

THE SILENT TREATMENT

ALL THE NEWS FIT TO HEAR • VOLUME 07 • NUMBER 05 • SEP/OCT 2013

THE ESSANAY STUDIOS RESTORATION & REUSE PROJECT



CHICAGO, IL. The studio that once numbered Charlie Chaplin, Gloria Swanson, G.M. Anderson, and Francis X. Bushman among its stars has embarked on a historic comeback.

The **Essanay Studios Restoration and Reuse Project** will enhance the life of the Uptown Community and the life of St. Augustine College, which owns the Essanay Studio Complex and uses it for classes, meetings, and other activities related to their educational mission.

This project includes the portion of the 1333 West Argyle Street building which contains the Charlie Chaplin Auditorium/Studio A and adjacent areas. Additionally, the restoration of the terra cotta façade on 1345 West Argyle Street is included in this project, along with streetscaping for the entire length of the 1333–1345 West Argyle Street Complex.

The restored buildings will help pave the way for **The Essanay Centers for Early Film & Cultural Performance**, which will use the historic facilities of the Essanay Film

Manufacturing Company to educate, inform, and entertain visitors and local residents. This entity will create and sustain the multicultural use of the restored facilities for film, theatre, dance, and other performance and visual arts. It will also serve as a historical repository of archival materials, references, and artifacts established through strategic partnerships with the Essanay Silent Film Museum in Niles, CA, private archives, and other sources.



Bushman, Chaplin & Anderson

In order to raise the funds needed to restore and renovate the space, Essanay has embarked on a campaign to raise money through grants, an In-

diegogo campaign, a Gala event, and donations from fans directly through its website. Fans can visit the official site at www.essanaystudios.org to learn more or make a donation. Fans can also connect with the studio on Twitter (www.twitter.com/essanaystudios) or Facebook (www.facebook.com/essanaystudios).

MURNAU MIXES WITH MOZART IN THE MAGIC FLUTE

LOS ANGELES, CA. A celebration of true love conquering all, **The Magic Flute** transports us into an enchanted world where good faces the forces of darkness.



Under the masterful baton of James Conlon, LA Opera presents the first U.S. performances of a highly inventive staging created by director Barrie Kosky in combination with the British theatre group **1927**, whose humorous shows have thrilled audiences all over the world with their interaction between film animation and live-performing actors.

At the heart of **1927's** practice is the desire to create dynamic and inno-



vative live theatre. The company has developed an approach to combining the mediums of film, performance and music to great effect, pushing the forms the company works in to new and exciting places. Thusly, a delicate marriage of disparate elements have been joined, making them work in harmony to create a unique theatrical experience.

Packed with exquisite singing and stage wizardry, Mozart's delightful blend of high comedy and serious drama will enchant young and old alike. **The Magic Flute** runs November 23rd – December 15th, 2013. (www.laopera.com)

GAMBLE IN SOULS: 28mm Show at EPFC

ECHO PARK, CA. Join the **Echo Park Film Center** on December 14th, 2013 at 8:00 PM for an extremely rare silent film presentation with the 28mm screening of **Gamble In Souls** (1916), starring William Desmond and produced by Thomas Ince. This could quite possibly be the very first time that a feature length film has been projected continuously on 28mm since it was in residential use during the 1910s.

The 28mm film gauge was first introduced by the Pathé Film Company in 1912 under the name Pathé Kok. Geared toward the upscale home market, 28mm utilized diac-

etate film stock rather than the flammable nitrate then commonly used in 35mm prints.

Pathé in France, and later Pathéscope and Victor in the USA, printed reduction prints (usually, although not always, abridged) of popular films for home rental, designed to be used in Pathéscope Premier or Victor projectors. World War I stopped European production of 28mm, but the process continued on in North America into the early 1930's.

Utilizing two antique Pathéscope Premier projectors (both circa 1918), a nearly 100 year old film print will be projected switching between the two machines. Live musical accompaniment will be provided by Michael Mortilla.



Gamble In Souls

(www.echoparkfilmcenter.org)

1911 MARY PICKFORD FILM FOUND

The only copy of a 1911 Mary Pickford movie that marked a turning point in the silent film star's career, has been restored by the Library of Congress after its discovery by a carpenter in a New Hampshire barn.

Titled **Their First Misunderstanding**, the film is the first for which Pickford was given screen credit in the advertising materials; before that, movie studios did not give actors credit in order to keep their wages low, said Pickford scholar Christel Schmidt, editor of **Mary Pickford: Queen of the Movies**.

Peter Massie, who discovered the film along with other vintage reels in

a barn he was tearing down in 2006, donated the films to Keene State College, and professor Larry Benaquist has led the effort to identify and restore them.



