



PRESENTS  
**THE 6<sup>TH</sup> SILENT FILM WEEKEND**  
 CINEMA MUSEUM - LONDON  
 NOVEMBER 5 & 6 2022

SATURDAY	SUNDAY
10.00 WIDECOMBE FAIR (1928)	10.00 MITCHELL & KENYON'S FICTION SHORTS
11.45 BFI 35MM SILENTS FROM BOLOGNA	11.10 THE LURE OF CROONING WATER (1920)
12.50 LUNCH	13.00 LUNCH
1.50 THE INSTITUTE OF AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHERS' AWARD-WINNERS' FILM PROGRAMME OF 1935-39	2.00 THE DEATH CHEAT (1922)
3.40 BRIGHT EYES (1929)	3.15 THE GOLD DIGGERS (1923)
5.25 CINEMA'S FIRST NASTY WOMEN	4.40 DRAGNET GIRL (1933)
7.00 DINNER	6.30 DINNER
8.00 THE WEDDING MARCH (1928)	7.30 FAUST (1926)

In addition to the lunch & dinner breaks, there will be short breaks between each programme

Many thanks to our accompanists Meg Morley, Lillian Henley, Cyrus Gabrysch, Colin Sell & Costas Fotopolous & John Sweeney, and to Glenn Mitchell (notes editor)

The programme has been curated in conjunction with The British Silent Film Festival & the British Film Institute.

Many thanks to Bryony Dixon (BFI) Laraine Porter (BSFF). Many thanks also to our guest contributors Matthew Ross (design of notes); Joshua Cattermole; Angela Graham (EAFA); Paul Firth (AMA); Keith Johnson (UEA); Maggie Hennefeld (UNM), The BFI national Archive, and of course to the Cinema Museum and their team of volunteers and especially Phil Clark our projectionist, David Lavelli and the team of volunteers at the Cinema Museum



Social Sciences and Humanities  
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 sciences humaines du Canada



# WIDECOMBE FAIR (1928)

GREAT BRITAIN. DIRECTED BY NORMAN WALKER. SCRIPT BY ELIOT STANNARD.

CINEMATOGRAPHY BY CLAUDE FRIESE-GREENE. PRODUCTION COMPANY BRITISH INTERNATIONAL PICTURES. BFI DIGITAL 92 MINUTES.

CAST: WYNDHAM STANDING, VIOLET HOPSON, MARGUERITE ALLAN, WILLIAM FRESHMAN, MOORE MARRIOTT, AUBREY FITZGERALD

*'Audience applauds Devon scenery' Daily News, 18th December 1928.*

*Widcombe Fair* is a heart-warming rustic comedy filmed in beautiful Dartmoor, based on Eden Phillpotts' novel of the same name. In it a generous but impecunious squire refuses all help from the daughter, her lover and the rich widow from over the hill to rescue the estate from the bailiff while a cast of country folk lend local colour. The story is slight but the real star of the film is the scenery, photographed with real feeling by Claude Friese-Greene.

It's unusual, if not unique, for a film company to be so captivated with a writer's work that they would commission two scripts from one book, and in the same year! But such was the case with BIP's two films of 1928, scripted by their top scenarist Eliot Stannard from Eden Phillpotts' popular novel of 1913, *Widcombe Fair*. In March they released *The Farmer's Wife* directed by Alfred Hitchcock, adapted by Stannard from the very successful play that Phillpotts created from the characters in *Widcombe Fair*. After a conversation with the author, Stannard seems to have been persuaded that the novel's wealth of characters and stories could be mined for more cinematic gold and so was born the film *Widcombe Fair*, released in December 1928. BIP, on the back of these two successes, also bought rights for Phillpotts' story 'An American Prisoner'. *Kine Weekly* noted the unusual situation in their May 31<sup>st</sup> issue:

*"Eliot Stannard that most prolific and successful of British scenarists who wrote the script of 'The Farmer's Wife' lately conferred with Eden Phillpotts at Torquay on subjects. Since then "an American Prisoner" has been bought and Stannard (who was also responsible for the script of 'Tommy Atkins') is busy on the treatment of Widcombe Fair for Norman Walker"*

*Widcombe Fair* was instantly popular with the press and seems to have proved the trade's feeling that British and even American film audiences would respond as well to tales of rustic charm as the readers of Phillpotts' novels did. The author wrote in the foreword to *Widcombe Fair* that the scenery was as important as the people - the characters' little lives being mere threads woven into the tapestry of the landscape and the seasons. It was an attempt to view a village at a stroke, with interleaving characters and stories - 'there's no room for a story' he claimed - but Stannard cleverly carved out a whole different narrative from the book. Where *The Farmer's Wife* focused on the Squire's search for a second wife, *Widcombe Fair* picked up on the story of the lost treasure of the Squire's miserly ancestor and his complete inertia in the face of impending bankruptcy. Stannard added a romance - the squire's daughter, in love with a lowly but efficient farmer whose industry could save the estate, and the famous trip to the Fair of the traditional song *Widcombe Fair* with 'Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney, Peter Davy, Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawke, Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all...' The story does not appear in the novel at all although one or two of its famous characters do. A major strength of the film is the performance of that stalwart of British film comedy Moore Marriott as Uncle Tom Cobleigh (sic). Indeed the whole film has a feel of those later Will Hay films with their unsophisticated comic book plots and broad humour.

Norman Walker was the safe pair of hands for this modest film. It was his second solo directing job and he went on to have a long career in Britain - perhaps his best known film nowadays is



*The Turn of the Tide* (1935), another tale of little lives in an out-of-the-way rural setting. His direction is assured but critics gushing about the beautiful settings only mention him in passing. The cast are praised too, Moore Marriott of course but Violet Hopson (a film producer in her own right as well a fine actress) is admired for her 'customary charm' and lends a cheerful gravity to the role of the widow and Marguerite Allan is also singled out, perhaps leading to her casting the following year as Fancy Day in *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1929). The interiors, as well as the hills and fields of Dartmoor, are lavish and well-designed lending a nice realism against which the ghostly skeletons of Tom Pearse's grey mare and her riders seem delightfully absurd. And audiences it seemed were as entranced as the reviewers – it came higher than Hitchcock's *The Ring* in a Film Weekly 'Best Picture' poll - I'm not sure I would go that far but that's public opinion for you – and at least Devon has never looked lovelier.

*Bryony Dixon – co-director, British Silent Film Festival*

## BFI 35MM SILENTS FROM BOLOGNA

### ZIGOMAR, ROI DES VOLEURS (1910)

DIRECTED BY VICTORIN-HIPPOLYTE JASSET. CINEMATOGRAPHY LUCIEN ANDRIOT. ADAPTED FROM THE ADVENTURE SERIAL ZIGOMAR BY LÉON SAZIE. PRODUCTION COMPANY: ÉCLAIR. 35MM. 53 MINUTES.

CAST: ALEXANDRE ARQUILLIÈRE [ZIGOMAR], ANDRÉ LIABEL [PAULIN BROQUET], JOSETTE ANDRIOT [RIRI-LA-JOLIE], ESMÉE, JACQUES FAURE, PAUL GUIDÉ.

