built in 1925 as the northwest flagship for the suburban Chicago Polka Brothers circuit of Maywood. The Spanish Baroque Revival building is the only known theatre designed by Betts & Holcomb departing from the Tudor aesthetic, with ebullient polychrome Terra Cotta. Aftersuccessfully hosting the likes of Gene Autry in vaudeville and film, the theater was purchased by H&E Balaban, a spinoff of Balaban & Katz, in 1935, and received a streamline modern re-decoration by Pereira & Pereira, including its distinctive marquee. The theater remained a popular first-run and discount house until a 1982 fire



Olive Thomas

damaged the building's storefronts. Although the theater itself suffered little damage, it remained closed for a year, and business never fully recovered.

In 1998, Jim and June Burrows of Chicago refurbished the theater for first-runs, but were unable to make it profitable. It then transitioned to Indian language films, then closed for a period when a bank purchased it, planning to demolish it for a new drive-through. The bank's plans were thwarted by community outcry and a zoning denial. Previous operators Dhitu and Dharmesh Bhagwakar purchased the building in 2003, continued showing Indian films, and in Novem-

ber 2010 commenced major renovations to restore the building for use as a live theater. Original Spanish art deco plaster work and paint were recovered around the proscenium and entryways during the renovation in early 2011.

The Des Plaines Theatre welcomes the Silent Film Society of Chicago for their 2013 Summer Series running six consecutive Friday nights from July 19th to August 23rd. The impressive lineup of perennial favorites includes the desert romance *The Sheik* (1921) starring Rudolph Valentino and Agnes Ayres launching the series on July 19th; it then carries on over to showcase young ingénue Olive Thomas in her most memorable film role as *The Flapper* (1920) on August 2nd; finally, the series winds down with the comic talents of Marion Davies in *The Patsy* (1928) on August 23rd.

All feature film presentations will



Marion Davies

include live theater organ accompaniment by Tim Baker and Jay Warren. The complete lineup of pictures and ticketing info can be found on the SFSC website. (www.silentfilm-chicago.com)

THE UNDESIRABLE

Excerpted article, 06/05/13

A century-old silent film by the legendary *Casablanca* director Michael Curtiz is to be digitally remastered in Hungary, the National Digital Archive and Film Institute (MaNDA) announced, after securing a state grant.



A *Tolonc* (The Undesirable or The Exile) had lain hidden for years in the basement of the Hungarian House, a cultural centre on East 82nd Street in New York. The lost piece of cinema history came to light in 2008, when rusty cans of film were brought to Hungary and examined by MaNDA.

Budapest-born Mihály Kertész, as he was then known, shot the film in 1914 in the Romanian town of Cluj, at the time part of the doomed Austro-Hungarian Empire. The six-week shoot was wrapped up in mid-July, just days before the outbreak of the First World War. It is thought the film was screened in the US in the 1920s under the title *The Undesirable*.

The reels were sent to Holland as there were no domestic labs equipped to deal with the notoriously unstable nitro-cellulose film. The fresh copy spent some time in the US before returning to Hungary when MaNDA secured state funding for the digital remastering.

The Hungarian National Film Foundation, headed by *Rambo* and *Terminator* producer Andy Vajna, is subsidising the project to the tune of HUF 14 million (EUR 48,000). The work is expected to take about a year to complete – until then, the film can be viewed in its pre-restoration condition on YouTube.

MaNDA says there has been considerable interest in the silent flick due to its association with a legend of Hollywood's golden era, and it plans to screen the film at international film forums. Plans are also afoot for a celebratory release of the remastered film in Hungary, to coincide with the 100th anniversary of its filming. (Full article www.budapesttimes.hu/2013/06/05/70438/)

FILMHARMONIE premieres ANGST at Klagenfurt

AUSTRIA. Since 2006, the FILMHARMONIE commissions new film scores for selected feature films. Each year one production is added to the repertoire which so far covers comedy, opera adaptations, dramas, and even "Kulturfilm" (feature film documentaries).



