

# THE SILENT TREATMENT

ALL THE NEWS FIT TO HEAR • VOLUME 08 • NUMBER 05 • NOV/DEC 2014



## IN GLORIOUS TECHNICOLOR

ROCHESTER, NY. From January 24, 2015 through April 26, 2015 at George Eastman House, **In Glorious Technicolor** celebrates the vivid 100 year history of one of the most widely recognized names in the American film industry—a company whose revolutionary motion picture color process enabled such Hollywood masterpieces as *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), *Gone With the Wind* (1939) and *Singin' In the Rain* (1952). Composed of stunning visual displays, this exhibition mixes original artifacts and projected video clips to explore Technicolor's wide ranging impact on the form and content of cinema, and draws heavily from the vast Technicolor Corporate Archive now held at GEH.

Highlights will include the company's evolving camera technology, from its first modest handmade camera from 1916, through to the massive Technirama widescreen system of the 1950s. Original costumes, production designs, posters and photographs will document how color was used creatively and presented to the public, while the vibrant dyes used

to create Technicolor's incomparable "look" will shed light on the science behind the process. Rare tests from Douglas Fairbanks's *The Black Pirate* (1926), behind-the-scenes stills from the Errol Flynn's *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938), and home movies from the set of *The African Queen* (1951) will reveal the stars and filmmakers most associated with color. Additionally, the exhibition will honor the achievements of Academy Award-winning cinematographers Ray Rennahan and Jack Cardiff, as well as Technicolor's often overlooked engineers, whose work remained out of the limelight.



**In Glorious Technicolor** is one of several events George Eastman House will be hosting in 2015 to mark Technicolor's centenary. In conjunction with the exhibition, the museum will publish **The Dawn of Technicolor**, the first authoritative study of Technicolor's early years, and the Dryden Theatre will present a special program of Technicolor films, including many rare dye-transfer film prints. An interactive, multi-platform "Technicolor 100" website, scheduled to launch on the same day the exhibition opens, will allow users to explore artifacts from the museum's collections and learn about the history of Technicolor's advanced camera and printing processes which enabled greater creative options for filmmakers over its 100-year history. (Website, effective 01/24/2015: [eastmanhouse.org/technicolor100](http://eastmanhouse.org/technicolor100))

## SHERLOCK HOLMES Lost Film found in France

SAN FRANCISCO, CA. The silent film version of *Sherlock Holmes* starring William Gillette has been found. Long considered lost since its first release, the Gillette film is a vital missing link in the history of Holmes on screen. A nitrate dupe negative of the picture was found in the vaults of the Cinémathèque Française. Originally assembled for French distribution, the negative contains French flash titles and color annotations.

By the time the film was made in 1916, Gillette had been established as the world's foremost interpreter of Holmes on stage. He gave his face and manner to the detective and inspired the classic illustrations of Frederic Dorr Steele. Dynamic but calm, he played Holmes in the colorful attire-bent-stemmed briar, ornate

dressing gown, and deerstalker cap—that has been identified ever since with the character.

The newly found Essanay production is not only Gillette's sole surviving appearance as Holmes, it is also the only film Gillette ever made, providing a unique opportunity to view the work of a major American actor in the legendary role that he wrote for himself. The film faithfully retains the play's famous set pieces—Holmes's encounter with Professor Moriarty, his daring escape from the Stepney Gas Chamber, and the tour-de-force deductions illustrate how Gillette wove bits from Conan Doyle's stories—ranging from *A Scandal in Bohemia* to *The Final Problem* into an original, innovative mystery play.



William Gillette

The European premiere will take place at the Cinémathèque Française's festival of film restoration, *Toute la Mémoire du Monde*, in January 2015. The American premiere will take place at the **San Francisco Silent Film festival** in May 2015.

### **100 Years in Post:** *Resurrecting a Lost Landmark of Black Film History*

New York, NY. **The Museum of Modern Art** announced the discovery of previously unidentified 101-year-old film footage of the earliest known surviving feature film with

a cast of black actors. The unedited daily rushes—multiple “takes” shot each day during production—were found among a trove of 900 negatives from the pioneering Biograph Studio that were acquired by MoMA's founding Film curator, Iris Barry, in 1939, just prior to their scheduled destruction following the closure of Biograph's Bronx facilities.

Starring the legendary Caribbean American musical theater performer and recording artist Bert Williams (1874–1922), the seven reels of un-titled and unassembled rushes were filmed at virtually the same time that D. W. Griffith began *The Birth of a Nation*. In addition to narrative scenes, the reels reveal candid footage of the black cast and white crew interacting on set, and several frames of Williams mingling with white extras on a suburban street location during a break in filming. The rushes also provide nearly eight minutes of documentary footage of the interracial cast and crew on the New York studio sets and suburban New Jersey locations.

