

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

NO. 153

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE FILMS OF ALBERTO CAVALCANTI MUSEUM PROGRAM SPANS FOUR DECADES

A comprehensive retrospective of more than 40 years of film production by Alberto Cavalcanti, a versatile and prolific filmmaker known primarily by film connoisseurs, will begin January 6 at The Museum of Modern Art. A producer and writer as well as a director, Cavalcanti has worked in France, England, East Germany, Brazil, Rumania, Israel and the United States during the course of his career and has made films in the experimental, documentary and narrative modes. Mr. Cavalcanti will be present at a showing of three of his earlier films--"La Petite Lilie" with Jean Renoir, "Rien que les Heures," and the rare avant-garde short "Pett and Pott"--on Thursday, January 6, at 8:00 pm, when he will address the Museum audience.

Alberto Cavalcanti was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1897. Studying architecture and law in Switzerland, Cavalcanti came to Paris in the 1920s and shortly became part of the group of young avant-garde artists centered around Marcel l'Herbier. Cavalcanti's initial ventures into film were as a set designer and one of his earliest sets was for l'Herbier's 1924-26 film "Feu Mathias Pascal." This film, which features the noted Soviet actor Ivan Mozhukin, will open the Museum series on January 6 at 2:00 pm.

Cavalcanti soon began to make his own films, one of the best known of which is "Rien que les Heures." This film of one day in Paris, made in 1926, was the first "city" film, and was seen by Dziga Vertov before he made his own "Man With a Movie Camera." Among the other films from the director's years in France is "En Rade," a rare subjective narrative from 1927 which has never been shown publicly in the United States. "En Rade" stars Catherine Hessling, the wife of Jean Renoir at that time.

Cavalcanti's work in France developed in the direction of documentary realism to the point where John Grierson invited him to England to work with Grierson's documentary group, the G.P.O. Cavalcanti arrived in England in 1934 and remained for more than a decade.

(more)

Among the best known of his documentary productions were "Coalface," "Night Mail," and "North Sea." From 1939 to 1942, Cavalcanti helped compile "Film and Reality." Controversial in its time, theoretical in concept, "Film and Reality" traces and questions the development of film reality and is composed of excerpts from more than 50 motion pictures.

During World War II, Cavalcanti turned to propaganda films one of which, "Yellow Caesar," was a savage indictment of Mussolini. In the mid 1940s, he began directing films in the narrative mode, making "The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby" and "Champagne Charlie," a musical. He also supervised the production of "Dead of Night," an omnibus film for which he directed the famous, chilling episode of the ventriloquist.

In the late 1940s, Cavalcanti returned to Brazil, with the intention of developing film production in his native country. After making several films there, of which "O Canto do Mar" will be shown in the Museum series, he travelled to East Germany, where he supervised the omnibus production "Die Windrose." Collaborators on "Die Windrose," which was filmed throughout the world, included Joris Ivens, Gillo Pontecorvo, Simone Signoret, Yves Montand, and Helene Weigel. While he returned to Brazil from East Germany, he continued to travel to make his films. The most recent film in the program is "Thus Spake Theodore Herzl," a 1967 documentary made in Israel.

The complete schedule of The Films of Alberto Cavalcanti follows:

Thursday, January 6

- 2:00 FEU MATHIAS PASCAL. 1924-26. Directed by Marcel l'Herbier. Sets by Cavalcanti. With Ivan Mozhukin. English titles. ca. 130 min. Silent.
- 5:30 LA JALOUSIE DU BARBOUILLE. 1927. By Cavalcanti. French titles. ca. 15 min. Silent. YVETTE. 1927. By Cavalcanti. With Catherine Hessling. Danish titles. ca. 90 min. Silent.
- 8:00 LA PETITE LILIE. 1927. By Cavalcanti. With Jean Renoir. ca. 15 min. Silent. RIEN QUE LES HEURES. 1926. 45 min. Silent. PETT AND POTT. 1934. By Cavalcanti.

Friday, January 7

- 2:00, 5:30 DIE WINDROSE. 1956. Omnibus production supervised by Cavalcanti. Collaborators include Joris Ivens, Gillo Pontecorvo, Simone Signoret, Yves Montand, Helene Weigel. In German and French; no titles.

Saturday, January 8

- 3:00 LA JALOUSIE DU BARBOUILLE and YVETTE (see Thursday, January 6, 5:30).
- 5:30 LA PETITE LILIE and RIEN QUE LES HEURES (see Thursday, January 6, 8:00).

