

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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OUTSTANDING FILMS ARRIVE FROM FRANCE AND ENGLAND

John Hay Whitney, President of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, announces the arrival of two shipments of outstanding motion pictures from England and France. A shipment came from Germany three weeks ago and further consignments are expected from Sweden and Russia. All of these films were obtained by the Director of the Film Library, John E. Abbott, and Iris Barry, its Curator, on their trip abroad during the past summer. These new acquisitions will be added to the collection of outstanding films being assembled by the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, which is international in scope.

The most elusive item in the consignment was René Clair's first film, Paris qui Dort (The Crazy Ray). When Clair made this picture in 1923 he was a practically unknown young man who had been a journalist and then a film actor. Within a few years he was famous as a motion picture director, but this first film he had made seemed for all practical purposes to have been lost. Miss Barry and Mr. Abbott could find no negative or print of it in Paris. In England they found one fairly good print in the possession of Mr. J. S. Fairfax-Jones, owner of the Everyman Theatre, Hampstead, who generously lent it to the Film Library. Within the past few days, however, as a belated result of their researches abroad, word has reached Mr. Abbott that a negative has after all been located in Paris.

The Crazy Ray is a story of modern Paris. Albert, night watchman of the Eiffel Tower, comes down from his work one morning to find all of the city in a trance-like sleep, everyone petrified in the moment of movement when immobility overcame the city - a suicide poised for his death dive into the Seine, a dustman bending over a bin, a taxi-driver changing gears. The film shows Albert's adventures in the sleeping city, in which he is joined by five passengers who arrive in an airplane.

In the shipment of films from England there is also another advance-guard French motion picture, Rien que les Heures, a film recording the passage of one day in a great city. Made in 1926 by Alberto Cavalcanti, who is now working with the GPO Film Unit, in London, it was given to the Film Library by Mr. Cavalcanti himself.

Mr. Leslie Wood, a scenario-writer in London who has long made a hobby of collecting old movies, has presented to the Film Library more than 150 films of English, French, Danish, American and Italian origin, most of them made before 1914. An interesting item in Mr. Wood's gift is the first box-office success produced in England - Rescued by Rover, a short film made in 1907 by the motion picture pioneer Cecil Hepworth, at a cost of \$38. Other films included in Mr. Wood's gift are historical spectacles from Italy and comedies featuring such old-time favorites as John Bunny, Sidney Drew, Max Linder and Mabel Normand.

One of the most interesting motion picture activities in Europe today is the making of documentary films by the British Government's GPO Film Unit. The GPO Film Unit itself has contributed to the Museum of Modern Art Film Library Weather Forecast (1934) and Granton Trawler (1934). These are two good examples of the new type of documentary and interest film being developed not only by the British Government but also by industrial concerns in England.

From France has come the first shipment of motion pictures selected by the Film Library officials as representative of various stages in the development of the French motion picture. These include four by the American-born Man Ray: The Return to Reason (1923); Emak Bakia (1927); The Mysteries of the Chateau of Dé (1929); and The Starfish (Etoile de Mer) (1928), which features Kiki, the famous artist's model of Paris who became an artist herself. Emak Bakia is designated by its director as a cinepoem rather than an abstract film. Its curious title is Basque for "don't bother me"; Man Ray says he gave it this title so that he could use it as a suitable reply to persistent inquiries as to why he employed various innovations in making the film.

The newly arrived French films also include Jean Epstein's Fall of the House of Usher (1928); Louis Delluc's Woman from Nowhere (1922) and his Fever (1921); Macbeth (1909), with actors from the Comedie Francaise; Kirsanov's Menilmontant, independently produced in 1926 at a cost of \$1,000; The Little Matchseller (1927) directed by Jean Renoir, son of the great French painter; and The Smiling Madame Beudet (1923), directed by France's noted woman director, Germaine Dulac.

The Film Library has also received word that other French films are on their way to this country. These include Louis Feuillade's Juve Against Fantomas (1914), part of a French serial film which was shown episode by episode on European screens at about the time The Perils of Pauline in weekly installments thrilled American audiences. Another French film on the way is The Madness of Doctor Tube, directed in 1916 by Abel Gance; not as well known as the same director's The Wheel, it is at least of equal importance in the history of film production, being especially remarkable for its use of distorting lenses to suggest states of mind. The Cruel Lady, (L'Inhumaine) coming in the same shipment, was produced in 1923-24 under the direction of Marcel L'Herbier and has sets designed by Mallet-Stevens, Cavalcanti, Leger and Autant-Lara which were shown at the Paris Exposition of Decorative Arts in 1925. El Dorado, directed in 1921 by Marcel L'Herbier, and The Seashell and the Clergyman, directed in 1929 by Germaine Dulac, are also included in the consignment. Thirteen Gaumont films made between 1908 and 1910 complete the shipment now on its way here. These are Drama Among the Puppets, A Genuine Lady, Policemen in Fact and in Fiction, The Animated Matches, The Irresistible Piano, Happy Microbes, The Effects of Bous'bous'mee, The Garlands, The Hackman, Lysistrata, The Neo-Impressionist Painter, The Miniature Faust, and The Beggar's Christmas.

From the newly acquired films several series of programs will be built up by the Film Library and circulated to museums, colleges and study groups throughout the country. Two series of films made in the United States are now touring the country and will be augmented later by other American film programs.