

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

146  
FOR RELEASE

Thursday, August 1, 1957

No. 65

## LA MATERNELLE AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

La Maternelle, the widely-acclaimed film about a day nursery, will be the August 1 - 3 film showing at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street. It is the current program in the summer series "60 Years of French Film."

When Jean Benoit-Lévy and Marie Epstein made La Maternelle in 1933, use of non-professional actors was still unusual. Of the 250 children in the film, M. Benoit-Levy said: "None of those selected were professional actors, none had ever learned a line by heart. In bringing to their understanding each situation of the scenario in which they had to perform, we always tried to make them find their replies for themselves, with their own proper words, rather than give them written answers to study." The adult actors "without any professional tricks. . . adjusted themselves to the level of these children - that means, they lifted themselves up to their natural simplicity."

On the first day of work, Madeleine Renaud of the Comedie Francaise, who plays the maid in the nursery, said: "We are not going to use make-up in this picture. How would we look in make-up, playing with these children?"

Herbert L. Matthews in the N. Y. Times responded typically to the film's effect: "These are real, live children, dirty, squalid, immensely pathetic. They tug at the heartstrings as no artificial child star from Hollywood could possible do. . . . Here is a picture whose profound sincerity and humanity raise it to heights that the screen seldom attains. There are no innovations, no tricks of photography, no dazzling stars; all is simplicity itself, and yet an exquisite work of art has resulted."

Paulette Elambert, as the deserted child of a prostitute, is warmly remembered.

There will be showings each afternoon at 3 and 5:30, with an additional showing Thursday evening at 8 in connection with the Museum's late Thursday closing, 10 p.m.

---

For stills and additional information please contact Herbert Bronstein, Assistant Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York City, CI 5-8900.