Léon Sazie's adventure serial *Zigomar* appeared in Parisian newspaper "Le Matin" from 7 December 1909 to 22 May 1910. After this daily publication, it was also published as a brochure by the publisher Ferenczi, with catchy cover art drawn by Georges Vallée. Appearing every Wednesday at the newsstand, Sazie's *Zigomar* became one of the most popular serials of this period and this popularity caused the appearance of the similar picaresque serials such as *Fantômas* by Marcel Allain and Pierre Souvestre.



With an eye on its success, Éclair planned to adapt this long serial – 23 brochures in total – in cinematic form. Right from the start, *Zigomar* was planned as a trilogy. Victorin Jasset, the artistic director of Éclair, obviously aimed to achieve a cinematic equivalent to the popular serial story. It was an audacious project. Discussing the difficulty of adapting a serial novel for the cinema, he wrote that "the means of the serial novel and those of theatrical cinematography are absolutely opposed. The novel says everything, explains everything and does not shy away from length. The cinema must, without having recourse to words, make itself understood by the simple spectacle of the facts and never insist, the spectator being placed in front of the film like a curious person in front of a news item, at the corner of the street." ("Ciné-Journal", 5 August 1911) Therefore the storyline had to be made as simple as possible and visual pleasure was of the utmost importance. The psychological developments of the characters are scarce and the spectators witness the unbelievable and bold actions as if they are bystander witnesses. Accordingly, the story created by Léon Sazie was reduced to nearly nothing – if one forgives the exaggeration. In the first *Zigomar*, the bandit kidnaps Riri-la-Jolie, a charming young girl, and Paulin Broquet fights Zigomar in order to save her. Because this is a simple pretext for visual pleasure, the spectator's concern focuses on the action and the strikingly beautiful mise en scène in each episode.

The first *Zigomar* film was released on 14 September 1911 in Paris and about one month later in provincial cities in France. However, Éclair seems to have shipped the prints earlier to the foreign markets. "Ciné-Journal" reports that *Zigomar* was shown at a press screening in August in Russia and the audience praised the beautifully choreographed dance scenes ("Ciné-Journal", 19 August, 1911). However, *Zigomar* left especially deep footprints in Japanese film history. The first *Zigomar* was released in November 1911 in Tokyo. It was a big hit. The trilogy was adapted into many novels. Also two film companies made their own Japanese *Zigomar* films. Fearing its impact on society, Japanese police banned *Zigomar* films in October 1912. It is interesting to see that, even after this decision, the first and second *Zigomar* films seem to be shown without mentioning the name of *Zigomar* everywhere in Japan. The third *Zigomar* – *Zigomar, peau d'anguille* – was therefore shown under the Japanese title of *The Triumph of the Detective*. The National Film Archive of Japan owns three different *Zigomar* prints. Among them the print from Yukinobu Toba's collection keeps the most integral version of the first *Zigomar*. Particularly it contains such important scenes as the dance of the will-o'-the-wisps at the Moulin Rouge, which was so much praised in 1911. This performance by the dancer Esmée has an echo of Loie Fuller's dances with its lighting effects. Such dreamlike scenes give this film a fantastic quality.

Preceding *Zigomar* will be:

### LA SOUBRETTE INGÉNIEUSE (1902)

FRANCE. DIRECTOR: FERDINAND ZECCA. PRODUCTION COMPANY: PATHÉ FRÈRES 143FT

### ALI BABA ET LES QUARANTE VOLEURS / ALI BABA AND THE FORTY THIEVES (1902)

FRANCE. DIRECTOR: FERDINAND ZECCA. PRODUCTION COMPANY: PATHÉ FRÈRES 557FT

Made from a hand-coloured nitrate print.

Hiroshi Komatsu

II Cinema Ritrovato 2022 programme notes.

# THE INSTITUTE OF AMATEUR CINEMATOGRAPHERS' WORLD TOUR (1935-1939)

To mark the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Institute of Amateur Cinematographers (IAC) in October 2022, we have created a specially curated programme of seven amateur films recently digitised in 2k at the East Anglian Film Archive and Filmoteca de Catalunya. This recreation of the IAC World Tour Programme (1935-39) stems from research conducted at the University of East Anglia as part of the project 'International Amateur Cinema Between the Wars, 1919-39' supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.



The IAC was founded during the formative years of amateur film production in Britain, and the organisation continues to support the work of amateurs today. The early 1930s was a significant period in British film history with the mainstream film industry completing the transition to all-sound production and amateur filmmakers increasingly relying on so-called 'sub-standard' amateur film gauges (an oft-misunderstood term that meant only that they were smaller than the standard 35mm format rather than a comment on quality) such as 9.5mm, 16mm and, from its introduction in 1932, 8mm. Such film gauges offered amateur filmmakers a creative and logistical freedom that dramatically fuelled the growth of amateur cine societies and film clubs as well as several amateur film publications, including *Home Movies and Home Talkies*, and *Amateur Cine World*.

The IAC became a nationally recognised representative of the amateur movement in Britain from late 1932 on, dedicated to expanding a burgeoning amateur network in need of support and organisation. The IAC's annual film competition (launched in 1933) was open to national and international entrants alike and helped to raise the profile of the amateur community in Britain and beyond. The award-winning films were subsequently offered for hire to affiliated cine groups and screened during regular club meetings across the UK.

Shortly after their second annual competition in 1934, the IAC undertook a more ambitious plan: a "World Tour" of the best award-winning films arranged in conjunction with cine clubs across the globe. This 'World Tour' programme, which commenced in Autumn 1935, featured seven winning films from the first two IAC competitions, representing the breadth of filmmaking styles and genres open to the amateur filmmaker.

Three of the films, *To Egypt and Back with Imperial Airways* (Ruth Stuart, 1932), *Her Second Birthday* (Agnes & John Thubron, 1932), and *Transport* (Agnes and John Thubron, 1933), are significant additions to the tour programme. They represent examples of the largely overlooked role played by women amateur filmmakers. Unlike the mainstream industry, which often relegated women to less visible roles in the filmmaking process, the annual IAC competition regularly featured the work of women directors, producers and writers. While the amateur film world was a patriarchal one, women filmmakers could enjoy the same creative freedoms offered by new amateur gauges and were valued members of many cine clubs and societies across the UK.

On their World Tour journey, the seven films spent over four years travelling across Europe, Africa, and parts of Asia, including screenings in Belgrade, Budapest, Vienna, South Africa, India, Shanghai, Japan, and New Zealand. In December 1939 when the films reached Australia the touring copies were donated to the Australian Amateur Cine Society. As Sydney-based amateur filmmaker James A. Sherlock reported, the copies had succumbed to the tell-tale signs of repeated projection leaving them 'brittle and [without] leaders and end titles in some cases.' However, Sherlock reassured IAC members back in Britain that 'they will be in quite respectable condition with a little treatment.'

Today, the new scans of these films reveal a range of different views of the world, and the creative possibilities that the new sub-standard film gauges offered to amateur filmmakers.