Their First Misunderstanding

The 10-minute comedy-drama stars Pickford and her first husband, Owen Moore, as newlyweds having their first argument. The first minute or so was destroyed, but the rest was in remarkably good condition, Benaquist said. (<http://thecelebritycafe.com/feature/2013/09/mary-pickford-film-their-first-misunderstanding-found-new-hampshire-barn-be-screened>)

Streaming Silents on Flicker Alley Website

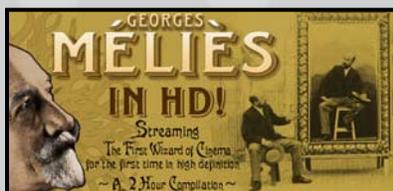
The changing face of the home-video market has long been of particular interest to Flicker Alley, with their mission being to bring film history to new audiences through various delivery methods.

With this in mind, Flicker Alley is now offering specialized digital content directly to consumers from their own website, www.flickeralley.com. Thanks in large part to their web-building partners Media Devils and vBrick, this site not only supports their growing DVD/Blu-ray catalog, but also adds an entire infrastructure devoted to high-quality streaming video rentals.

New developments in technology have allowed a multitude of exciting features to the site. To start, there's **George Méliès in HD**, the first-ever

streaming version of the fantastic films featured in the popular box set, **George Méliès: First Wizard of Cinema.**

There's also **Century City: Films From 100 Years Ago**, which offers users the chance to stream a rare 1913 or 1914 film each and every month. Adding more user interactivity to the website, members can watch streaming titles from their computer, internet-enabled television, and most mobile devices.



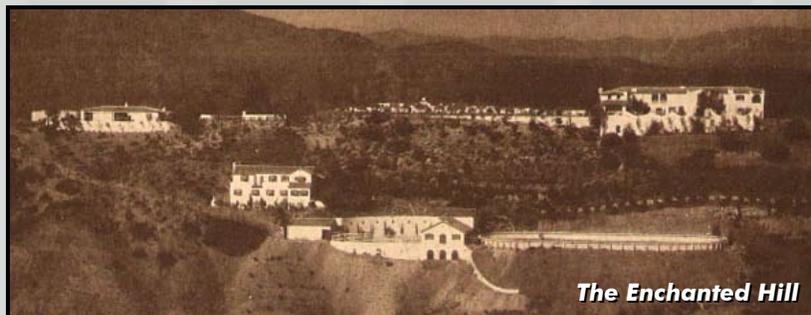
The entire process is a huge investment for Flicker Alley, but as a small business in home-video publishing, they're hoping to help establish a new landscape in which to experience cinematic history for years to come.

LOST HOLLYWOOD: The Enchanted Hill of Fred Thomson & Frances Marion

By Steve Vaught (excerpted article)

Fred Thomson and Frances Marion were counted among Cineland's most popular couples during the ten years they spent together in the heady twenties before their fairy tale existence was shattered by Fred's tragic death on Christmas Day, 1928.

Destiny brought them together in the form of a broken leg—Fred's "war wound" picked up not on the battlefield, but in an overly spirited football game at Camp Kearney near San Diego. Fred, an ordained Presbyterian minister, had joined the U.S. Army upon America's entry into the First World War, serving as a chaplain with the 143rd Field Artillery. As fate would have it, the 143rd was



"adopted" by Mary Pickford as their godmother—and while Fred was laid up at hospital, Mary appeared on a visit with her very good friend and collaborator Frances Marion in tow.

There was an immediate physical and spiritual attraction between the two, and within ten days they were already making arrangements to be married. Even a world war could not hinder their romance: while Fred was quickly shipped out to France with the 143rd, Frances was not far behind, heading overseas as a war correspondent. No sooner had the Armistice been signed, the pair married at the Edouard VII Hotel in Paris on November 19th, 1918.

With his movie star good-looks and high-powered Hollywood connections, it was inevitable that Fred would enter the movies. Mary and Frances gave him a trial run in *The Love Light* (1921), a Mary Pickford vehicle written and directed by Frances with Fred playing, ironically, a villain. A few more picture appearances followed before he hit his stride as a cowboy star with his trusty steed Silver King.

By this time, the couple had built "the largest house on the highest hill in Beverly Hills." According to Frances, their plans started out innocently enough with the idea of a little hacienda-style farmhouse on four acres they purchased in the hills at \$1,500 an acre. But then Fred began buying more horses—after all, Silver King needed doubles, and lots of them.

This necessitated a much bigger

estate than originally planned, and the job was turned over to a specialist in the Spanish Hacienda type home the Thomsons were planning. Architect Wallace Neff transformed the Thomsons' dreams into a kingdom, and on its completion in 1925, the Thomsons bestowed the dreamy name of "The Enchanted Hill" upon their fantastical new estate at the end of Angelo Drive. By now the estate had expanded to fifteen acres and would ultimately grow to 120.

