

The Museum of Modern Art Department of Film

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SILENT FILMS OF GERMAN COMIC KARL VALENTIN AT MoMA OCTOBER 19 AND 20

New York audiences will be introduced to seven silent films featuring the Bavarian comedian Karl Valentin (1882-1948) on Saturday, October 19 at 2:30 and 5:30 p.m. and Sunday, October 20 at 2:30 p.m. at The Museum of Modern Art (titles listed below).

Chosen from the twenty-nine surviving silent and sound films in which Valentin appeared between 1913 and 1941, the films in the exhibition KARL VALENTIN: SILENT FILMS reveal his kinship to film comedians Laurel and Hardy, W.C. Fields, the Marx Brothers, and Charlie Chaplin, as well as to dramatists Samuel Beckett and Bertolt Brecht. As Michael Schulte wrote in Karl Valentins Filme, "Karl Valentin is the Marx Brothers in one. He unites Groucho's cynicism with Chico's virtuoso slapstick and Harpo's poetry."

Valentin began his career during the first decade of this century performing self-composed texts in Munich pubs, where he captured the attention of local music hall directors. Although he never formally studied acting, he appeared in and directed pieces that he wrote for the stage, often joined by his partner Liesl Karlstadt. He recognized the importance of film, particularly for comedy, and in the very early twenties he collaborated with Brecht and Erich Engel on Mysterian eines Frisiersalons/Mysteries of a Barbershop, which is included in the MoMA program.

KARL VALENTIN: SILENT FILMS has been arranged for the Museum by Jytte Jensen, curatorial assistant in the Department of Film, in cooperation with Goethe House, New York. Prints have been provided through the courtesy of the Cinémathèque Québécoise.

The films contain intertitles in German only, but plot synopses will be available at the seventy minute program in the Museum's Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 2. The 5:30 program on October 19 and the 2:30 screening on October 20 will have live piano accompaniment.

Program:

Karl Valentins Hochzeit/Karl Valentins Wedding (1913)- Valentin is roped into marriage by an Amazon

Die Lustigen Vagabunden/The Hearty Vagabonds (1913)- Valentin as a witless policeman taunting two tramps

Der Neue Schreibtisch/The New Writing Desk (1913 or 1914)- a clerk trying to cut the legs of a tall desk down to size evenly

Karl Valentin Privat und im Atelier/Karl Valentin in His Private Life and His Studio (1913)- documentary footage with a home movie flavor

Mysterian eines Frisiersalons/Mysteries of a Barbershop (1922 or 1923)- a masterpiece of dadaist comedy, made in association with Brecht, set in a barbershop where chaos, humiliation, and mutilation are the order of the day

Karl Valentin und Liesl Karlstadt auf der Oktoberwiese/Karl Valentin and Liesl Karlstadt on the Grounds of the Oktoberfest (1923)- turning the amusements into catastrophes

Karl Valentin als Musikal-Clown/Karl Valentin as Musical Clown (1929)- demonstrating his unique acting ability by capturing the music of his best-loved routines in entirely silent, visual gestures

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For further press information contact Howard Feinstein, film press representative, The Museum of Modern Art 212/708-9752.