The films are:

**TO EGYPT AND BACK WITH IMPERIAL AIRWAYS (Ruth Stuart, UK 1931-32):** a filmmaking prodigy, 16-year-old Ruth Stuart allegedly filmed this travelogue without her parents being aware of the trip! The film won a gold medal at the 1933 *American Cinematographer* Amateur Movie Contest, the Novel prize at the 1933 Paris Concord, and the IAC award, beginning Stuart's run of award-winning productions through the 1930s.

**WESTMINSTER IN WINTER (Matthew L. Nathan, UK 1932):** An early 1930s documentary that captures the sights of Westminster including the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Bridge, St James Park and London's West End. London-based lawyer Nathan was a well-known figure in UK amateur film circles with his other IAC award-winning travelogues *An Austrian Village* (Nathan, 1933) and *Venice* (Nathan, 1934).

**HER SECOND BIRTHDAY (Agnes K & John B. Thubron, UK 1932) and TRANSPORT (Agnes K & John B. Thubron, UK 1933):** This amateur wife-and-husband filmmaking team started *Her Second Birthday* as a "domestic record" of their granddaughter before they decided to film additional shots and add stop motion animation. This combination of 1930s family filming and early amateur animation makes a unique contribution to amateur film. *Transport* is a more traditional colonial-era travelogue, offering views of different modes of transport around the world.

**MEMMORTIGO? (Delmiro de Caralt, Spain 1933-34):** Caralt was a leading avant-garde filmmaker and thinker who introduced amateur film to Spain in the 1920s. This experimental film, which explores pessimism and optimism, received an Honourable Mention at the 1934 *American Cinematographer* Amateur Movie Makers Contest.

**EIN ZOMMER GEHT ZU ENDE [LAST DAYS OF SUMMER] (Hans Figura, Austria 1933):** A Vienna-based filmmaker, Hans Figura was also a leading member of that city's Klub der Kino-Amateure organisation. This gentle documentary follows Figura's two daughters as they play in and around the landscape of the Danube before, reluctantly, returning to school.

**SISTER (Kichinosuke Takeuchi, Japan 1933):** An active amateur filmmaker in Japan's Kansai region, Takeuchi contributed articles and screenplays to local amateur publications such as *Bebī kinema* (*Baby cinema*) and *Patē kinema* (*Pathé cinema*). Focused on a sister's love for her brother, Takeuchi's film was submitted to the Institute of Amateur Cinematographer's 1933 competition.

*With thanks to: Angela Graham (EAFA), Keith M. Johnston (AMA), Paul Frith (AMA) and Mariona Bruzzo Llaberia at the Filmoteca de Catalunya for permission to screen Memmortigo? (Delmiro de Caralt).*

*With thanks to: Angela Graham (EAFA), Keith M. Johnston (AMA), Paul Frith (AMA)*



## CINEMA'S FIRST NASTY WOMEN - GENDER ADVENTURES (1910 -1926)

USA. DIRECTED BY JAMES YOUNG DEER, SIDNEY OLCOTT, WALLACE MCCUTCHEON, D. W. GRIFFITH, AND RICHARD WALLACE. DIGITAL. TOTAL RUNNING TIME 92 MINUTES.

Five shorts directed by James Young Deer, Sidney Olcott, Jay Hunt, and Richard Wallace with Lillian St. Cyr (Red Wing), Gene Gauntier, Texas Guinan and Katherine Grant. Gender Adventures – From the Old West to the (now not so) distant future, women take centre stage and drive the action in this programme of adventures. Produced from 1910 to 1926, these rarely seen silent films showcase actresses cross-dressing in adventure and comedy, assuming a range of identities that gleefully dismantle traditional gender norms and sexual constraints. On the Western frontier, young women disguise themselves as boys to seek their fortune; other films show the rambunctious gun-toting femininity cultivated out West, while we close the programme with a hilarious sex role-reversal comedy from the Hal Roach Studios.



### THE RED GIRL AND THE CHILD (US 1910), 17 min. (Museum of Modern Art)

DIRECTED BY JAMES YOUNG DEER WITH RED WING AND JAMES YOUNG DEER.

Lillian St. Cyr was a citizen of Ho-Chunk Nation who performed in more than 70 films, most of which are not known to survive. In 1910, she appeared in *The Red Girl and the Child*. To return a kindness to Dick Sutton, the man who saves her from racialized harassment by Bill, a racist cattle rustler, she dresses as a man and steals back the toddler. She flees Bill and his henchmen on horseback, scrambles up a mountain, pulls herself across a gully, all with the toddler on her back. Red Girl returns the child to her parents and is every bit the hero of the film.

### THE GIRL SPY BEFORE VICKSBURG (US 1910), 15 min. (EYE Filmmuseum)

DIRECTED BY SIDNEY OLCOTT WITH GENE GAUNTIER.

The Film Index called this “perhaps the most hazardous feat of the plucky girl” and “positively the climax of reckless, neryv action.” In this film from the “*Girl Spy*” series, Nan (Gene Gauntier) is again summoned to the Confederate regiment, who has recently found out about a Union wagon carrying ammunition. Nan is outfitted with a Union uniform and tasked with blowing up an ammunition wagon. She escapes through a daring chase through water and other natural landscapes. Nan’s worried mother is also featured throughout this film.

### A RANGE ROMANCE (US 1911), 13 min. (Library of Congress. Music)

A Brokeback Mountain for the silent era! This love story follows a ranch foreman and a young ranch hand who turns out to be a girl in disguise. After an argument, Bob takes his young daughter Bessie out West with him, where she lives as a boy. When they find work on a ranch, the disguised girl and the ranch foreman fall in love. By coincidence, the ranch replaces a Chinese cook (in yellow face) with Bessie’s estranged mother, Mary. The estranged couple reunites on the same day that the foreman proposes marriage. This film was one of many suggesting that a frontier boyhood could make white girls into physically vital adult women. These films simultaneously made visible and disavowed romantic relationships between men on the frontier.

### THE NIGHT RIDER (1920), 25 min.

DIRECTED BY JAY HUNT WITH TEXAS GUINAN AND PAT HARTIGAN.



This is a Western comedy about a feisty gun-totin’, horse-ridin’ gal named Texas getting herself a man and a husband at gunpoint. In a film career that began in 1917 and continued through 1933, Texas Guinan was part of the vanguard of women filmmakers in the United States. Triangle Film Corporation, founded in 1915 by Harry Aitken and Roy Aitken, featured Guinan in four two-reel shorts between 1917 and 1918, *The Fuel of Life*, *The Stainless Barrier*, *The Gun Woman* and *The Love Brokers*. Unlike the musical genre she was known for on stage, she was now moving towards the Western movie genre, and on her dressing room door appeared a map of the state of Texas, rather than her name. Triangle began billing her as “the female Bill Hart” in reference to the industry’s first Western star who at that time topped fandom popularity polls. *The Night Rider* was produced by Bulls Eye Productions/Reelcraft, where she began to expand towards the production end of

filmmaking, as a unit department head on the films *Outwitted*, *The Lady of the Law*, *The Girl of the Rancho*, *The Desert Vulture*, and at least five other productions.



**WHAT'S THE WORLD COMING TO?** (US 1926), 23 min. (San Francisco Silent Film Festival)

DIRECTED BY RICHARD WALLACE AND F. RICHARD JONES. WRITTEN BY STAN LAUREL AND FRANK TERRY.