For the 2013 season, the producer and founder of the FILMHARMONIE orchestra, Michael Seeber, has selected a new score by Florian C. Reithner to play alongside the re-

cently restored 1928 German-British co-production *Angst* (Fear) directed by Hans Steinoff. The restoration, along with this newly commissioned score, is set to premiere at the Volkskino open air cinema in Klagenfurt on Thursday, July 25th, 2013.



All surviving silent films by German filmmaker Hans Steinhoff have been restored over the past decade by the Bundesarchiv in Koblenz, and *Angst* was the first. A dramatic tale of morality between two couples, the picture was loosely based on the popular 1925 novella, *Fear*, by Stefan Zweig. *Angst* was restored using a combination of extant German, Russian and British prints, and following the Cine-Concert premiere in July, the restoration and its new score is scheduled for release onto DVD next year. (www.filmharmonie.at & www.volkskino.net)

HOLLYWOOD GLAMOURIZES SWIMMING POOLS

By Mary Mallory (exclusive to TST)

Thanks to its moderate, Mediterranean climate and perpetual sunshine, Southern California attracted both refugees from dreary climes and filmmakers looking for golden light. Over the years, motion picture producers further developed the image of Los Angeles and Hollywood as beachside paradise, featuring sun-kissed beaches, stunning seascapes, and luxurious estates populated with

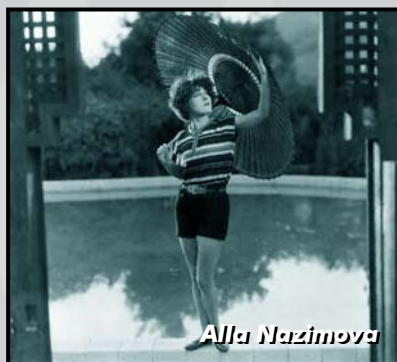
elegant swimming pools in their fantasy dreamscapes.

California in 1892, followed by other natural baths and public pools. In the



While Southern California did not invent the idea of home swimming pools, Hollywood's iconic use of them to flaunt luxury, sex, and romance glamourized their existence. Silent motion picture stars helped usher in their popularity with middle-class Americans.

Spas, baths, and pools date to the days of early Egyptians and Persians as a symbol of status. Swimming pools arrived in the United States around 1887, with the first public pool constructed in Brookline, Massachusetts. Wealthy Easterners soon began adding pools to their estates, and the practice quickly moved West.



Glen Ivy Hot Springs built the first warm water swimming pool in

early 1900s, Clara E. Selover added the luxurious item to her palatial estate at Miramar and Bonnie Brae Streets. The first Hollywood mansion with its own pool was Malcolm Mc-Nighten's 1913 Mediterranean villa at Los Feliz and Edgemont.

Mack Sennett's Keystone Company constructed a twenty by forty foot pool on its lot in 1915, the first pool in the movie colony. Glamorous silent film actress Mae Murray bought a ten-acre ranch with outdoor pool in the San Bernardino Mountains in November 1917, with water channeled from Arrowhead Springs providing natural replenishment.

When movie king and queen Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford constructed elaborate pools on their Pickfair estate, swimming pools instantly gained worldwide recognition and status. Other celebrities quickly followed suit, and soon swimming pools became de rigueur among Hollywood's elite.

Once the motion picture industry began spotlighting them in films and Esther Williams' aquatic extravaganzas, average Americans began constructing their own pools for their own little slice of the high life.

TST BOOKCORNER

GO WEST, YOUNG WOMEN!

THE RISE OF EARLY HOLLYWOOD

In the early part of the twentieth century, migrants made their way from rural homes to cities in record numbers and many traveled west. Los Angeles became a destination. Women flocked to the growing town to join the film industry as workers and spectators, creating a "New Woman." Their efforts transformed filmmaking from a marginal business to a cosmopolitan, glamorous, and bohemian one.

