

THE SILENT TREATMENT

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JÉRÔME SEYDOUX-PATHÉ FOUNDATION Opens New Cinema History Centre



By Rosslyn Hyams (Excerpted Article, 09/05/14)

PARIS, FRANCE. A new hub of cinema history has opened in Paris, housed in a building designed by world-famous architect, Renzo Piano. Silent films will top the bill at the **Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé Foundation**, which aims to show the development of cinema through the history of the Pathé film company.

If you are standing on the Avenue des Gobelins, the 2,200 square-metre building, situated on the site of a disused cinema and theatre, gives the impression that a gigantic glass slug is going to burst through the façade, which was decorated by the great French sculptor Auguste Rodin in the 19th century.

“It wasn’t designed as an animal but, as work on developing the form progressed, some kind of an organic shape emerged which is better matched to the site than a square building,” explains Torsten Sahlmann, who steered

the architectural project for the Renzo Piano practice. “The dimensions are good for this kind of intimate building.”

Businessman Jérôme Seydoux bought Pathé in 1990. The firm, now Gaumont-Pathé, is the only film industry pioneer in the world still operating and owns a treasure of archival material, useful for researchers at all levels. The foundation, which opened on September 10th, will trace cinema history through the history of Pathé, which was established in 1896 by



Emile and Charles Pathé and was the biggest film company in the world until World War I.

Its distinctive logo, a crowing cockerel, is still visible over the entrance to the old Pathé studios - since converted into the renowned film school, Fémis, in Montmartre - where newsreels and feature films were made.

Sophie Seydoux, wife of Jérôme, chairs the Foundation Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé and is the force behind it. “We are lucky to have fantastic archives,” she says. “We kept them from day one. The accounting and board meeting papers, every single paper from day one.”

One floor of the building is devoted to a collection of machines, including the first phonographs sold by Pathé and the first cameras and film projectors that helped build the company’s reputation the world over.



The earliest private films, made by middle-class French holiday-makers at the turn of the 20th century, flicker on the walls projected by 21st-century equipment.

Children’s groups can handle a very old camera and film reels, and with the help of a tablet, they can see how the camera works inside.

“Pathé was the first to make cinema into an international industry,” says cinema historian Anne Gourdet-Marès, who is in charge of the equip-

ment section. “Pathé was a visionary, surrounding himself with engineers who could turn his ideas into equipment, like the Pathéscope or the Pathé Baby which dates from 1922. The initial studies for this camera were developed secretly with English engineers.”

One of the draws of the Foundation, designed by the same architect who designed The Shard in London and the New York Times newspaper building, is its cozy 68 seat screening hall, equipped with two 35mm projectors and a digital projector. A black piano at the foot of the screen is not just for show—the silent film programme is accompanied, as it was in the days before the talkies, by pianists who improvise accompaniment to the films. (<http://www.english.rfi.fr/culture/20140905-pathe-opens-new-cinema-history-centre-paris>) (Website: <http://fondation-jeromeseydoux-pathe.com>).

HAUNTED SCREENS: German Cinema in the 1920s

LOS ANGELES, CA. The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), in collaboration with La Cinémathèque Française, presents **Haunted Screens: German Cinema in the 1920s**, an exhibition that explores the height of German Expressionist film history through an array of film clips, photographs and posters—documenting 25 films, 20 artists, and 14 directors.



Die Nibelungen

German cinema in the 1920s—the Weimar cultural period between World War I and World War II—was the first self-conscious art cinema, influencing filmmakers throughout the world in its own time and continuing to inspire artists today.



Metropolis set sketch

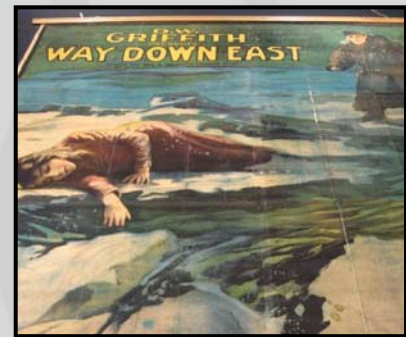
The Expressionist movement, which began in the early 1900s and proliferated through painting, photography, theater, literature, and architecture, resurfaced in silent film during the 1920s. In a rejection of realist traditions, Expressionism sought to communicate a subjective, emotional reality through stylized abstraction. Within the cinematic realm, filmmakers employed geometrically distorted set designs, chiaroscuro lighting, and innovative camera angles to express complex psychological states.