WITH CLYDE COOK, KATHERINE GRANT AND JAMES FINLAYSON.

This farce takes place “One hundred years from now—when men have become more like women and women more like men.” A “blushing groom” named Claudia approaches the altar, where his flapper fiancée, Billie, and her manly “best woman” await. The dashing Lieutenant Penelope (a spitting image of lesbian author Radclyffe Hall) interrupts the ceremony, to no avail. She later courts Claudia, who is feeling abandoned by his playboy wife. The literal arrival of a stork restores harmony. The clothing and hairstyles in this film playfully evoke real-life lesbian icons of the period and the film repeatedly pairs women together in the frame, offering a series of Sapphic winks to the wise.

*This programme has been curated by archivists and scholars Maggie Hennefeld, Laura Horak and Elif Rongen-Kaynakçi for Kino Lorber in advance of the release of Kino Lorber’s four-disc DVD/Blu-ray collection.*



## BRIGHT EYES aka CHAMPAGNE (1929)

GREAT BRITAIN AND AUSTRIA. DIRECTED BY GEZA VON BOLVARY. PRODUCED BY BRITISH INTERNATIONAL PICTURES AND SASCHA-FILM. RELEASED BY WARDOUR FILMS. CINEMATOGRAPHY BY THEODOR SPARKUHL. FIRST RELEASED AS A SILENT FILM IN MAY 1929 AND WITH SYNCHRONIZED MUSIC AND SONGS ADDED BY R.C.A. IN OCTOBER 1929. DIGITAL APP. 90 MINUTES.

CAST: BETTY BALFOUR [JENNY], JACK TREVOR [JEAN], FRITZ GREINER [HENRI], MARCEL VIBERT [MIGUEL GOMEZ], VIVIENNE GIBSON [LOLA], OTTO HARTMANN [MARCEL].

Betty Balfour stars as Jenny, a kitchen maid working in the opulent Palais de Luxe night club, who has fallen for handsome head waiter Jean (Jack Trevor). But Jean is currently dating Lola (Vivienne Gibson) the glamorous mistress of an older man, and he's totally impervious to Jenny's charms and oblivious to her desire for him. On Jenny's birthday, Jean is the only colleague who fails to give her a gift, so in a desperate attempt to grab his attention she steals a bottle of champagne. Things backfire, he is not amused and she's dismissed. Hiding in the dancehall, Jenny comes to the attention of a wealthy patron who assumes she is a comedienne and obliges her to perform for him, which at least grabs the attention of the starchy Jean whose jealousy is finally piqued



...

*The Bioscope* (8 May, 1929) was enthusiastic about the silent version, stating that 'the whole thing bubbles over with fun, for Jenny Brighteyes is a mercurial character' describing the dance hall setting as 'gorgeous' and the dancing as a key selling point. And we also see Balfour at the height of her powers in a vehicle perfectly suited to her talents.

*Bright Eyes* belongs to the flourish of late silent British films made in 1928 and 1929, like *Piccadilly*, *A Little Bit of Fluff*, *Moulin Rouge*, *Tesha*, *Champagne*, *Weekend Wives* and *The Ware Case* etc. which according to Rachael Low were 'modern in conception and execution' with the 'absence of that old mean look that had plagued British production. The camerawork ... was excellent. The general appearance of the films was opulent and contemporary and sets were elaborate, using the new special processes for stages, night clubs, streets and big hotels.' (Low 1971, 189). However, Low then goes on to unleash her characteristic opprobrium stating that 'they tended towards slightly sexy society or exotic glamour ... comedy was of the mother-in-law, undressing, weekends at Deauville and 'taratiddles' type'. Low also pointed out that these films were so scaffolded by international talent like Sparkuhl's cinematography or Von Bolvary's direction in *Bright Eyes*, and questioned whether some could be considered British productions at all. (ibid., 190).

*Bright Eyes* with its Austrian title *Champagne* was sometimes confused with Hitchcock's *Champagne* of the previous year, due to the coincidence of Betty Balfour and similar title. The story is in fact nearer to Hitchcock's original concept for his film which followed a rags-to-riches trajectory. As it turned out, screenplay writer Walter Mycroft reversed direction of travel, making Balfour a rich girl who loses her money and has to go to work in a night club before her wealth is eventually restored. It weakens the audience's sympathy for the Balfour character which in *Bright Eyes* is never lacking. The Hungarian, Geza von Bolvary, directed several very good, light genre films under various Anglo-Austrian or Anglo-German co-productions deals, using studios in Austria, Germany and Britain, including *The Ghost Train* and Arnold Ridley's follow-up, *The Wrecker*.

*Bright Eyes* was very much a conversion-era film and although it was made silent, it was given the 'goat gland' treatment later in 1929 and had music and songs added at R.C.A. in New York. Of the sound version, *The Bioscope* (2 October, 1929), felt that the songs were of 'no special merit' and added nothing to Balfour's performance as 'Miss Balfour's voice does not register in a manner to do her justice'. Though we now know that Balfour's voice recorded very well in her early sound film - Walter Summers' *Raise the Roof* (1930) where Britain's 'Queen of Happiness' veritably sparkles in her first proper talkie, giving lie to those myths that she did not make a successful transition to sound cinema.

*Bright Eyes* was screened as part of the 2014 British Silent Film Festival which was founded in 1998 to showcase British cinema before 1930. For several decades, British silent film had been overshadowed by critical neglect and a degree of indifference which had emerged in the 1930s. In the 1990s, revisionist historians started to re-examine this period in British film history and the British Silent Film Festival was inaugurated to bring the films themselves alongside this debate and new research, to a wider public. The last edition was held in 2019 and we hope to stage future events in 2023.

References: Rachael Low (1971) *The History of British Film 1918-1929*  
Laraine Porter – co-director, British Silent Film Festival

# THE WEDDING MARCH (1928)

USA. DIRECTED BY ERICH VON STROHEIM. PRODUCTION: CELEBRITY PICTURES AND PARAMOUNT FAMOUS LASKY CORPORATION; RELEASED BY PARAMOUNT. PRODUCED BY PAT A. POWERS. SCENARIO BY ERICH VON STROHEIM AND HARRY CARR. ART DIRECTION BY RICHARD DAY. SPECIAL MILITARY ASSISTANTS, COUNT ALBERT CONTI AND D.R.O. HATSWELL, R.N. TECHNICAL CONSULTANT, ARCHDUKE LEOPOLD OF HAPSBURG. ASSISTANT DIRECTORS, EDDY SOWDERS AND LOUIS GERMONPREZ. SECOND ASSISTANT DIRECTORS, EDDIE MALONE AND ART JELL. CINEMATOGRAPHY BY HAL MOHR. EDITED BY FRANK E. HULL. © 8 OCTOBER 1928 (AT 14 REELS) BY PARAMOUNT FAMOUS LASKY CORPORATION. PREMIERED 6 OCTOBER 1928 AT THE RIVOLI THEATRE IN NEW YORK. PROCESSION SEQUENCE IN TWO-STRIP TECHNICOLOR.

