

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 7-7470

For release Saturday afternoon or  
Sunday morning, April 3 or 4, 1937

A surrealist film directed by René Clair, a film conveying the weird and gloomy mood of Poe's tales, and a gaily fantastic animated cartoon in a new technique will compose the seventh program in film series III: The Film in Germany and in France which the Museum of Modern Art Film Library is presenting this year. The initial showing of this program will be held for members of the Museum of Modern Art on Sunday evening, April fourth, at 8:30 in the Auditorium of the American Museum of Natural History, 77th Street and Central Park West, New York City.

The surrealist film Entr'acte, was produced in 1924 in Paris by the Ballets Sûdois de Rolf de Maré as an integral part of the ballet Relache. It has been acquired by the Film Library through the courtesy of Rolf de Maré and Fernand Léger. With direction by René Clair, scenario by the artist Picabia, and music by Erik Satie, its cast also includes two more names famous in modern art: Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray. Of Entr'acte Iris Barry, curator of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, has written:

"Entr'acte is related to the dada-surrealist half-literary half-pictorial movement. Its somewhat tenuous story of a light-hearted murder and a fantastic funeral is informed with the dada spirit of mockery, irreverence, and unreality. The irresponsible humor, the visual wit of Entr'acte mark it very definitely as René Clair's. His comic vein is, at least in part, in the tradition of Mack Sennett whose comedies were and are venerated in Paris. In the magical scenes the influence of Georges Méliès can certainly be traced. The slow-motion of the funeral procession is a felicitous use of the stock-in-trade magic of the cinema, all too rare nowadays save in scientific and sport films. For the student of the cinema, Entr'acte is of special interest, holding as it does a key-position in a historic succession of the cinema. The pioneer Méliès very signally influenced the American film during the first decade of this century. Mack Sennett's slapstick comedies and the work of Chaplin in turn made a profound impression on the French cinéastes. The influence of Méliès, of Sennett, and of Chaplin is marked in Entr'acte, while from Entr'acte itself (along with other films by René Clair) stem the two considerably later Bunuel-Dali surrealist films and, with a fresh infusion from Méliès, Cocteau's The Blood of a Poet.

The Fall of the House of Usher, produced in 1928 in Paris by Films Epstein, has been acquired through the courtesy of the Cinémathèque Française. The scenario is based on two stories by Edgar Allan Poe - The House of Usher and The Oval Portrait. The film was

directed by Jean Epstein with Jean Debucourt, Marguerite Gance, and Charles Lamy in the principal roles. The atmosphere of the film is surcharged with eerie gloom but it is in the macabre scenes of the burial and the subsequent restorations to life of the heroine that the picture achieves its finest effects. The film is particularly noteworthy in the use of slow motion photography and wide-angle lenses to heighten its nightmare quality.

Joie de Vivre was produced in 1934 by two young artists in Paris: Anthony Gross, an Englishman, and Hector Hoppin, an American. Without financial backing and with no experience in the technical production methods of animated cartoons, they spent two laborious years evolving Joie de Vivre from the original idea to the finished product. Although the mechanical process they have used is the same as that of the standard animated cartoon, the young artists carry out their idea in entirely new fashion. The animation is in ballet rhythm to modern music especially written for the film by Tibor Harsanyi. The backgrounds, showing factories and countryside, are handled in the manner of contemporary artists. The "scenario" for the cartoon is an amusing dream which shows in ballet form the sprightly and fantastic adventures of two French shop girls and a bicycle-riding Apache. The three swing through the clouds, dance over telegraph wires, and jumble up railway signals to send trains scurrying in every possible wrong direction.

Joie de Vivre, a new step in that branch of the cinema devoted to the animated cartoon, has been widely exhibited in Europe. It has been acquired by the Museum of Modern Art Film Library through the courtesy of its creators and producers, Anthony Gross and Hector Hoppin, who have recently produced a second cartoon The Fox Hunt under the aegis of Alexander Korda in London.

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Please reply to: The Film Library, 485 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y.  
 Director, John E. Abbott    Curator, Iris Barry    Telephone PLaza 3-1981    Cable Address: Modernart

April 8, 1937

TO MOTION PICTURE EDITORS  
 TO CITY EDITORS

Dear Sirs:

The Museum of Modern Art Film Library will give the initial showing of its third supplementary program of Series III, The Film in Germany and in France, Sunday night, April 18, at 8:30 in the auditorium of the American Museum of Natural History, entrance on West 77th Street between Columbus Avenue and Central Park West.

The Press is invited to attend the Sunday night showing or, if more convenient, to come to a Press Preview in Room 502, 125 East 46th Street (Grand Central Palace) at 2:30 Wednesday afternoon, April 14.

The program will consist of the full-length feature picture Metropolis, produced in 1926 by UFA, directed by Fritz Lang with scenario by Thea von Harbou. The leading roles are played by Brigitte Helm, Gustav Froehlich, Alfred Abel, and Rudolf Klein-Rogge. The film has been acquired by the Museum of Modern Art Film Library through the courtesy of UFA.

In Metropolis German studio technique reached probably its high point. Considered in the light of motion picture history, the film completes the cycle of silent trick films begun by Melies' Trip to the Moon, produced in Paris in 1902. From Metropolis this type of film has gone on to further development in the talkies, the most recent example being H. G. Wells' Things to Come.

The setting of Metropolis is the City of the Future with towering skyscrapers, huge complex machinery, and vast underground catacombs where the workers live; their masters live in the skyscraper city above. The impressive and realistic settings are actually almost all small-scale models.

The two scenes probably most memorable in the picture are the one in the scientist's laboratory where the likeness of the heroine (Brigitte Helm) is transferred to a metal figure and a composite creature results, a robot-woman; also a revolt of the workers climaxed by a smashing of the machines and machinery that enslaved them.

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

Sincerely yours,

*Sarah Newmeyer*

Sarah Newmeyer  
 Publicity Director