Haunted Screens, which runs from September 2014 through April 2015, features roughly 25 films that are grouped by theme within one of five sections, loosely arranged in chronological order: Madness and Magic; Myths and Legends; Cities and Streets; Machines and Murderers; and a sub-section which gathered drawings from a wide variety of films using the stairway as a visual and psychological motif. There are two darkened tunnel areas within the exhibition in which excerpts from the featured films will be projected to complement the content of the galleries. (<http://www.lacma.org/art/exhibition/haunted-screens-german-cinema-1920s>)

WAY DOWN EAST Poster Conservation Project

The **George Eastman House Photo Finish 5K** returns to the streets for its fourth year on Saturday, September 27th, to raise funds for a variety of non-profit causes. In association with this annual event, the Moving Image Department at George Eastman House is continuing fundraising efforts for conservation treatment of a 6-sheet movie poster for D.W. Griffith’s *Way Down East*. Produced in 1920, the film stars Lillian Gish and Richard Barthelmess and includes a climactic rescue on the ice floes of Connecticut.

The conservation project fundraiser was launched in 2013 with the goal of raising \$4,600 to restore this original poster, and from that amount, \$945 was pledged. The deadline to meet the remaining fundraising goal of \$3,655 is October 27, 2014.



The poster is very large and fragile, measuring 80” x 80”. It is currently backed with cloth, mounted on wooden dowels, and rolled. The poster needs to be removed from the dowels, washed, removed from the cloth, and backed onto Japanese paper and cotton muslin to flatten and strengthen it. Some re-touching will be done to areas of image loss. (<https://www.crowdrise.com/mid-poster/fundraiser/nancykauffman>)

LONDON SYMPHONY:
A Brand New Silent Film about the
Culture and Diversity of London

London Symphony is a poetic journey through the city of London, exploring its vast diversity of culture and religion through its various modes of transportation. It is both a cultural snapshot and a creative record of London as it stands today. The point is not only to immortalise the city, but also to celebrate its community and diversity.

The new film is being made in the style of a silent City Symphony and is influenced by the work of the Soviet Montage Theorists, thus placing *London Symphony* within the long lineage of Soviet-influenced British documentary filmmaking which began with John Grierson and the EMB and GPO Film Units. Specific influences include: *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929, dir: Dziga Vertov), *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* (1927, dir: Walter Ruttmann), *Rain* (1929, dir: Joris Ivens), *Drifters* (1929, dir: John Grierson), *Night Mail* (1936, dir: Harry Watt and Basil Wright), *Koyaanisqatsi* (1983, dir: Godfrey Reggio), the photography of Alexander Rodchenko, the films and theories of Sergei Eisenstein and Vsevolod Pudovkin, and the music of Sergei Prokofiev, Dmitri Shostakovich and Benjamin Britten.



The film is meant neither as a pastiche nor a parody, but rather as

a modern take on a particular aspect of silent cinema. A Crowdfunding Campaign launched on September 16th, 2014 to help complete the project. The filmmakers have been developing *London Symphony* since the beginning of the year and are now ready to enter production (www.londonsymphfilm.com)

Too Much Johnson
Now Streaming on NFPF Website

In 2013 the National Film Preservation Foundation, George Eastman House, the Cineteca del Friuli, and Cinemazero announced the recovery of Orson Welles's long-lost *Too Much Johnson* (1938), filmed two years before the celebrated American director went to Hollywood to make *Citizen Kane* (1941).



As a member of the Mercury Theatre, Welles created silent comedy shorts starring Joseph Cotten, Arlene Francis, and Ruth Ford for the Theatre's innovative 1938 revival of the 19th-century farce by William Gillette. Never finished, the films did not screen publicly and took on legendary status when the single known print reportedly burned.

An abandoned 35mm nitrate work print of *Too Much Johnson*, found in a warehouse in Pordenone, Italy, was salvaged by Cinemazero, the film exhibition organization that partners with the Cineteca del Friuli to present the city's annual silent film

festival. Given the importance of *Too Much Johnson* for American stage and film history, the two organizations invited Eastman House and the NFPF to work with them to preserve the film. Eastman House directed the preservation to 35mm film, which was funded through the NFPF, and hosted the American premiere on October 16, in Rochester, New York.

While none of the three parts of *Too Much Johnson* reached final cut, the surviving work print reveals a master in the making. The longest and most finished piece, the act 1 prologue, shows the philandering Billings (Joseph Cotten), who has been womanizing under the name of Johnson, chased at breakneck speed across Manhattan by a wronged husband. Two shorter segments establish the death of Billings' friend in Cuba and the complications caused when too many Johnsons turn up there. (Stream or download at: www.film-preservation.org/preserved-films/mercury-theatre-project)

TST BOOKCORNER

Pola Negri:
Hollywood's First Femme Fatale

Pola Negri (1897–1987) rose from an impoverished childhood in Warsaw, Poland, to become one of early Hollywood's greatest stars. After tuberculosis ended her career as a ballerina in 1912, she turned to acting and worked under legendary directors Max Reinhardt and Ernst Lubitsch in Germany. Negri preceded Lubitsch to Hollywood, where she quickly became a fan favorite thanks to her beauty, talent, and diva personality. Known for her alluring sexuality and biting artistic edge, she starred in more than sixty films and defined the image of the cinematic femme fatale.

