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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 7-7470

FOR RELEASE Saturday afternoon or
Sunday Morning, April 4 or 5, 1936

The Museum of Modern Art Film Library announces the New York showing of its fourth program of motion pictures on Tuesday and Wednesday, April 7 and 8, at eight-thirty p.m. in the auditorium of the Dalton School, 108 East 89th Street. Admission is by card only, issued to members of the Museum of Modern Art.

The fourth program, under the general title of The German Influence, consists of two motion pictures: Hands (1928) directed by Stella Simon and Miklos Bandy, with music by Marc Blitzstein; and Sunrise (1927) directed by F. W. Murnau and produced by Fox Films.

Hands, acquired by the Film Library through the courtesy of Stella Simon, the New York photographer, was made independently by Mrs. Simon herself. This is the first purely experimental or non-commercial film to be included in the current series "A Short Survey of the Film in America" now being circulated to museums and colleges throughout the country. Hands has little in common with the customary realistic movie with a plot. Its only actors are hands and arms, and the film might almost be described as a ballet of hands. The rhythm and the photographic composition, in which lighting plays a significant role, are all-important. There is no plot in the usual sense, though two hands - one masculine and one feminine - emerge conspicuously from the general pattern and their movements suggest a definite emotional and dramatic continuity. Although there have been attempts to read serious implications and a message into this film, Mrs. Simon insists that it has none, but that it simply represents an experiment on her part to discover what effects might be achieved by treating the motion picture as an abstract pattern in time and space. Like many other artists at the time she had become deeply interested in the film as a medium for expression through the example of advanced German pictures such as Walter Ruttmann's Berlin: The Symphony of a City.

Sunrise, acquired by the Film Library through the courtesy of Twentieth Century-Fox, is an eleven-reel picture made in 1927 in Hollywood by the late F. W. Murnau, famous director of the German-made The Last Laugh. It displays perhaps more clearly than any other

film the influence of the post-war German school of cinematography on the American studios. The tremendous sets were designed and the scenario written by former associates of Murnau's in Germany, and the lighting and the camerawork throughout are quite in the German style. A striking use is made of the travelling camera, just as in The Last Laugh, when it follows the principal characters about through sets specifically designed to make this possible. The deliberate gestures of George O'Brien recall those of Emil Jannings in Murnau's foreign-made pictures, and the performances of Janet Gaynor (in a blond wig) and Margaret Livingston are equally foreign to their customary style of acting.

In her program notes, Iris Barry, Curator of the Film Library, writes: "When German films first travelled abroad after the war, it was evident that a new school of cinematography well worthy of study, perhaps of imitation was being evolved in Berlin. The first of these films to reach the United States was Passion in 1920, followed in 1921 by The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari.... These represented two distinct varieties of the German film, each of which exercised some influence in America. Meanwhile, a third variety evolved which was to have a more profound effect.... These were films with a markedly slow tempo which.... achieved their effects chiefly by lighting and by lively photographic devices. It was the German camerawork (in the fullest sense of that term) which most deeply impressed Hollywood. Variety in particular was admired for its camera angles and The Last Laugh for its unity of pictorial construction and the use it made of the travelling camera.... Any number of cameramen, designers, scenarists, actors and directors from the German studios were engaged by American studios.... The German invasion and the example of the German films combined to exercise a lasting influence."

The program of films to be given next month will conclude the present series, "A Short Survey of the Film in America", with The Talkies. It will include early experiments in sound-film and a scene from The Jazz Singer, the whole of All Quiet on the Western Front and the first Mickey Mouse ever released.

The Museum of Modern Art

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Please reply to: The Film Library, 485 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y.
Trustee Committee: John Hay Whitney, Chairman, A. Conger Goodyear, Edward M. M. Warburg

Director, John E. Abbott Curator, Iris Barry Telephone: PLaza 3-1981

April 4, 1936

TO MOTION PICTURE EDITORS
TO CITY EDITORS

The PRESS VIEW of the initial showing of the fourth program, The German Influence, given by the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, will be held in the Dalton School Auditorium, 108 East 89 Street, TUESDAY, APRIL 7, AT 3:00 P.M. The two motion pictures which comprise the fourth program are:

Hands (1928) directed by Stella Simon and Miklos Bandy, with music by Marc Blitzstein. Produced independently by Stella Simon.

Sunrise (1927) directed by F. W. Murnau and produced by Fox Films.

Still's from each of these films may be obtained from me at the Museum or at the Dalton School the day of the showing.

Hands will be the first purely experimental or non-commercial film to be included in the current motion picture series, A Short Survey of the Film in America, which we are circulating to museums and colleges throughout the country. Its only actors are hands and arms.

Sunrise, acquired by the Film Library through the courtesy of Twentieth Century-Fox, is an eleven-reel picture which displays perhaps more clearly than any other film the influence of the post-war German school of cinematography on American motion picture studios.

You are invited to attend or to send a representative. If Tuesday afternoon at 3:00 would be inconvenient, you may attend one of the showings for Museum members at the Dalton School Tuesday or Wednesday, April 7 or 8, at 8:30 P.M. Please use this letter as an admission card.

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

Sincerely yours,

Sarah Newmeyer
Sarah Newmeyer
Publicity Director

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