Although newly built, The Enchanted Hill looked as if it had been in place for a century thanks to Neff's sensitive and skilled design—an Andalusian Cortijo magically transported from the sunny hills of Spain to the sunny hills of Southern California. The Enchanted Hill was built for entertaining, and Fred and Frances opened the home up regularly for their wide circle of friends.



Anyone visiting The Enchanted Hill and seeing this beautiful and successful couple so deeply in love could only imagine a long "happily ever after" for the two. But ten days before Christmas 1928, as the couple

gazed at the twinkling lights of Beverly Hills far down in the distance, Frances noticed her husband had a slight limp and asked him if the leg he broke the previous year was troubling him. "No," he replied. He died on Christmas Day at age 38 in his wife's arms, a victim of medical misdiagnosis with tetanus believed by doctors to be a gallbladder problem.



Within a few weeks, the grief-stricken Frances put the estate up for sale, and it changed hands for a reported \$540,000 in cash to Lejene S. Barnes, president of the Elbe Oil Land Development Company. By 1945, the property had passed to Paul Kollsman, who maintained The Enchanted Hill for the next 4 decades.

After his death in 1982, Kollsman's widow remained on the estate until 1997 when she sold it to Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen, who then quickly ordered the entire Enchanted Hill and its outbuildings to be bulldozed into oblivion. More than a decade later, it sits as a vacant, weed-covered lot. (Full article: <http://paradiseleased.wordpress.com/2011/09/05/lost-hollywood-the-enchanted-hill-of-fred-thomson-and-frances-marion>)

TST BOOKCORNER

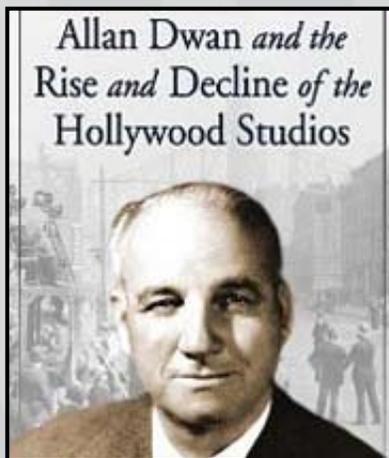
ALLAN DWAN AND THE RISE AND DECLINE OF THE HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS

By Frederic Lombardi

It could be said that the career of Canadian-born film director Al-

lan Dwan (1885-1981) began at the dawn of the American motion picture industry. Originally a scriptwriter, Dwan became a director purely by accident, and his problem-solving skills propelled him to the top of his profession. He achieved success with numerous silent film performers, most spectacularly with Douglas Fairbanks Sr. and Gloria Swanson, and later with such legendary stars as Shirley Temple and John Wayne.

Though his star waned in the sound era, Dwan managed to survive through pluck and ingenuity. Considering himself better off without the fame he enjoyed during the silent era, he went on to do some of his best work for second-echelon studios and independent producers.

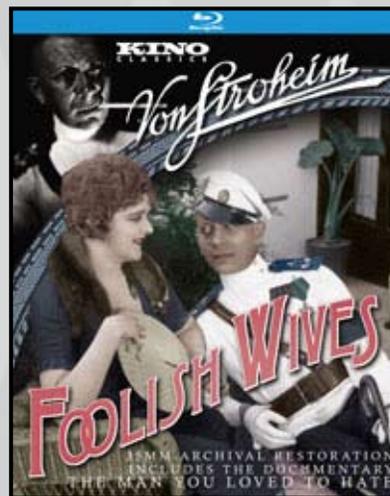


Rich in detail in its nearly 400 pages, and with more than 150 photographs, this book presents a thorough examination of Allan Dwan that separates myth from truth in his life and films. (www.mcfarlandpub.com)

HOME ENTERTAINMENT

FOOLISH WIVES

As artistically brilliant as it is gleefully perverse, *Foolish Wives* is Erich von Stroheim's epic-scale account of an American diplomat's wife



who falls under the spell of a phony Russian Count. With his trademark eye for visual metaphor and gritty detail, von Stroheim infuses the aristocratic splendor of Monte Carlo (rebuilt in all its majesty on the Universal backlot) with an air of moral depravity. The result is a Grimm's fairy tale romance that is no less fascinating today than it was 90 years ago.

This Blu-Ray edition is mastered in HD from an archival 35mm print of the 1972 AFI Arthur Lennig restoration and includes the original 1922 Sigmund Romberg score performed by Rodney Sauer; plus additional material as the 1979 documentary *The Man You Loved to Hate* newly remastered in HD from the original negative; audio commentary by von Stroheim biographer Richard Kozarski; and audio interview clips of Valerie von Stroheim and Paul Kohner. (www.kinolorber.com)

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