

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

117
film

No. 32

FOR RELEASE:

Thursday, April 3, 1958

N.Y., N.Y. AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

On Thursday evening, April 3 only, N.Y., N.Y., a new color film by Francis Thompson with an original score by Gene Forrell, will be premiered to the public at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street; showings at 8:30, 9 and 9:30.

Using the most varied and surprising camera distortions seen so far on the screen, Mr. Thompson's film moves swiftly through a day in New York, turning the city's familiar scenes into a new world of fantasy. Buildings float, limp automobiles swallow themselves, trumpet horns distend. With the actual scene manipulated and transformed by the camera itself, each sequence is organized into a visual structure of movement and mood. Gene Forrell's music, synchronized with the film, explores the vast sound possibilities of a small chamber orchestra. His soundview of the city is both witty and thoughtful.

Aldous Huxley, after seeing N.Y., N.Y. in Mr. Thompson's studio, wrote:

In this very strange and beautiful picture we see the city of New York as it appears when photographed through [a variety of photographic devices]. We still recognize houses, people, shop fronts, taxicabs, but recognize them as elements in one of those living geometries which are so characteristic of the visionary experience....alive, glowing, intensely significant in the sequences of Mr. Thompson's film.

N.Y., N.Y. is a special feature to inaugurate the Museum's late Thursday closing hours during the summer, 10 pm. The exhibition galleries will be open.

Admission to the Museum, 75 cents for adults and 25 cents for children under 16, includes the film showing. An inexpensive supper will be available in the garden restaurant and on the terrace overlooking the sculpture court.

Film notes attached.

For further information contact Herbert Bronstein, Assistant Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, NY. Circle 5-8900.

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N.Y., N.Y.

A Day in New York

A new color film by Francis Thompson.

Original score by Gene Forrell.

15 minutes.

PUBLIC PREMIERE

Thursday, April 3, 1958
8:30, 9:00 and 9:30 p.m.
Museum of Modern Art Auditorium
11 West 53 Street

N.Y., N.Y.

A professional film-maker, Mr. Thompson made N.Y., N.Y. in his spare time over a period of years. A brief, incomplete version without sound was shown at the Museum in 1952. The film is not a sequence of happy accidents. Never interested in a loosely-assembled series of spectacular shots, Mr. Thompson's objective was a complete and carefully integrated film using precisely controlled camera distortion in a dramatically unfolding structure. The camera was used to bend reality to achieve a predetermined effect. Gene Forrell's score, synchronized to the movement and mood of the film, is so disciplined that it could stand alone, unusual for film music. Simultaneously audacious, witty and beautiful, N.Y., N.Y. is the most highly developed expression of abstraction in film to date. It has been submitted to the International Experimental Film Competition of the Brussels World Fair.

FRANCIS THOMPSON and GENE FORRELL

Mr. Thompson used a movie camera for the first time in 1935 on top of a Fifth-Avenue bus. Improper threading of the film blurred his shots vertically. Fascinated, he began to experiment with deliberate distortion, using color almost immediately. Mr. Thompson studied painting at Carnegie Tech, and later, while a student of Andre Lhoté in Paris in the early 30's, saw the films of Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Clair, Bunuel, Dali and Cocteau. Back in the U.S., he taught art courses until 1942 when he became a full-time professional film-maker. His first complete film, made in 1939 while he was still teaching, was Evolution of the Skyscraper for the Museum of Modern Art, still being circulated by the Film Library. In 1942 he went to South America for a year-long expedition to make a number of films for the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs. Later, for the same office, he wrote, directed and photographed a series of 5 films made in and around a small town in the USA for distribution overseas. He has made many other films, including a number for the Julien Bryan International Film Foundation, some under contract to the US Department of State; Fears of Children, for the Mental Health Film Board; Three Steps to Start, for the Fund for Adult Education; Diesel Race Car; Williamsburg Restored; and Your Share in Tomorrow, for the U.S. Stock Exchange.

Mr. Forrell has been a composer and teacher of music for several modern dance groups in the Eastern U.S. Since 1940 he has written scores for documentary and industrial and motion pictures, many-- including Boundary Lines and Picture in Your Mind - winning awards in domestic and international film festivals. He has been musical director of West Coast Ballet companies, Professor of Music at Mills College, California, and frequent lecturer on film music at all New York City colleges. His works include music for ballet, piano, symphony orchestra chamber ensembles, solo voice and chorus. He has recently completed a children's opera, The Trouble with King Twillus.