Though a few other movies from that period featuring black casts, such as William Foster's *The Pullman Porter* (1913) and Hunter C. Haynes's *Uncle Remus' First Visit to New York* (1914) are known to have been filmed, all are considered lost. The discovery of the 1913 rushes launched a multiyear research project to identify the production, its actors, and its crew, led by Associate Curator



Bert Williams & friend

Ron Magliozzi, and Preservation Officer Peter Williamson. This exhibit includes selections from the film, along with research findings, archival materials, and film stills runs through March 31, 2015. ([www.moma.org/visit/calendar/exhibitions/1528](http://www.moma.org/visit/calendar/exhibitions/1528))

## **SILENT SPOTLIGHT**

### **ROLAND WEST**



By *Dino Everett*, exclusive to TST.

Roland West is not exactly a household name in the history of motion pictures, but surprisingly most film fans are at least familiar with some of his work. His adaptation of Mary Roberts Rinehart's *The Bat* (1926) and its subsequent sound remake *The Bat Whispers* (1930), are probably the most recognizable due in no small part to the popularity of the original play. If that still doesn't jar their memory, then one can always pull out the Thelma Todd card since she was found dead inside the garage of a bungalow owned by West. Todd's untimely death left many speculating whether he had something to do with her passing, since the two had been collaborators and he managed her career for a time. The uneducated often will state, “Oh yes, Roland West? He killed Thelma Todd, didn't he?”

He was never a B-picture director, and yet is often written off as such primarily because of his repeated use of genre-picture themes such as crime, mystery, and the supernatural. Often the protagonists in his films would be on the opposite side of the law or at the very least, public opinion.



The truth is, he generally collaborated with some of the best in the business over the years such as Lon Chaney who starred in *The Monster* (1925), or Norma Talmadge who was in *DeLuxe Annie* (1918) and West's final silent film, *The Dove* (1927). Celebrated cameraman Greg Toland received his first cinematography credit on *The Bat* and William Cameron Menzies won an Oscar® in 1928 for the cumulative work he did on *The Dove* and Sam Taylor's Barrymore vehicle, *Tempest* (1928).

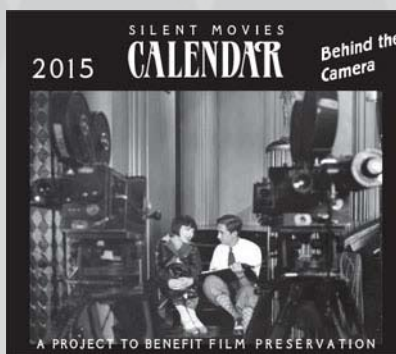
West's first sound film, *Alibi* (1929) was nominated for three Oscars® including best actor for Chester Morris, best art direction again for Menzies, and best picture.

An argument could be made that Roland West was one of the only true auteurs, because not only did his films share a similar West look and style throughout his career, but he generally controlled all aspects of them. Acting as writer, director and producer

allowed him to fully indulge himself to achieve his personally desired results. He used an experimental special coloring process for the film adaptation of his own successful play *The Unknown Purple* (1923). He simultaneously shot *The Bat Whispers* in standard 35mm and the experimental wide format 65mm. He was the first to experiment with certain creative sound techniques in *Alibi* that are often credited to Alfred Hitchcock, even though West's film did them first.

West made his final film *Corsair* (1931) at a time when the cinematic climate was definitely changing, and rather than fall victim to the creative control of a major studio dictating what he could and could not do, he walked away from the movies for good, leaving us to judge his work based on what little is available of his overall 13 films. To date five of West's silent films are thought lost and two are virtually inaccessible, leaving scholars and film fans to judge his output based solely on the three commonly available titles, or roughly 30% of his overall silent work.

## 2015 Silent Movies Benefit Calendar



The theme of the 2015 Silent Movies Benefit Calendar is **Behind the Camera**, and all of the photos (selected by Rodney Sauer) show films in production, from special ef-

fects shots to candid photos of actors and directors on the set. It also includes birthdays of silent-era film stars and personalities, as well as notable marriages, deaths, film openings, and other significant dates.

All proceeds (after printing expenses) will be contributed this season to the Museum of Modern Art. The 2015 calendar is available for purchase on the Mont Alto Orchestra website at [www.mont-alto.com/Calendar.html](http://www.mont-alto.com/Calendar.html).

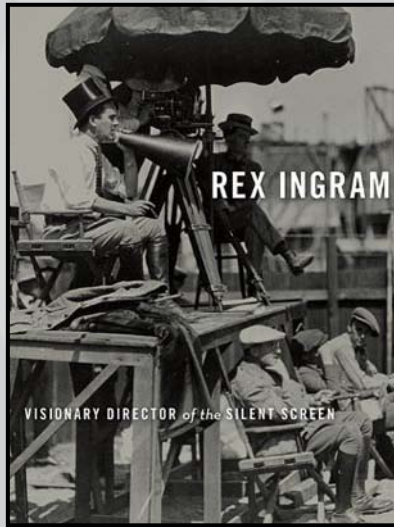
## TST BOOKCORNER

### Rex Ingram: Visionary Director of the Silent Screen

By Ruth Barton

Noted for his charisma, talent, and striking good looks, director Rex Ingram (1893–1950) is ranked alongside D. W. Griffith, Marshall Neilan, and Erich von Stroheim as one of the greatest artists of the silent cinema. Ingram briefly studied sculpture at the Yale University School of Art after emigrating from Ireland to the United States in 1911; but he was soon seduced by the new medium of moving pictures and abandoned his studies for a series of jobs in the film industry. Over the next decade, he became one of the most popular directors in Hollywood, directing smash hits such as *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1921), *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1922), and *Scaramouche* (1923).

