

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 7-7470

FOR RELEASE Saturday afternoon or Sunday
Morning, February 20 or 21, 1937

The Museum of Modern Art Film Library announces the initial showing of its fourth program of Series III: The Film in Germany and in France, a new series of outstanding foreign motion pictures. This program, composed of the first group of notable French films, will be presented to members of the Museum of Modern Art on Sunday evening, Feb. 21st, at 8:30 p.m. in the Auditorium of the American Museum of Natural History, 77th Street and Central Park West, New York City. After this showing in New York the Film Library will circulate this and subsequent programs in the new series to museums, colleges, and study groups throughout the country.

Program IV, entitled: The Film In France - From Lumière to René Clair, will consist of:

Early Lumière Films (1895-96) Acquired through the courtesy of M. Louis Lumière. These consist of brief glimpses of everyday life, street scenes, early news reels, etc. made by Lumière, the French pioneer of the motionpicture.

The Runaway Horse (1907) Produced by Pathé Frères. Directed by Ferdinand Zecca. From the Jean A. LeRoy Collection, acquired by the Film Library in 1935. Ferdinand Zecca, production-chief for Pathé for many years, made trick films, melodramas and "chase" films. He directed Max Linder in his first pictures. The Runaway Horse is a cinematic ancestor of the Keystone comedies.

Juve vs. Fantomas (1913) Produced by Etablissements Gaumont. Directed by Louis Feuillade, after a novel by Souvestre and Allain. Acquired through the courtesy of Gaumont-Franco-Film-Aubert. Preceding by six months the American Adventures of Kathlyn, this serial melodrama was shown not only in France but all over the world. It was followed breathlessly not only by juveniles and audiences composed of the general public but by the intelligentsia of Paris who discussed and reviewed it episode by episode.

The Crazy Ray (1922-23) produced by A.G.C. Directed by René Clair. Acquired through the courtesy of J.S. Fairfax-Jones, Esq. René Clair's first motion picture, made with little money and under difficulties, cannot be compared with his later work, but it is of great interest in showing Clair's deliberate rejection of the cinema technique and conventions of his own time for the freer cinematic forms of early French films.

The film in France developed independently and very early. Its first producers were Louis Lumière and his brother, Auguste, sons of a manufacturer of photographic supplies in Paris. The Lumières had seen Edison's kinetoscope - the peep-show machine - which showed miniature pictures in motion. Louis Lumière and his brother thought of taking the little pictures out of the peep-show and throwing them on a screen. In 1895 the Lumières patented their invention, the cinématographe, a

machine not only for taking movies but for projecting them on a screen. They took the first motion pictures made in France, a scene of the workers leaving their father's factory. In December of that year they showed this picture publicly, with others they had taken: A Train Leaving A Station, and scenes of everyday French life. By 1895 the Lumières had cameramen traveling all over the world to make topical and scenic movies.

Last summer in Paris, members of the staff of the Film Library enjoyed long conversations not only with the famous pioneer film-makers, Georges Méliès and Ferdinand Zecca, but also with Felix Mesguich, the cameraman who, as early as 1896, was already taking films (including one of Niagara Falls) in the United States, and during the next two years travelled about the world to obtain films of distant places and topical events for the Lumières. Like M. Louis Lumière himself, the father of the French film, these pioneers are all hale and vigorous men to this day: M. Lumière keeps in constant correspondence with the Film Library, while MM Méliès, Zecca and Mesguich have generously contributed photographs, books and other material, as well as stores of useful information about the early days of the film in France, to the constantly growing archives of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library.

In her program notes for The Film In France - From Lumière to René Clair, Iris Barry, Curator of the Film Library, writes: "The French film had a radiant infancy. After Lumière showed his first film in December 1895, a vigorous industry of production sprang into being, and for the next twelve years the French output was enormous, full of variety and of invention. After 1907, an attempt to elevate and refine the film led to the production of many stilted transcriptions of eminent literary works and stage plays in the formal style of the Comedie Française. Nevertheless, the vulgar but more creative impulses persisted..... interest in melodrama, violent action and crime, blossomed afresh in serial films shortly before the war. Here was material suited to the screen, freely and appropriately handled. But already by 1914 the critical approach to the film in France, and the emphasis on the advance-guard film which was to ensue, had both been determined in part by men from outside the cinema altogether -- men able to extend their enthusiasm for what was new and untraditional in the older arts to include a special interest in the new art of the cinema. In France, if nowhere else, the aesthetes exercised a real influence on the film."

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Program V of Series III: The Film in France - The Advance-Guard, will be shown to members of the Museum of Modern Art on Sunday, March 7th in the Auditorium of the American Museum of Natural History.

The Museum of Modern Art

F4 Please reply to: The Film Library, 485 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y.
 Director, John E. Abbott Curator, Iris Barry Telephone PLaza 3-1981 Cable Address: Modernart

February 10, 1937

TO MOTION PICTURE EDITORS
 TO CITY EDITORS

Dear Sirs:

The Museum of Modern Art Film Library will give the initial showing of its fourth program of foreign motion pictures Sunday night, February 21, at 8:30 in the auditorium of the American Museum of Natural History, entrance on West 77 Street between Columbus Avenue and Central Park West.

The Press is invited to attend the Sunday night showing or, if more convenient, to come to a Press Preview in Room 502, 125 East 46 Street (Grand Central Palace) at 2:30 Monday afternoon, February 15.

Program IV, entitled The Film in France: From Lumière to René Clair, is composed of the following motion pictures:

Early Lumière Films (1895-96) Acquired through the courtesy of M. Louis Lumière. These consist of brief glimpses of everyday life, street scenes, early news reels, etc. made by Lumière, the French pioneer of the motion picture.

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For further information, please call me at Circle 7-7470.

Sincerely yours,

Sarah Newmeyer
 Sarah Newmeyer
 Publicity Director

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