

THE SILENT TREATMENT

ALL THE NEWS FIT TO HEAR • VOLUME 07 • NUMBER 04 • JULY/AUG 2013

INTOLERANCE

HITS THEATER CIRCUIT IN 2013

Cohen Film Collection is proud to announce the release of its 2K restoration of the D.W. Griffith masterwork *Intolerance* (1916). Completed at Modern Videofilm in Los Angeles, and utilizing three 35mm negatives, this restoration replicates the director's last cut of the film, as well as the tinting found in that version. The restoration features a magnificent orchestral score (in 5.1 surround sound) composed by Carl Davis conducting the Luxembourg Radio Symphony Orchestra.

Intolerance has enjoyed a wildly successful run at New York's Film Forum, having had its initial 7 day run in early August extended by 11 additional days that received notices in The New York Times, The Village Voice,

and The New Yorker. Future theatrical engagements includes stops in Los Angeles at the American Cinematheque on September 22nd, the Detroit Institute of Art on September 27th – 29th, the Castro Theater in San Francisco on October 5th, and The Gene Siskel Film Center in Chicago on October 5th.

In November, Cohen will release a deluxe home video set available on DVD and Blu-Ray that includes the new restoration of *Intolerance* along with bonus features of the Griffith films *The Mother and The Law* (1919) and *The Fall of Babylon* (1919).

The bonus features are presented in HD and accompanied by newly commissioned scores from The Mont Alto Motion Picture Orchestra. A new fea-

turette about *Intolerance* with Kevin Brownlow, as well as new essays on the topic are also among the mix. (<http://cohenmedia.net/>)

POLITA: THE 3-D MUSICAL

WARSAW, POLAND. *Polita* is a twenty-first century dramatic and musical performance based on the biography of one of the biggest stars of world cinema—Pola Negri.

Director Janusz Jozefowicz will use a 3-D stereoscopic technique on a 22 meter wide screen where virtual scenery and virtual actors partner the artists playing live. Natasza Urbańska (as Pola) plays alongside fellow contemporaries as Ernst Lubitch, Sarah Bernhardt, Charlie Chaplin, Gloria Swanson and Rudolph Valentino.



The combination of virtual scenery with real props, and an unlimited number of actors and extras, creates the possibility of scenes that theater and revue directors could only previously dream of. Audiences will see scenes of a full-scale Ziegfeld's follies revue, a torch lit Fascist parade (in which Pola and Goebbels have a conversation), the New York Stock Exchange on Wall Street when the Great Depression began in 1929, and Pola in the title role on a flying carpet in a dream *Sumrun* scene.

The material for the 3D projection was prepared by Platige Image

TST



which produced the Oscar-nominated short film *The Cathedral* by Tomek Baginski and the score for **Polita** is by Janusz Stoklosa written for a symphony orchestra, mixed choir, electronic music, dance combos and soloists. Upcoming performances of this extravaganza take place October 22nd and 23rd, 2013, at Studio Boffo. (<http://studiobuffo.com.pl>)

A Monument for "Fearless Flo"

PORTLAND, OR. Florence La Badie was one of the most important and popular actresses of the early motion picture era. She appeared in over 180 silent films from 1911 through 1917 for the Thanhouser studio based in New Rochelle, New York. A daredevil at heart, she was known as "Fearless Flo" for taking risks and performing many of her own stunts.

Tragically, on October 13, 1917, she succumbed to injuries suffered in an automobile accident, making her the first major "movie star" to die at the zenith of her popularity and was buried in an unmarked grave at the Green-Wood Cemetery on October 17, 1917.

Almost 100 years have passed since her untimely death, but her popularity remains high and is surging on social media. Through the cooperation of Thanhouser Company Film Preservation, Inc. and the Green-Wood Historic Fund, a cam-

paign is being launched with the goal to raise funds to install a monument to commemorate her historic career. Thanks to the generous support of the Green-Wood Historic Fund, all contributions will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$2,000. Film fans, historians, and the public at large are encouraged to contribute to the effort.

Donors will receive a keepsake gift featuring Florence to recognize their support to the memorial campaign, plus e-mail updates for a celebration of life during the installation of Florence's memorial, currently targeted for the spring of 2014.



Florence La Badie

Contributions to the Florence La Badie Memorial Fund may be made through Thanhouser Company Film Preservation, Inc. (www.thanouser.org) or The Green-Wood Historic Fund (www.green-wood.com). The campaign will accept donations through October 13, 2013.

HALLOWEEN with PEACHERINE

Lumberton, NC. **The Carolina Civic Center Historic Theater** first opened in 1928 as a silent film and vaudeville house, and now it will present a special program acknowl-

edging its historic roots. The **Peacherine Ragtime Orchestra** will accompany a collection of classic silent films including three that fit in with the Halloween-themed night at the Civic Center on October 26th, 2013.