Author Mariusz Kotowski brings the screen siren's story to English-



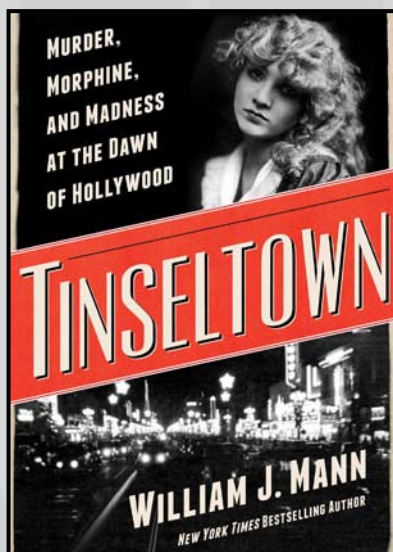
speaking audiences for the first time in this fascinating biography. At the height of her fame, Negri often portrayed exotic and mysterious temptresses, headlining in such successes as *The Spanish Dancer* (1923) and *Forbidden Paradise* (1924), before returning to Europe in the 1930s. The devastating effects of World War II soon drove her back to the United States, where she starred in *Hi Diddle Diddle* (1943) and pursued her vaudeville career before retiring from the entertainment industry. (www.kentuckypress.com)

Tinseltown: Murder, Morphine, and Madness at the Dawn of Hollywood

By 1920, the movies had become America's new favorite pastime, and one of the nation's largest industries. Never before had a medium possessed such power to influence, yet Hollywood's glittering ascendancy was threatened by a string of headline-grabbing tragedies—including the murder of director William Desmond Taylor, a legendary crime that has remained unsolved until now.

Bestselling Hollywood chronicler William J. Mann draws on a rich host of sources, including recently released FBI files, to unpack the

story of the enigmatic Taylor and the diverse cast that surrounded him—including three beautiful, ambitious actresses; a grasping stage mother; a devoted valet; and a gang of two-bit thugs—any of whom might have fired the fatal bullet. Overseeing this entire landscape of intrigue was Adolph Zukor, the brilliant and ruthless founder of Paramount, locked in a struggle for control of the industry and desperate to conceal the truth about the crime. Along the way, Mann brings to life Los Angeles in the Roaring Twenties—a dangerous place where the powerful could still run afoul of the desperate.



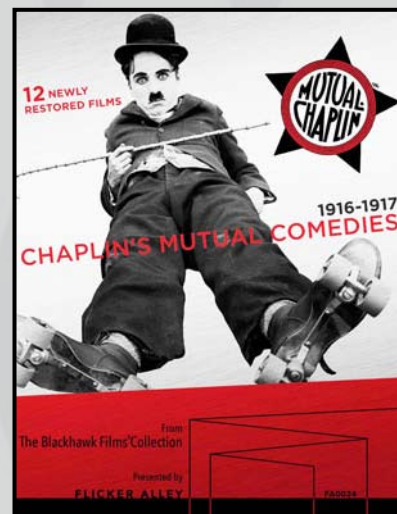
A true story recreated with the suspense of a novel, **Tinseltown** is the work of a storyteller at the peak of his powers—and the solution to a crime that has stumped detectives and historians for nearly a century. (www.harpercollins.com)

HOME ENTERTAINMENT

Chaplin's Mutual Comedies

Flicker Alley and The Blackhawk Films® Collection are proud to commemorate the 100th anniversary of

the birth of the Little Tramp with the premiere of Chaplin's Mutual Comedies, a 5-disc Blu-ray/DVD box set, presented for a limited time in a collector's edition SteelBook case.



The collection features 12 newly restored films all scanned from original 35mm prints gathered from archives all over the world, then digitally assembled and restored. A collaborative effort of Lobster Films in Paris and L Immagine Ritrovata in Bologna, Italy, each film offers the option of either improvised piano accompaniment or a full orchestral score. Among the many well-known composers and musicians featured are Eric Beheim, Neil Brand, Timothy Brock, Antonio Coppola, Carl Davis, Stephen Horne, Robert Israel, the Mont Alto Motion Picture Orchestra, Maud Nelissen, Donald Sosin, & Gabriel Thibaudeau. (flickeralley.com)

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