

The Museum of Modern Art

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FOR RELEASE:

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FILM MEMORIAL TO DOROTHY GISH AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

There will be a three-day memorial film program for Dorothy Gish, the late actress, at The Museum of Modern Art Friday (October 18), Saturday (October 19), and Sunday (October 20), consisting of some of the most famous of the silent screen star's films. The program, open to the public, and taken from the Museum archives will consist of two-reelers, excerpts from popular Gish films, and three full-length features. Miss Gish's celebrated sister, Lillian, also appears in some of the films selected.

Dorothy Gish, born March 11, 1898, died June 4 of this year. Of the 60 two-reelers she made between 1912 and 1916, only a few survive, according to William Everson, film historian and lecturer, who with Eileen Bowser of the curatorial staff of the Museum, Department of Film, compiled the program. Miss Gish starred in forty feature films between 1916 and the end of the silent film era. The six surviving films contain chiefly dramatic roles for Dorothy Gish, although "It was as a comedienne in sprightly farces, spoofs and romantic comedies that she really made her mark," Mr. Everson points out.

The highly successful, but rarely revived, "Neill Gwynn," filmed in England, by Herbert Wilcox in 1925, evoked the comment from the late critic George Jean Nathan, "It took a British director to reveal how sexy Dorothy Gish can be." "Neill Gwynn" will be shown on the program with two other features.

"Hearts of the World," directed by D. W. Griffith is an early spectacle of World War I. The film, made in 1918, gave Miss Gish her start as a comedienne, in the role of "The Little Disturber." "It paved the way for the series of popular comedy roles that immediately followed when Dorothy was signed by Paramount," said Mr. Evenson.

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An even earlier feature "Old Heidelberg," made in 1915 with Wallace Reid and Erich von Stroheim, is a pacifist version of "The Student Prince."

The only two-reeler on the program is "An Unseen Enemy," which D. W. Griffith directed in 1912. This film served to introduce both Dorothy and Lillian Gish into the movies after Gladys Smith, a close friend, later to become known as Mary Pickford, "America's Sweetheart," had brought them to the attention of D. W. Griffith.

Excerpts will also be shown from two pictures starring both sisters, "Romola," from the George Eliot novel, directed by Henry King, and "Orphans of the Storm," directed by D. W. Griffith. Joseph Schildkraut, Monte Blue and Louis Wolheim are in the cast of "Orphans of the Storm," which was set in the time of the French Revolution.

All the pictures will be shown with a piano accompaniment by Charles Hofmann, who is on the staff of the Museum. Mr. Hofmann will compose an original musical accompaniment for each picture. For "Neill Gwynn" he will play the harpsichord as well as the piano. He will prepare special harpsichord interludes to conform to the seventeenth century background of the film.

The program follows:

October 18: "An Unseen Enemy " (1912), directed by D. W. Griffith with Lillian and Dorothy Gish, Elmer Booth, Harry Carey, Robert Harron. 12 min.

"Old Heidelberg" (1915), directed by John Emerson with Wallace Reid, Dorothy Gish, Erich von Stroheim. 50 min.

October 19: An excerpt from "Orphans of the Storm" (1922), directed by D. W. Griffith, with Lillian and Dorothy Gish. 5 min.

"Hearts of the World" (1918), directed by D. W. Griffith with Lillian and Dorothy Gish, Robert Harron, Kate Bruce, Josephine Crowell, George Fawcett. 92 min.

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October 20: An excerpt from "Romola " (1924), directed by Henry King with Dorothy and Lillian Gish. 5 min.

"Nell Gwynn" (1925), directed by Herbert Wilcox with Dorothy Gish, Randle Ayrton, Juliette Compton. 75 min.

The showings of Miss Gish's films will be at 2:00 P.M. and 5:30 P.M. Friday and Sunday, and at 3:00 P.M. and 5:30 P.M. Saturday.

Stills and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, and Lillian Gerard, Film Coordinator, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. 245-3200.