Peacherine was founded at the University of Maryland in 2010 and uses original musical scores and antique instruments to play early American Ragtime music. Selections from their Halloween program includes Ragtime pieces as *More Candy* (1917), *The Demon Rag* (1912), and *The Black Cat Rag* (1905) interspersed with some spook inspired silent comedies as *The Haunted House* with Buster Keaton and *Haunted Spooks* with Harold Lloyd along with indispensable favorites like *The Convict* with Charlie Chaplin. (*Complete program details at www.carolinaciviccenter.com*)

TST SPOTLIGHT

The Curious Case of Louis Le Prince

By Patrick Samuel (*excerpted article*)

The name Louis Aimé Augustin Le Prince might not be one you are immediately familiar with, but believe me when I say we have a lot to be thankful to this pioneering filmmaker for.

Born in Metz, France on August 28th, 1841 he was an inventor

with a background in photography and chemistry. After serving in the Franco-Prussian War, Louis returned to Britain where he had been living with his wife, Lizzie Whitley, and together they set up an art school in Park Square, Leeds.

In 1881 they moved to America where Lizzie got a job with the New York Institute for the Deaf and where Louis began experimenting with moving picture machines.

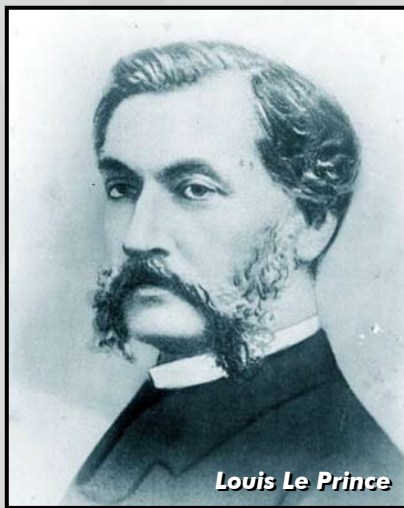
His breakthrough came on October 14th, 1888 when he managed to record a moving piece of film. Lasting only 2.11 seconds, the scene captures Adolphe Le Prince (Louis' son), and Sarah Robinson Whitley (Louis' mother-in-law)

walking around in a garden. Shot at 12 frames per second in Roundhay, Leeds, it's a film of remarkable historical and technological importance. As a window back in time we get a glimpse of life in the late 19th century with a British middle-class family. As they walk in circles, remaining in the picture's frame, they can be seen laughing and talking to each other. What we see is not a set and figures dressed in costumes—this really is 1888.

Recorded on Eastman Kodak paper base photographic film from 1885 through Louis's single-lens combination camera-projector, the filmstrip is thought to be not only the oldest surviving piece of film, but also the first. If this is the case, then his *Roundhay Garden Scene* predates anything by Thomas Edison or the Lumière Brothers, and surely it would have been documented and widely known-

-and that's exactly why I call it "the curious case."

Although Louis applied for several patents for his work in Britain, France, and America, financial difficulties would get the better of him and he packed up in 1890 to return to his wife in America. In the late summer of that year, after visiting in France with friends, Louis was last seen boarding a train from Bourges to Dijon, where his brother lived. He was never seen again. Any hopes he had of being recognised as the true father of the motion picture were lost as he vanished before he was able to patent the new camera in Britain and demonstrate its operation in America.



Louis Le Prince

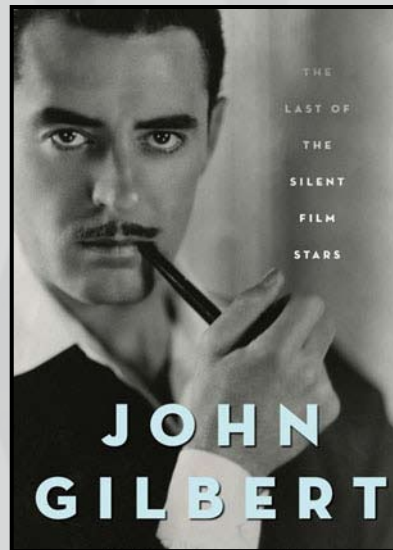
However, his work survives. Along with *Roundhay Garden Scene*, there's also *Leeds Bridge*, a 6-frame sequence in which Louis filmed the passing traffic on Leeds Bridge from an ironmongers shop. There's also *Man Walking Around A Corner* and a 19-frame sequence called *Accordion Player* which shows Adolphe Le Prince playing a diatonic button accordion.