In **Rex Ingram**, Ruth Barton explores the life and legacy of the pioneering filmmaker, following him from his childhood in Dublin to his life at the top of early Hollywood's A-list and his eventual self-imposed exile on the French Riviera. Ingram excelled in bringing visions of adventure and fantasy to eager audiences, and his films made stars of actors like Rudolph Valentino, Ramón Novarro,



and Alice Terry—his second wife and leading lady.

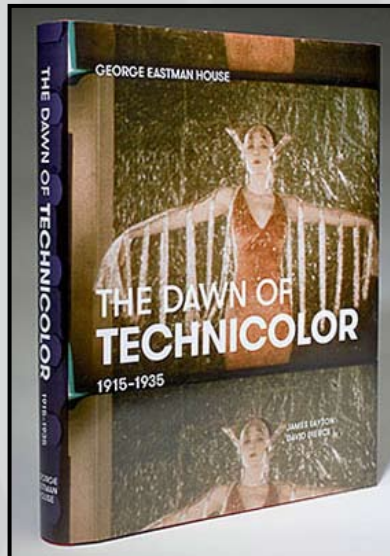
With his name a virtual guarantee of box office success, Ingram's career flourished in the 1920s despite the constraints of an increasingly regulated industry and the hostility of Louis B. Mayer, who regarded him as a dangerous maverick. ([www.kentucky-press.com/index.php](http://www.kentucky-press.com/index.php))

## **The Dawn of Technicolor: 1915 - 1935**

**The Dawn of Technicolor** is the first detailed history of Technicolor's formative years. Authors James Layton and David Pierce recount the first two decades of one of the most widely recognized names in the American film industry, painstakingly reconstructing the company's early years from a wealth of previously untapped internal documentation, studio production files, firsthand accounts, and unpublished interviews. The book is lavishly produced with more than 400 images, and it includes a comprehensive annotated filmography of all two-color Technicolor titles.

**The Dawn of Technicolor** investigates vital make-or-break years,

as the firm grew from a small team of exceptional engineers into a multimillion-dollar corporation. Color provided new creative tools for filmmakers, but also introduced new challenges on set, in the laboratory, and during projection. The authors chart the making of pivotal films in the process, from the troubled productions of *Ben-Hur* (1925) and *The Mysterious Island* (1926-29), to the early short films in Technicolor's groundbreaking three-color process: Walt Disney's animated *Flowers and Trees* (1932) and the live-action *La Cucaracha* (1934). (<http://eastman-house.org/dawnoftechnicolor/>)

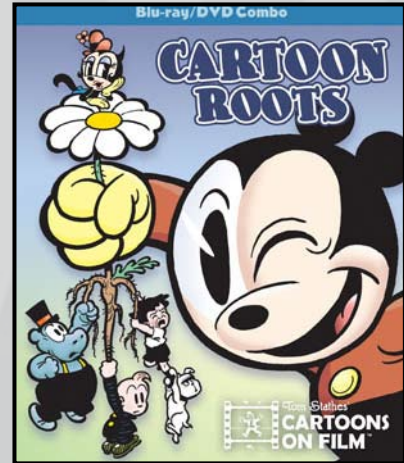


## **HOME ENTERTAINMENT**

### **Cartoon Roots**

Out of history's mists and the Tom Stathes Collection come cartoon pioneers' earliest hits—the "roots" of animation's Golden Age. Dive into rare works by Max Fleischer, Earl Hurd, Paul Terry, and Walter Lantz; sample the best of Col. Heeza Liar, Krazy Kat, Koko the Clown, and more. You'll even meet Bob McKim-

son's long-lost Binko the Cub making his home theatre debut.



Selections of cartoons compiled include, *Lightning Sketches* (Blackton, 1907), Mutt and Jeff: *Fireman Save my Child* (Dick Huemer, 1919), Krazy Kat: *Scents and Nonsense* (Bill Nolan, 1926), and Dinky Doodle: *Lost and Found* (Lantz, 1926).

Info booklet, archival galleries, and music by noted composers Robert Israel and Ben Model are also a part of this Blu-ray/DVD combo. (<http://cartoonsonfilm.com/>)

## **MOMENTS IN SILENCE**

**December 18, 1928** – MGM's Leo the Lion roar recorded for sound pictures.

**December 28, 1913** – *The Squaw Man*, Hollywood's first feature length film, begins shooting

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