

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

No. 118

FOR RELEASE:

Wednesday, Oct. 10, 1962

SWEDISH FILMS, 1909-1957 RETROSPECTIVE AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

The most complete historical survey of Swedish films ever presented begins today (October 10) at the Museum of Modern Art with a program of three silent films: Swedish Primitives (1909), New York Vignettes (1911) and Victor Sjöström's first feature, Ingeborg Holm (1913). The opening program continues through Saturday, with showings daily at 3 and 5:30. The three-month retrospective, assembled in part of prints lost for many years, is directed by Einar Lauritzen, Director of the Swedish Film Archives, in collaboration with the Swedish Institute and Svensk Filindustri, Stockholm, and Janus Films, New York. Margareta Akermark of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library went to Sweden to organize the series.

The thirty-one features and four short subjects included in the survey were selected by Mr. Lauritzen to illustrate Sweden's contribution to the film. From the beginning of the Swedish film, the unique interplay of film and theater led to disciplines of invention, dialogue and performance almost unknown elsewhere. Actors direct, directors act, writers and producers fill any artistic function needed. Victor Sjöström, Mauritz Stiller, Alf Sjöberg, Gustaf Molander and Ingmar Bergman all started in the theater. Sjöström, as an example, is represented in the series as both actor and director in his classic, Terje Vigen (1916), and in several other early films, and, as an old man nearing 80, as the leading performer in Bergman's Wild Strawberries (1957). Molander wrote the script for The Treasure of Arne (1919) and Erotikon (1920) with Stiller; directed One Night (1931), Intermezzo (1936), and The Word (1943), in which Sjöström appears, and Woman Without a Face (1947), which was written by Bergman. The emotional and romantic treatment of nature, an element of Swedish films from the first, is seen throughout the series, most conspicuously in Arne Sucksdorff's first feature, The Great Adventure (1953). Mr. Lauritzen, who is in New York for the opening of the exhibition, says that "this special feeling toward nature is manifested in part by traditional excellence of camera work, apparent early in Julius Jaenzon's 'Rembrandt lighting' in such films as The Phantom Chariot (1920). Great works of Swedish literature have frequently been dramatized, as indicated by Sjöström's Sons of Ingmar (1918), from a Selma Lagerlöf story, later by Sjöberg's Miss Julie (1951), from Strindberg. Although films of quality have been concerned chiefly with moral and religious themes, as in Sjöström's The Phantom Chariot and in the seven Bergman films in the series beginning with Port of Call

more...

(1948), an exception is Stiller's Erotikon (1920), a sophisticated comedy from which Ernst Lubitsch derived techniques later to be identified as the 'Lubitsch touch.'

Sweden has been a source of talented actresses for Hollywood, Mr. Lauritzen points out. Greta Garbo is represented in the series by her first important role, Stiller's The Story of Gösta Berling (1923); Ingrid Bergman in Molander's original version of Intermezzo (1936), shown for the first time in this country; Signe Hasso in Bauman's Career (1938); Mai Zetterling in Sjöberg's Torment (1944); and Ingrid Thulin in Wild Strawberries (1957).

A 32-page illustrated brochure to be issued in connection with the series has notes and biographical sketches by Mr. Lauritzen and an introduction by Richard Griffith, Curator of the Museum's Film Library.

Music for the silent films is arranged and played by Arthur Kleiner.

Admission to the Museum is \$1.00; members free. There is no additional charge for film showings.

Planned to coincide with the Museum's series, an exhibition of 57 photographs tracing the history of the Swedish film will be on view on the main floor of the Donnell Library, 20 West 53 Street, October 15 - November 30.

Schedule attached.

Photographs and further information available from Herbert Bronstein, Associate Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York 19, New York. Circle 5-8900.