They are short, grainy, and at first glance might not seem much, but these are the oldest known films we have, if not the first. Whether or not Louis met with foul play over a patent war with Edison is still up for debate, and his body was never recovered. Whatever the case might be, it certainly is a curious one. (*Full article and 1888 clip at <http://staticmass.net/early-films-and-cinema/the-curious-case-of-louis-aime-augustin-le-prince/>*)

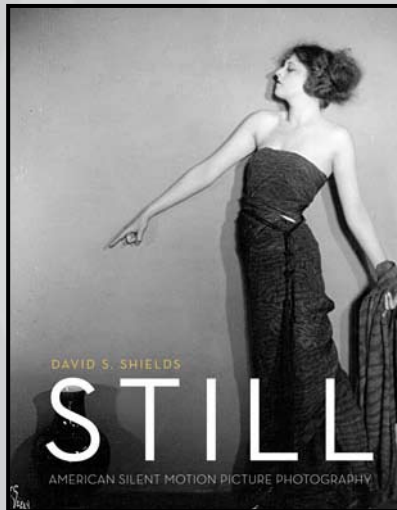
TST BOOKCORNER

JOHN GILBERT: LAST OF THE SILENT FILM STARS

Charming and classically handsome, John Gilbert (1897–1936) was among the world's most recognizable actors during the silent era. He was a wild, swashbuckling figure on screen and off, and accounts of his life have focused on his high-profile romances with Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich, his legendary conflicts with Louis B. Mayer, his four tumultuous marriages, and his swift decline after the introduction of talkies. Many myths have developed around the larger-than-life star in the eighty years since his untimely death, but this definitive biography sets the record straight.



Biographer Eve Golden separates fact from fiction in this comprehensive and generously illustrated book and debunks some of the most pernicious rumors about the actor, including the oft-repeated myth that he had a high-pitched, squeaky voice that ruined his career. (www.kentucky-press.com)



STILL:
AMERICAN SILENT MOTION
PICTURE PHOTOGRAPHY

By David S. Shields

While the American silent movie was one of the most significant popular art forms of the modern age, it is also one that is largely lost to us, as more than eighty percent of silent films have disappeared. We now know about many of these cinematic masterpieces only from the collections of still portraits and production photographs that were originally created for publicity and reference. Capturing the beauty, horror, and moodiness of silent motion pictures, these images are remarkable pieces of art in their own right.

Exploring the work of over sixty camera artists, *Still* recovers the stories of the photographers who descended on early Hollywood, and the stars and starlets who sat for them between 1908 and 1928. Focusing on the most culturally influential types of photographs—the performer portrait and the scene still—Shields follows these artists as they devised the poses that newspapers and magazines would bring to American society. (<http://press.uchicago.edu>)

HOME ENTERTAINMENT

THE BIG PARADE

The highest-grossing silent film of all time, as well as the first realistic war drama, *The Big Parade* tells the harrowing story of a young man's (John Gilbert) front-line experiences in World War I. This Blu-ray edition marks the first North American home video release of this seminal picture since the 1990s. It's been mastered from a new 4K high-definition video transfer, based on the Thames Television presentation edition produced by Kevin Brownlow and David Gill, with an orchestral score composed by Carl Davis.



The Big Parade

Supplemental material includes a 64-page DigiBook with comprehensive notes by historian Kevin Brownlow; Audio Commentary by Historian Jeffrey Vance featuring director King Vidor audio clips; the documentary *The Men Who Made the Movies: King Vidor*, and the short subject *1925 Studio Tour*. (amazon.com)

LOST AND FOUND:
AMERICAN TREASURES FROM THE
NEW ZEALAND FILM ARCHIVE

Treasures New Zealand draws from the extraordinary cache of nitrate prints safeguarded in New Zealand for nearly a century and pre-

served through a groundbreaking international partnership led by the National Film Preservation Foundation. None of these films have been seen before on video; in fact, none were thought to exist just four years ago.



The 3-1/4 hour DVD, playable worldwide, includes John Ford's *Upstream* (1927) and a preview for his lost feature *Strong Boy* (1929); 3 reels from the first surviving feature credited to Alfred Hitchcock (as assistant director, art director, writer, and editor) *The White Shadow* (1924); *Won in a Cupboard* (1914), the first surviving film directed by and starring Mabel Normand; and *The Love Charm* (1928), a South Seas romance filmed in two-color Technicolor by Ray Rennahan and written by Duncan Renaldo (the "Cisco Kid").

Treasures New Zealand includes a 56-page illustrated catalog with forewords by Leonard Maltin and Chris Finlayson; program notes by Scott Simmon and David Sterritt; and new music created by Michael D. Mortilla and Donald Sosin. (www.filmpreservation.org)

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