

The Museum of Modern Art

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TOM MIX, CLARA BOW, AND OTHER EARLY STARS ON MUSEUM SCREEN

"Riders of the Purple Sage" and "Just Tony," two early silent films of Tom Mix, and "Call Her Savage," starring Clara Bow, the early sex siren, will be part of a special series of "rescued" films to be shown at The Museum of Modern Art. The program, starting April 10, 1971, consists of Twentieth Century-Fox films preserved by the Museum, which have not been seen here since their original release.

"Riders of the Purple Sage," a 1925 Zane Grey romance, was made by Fox four times between 1914 and 1941. Of the Tom Mix version Eileen Bowser, Associate Curator in charge of the Museum's Film Archive, points out "the camera is permitted to get closer than usual to the actor: he avoided close-ups as a rule, not only to show off to the full his splendid riding and roping skills, but also because he made little pretense of being a dramatic actor."

Mix, according to Mrs. Bowser, outranked all other cowboy stars in popularity. He made his debut on film in 1919, but prior to that time he had been a star of touring Wild West shows, and he was billed as "Tom Mix Ex-U.S. Marshall, Expert Roper and Bronco Buster." The second picture starring Mix, "Just Tony," is of 1922 vintage. Named after the celebrated horse Mix rode, which plays an important role in the story, it was made on location in Nevada in the Valley of the Eagles.

Heroes and sirens ran a close popularity contest in the silent period when Clara Bow became known at the "It" girl, after Elinor Glynn's novel of the same title. During the flapper period of post World War I, Miss Bow had a phenomenal success, but her career, according to Mrs. Bowser, lasted less than five years. In ^{the 1932} "Call Her Savage," from the Tiffany Thayer story, she attempted a comeback, and "her tremendous vitality," Mrs. Bowser states, gives life to this typical confession style film.

On the same program there will be two John Ford films: "Just Pals," a 1920 example of Americana and "Four Sons," a 1928 silent film from I. A. R. Wylie's short story, with a musical score added by S. L. Rothafel (Roxy), assisted by Erno Rapee.

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Other directors represented are Fritz Lang, Raoul Walsh and William K. Howard. Altogether twenty-five films have been donated to the Museum archives by the film company, as a result of an agreement by which the Museum transfers perishable nitrate film stock to safety acetate, and the films become part of its permanent collection for future viewing. The works "rescued" include examples of famous cinematographers, among them James Wong Howe, Lee Garmes, Rudolph Mate and George Schneiderman.

"The Yellow Ticket," made in 1931 by Raoul Walsh, stars Elissa Landi and Lionel Barrymore, Laurence Olivier, Mischa Auer and Boris Karloff. Its subject is anti-semitism in Czarist Russia, and it was based on a well-known play by Michael Morton, filmed earlier, in 1918, with Fanny Ward. The Raoul Walsh translation, indicates Mrs. Bowser, ^{his} was directed with/usual Rabelaisian zest, prior to the self-censorship the Hollywood companies imposed upon the industry.

Fritz Lang's "Liliom," produced in 1934 by Eric Pommer, stars Charles Boyer in the often filmed Ferenc Molnar play, with photography by Rudolph Mate. It was made in Fox Studios in Paris, after Pommer and Lang had fled from Nazi Germany. The picture will be shown in the original, uncut two hour version, made in French.

The 1917 version of "A Tale of Two Cities," directed by Frank Lloyd, has William Farnum in the dual role of Charles Darnay and Sidney Carton. Jewel Carmen and Florence Vidor also star in what was "the first triumph of Lloyd's career." A success at the time, it displayed the influence of D. W. Griffith's "Intolerance," and Mrs. Bowser notes that the camera placement and movement, and the editing of the storming of the Bastille, are remarkably similar to the attack on the walls of Babylon in the Griffith film.

Two William K. Howard pictures complete the program: "Surrender," filmed in 1931, a World War I story with Warner Baxter, Ralph Bellamy and C. Aubrey Smith, notable for its night sequences and "naturalistic" camerawork by James Wong Howe; and "Sherlock Holmes," made by Howard in 1932, with Clive Brook in the title role, and Reginald Owen as Dr. Watson. Ernest Torrence and Alan Mowbray were featured in this modern dress version of the Conan Doyle classic, using Chicago gangster techniques in a London milieu, with "strong shadows, low key lighting and oblique camera angles."

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The program follows:

Saturday, April 10 (5:30) : RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE (1925). Directed by Lynn Reynolds. With Tom Mix. 70 min. Silent.

Sunday, April 11 (2:00, 5:30) : JUST PALS (1921). Directed by John Ford. With Buck Jones, Helen Ferguson, George E. Stone. ca. 70 min. Silent.

Monday, April 12 (12:30) : LILIOM (1934). Produced by Erich Pommer. Directed by Fritz Lang. With Charles Boyer, Madeleine Ozeray. French, no English titles. 120 min.

Wednesday April 14 (2:00, 5:30) : A TALE OF TWO CITIES (1917). Directed by Frank Lloyd. With William Farnum, Charles Clary, Jewel Carmen. ca. 90 min. Silent.

Thursday, April 15 (2:00, 5:30) : SURRENDER (1931). Directed by William K. Howard. With Warner Baxter, Leila Hyams, Ralph Bellamy. 70 min.

Friday, April 16 (2:00, 5:30) : SHERLOCK HOLMES (1932). Directed by William K. Howard. With Clive Brook, Ernest Torrence, Reginald Owen. 68 min.

Saturday, April 17 (3:00, 5:30) : JUST TONY (1922). Directed by Lynn Reynolds. With Tom Mix and his horse Tony. 75 min. Silent.

Sunday, April 18 (2:00, 5:30) : YELLOW TICKET (1931). Directed by Raoul Walsh. With Elissa Landi, Laurence Olivier, Lionel Barrymore. 81 min.

Monday, April 19 (12:30) : FOUR SONS (1928). Directed by John Ford. With Margaret Mann, James Hall, Francis X. Bushman, Jr. 105 min.

Wednesday, April 21 (2:00, 5:30) : CALL HER SAVAGE (1932). Directed by John Francis Dillon. With Clara Bow, Gilbert Roland, Thelma Todd. 92 min.

Thursday, April 22 (2:00) : LILIOM (see Monday, April 12).

Thursday, April 22 (5:30) : FOUR SONS (see Monday, April 19).

Additional information available from Lillian Gerard, Film Coordinator, and Mark Segal, Assistant, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, New York 10019. Tel: (212) 956-7296.