

American MovieMakers

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"AMERICAN MOVIEMAKERS" SERIES AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
FEATURES EARLY VITAPHONE FILMS
AND A RETROSPECTIVE OF THE WORK OF VINCENTE MINNELLI

A major film retrospective and restoration program, "American MovieMakers," begins this fall at The Museum of Modern Art. Sponsored by AT&T, the two-fold exhibition celebrates the development of talkies through the Vitaphone process in "The Dawn of Sound" (November 17 - December 4, 1989) and one of the great Hollywood careers in "Directed by Vincente Minnelli" (December 15, 1989 - January 28, 1990). The program includes publications for each exhibition; gallery exhibitions of film-still enlargements, posters, artifacts, and an interactive video display; and symposia.

Museum Director Richard E. Oldenburg stated, "We are extremely grateful to AT&T for undertaking the sponsorship of such an ambitious film project at The Museum of Modern Art. In addition to its extraordinary exhibition support, AT&T has made possible the restoration of original Vitaphone productions and a Vincente Minnelli film, ensuring that these works will be preserved for future study and exhibition."

Mary Lea Bandy, director of the Department of Film and organizer of "The Dawn of Sound," added, "'American MovieMakers' exemplifies two important aspects of the Museum's film program. We are dedicated to showing the lifetime achievements of the most important figures in film history and are especially pleased to be presenting this long overdue retrospective of Vincente Minnelli's

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The Museum of Modern Art

work. We also have a strong and long-standing commitment to film preservation. It is particularly rewarding to be showing these newly restored Vitaphone films, which represent an important transitional period in motion picture history."

Marilyn Laurie, senior vice president of public relations at AT&T, said "For more than a century, AT&T has been in the business of exploring science and technology to transform the way people communicate. This exhibition celebrates sixty years of sound's universal use by the motion picture industry. AT&T is pleased to have played a leading role in the development of sound for the movies, and we are proud to participate today in helping to rediscover and preserve its rich legacy."

"The Dawn of Sound" is the first major exhibition of films that use the Vitaphone sound process developed by AT&T's Bell Telephone Laboratories and Western Electric in the 1920s. The films highlighted in the program were originally synchronized with Vitaphone disc recordings, one of the earliest sound-film systems. A gallery exhibition illustrates the history of sound in film and the development of the Vitaphone process through photographs, text panels, and an interactive video program (October 13 - November 29, 1989). It has been assembled by Sheldon Hochheiser, research associate, AT&T, and Fred Blumlein Associates, Inc., and coordinated for the Museum by Mary Corliss, assistant curator, Department of Film. The exhibition is complemented by an illustrated brochure and a symposium, titled "Technology at the Movies: Vitaphone and Early Sound Systems," which takes place at the Museum on November 21.

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"Directed by Vincente Minnelli" follows the course of the American director's singular career, presenting the thirty-four feature films he made between 1943 and 1976. All but three of Minnelli's films were made at MGM, where he mastered the genres of the musical, the melodrama, and the sophisticated comedy. Organized by Stephen Harvey, associate curator, Department of Film, the exhibition is accompanied by a major monograph by Mr. Harvey; a gallery exhibition of film-still enlargements, posters, and memorabilia organized by Ms. Corliss; and a symposium, which takes place at the Museum on January 28.

Additional information on each exhibition, along with tour schedules, is provided on the exhibition fact sheets (attached).

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