CAST: ERICH VON STROHEIM [PRINCE NICHOLAS EHRHART HANS KARL MARIA VON WILDELIEBE-RAUFFENBURG], FAY WRAY [MITZERL SCHRAMMELL], ZASU PITTS [CECILIA SCHWEISSER], MATHEW BETZ [JOHANN ADELBERT 'SCHANI' EBERLE, MITZI'S FIANCÉ], GEORGE FAWCETT [PRINCE OTTOKAR LADISLAUS VON WILDELIEBE-RAUFFENBURG], MAUDE GEORGE [PRINCESS MARIA IMMACULATA VON WILDELIEBE-RAUFFENBURG], CESARE GRAVINA [MARTIN SCHRAMMELL, VIOLINIST AT THE BEERGARTEN AND MITZI'S FATHER], DALE FULLER [KATERINA SCHRAMMELL, HIS WIFE AND MITZI'S MOTHER], GEORGE NICHOLLS [FORTUNAT SCHWEISSER, THE CORN-PLASTER MAGNATE AND CECILIA'S FATHER], HUGHIE MACK [ANTON EBERLE, THE BEERGARTEN OWNER AND SCHANI'S FATHER]; SIDNEY BRACEY [NAVRATIL, NICKI'S VALET], ANTON VAVERKA [EMPEROR FRANZ-JOSEF], DON RYAN [H.I.H. ARCHDUKE LEOPOLD SALVATOR], LUCILLE VAN LENT [PRINCE NICKI'S MAID], CAPTAIN JOHN S. PETERS [IMPERIAL GUARD OFFICER], CAREY HARRISON [IMPERIAL GUARD OFFICER], HARRY REINHARDT [IMPERIAL GUARD OFFICER], COUNT ALBERT CONTI [IMPERIAL GUARD OFFICER], WILHELM VON BRINCKEN [IMPERIAL GUARD OFFICER], SCHUMANN-HEINK [IMPERIAL GUARD OFFICER], VON HARTMANN [IMPERIAL GUARD OFFICER], RAY ERLNBORN [ALTAR BOY], CLAIRE DELMAR.



*The Wedding March* was the culmination of the beautifully elaborate but financially ruinous re-creations of central European splendour over which Vienna-born Erich von Stroheim had argued with America's big studios. From here Stroheim's career would take a different path but *The Wedding March* may fairly be considered a magnificent last hurrah both for his epics and for the world he was seeking to depict.

Originally budgeted at \$750,000, Stroheim maintained that the production costs of the total film as shot was \$900,000; producer P.A. Powers stated that the costs ran to \$1,125,000. With approximately 200,000 feet of negative film stock exposed, Powers halted production with approximately two-thirds of the second half of the film shot. Stroheim's first rough cut was approximately 50,000 feet, or about 50 reels, running about eleven hours. Originally cut as a two-part film, the first part was titled *The Wedding March* and Frank Hull's first cut, made under the supervision of Stroheim, was 25,795 feet. A second editing of the first part, imposed by Paramount, resulted in a version of 17,993 feet, which Stroheim at least supposedly approved. Julian Johnston edited a third version to 11,147 feet, and Stroheim, assisted by Josef von Sternberg, edited a fourth to 11,062 feet. Stroheim and Sternberg edited the final release version, the fifth cut, to 10,400 feet, which was released in 14 reels accompanied by 14 synchronized sound discs of orchestral music accompaniment. The second part of the film was to be entitled *The Honeymoon*, and was first edited by Stroheim to 22,484 feet. A second version was edited by Sternberg to 10,789 feet. Paramount editors further reduced part two to approximately 7000 feet — 2000 feet of which recapped the story of the first part to make a more coherent film. The second part was filed for copyright at approximately 6000 feet. Part two originally appeared only in European prints, released in France during 1929 as *Mariage de Prince*. The only known copy of this release was destroyed in a fire in 1959.

Stroheim's leading lady, Fay Wray, may now be considered a surprising choice for those who know her primarily from the 1933 classic *King Kong*. At this time she was an up-and-coming actress who in 1925 had been given roles in various Hal Roach comedies after making her feature debut in *The Coast Patrol*. The following year she was selected as a 'WAMPAS Baby Star' and landed a contract with Paramount, hence Stroheim giving her a first chance at a leading role in *The Wedding March*. Fay Wray attended the Channel Four Silents screening of the film in London in 1998, a copy that includes the procession scene in two-strip Technicolor. It is this 35mm print, by courtesy of Photoplay Productions, that we are screening today.

# MITCHELL & KENYON'S FICTION SHORTS



**Sagar Mitchell**

Not much is generally known about this company or their films although over 850, mainly actualities, are known to survive, mostly in private hands and a few in archives. We are fortunate to have 65 films dating from 1899 to 1906 (and possibly later) that cover most aspects of their production.

Sources say that the company was established in 1897 or 1899 by James Kenyon and Sagar J. Mitchell in Blackburn, Lancashire, an industrial town in the North of England. It is thought that their last films may have been produced in 1913. The first films known to be advertised were *The Tramp's Surprise*; *The Tramps and the Artist*; and *Kidnapped by Indians* but they produced most types of film popular at the time: comedies, dramas and actualities. Today they are probably best known for producing a series of films purporting to be documentary incidents from the Boer War but actually filmed on the outskirts of Blackburn.

The selection we have chosen covers most aspects of the films produced and includes one of the first: *The Tramps and the Artist*. We have arranged the films chronologically where the date is known up to *Who's Collared My Parcel?* Thereafter we do not yet know the dates of the films. We hope that you will enjoy these films, some last seen by audiences nearly one hundred years ago and that their screening will stimulate further interest and research.

## **Films:**

The Tramps and the Artist 1899

The Kidnappers\*

The Tramp Cyclist\*

The Snowman 1901

Chasing De Wet 1901

Hands Off the Flag 1901

Saved by a Woman 1901

Cool Proceedings 1902

No Bathing Allowed 1902

Rival Snow Shovellers 1902

A Slippery Job 1902

Who Stole the Bike? In Two Scenes 1902

£100 Reward. Lost!!! Diving Lucy. 1903

A Tragic Elopement 1903

Interrupted Picnic (thought to be earlier than the

version which follows)

The Interrupted Picnic 1906

Who's Collared My Parcel? (believed to be "Who's

Taken My Parcel' 1906)

Compo's Tea Garden

The Fisherman

Just Like A Woman

The Mad Barber

A Monkey's Merry Morning

Mrs. Gamp's Mishap

[performing dogs]

The Rival Lovers

Rough on the Collector

[snow police?]

The Sporting Colliers and the Bobby

A Standing Joke

Lady Boxers to the Rescue in Two Scenes

[poison]

Putting Him On the Blacklist in Three Scenes

The Future Champions

Happy Mrs Grunt

Isle of Man Panorama Port Soderic to Douglas Head

A Lively Finish

[man reading a letter]

May Day in the Slums

[Isle of Man??]

Our King and Queen God Bless 'Em

\*At the time the films were sent to Haghefilm Conservation it was believed that these films were probably from 1899 but further study had caused us to revise this opinion and we now believe them to be of a later date.

