

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

REMARKS MADE BY GERMAN AMBASSADOR HEINZ L. KREKELER AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

October 23, 1957

No. 114

dest. at press conf.

230

The German Ambassador to the United States, Heinz L. Krekeler, tonight opened the German film week at a gala first showing of The Captain from Koepenick at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York. He was the honor guest at a dinner given before the performance by Mr. and Mrs. William A. M. Burden, President of the Museum's Board of Trustees.

In introducing the first film to be shown, The Captain from Koepenick, the Ambassador pointed out that it is a satire on German military institutions of former times. The play from which the film is taken, the Ambassador said, dates back many years. It was written by Carl Zuckmayer, who is now an American citizen, and had its premiere performance in 1931 at Max Reinhardt's famous Deutsches Theater in Berlin. The film, one of the most recent produced in Germany, was directed by Helmut Kautner, who was also present at tonight's opening. The Ambassador expressed his pleasure at the selection of this film as an example of the German film industry of today.

The Ambassador spoke of the role which humor plays in the life of a nation and in international understanding as well. Nothing is more revealing, he said, about the character of a people than their sense of humor; and as examples of this in Germany he pointed to the well known traditions of the humorist and cartoonist Wilhelm Busch in the 19th century and of the satirical magazine "Simplizissimus" in the years before 1914. Both, he said, made great fun of many aspects of German life; and The Captain from Koepenick is a new example of self-satire.

Ambassador Krekeler took this occasion also to express his gratitude to Mr. Burden, to Mr. René d'Harnoncourt, Director of the Museum of Modern Art, and to the staff for making this selection of German films available to American audiences.

* * *

The Captain from Koepenick, this year's German nominee for the Academy Award, inaugurates a week of seven new, unreleased German films selected by Richard Griffith, Curator of the Museum Film Library, from a large number of recent productions made available by the Export-Union of the German film industry through its American representative, Mr. Munio Podhorzer. Each of the seven films is expected to be released commercially in the near future. A thirteen-week retrospective will follow. The entire program, planned to show achievement both current and traditional, is called "Past and Present, a Selection of German Films, 1896 - 1957."

For additional information please contact Elizabeth Shaw, Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York. CI 5-8900