By 1920, Los Angeles had become the only western city where women outnumbered men. In **Go West, Young Women**, Hilary A. Hallett explores these relatively unknown new western women and their role in the development of Los Angeles and the nascent film industry.



From Mary Pickford's rise to become perhaps the most powerful woman of her age, to the racist moral panics of the post-World War I years that culminated in Hollywood's first sex scandal, Hallett describes how the path through early Hollywood presaged the struggles over modern gender roles that animated the century to come. (www.ucpress.edu)

HOLLYWOOD BEFORE GLAMOUR

FASHION IN AMERICAN
SILENT FILM

By Michelle Tolini Finamore

This exploration of fashion in American silent film offers fresh perspectives on the era preceding the studio system, and the evolution of Hollywood's distinctive brand of glamour.

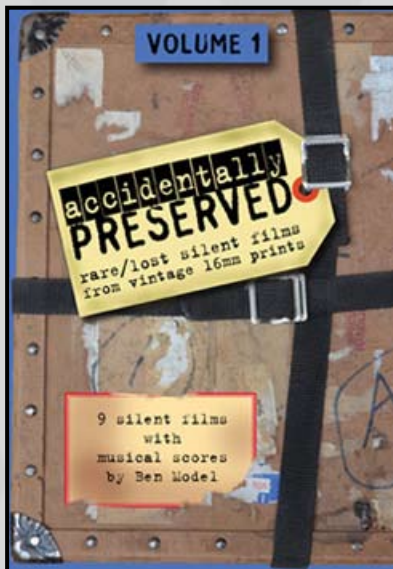


By the 1910s, the moving image was an integral part of everyday life and communicated fascinating, but as yet un-investigated, ideas and ideals about fashionable dress. (<http://us.macmillan.com/palgrave.aspx>)

HOME ENTERTAINMENT

ACCIDENTALLY PRESERVED

Coming to TV, computer, and smartphone screens everywhere in 2013 is **Accidentally Preserved** presented by Ben Model; one of the USA's leading silent film accompa-



nists who has been composing and improvising musical scores for silent films for thirty years.

Ben owns more than a dozen short silent movies that are either lost films or just really rare on vintage 16mm film editions made in the 1930s and 1940s. Nine silent film shorts are now available on DVD and in an online web-series and consist of seven comedies, one industrial, and one animated cartoon. Selections include *The Lost Laugh with Wallace Lupino* (1928), *The House of Wonders by Elgin National Watch Company* (ca. 1931), and *Mechanical Doll*, a Max Fleischer "Out of the Inkwell" cartoon (1922). (www.accidentally-preserved.com)

Underground

The BFI Archive's acclaimed restoration of Anthony Asquith's subterranean tale of love, jealousy and murder is finally made available in this stunning Dual Format Edition. This classic British film from the silent era features Neil Brand's new orchestral score, recorded live in 2012, which perfectly complements the film's richly detailed evocation of

1920s London.

From his own screenplay Anthony Asquith balances the light and dark sides of London life, aided by a superb cast of Brian Aherne and Elissa Landi as the nice young lovers, and Norah Baring and Cyril McLaglen as their unhappy counterparts.

More than any other film from Britain's silent canon, *Underground* evokes the life of the ordinary Londoner with its scenes of the bustling underground and the capital's parks, double-decker buses, pubs and shabby bedsits. (http://filmstore.bfi.org.uk/catalog/info_26495.html)



MOMENTS IN SILENCE

August 16, 1926 – Clara Bow signs 5 year contract with Paramount

August 22, 1927 – Charlie Chaplin divorces Lita Grey

TST EDITED & PUBLISHED BY:

Brandee B. Cox:

Content Manager

Steven K. Hill:

Layout & Graphic Design

Contact us at: tstnews@yahoo.com
www.tstnews.net