[ ] = no title

*Notes from the premiere screening at the 1997 Pordenone Silent Film Festival*



# THE LURE OF CROONING WATER (1920)

GREAT BRITAIN. DIRECTED BY ARTHUR H. ROOKE. PRODUCED BY GEORGE CLARK FOR STOLL PRODUCTION COMPANY.

SCENARIO BY GUY NEWALL FROM THE 1913 NOVEL BY MARION HILL. ART DIRECTION BY CHARLES DALMON.

CINEMATOGRAPHY BY JOE ROSENTHAL. 35MM PRINT FROM THE BFI III MINUTES.

CAST: GUY NEWALL [HORACE DORNBLAZER], IVY DUKE [GEORGETTE VERLAINE], DOUGLAS MONRO ["YES" SMITH], HUGH C. BUCKLER [DR. JOHN CONGDON], MARY DIBLEY [RACHEL DORNBLAZER], ARTHUR CHESNEY [GUY PINKERTON], LAWFORD DAVIDSON [FRANK HOWARD], THE HOOD CHILDREN [THE LITTLE DORNBLAZERS], CHUN AH MOY [GEORGETTE'S MAID].



*The Lure of Crooning Water* was Arthur Rooke's fifth feature film as director and one of several made in partnership with the multi-talented Guy Newall who adapted the scenario from Marion Hill's popular 1913 novel of the same name. Rooke and Newall had first collaborated on *The Garden of Resurrection* in 1919 which also starred Ivy Duke. Having met on set, Duke and Newall went on to marry and become a 'power couple' in the 1920s British film industry; their chemistry evident in their performances together.

In Arthur Rooke's film, Duke plays Georgette, a spoilt London stage actress described by the *Bioscope* as a 'typical child of joy' who is sent to the countryside for a rest-cure following a breakdown while performing on stage. Recuperating on Horace and Rachel Dornblazer's idyllic farm but finding country life rather dull after the big City, she decides to seduce Horace purely for her amusement, relishing as his hardworking wife is forced to watch hopelessly from the side lines.

While not a classic male romantic lead, and more often associated with comedic characters, Newall portrays Horace with an intensity which shifts from outright disdain for Georgette to passionate desire for her. Duke's performance as the seductress prefigures Margaret Livingston's 'Woman from the City' in Murnau's *Sunrise* (1929) by almost a decade, but packs a similar sense of the predatory vamp's powerful sexuality. Mary Dibley's portrayal of the devoted Mrs Dornblazer also echoes Janet Gaynor's 'Wife' in *Sunrise*. *The Bioscope* (29th January 1920), commented that '[a]s a study in emotional light and shade, the film is most delicately executed', and that the film's director, Arthur Rooke, had handled his study of English life and character 'almost in the manner of the Russian psycho-analysts'.

Arthur Rooke's own film career began with supporting appearances in films directed by his friend, A. E. Coleby, during WWI. Following his appearance in Coleby's 1917 *The Will of the People*, Rooke began co-directing with Coleby and the pair made five films together between 1917 and 1918, before Rooke branched out on his own with *The Double Life of Mr. Alfred Burton* in 1919, an adaptation of an excellent novel by E. Phillips Oppenheim.

In her book *100 Silent Films* (2011) Bryony Dixon also draws the comparison with *Sunrise* along with the influence of French Pastoralism and the work of Ibsen and Strindberg: '*The films of Guy Newall and Ivy Duke, made in the very early Twenties seem to be an anomaly in British film history. These simple character-driven dramas, primarily shot on location in rural settings are beautifully photographed and characterised by the naturalistic acting that owed a debt to Ibsen and Strindberg and to André Antoine, the influential French theatre producer turned film director. Newall, particularly was celebrated for his minimalist acting style and often referred to as "Britain's best actor". He had been on the stage since a youth and could turn his hand to broad comedy or the more melancholic loner type of character that featured in the series of films he made with producer George Clark at the cramped Ebury St. studios in London. Fox Farm, Testimony, Garden of Resurrection and most poignantly The Lure of Crooning Water are a development of Antoine's French pastoral films. The acting style that Antoine aspired to was achieved in the more intimate setting of the English countryside and the smaller storylines and closer camerawork allowed it to mature. At the end of the Twenties, French directors such as Jean Epstein and Grémillon would meld this naturalism with their own toned down impressionist techniques to produce some very fine films such as Maldone (Newall is reminiscent of lead actor Charles Dullin) or the Breton series. Poor Guy Newall could never have hoped to reach these heights on his tiny budgets, but the promise was there. Rachael Low, hardly one to go mushy over a British talent, expresses real regret that Newall couldn't take his directorial career further.* (Bryony Dixon)

*The Lure of Crooning Water* was screened as part of the 2000 British Silent Film Festival which was founded in 1998 to showcase British cinema before 1930. For several decades, British silent film had been overshadowed by critical neglect and a degree of indifference which had emerged in the 1930s. In the 1990s, revisionist historians started to re-examine this period in British film history and the British Silent Film Festival was inaugurated to bring the films themselves alongside this debate and new research, to a wider public. The last edition was held in 2019 and we hope to stage future events in 2023.

Laraine Porter – co-director, British Silent Film Festival



## THE DEATH CHEAT (1922)

GERMAN. ALSO KNOWN AS *DIE HIMKEHR DES ODYSSEUS (THE HOMECOMING OF ODYSSEUS) / THE RETURN OF ODYSSEUS*. PRODUCTION COMPANY: PHOEBUS-FILM. DIRECTED BY MAX OBAL. WRITTEN BY ROLF E. VANLOO. CINEMATOGRAPHY BY WILLY GROBSTÜCK AND GIOVANNI VITROTTI. ART DIRECTOR: HANS SOHNLE. ORIGINAL GERMAN RELEASE: 18<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 1922. 35MM. 67 MINUTES.

CAST: LUCIANO ALBERTINI, CLAIRE LOTTO, HEINRICH SCHROTH, HERMANN BOETTCHER, ERNST BEHMER AND FRITZ HIRSCH.

An adaptation of Homer's epic Greek poem *The Odyssey*, believed to date back to the 8<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, this was one of a series of 1920s adventure films starring Luciano Albertini and directed by Max Obal. It was released in Britain by Stoll under the title *The Death Cheat* and this version – screened today by courtesy of the BFI – is believed to be the only one extant.

One of the famous strongmen and daredevils in silent film, Luciano Albertini (1882-1945) was born Francesco Vespignani in Lugo di Romagna, Italy, in 1882. Formerly a circus artist, in youth he had been a keen gymnast and on concluding his studies in France, continued his training at the Ecole Péchin in Lyon. In the mid-1900s he led an eight-strong acrobatic team – including his wife, Domenica Meirone – whose speciality was a stunt called 'the death spiral'. His career was interrupted by service in the Italian Navy during the First World War but despite this he was able to make a film named after the stunt (*La spirale della morte/The Death Spiral*) in 1917, produced in Turin by the Società Anonima Ambrosio. Afterwards he worked for the studios Pasquali and Latina Ars, both also in Turin. At Pasquali he started the successful *Sansone* (Samson) series, as in *Sansone contro i Filistei/Samson Against the Philistines* (1918), before founding his own company, Albertini Films, in 1919. After two years – and films including a 1920 version of *Frankenstein* – a crisis in the Italian film industry, complemented by Albertini's own debts, forced a move to Berlin. Producer Jacob Karol, a specialist in adventure and circus films, cast him in the first of a series, *Der König der Manege/The King of the Circus Ring* (1921). Albertini also worked with another Italian expatriate, director Nunzio Malasomma, but most of his German films were directed by Max Obal. Albertini's Latin looks proved especially popular with female audiences in Germany; he also filmed for Universal in the USA.



