

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

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## HITCHCOCK FILM SERIES AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

The Cinema of Alfred Hitchcock, a series of 37 feature and 6 television films made by the eminent British director, will be shown in the Museum of Modern Art auditorium, May 5 through November 16. This is the longest Museum retrospective of the work of a single film maker. Mr. Hitchcock's films will be shown chronologically, daily at 3 and 5:30, the program changing twice each week. The series opens with The Pleasure Garden (1925, silent), with Virginia Valli, Miles Mander, Nita Naldi, and John Stuart, and continues with such notable British films as the original versions of The Man Who Knew Too Much (1934), with Leslie Banks and Peter Lorre, and The Thirty-Nine Steps (1935), with Robert Donat, Madeleine Carroll, and Godfrey Tearle. Among other films in the series are The Secret Agent (1936), Foreign Correspondent (1940), Shadow of a Doubt (1943), Rope (1949), and To Catch a Thief (1955).

The series was arranged by Peter Bogdanovich, who is also author of The Cinema of Alfred Hitchcock, an illustrated monograph to be issued concurrently by the Museum.

Mr. Hitchcock's current thriller, The Birds, will open March 28 at the RKO Palace and Sutton theaters.

Richard Griffith, Curator of the Museum's Film Library, says: "When Alfred Hitchcock received the script of his Secret Agent (1936), the first scene was laid in the British Foreign Office. In it, a number of C. Aubrey Smith types sat around a desk and explained to the secret agent that he must disappear and be given out as dead so that 'the enemy' will be thrown off his trail. This scene, entirely in dialogue and entirely without action, Hitchcock discarded. For it he substituted the following: A dining room in a private house. A coffin on the dining room table. Mourners stand about. A minister is reading the funeral service. In the background stands a little man with one arm, evidently a servant. The funeral is over, the mourners leave. The little man tidies up the room. Then he picks up the coffin under one arm and goes out.

"'Say it with props' was a favorite motto of the silent days when words were unavailable; it should be one still. But mottoes are of little use to anyone not born with the instincts of a film director. Alfred Hitchcock's is the instinct to visualize. Many of his films are famed for their trick camera work, especially The Birds. But as Hitchcock says in the monography accompanying this exhibition, he does

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not enjoy trick work for its own sake. It is just that if he cannot find the effect he wants in nature (he visualizes every shot in his films before beginning work), or produce it on the set, he is compelled to resort to artifice. Other directors have not been so particular - or felt so compelled. Many simply have the wanted action take place 'off,' later to be described by one of the characters, as in a Shakespearean chronicle play. Hitchcock says, 'You cannot describe action. You must show everything.'

"Part of the film sense, of course, is knowing how much of 'everything' to show, and when, and how often. Alfred Hitchcock possessed all of the components from the moment he first walked on the set. Except for fashion, and the difference between silence and sound, it would be difficult to tell his prentice work from the films he gives us today. We are particularly glad that, thanks to the kindness of the British Film Institute, we can restore these legendary early works to an American screen for the first time in four decades. Thanks are also due to M-G-M, Paramount Pictures, 20th Century-Fox, Universal Pictures, Warner Brothers, Principal Film Exchange, Contemporary Films and Selznick International, and particularly to Mr. Hitchcock himself for his help."

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Stills and additional information available from Herbert Bronstein, Associate Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York 19, N. Y. CI 5-8900.