

MUSEUM TO LAUNCH MAJOR FILM RETROSPECTIVE

"UNIVERSAL PICTURES: 65 YEARS"

The Museum of Modern Art is planning to launch an eight-month film retrospective in celebration of the sixty-fifth anniversary of Universal Pictures. The retrospective was announced by Ted Perry, Director of the Department of Film. It will start on June 8, the exact date when Carl Laemmle disclosed the formation of the company in 1912, and will comprise more than 310 films of every genre, reflecting both the history and growth of the American film industry.

Titled "Universal Pictures: 65 Years," this comprehensive cycle, continuing through January 29, 1978, includes many rare early films: the 1913 sociological drama, "Traffic in Souls," dealing with white slavery and the "corruption" of innocent immigrant girls; the 1916 film version of the Jules Verne classic, "Twenty-Thousand Leagues Under the Sea;" the first John Ford feature, "Straight Shooting" with Harry Carey and Hoot Gibson made in 1917; and one of the earliest Rudolph Valentino films, the 1918 "All Night" starring Carmel Myers.

The Universal retrospective has been in preparation for the past year and a half, under the direction of Adrienne Mancina, Curator of the Department of Film, and Larry Kardish, Assistant Curator. It will be accompanied by an exhibition of rare photographs and posters from famous Universal films, to be hung in the Auditorium Gallery. The pictures will be selected by Mary Corliss, the Museum's Still Archivist.

Lectures will accompany some of the rare films: William K. Everson, film historian, teacher, and author, will discuss the early Universal serials; James Card, Director of the George Eastman House, will lecture on "Law and Order," a little-known 1932 western starring Walter Huston from a

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screenplay by John Huston; and Walter Lantz, creator of Woody Woodpecker, will introduce and discuss a selection of his popular cartoons.

Rich and varied is the scope of films chosen, illustrative of each decade. The silent '20's, for example, are well-represented by two masterful Erich von Stroheim films: "Foolish Wives" and "Blind Husbands;" the rise of Lon Chaney will be seen in his two classics: "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" and "Phantom of the Opera;" the origins of the musical can be traced to two early films: the silent "Show Boat" of 1929, starring Laura La Plante, and the 1930 "King of Jazz," the first from Universal in Technicolor, with Paul Whiteman and Bing Crosby, directed by John Murray Anderson. Another rare musical is "Captain of the Guard" of 1930, with Laura La Plante and John Boles.

It was in the '30's that Universal embarked in earnest on a series of horror pictures. Boris Karloff starred in "Frankenstein," Bela Lugosi in "Murders in the Rue Morgue," and Claude Rains in "The Invisible Man." The latter, like "Frankenstein," was directed by James Whale, who is responsible for the much admired drama, "Waterloo Bridge," with Mae Clarke, as well as for the second version of "Show Boat," with Paul Robeson.

The Universal program covers every decade after the first one of this century. From the company's founding by Carl "Papa" Laemmle to the present day, it encompasses the 65 year history of Universal, which is now an affiliate of MCA, Inc. The survey reflects not only changing styles in film, but also changes in the taste of the American public. Contemporary trends are illustrated in such recent Universal film as Alfred Hitchcock's "Frenzy," "The Sting," and "Jaws."

The entire anniversary program will be announced shortly. It consists of pictures borrowed from world-famous, international archives, which have contributed to this retrospective. Among them are: The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences; the American Film Institute; the Czechoslovak Film Archive; the Danish Filmmuseum; the George Eastman House, Motion Picture Study Collection; the Library of Congress, Motion Picture Selection; the National Film Archive of the British Film Institute; and the Royal Film Archive of Belgium.

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