Sunday, January 9

- 2:00 Short films by Cavalcanti: TOUR DE CHANT (1933), COALFACE (1936), YELLOW CAESAR (1941), GREEK TESTAMENT (1942), THREE SONGS ABOUT RESISTANCE (1943). Program ca. 90 min.
- 5:30 FEU MATHIAS PASCAL (see Thursday, January 6, 2:00).

Monday, January 10

- 1:00 Same program as Sunday, January 9, 2:00.

(more)

Wednesday, January 12

- Noon LA JALOUSIE DU BARBOUILLE and LE PETITE LILIE (see January 6) and YELLOW CAESAR (see January 9).
- 2:00 Short films by Cavalcanti: PETT AND POTT (1934), LINE TO THE TSCHIERVA HUT(1937), WE LIVE IN TWO WORLDS (1937), SQUADRON 992 (1939), MEN OF THE LIGHTSHIPS (1940), RAINBOW DANCE (1936), SPARE TIME (1939). Program ca. 100 min.
- 5:30 WENT THE DAY WELL (48 Hours in U.S.). 1942. By Cavalcanti. 90 min.

Thursday, January 13

- 2:00 WENT THE DAY WELL (see Wednesday, January 12, 5:30).
- 5:30 Same program as Wednesday, January 12, 2:00.
- 8:00 FOR THEM THAT TRESPASS. 1948. By Cavalcanti. With Richard Todd. 93 min.

Friday, January 14

- 2:00 Short films by Cavalcanti: NORTH SEA (1938), MESSAGE FROM GENEVA (1937), SPRING OFFENSIVE (1939), MEN IN DANGER (1939). Program 90 min.
- 5:30 FILM AND REALITY. 1939-42. Compiled by Cavalcanti and Ernest Lindgren. 105 min.

Saturday, January 15

- Noon NIGHT MAIL. 1936. Produced by Cavalcanti. To be shown with other documentaries.
- 3:00 CHAMPAGNE CHARLIE. 1944. By Cavalcanti. With Stanley Holloway. 79 min.
- 5:30 DEAD OF NIGHT. 1945. Omnibus film by Cavalcanti, Robert Hamer, Charles Crichton, Basil Dearden. With Michael Redgrave. 104 min.

Sunday, January 16

- 2:00, 5:30 THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF NICHOLAS NICKELBY. 1946. By Cavalcanti. With Cedric Hardwicke, Sybil Thorndike. 108 min.

Monday, January 17

- 1:00 FOR THEM THAT TRESPASS (see Thursday, January 13, 8:00).

Tuesday, January 18

- 5:30 O CANTO DO MAR. 1954. By Cavalcanti. In Portuguese; no English titles.

Wednesday, January 19

- Noon Short films by Cavalcanti.
- 2:00 O CANTO DO MAR (see Tuesday, January 18, 5:30).
- 5:30 THE FOREMAN WENT TO FRANCE. 1941. Produced by Cavalcanti and Michael Balcon; directed by Charles Frend. With Tommy Trinder, Constance Cummings. 88 min.

Thursday, January 20

- 2:00 FILM AND REALITY (see Friday, January 14, 5:30).
- 5:30 THEY MADE ME A FUGITIVE. 1947. By Cavalcanti. With Trevor Howard, Sally Gray.
- 8:00 EN RADE. 1927. By Cavalcanti. With Catherine Hessling. ca. 60 min. Silent.

Friday, January 21

- 2:00 EN RADE (see Thursday, January 20, 8:00).
- 5:30 CHAMPAGNE CHARLIE (see Saturday, January 15, 3:00).

Saturday, January 22

- 3:00 THE MONSTER OF HIGHGATE PONDS. 1960. By Cavalcanti. 59 min.
- 5:30 THUS SPAKE THEODORE HERZL. 1967. By Cavalcanti. 55 min. NIGHT MAIL (see Saturday, January 15, noon).

Sunday, January 23

- 2:00 THE MONSTER OF HIGHGATE PONDS (see Saturday, January 22, 3:00).
- 5:30 THE FOREMAN WENT TO FRANCE (see Wednesday, January 19, 5:30).

Monday, January 24

- 1:00 THEY MADE ME A FUGITIVE (see Thursday, January 20, 5:30).

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