**With thanks to Ivo Blom**

## THE GOLD DIGGERS (1923)

USA. DIRECTOR BY HARRY BEAUMONT. PRODUCTION WARNER BROTHERS PICTURES. BASED ON THE PLAY THE GOLD DIGGERS BY AVERY HOPWOOD, 1919. PRODUCER BY DAVID BELASCO. EDITED BY FRANK MITCHELL DAZEY. WRITTEN BY GRANT CARPENTER. RELEASED: 22 SEPTEMBER 1923. DIGITAL RESTORATION 42 MINUTES.

CAST: HOPE HAMPTON [JERRY LA MAR], STEPHEN LEE [WYNDHAM STANDING], LOUISE FAZENDA [MABEL MUNROE], ANNE CORNWALL [VIOLET DAYNE], JOHN HARRON [WALLY SAUNDERS], ALEC FRANCIS [JAMES BLAKE], JED PROUTY [BARNEY BARNETT], GERTRUDE SHORT [TOPSY ST. JOHN].

For fans of musical films, *The Gold Diggers* is a household name, with the films of that name from the late 1920s and 1930s attracting much attention and acclaim. The timeless and amusing storyline involving a group of actresses banding together to outwit rich old men guaranteed that these films would see success, even if the later films deviated in the original plot. While these musicals largely survived, with the 1929 film surviving in incomplete form, the original silent film (starring Hope Hampton, Wyndham Standing and comedienne Louise Fazenda) fell victim to the ravages of time and was forgotten. Still, people have long speculated on the nature of the original, which came only a few years after Avery Hopwood first ran the original production on Broadway in 1919-1920, and which was more firmly based in the story he had composed. Alas, such is the nature of most silent films, what remained amounted to a few stills and production notes, alongside a faint glimmer of hope that it may be rediscovered.

98 years later, in May 2021, that hope would become reality, taking the form of an unlikely and curious case of lost film rediscovery. During a routine browse of online antiques listings I spotted a seller with several reels of 35mm nitrate film. The few provided images showed women in 1920s clothing and several intertitles. The brief listing description seemed uncertain, with the seller asking any viewers if they may know anything. I did not, though my curiosity had been piqued. The seller insisted on collection only, and that the buyer had to prove sufficient knowledge of nitrate to deal with it responsibly. After a brief phone call the seller was satisfied, and my brother and I made the journey two days later. This hastily planned crusade led us to a housing estate where the friendly seller led us to an old van parked on his front, opening the back door to reveal a small pile of rusty biscuit tins and film cans. A cursory inspection led to dismay, in the form of a rotten nitrate smell, though most of the reels appeared to be in excellent shape. After paying the man, we returned home, where a more careful examination of the reels could be made.

Three of the seven reels featured considerable nitrate decay, while the other four, in rich orange and grey tints from the same film stock, being in excellent shape. Additionally, these four had intertitles of identical font, with closer examination revealing the same actors and actresses. It appeared that these reels were all from the same film, and a large one considering that four near-complete reels were extant: perhaps a complete film or at least a large chunk of a silent feature. One of the reels, in a rich orange tint, featured a definition for the term 'Gold Digger'. The author of the definition appeared below: Avery Hopwood. Though not an expert in silent pictures, I had heard the name before, and an examination pointed towards the existence (or lack of it) of a 1923 picture titled *The Gold Diggers* by Warner Brothers, which had apparently been lost for nearly a century. Gobsnacked, this revelation initiated what would lead to the announcement and eventual restoration of this classic from the silent era.

Though a substantial find, *The Gold Diggers* as it now exists now is not a mint condition print as Americans would have seen it in late 1923. This survival forms an incomplete European print, exported to Britain by Warner Brothers in 1924, which would differ ever so slightly from the American print (such as slightly different camera angles). This print has seen chopping, poor editing and the addition of pieces not present on the original (such as a Universal Pictures end card, edited out in the restoration, with a date code indicating projection as late as 1930). Though one must keep this in mind, the importance of what survives, a little over half of the original feature, cannot be overstated. The new restoration contains the first and much of the last reel, as well as a substantial chunk of the middle. What remains lost is largely plot development, which I had attempted to bridge with explanatory cards to keep the continuity without impeding the pace of the film. This, in addition to scanning and restoration work by Jim Groom, Fritz Kramer and Bob Geoghegan, has allowed this lost classic to be shown again, in stunning 4k quality, nearly a century later.



## DRAGNET GIRL/HIJOSEN NO ONNA (1933)

JAPAN. DIRECTED BY YASUJIRO OZU. PRODUCED BY SHOCKIKU FILMS. SCENARIO BY TADAO IKEDA, BASED ON A STORY BY "JAMES MAKI" (YASUJIRO OZU). PHOTOGRAPHY BY HIDEO MOHARA. EDITING BY KAZUO ISHIKAWA, MINORU KURIBAYASHI. ART DIRECTION BY YONEICHI WAKITA. DIGITAL 100 MINUTES.

CAST: KINUYO TANAKA, JOJI OKA, SUMIKO MIZUKUBO, HIDEO MITSUI, YOMEKO OUSHI, YOSHIO TAKAYAMA, KOJI KAGA, YASUO NANJO, CHISHU RYU.



In *Dagnet Girl*, Ozu ventured outside his habitual terrain, in both setting and genre. Normally Ozu concentrated on the everyday rituals of the average family, on the rifts and rapprochements between parents and children as they swing between resistance and conformity to social pressures on matters of wide public concern – changes in marriage, education and employment patterns, shifts in morals and manners. In this film he focused on the troubled relationship between a gangster and his moll (who is also a member of the typing pool in a business company during the day). Not noted for his interest in sex and violence, let alone heterosexual relationships, Ozu would seem to be out of his depth. But he characteristically charms us with injections of humour, visual rhymes and homages to Hollywood, as well as demonstrating his ability to extend his visual repertoire beyond washing lines, telegraph poles and kettles.

*Dagnet Girl* is set in Yokohama which, like most port cities, was noted for the prevalence of prostitution and vice, and its generally low moral standards, due to the large number of visiting sailors and overseas residents. As in Hollywood gangster films, the gangsters and their dames are sharply dressed in flashy attire and habituate a boxing club, a nightclub, a poolroom and the street. Instead of washing on the line, telegraph poles, kettles and vases, Ozu uses hats, guns, billiard cues, punching bags, items of jewellery, records, suitcases and a coffee pot as recurrent visual motifs. The coffee pot is repeatedly featured in the scenes set in the apartment shared by the gangster and his moll. Rows of typewriters and a row of hats on pegs are repeatedly featured in the scenes set in the office where the heroine, Tokiko, works as a typist. Her competition, the stereotypical good girl, who is distressed about her student brother drifting into crime, works in a record shop, where the HMV/RCA trademark dog is repeatedly featured as a visual motif. The sets and cinematography were reputedly influenced by Sternberg and Hollywood gangster movies of the early 1930s. There is certainly an emphasis on glass surfaces and light and shadow, as well as a busy *mise en scène*, all of which are unusual in Ozu.

