

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

14 WEST 49TH STREET, NEW YORK

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BRITISH MAGICIANS SEE EARLY MELIES FILMS

Leslie ("The Great") Levante, world famous illusionist, headed a group of twenty-one members of the British Ring of the International Brotherhood of Magicians on a special visit today to the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street. They were the guests of the Museum's Film Library at a showing of five fantastic films by Georges Méliès, noted French magician and film pioneer, which cover a period from 1899 - 1912.

This series of films now shown daily to the public at 2:45 P.M. in the Museum's air-cooled film theatre, include:

- 1899 THE CONJURER, with Méliès as the Conjuror (acquired through the courtesy of the British Film Institute)
- 1902 A TRIP TO THE MOON (Le Voyage dans la Lune), with Méliès as the Inventor, dancers from the Théâtre du Châtelet acrobats from the Folies Bergères (from the Will Day and Jean A. LeRoy Collections)
- 1905 THE PALACE OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS (Le Palais des Mille et Une Nuits) (from the Jean A. LeRoy Collection)
- 1908 THE DOCTOR'S SECRET (Hydrothérapie Fantastique), with Méliès as the Doctor (from the Jean A. LeRoy Collection)
- 1912 CONQUEST OF THE POLE (A la Conquête du Pôle), with Méliès as Engineer Maboul (acquired through the courtesy of the British Film Institute)

THE CONJURER, produced in 1899, is one of the earliest examples of the use of stop-motion cinematography -- a technique which Méliès discovered by accident. The British Magicians also found particular interest in Méliès' ingenious use of visual illusions.

After the showing they visited the Museum's gallery exposition of Méliès material, as the guests of John Mulholland, foremost American authority on the history of magic and editor of the

magicians' magazine "The Sphinx." Mr. Mulholland has loaned important Méliès items to this section of the Museum's tenth anniversary exhibition of Art in Our Time.

"Few people realize how great were the contributions of magicians to the early days of the motion picture," said Mr. Levante. "The son of a well-to-do merchant, Méliès' lot was that of many a pioneer. He lost his entire fortune in the quest of an ideal. We magicians, and particularly my friend David Devant, who worked with him for so many years, are pleased that after his death last year Méliès is beginning to receive the recognition he merits."

Among the group of British Professional and Amateur Magicians who attended today's performance were: The Great Levante, Cedric, and Deveen, three leading British professional magicians, Arthur Boller, humorist, as well as the leading amateurs - Edgar Reid, retired engineer, Walter Wandman, plastics manufacturer, Thomas Darlington, London hotel proprietor, Edmund Younger, business executive, Stanley Ballard, retired milliner, and Dr. H. Park Shackleton, noted London physician.

They are sailing for England Wednesday on the S.S.

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