The film can be situated as an example of Shochiku's experimentation with genre diversification and Hollywood conventions in its first decade and a half. While the Nikkatsu company were more influenced by the local theatre, in choice of scripts, casting and performance style, the Kamata studio of Shochiku prided itself on its modernity and borrowings from Hollywood. The directors there were great fans of American comedy, and Ozu initially trained as a director of slapstick (the so-called nonsense genre). Under Shiro Kido, the head of the studio, the Kamata team eventually developed a distinctive genre of family sitcom (called the *shomin gekio* home drama) that concentrated on the everyday problems of family life and that, not unlike Chaplin's cinema, combined pathos and humour. Some of Naruse's early movies made at Shochiku's Kamata studio betray an uncomfortable mixture of melodrama, slapstick and social realism, but the studio stalwarts (Shimazu, Shimizu, Goshu and Ozu) soon mastered the art of welding these genres seamlessly together with what became known as "the Kamata touch" – a charmingly light, affecting, modern sensibility. Until the new sound studio was built at Ofuna in the mid-1930s, Shochiku continued to produce largely silent movies – even though they had made a successful sound movie already in 1931 (see below) – in order to service their large number of exhibition outlets which were not equipped for sound.

In the same year as *Dagnet Girl*, Hiroshi Shimizu, Ozu's colleague at Shochiku, also produced a film set in Yokohama, with a similar romantic triangle involving two girls (one respectable, the other disreputable) in love with the same guy. But the Shimizu film is not a gangster movie; it is a fully-fledged romantic melodrama. Ozu's film is a genre exercise and he seems to have recognised his limitations by immediately reverting to his real forte – the everyday life of ordinary people – in his next film. In *Passing Fancy (Dekigokoro)* (1933), he displayed an emotionally stronger engagement with the endearing personality, trials and tribulations of a thick-headed loser (a single father) as he details his humorous and pathetic attempts to court a young lady and look after his scruffy son (played by the same boy who featured as the younger son in *I was Born But...*, [1932]). Though lacking the tight narrative and formal construction of *Dagnet Girl*, there is an emotional engagement with the two central characters of father and son in *Passing Fancy* – as well as a poignancy in their relationship – that is lacking in the central relationship between the lovers in *Dagnet Girl*, despite the spirited lead role performed by Kinuyo Tanaka.

*Dagnet Girl* provides an opportunity to view this star actress in one of her early roles. In the early 1930s, Tanaka was a Kamata studio actress, playing leading roles for Goshu, Shimizu and Ozu. She had featured in the role of the young wife in the studio's first sound film, *The Neighbour's Wife and Mine (Heinosuke Goshu, 1931)*, and in several previous Ozu movies. In the post-war era, she was the star of almost all of Mizoguchi's movies. As the gun-toting tough heroine of *Dagnet Girl*, she not only harbours a heart of gold (as conventionally do most fallen women of opera, fiction and movies), she also turns out to have the moral fibre, resolute determination and reformist zeal of a Salvation Army crusader – even if she has to shoot her man in the foot to teach him his lesson.

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[https://www.sensesofcinema.com/2004/cteq/dagnet\\_girl/](https://www.sensesofcinema.com/2004/cteq/dagnet_girl/)



# FAUST (1926)

GERMAN. KNOWN IN GERMANY AS FAUST: EINE DEUTSCHE VOLKSSAGE. DIRECTED BY F. W. MURNAU. PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTED BY UFA. PRODUCED BY ERICH POMMER. SCENARIO BY HANS KYSER, FROM GERMANIC LEGENDS AND THE PLAY FAUST BY JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE. ART DIRECTION BY ROBERT HERLTH AND WALTER RÖHRIG. COSTUME DESIGN BY GEORGES ANNEKOV, ROBERT HERLTH AND WALTER RÖHRIG. CINEMATOGRAPHY BY CARL HOFFMANN. PREMIERED 14 OCTOBER 1926. DIGITAL 112 MINUTES.

CAST: GÖSTA EKMAN [FAUST], EMIL JANNINGS [MEPHISTO], CAMILLA HORN [GRETCHEN], WILHELM DIETERLE (WILLIAM DIETERLE) [VALENTIN], FREIDA RICHARD [GRETCHEN AND VALENTIN'S MOTHER], YVETTE GUILBERT [MARTHE SCHWERDTLEIN], ERIC BARCLAY [HERZOG, DUKE OF PARMA], HANNA RALPH [HERZOGIN, DUCHESS OF PARMA], WERNER FUETTERER [ERZENDEL (ARCHANGEL)]; HANS BRAUSEWETTER, LOTHAR MÜTHEL, HANS RAMEAU, EMMY WYDA, HERTHA VON WALTHER

Lillian Gish was originally selected to play Gretchen but she insisted that Charles Rosher be the film's cinematographer, and Murnau preferred cinematographer Karl Freund. When Gish left the production and Germany altogether, Charles Rosher remained to observe UFA production techniques and was a production consultant on the film. When Freund became ill and unable to shoot the film, he was replaced by Hoffmann. Camilla Horn's first credited film role.

*Faust* is not a rare film, and this version doesn't really add any unfamiliar footage; but for decades all the prints in circulation in the United States have been dreadfully murky, and seeing the Munich print is like seeing this masterpiece of light for the first time. This ambitious film—the last Murnau was to make in Germany before coming to the United States to shoot *Sunrise*—was a big-budget super production featuring dazzling special effects and a name cast, headed by Germany's Emil Jannings (as an unsettlingly mischievous Mephistopheles) and Sweden's Gosta Ekman as Faust, alongside beautiful newcomer Camilla Horn, a luminous Marguerite (a role for which Lillian Gish was originally envisioned). Also featured were the French chanteuse Yvette Guilbert, whom Toulouse-Lautrec had painted many years before, and director-to-be William Dieterle. Eric Rohmer, who wrote his doctoral thesis on Murnau's virtuoso use of space in this dazzling film, described it as "a sort of visual opera, with the mise-en-scene taking the place of the score." Andrew Sarris has called it "one of Murnau's most eerie works in its strange mixture of tones. Jannings' very playful Mephistopheles dominates the film until the spiritually intoxicating ending, which represents one of cinema's most sublime sequences of redemption. *Faust* is one of the most pictorially beautiful films ever made, a supreme example of German studio craftsmanship, at times seeming like a Durer or Bruegel come to life. The expressionistic medieval settings are beautifully lighted; strange apparitions and weird camera tricks add a mystical atmosphere. In the famous scene where Mephisto and the rejuvenated Faust fly through the air, the camera, placed on a roller coaster device, travelled over miles of miniature cities and country."



Theodore Huff - San Francisco International Film Festival screening