

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART TO SHOW CYCLE OF 300 FILMS
INCLUDING CABIRIA, VARIETY AND MALE AND FEMALE

On June 30 the Museum of Modern Art Film Library will present in the auditorium of the Museum at 4 P.M. daily and at 2 and 4 P.M. on Sundays the first half of a Cycle of 300 Films highlighting the history and development of the motion picture from 1895 to 1940.

Twenty-five films unseen for more than a decade will be included in this new series. Among them will be the famous Italian spectacle, Cabiria produced in 1914; Cecil B. de Mille's Male and Female made in 1919 and starring Gloria Swanson; Variety (1925) with Emil Jannings and Lya de Putti; the first Beau Geste made in 1926 with Ronald Colman, William Powell and Alice Joyce; The Salvation Hunters (1925), an experimental film made in Hollywood on a shoestring by von Sternberg long before he won fame for himself and Marlene Dietrich by directing The Blue Angel in Germany; "Broncho Billy" Anderson's Shootin' Mad (c.1911); William S. Hart's Toll Gate (1920) with Anna Q. Nilsson; and Erich von Stroheim's Blind Husbands (1919) and Foolish Wives (1921).

Part I, which will be shown from June 30 to October 31, will include 135 films comprised in 62 programs. The Museum will try an innovation in presenting these films. Instead of showing the programs successively day after day and then repeating the entire Part I of the series from beginning to end, the Museum will show each program on two successive days, i.e., Program 1, The Development of the Narrative, will be shown June 30 and July 1. Program 2, The French Film, will be shown July 2 and 3, and so on. This innovation is being tried for two reasons: (1) in such a long series the repeat dates are difficult to keep in mind and people are always missing by a day or two exactly the program they were planning to see; and (2) it is usually more convenient for prospective Museum visitors to take immediate advantage of the enthusiasm aroused by the report of a friend who has just seen a film at the Museum. It is for these reasons that the two-day repeat program will be given a trial at the Museum.

This huge Cycle of 300 Films is the first retrospective exhi-

125
bition of American and foreign motion pictures ever to be held in this country or abroad. The films in this pageant of motion picture history have been drawn from the archives of the Film Library, which has just completed its sixth year. The exhibition is in effect a survey of the pioneer work of the Film Library. On Monday, June 30, simultaneously with the opening of the Film Cycle, the Museum will publish a Bulletin on the work of the Film Library, in the form of an article by Iris Barry, Curator of the Film Library since it was founded in May 1935. An insert in the Bulletin lists the films and has a foreword by Miss Barry, who writes in part:

"Until the establishment of the Film Library in 1935, it was impossible to see the masterpieces of the silent era of films or, as a rule, any but very recent pictures. As a result, knowledge of the aesthetic and technical development of this new medium of expression had become largely a matter of recollection and conjecture. Now the Film Library is drawing upon its archives to present in the Museum auditorium the first retrospective of motion picture history.

"Here, at last, it will be possible to follow in chronological sequence the growth and development of this new art from its beginnings. In this first half of the cycle, for instance, visitors to the Museum can observe how vigorous primitives of many types gradually give place to longer and more ambitious pieces in which theatrical and literary influences often weigh down the newer form of expression, while more and more printed captions are inserted to 'tell the story.' But they will see, too, how at the same time creative talent contributes new techniques, attacks the problem of purely cinematic composition and editing and discovers visual eloquence. Italian spectacles enlarge the scale of action, the advent of famous stage stars to the screen lends it respectability and, finally, the American film with its characteristic pace and gusto establishes itself, introducing fabulous figures--the cowboy, the vamp, the bathing belle--and a new iconography to millions of filmgoers the world over.

"The powerful influence of the motion picture is recognized when, during and after the first World War, it is harnessed to the uses of propaganda. Scandinavia and Germany next add a more profound psychology and fresh narrative methods to the growing repertory of the art. Chaplin becomes the universal figure of comedy, and the star system provides figures to people the daydreams of multitudes. As the silent era draws all unexpectedly to its close, the medium struggles visibly to conquer richer meaning and deeper content. It becomes more and more clear that films at their best are not translations of literature or substitutes for stage plays but independent works in an original medium laboriously mastering its own unique powers. At the same time, the screen unconsciously reflects--as this genuinely popular art needs must--the morals and manners of the society that produced it. By means of its newsreels, its travel films and its documentaries, the film has also mirrored the transient world of reality about it. Striving in the main to entertain, movies have unwittingly produced strange by-products of great value alike to the sociologist and the art historian....

"But as the Film Library continues its work of collecting and preserving significant and influential films, and making them available for re-examination and study, a new phase is being initiated. Already colleges and universities are increasingly aware of the importance of the motion picture, no longer merely as an aid to education, but as a subject of profound interest in itself. A comprehensive understanding

of the film is increasingly regarded as essential to a well-grounded education, not only because it exercises a profound influence in forming the taste and affecting the attitude to life of the millions who weekly attend film showings, but because it is the liveliest and the youngest of the arts."

The programs are divided into subjects such as The Rise of the American Film; The French Film; The Italian Film; The Russian Film; The German Film; The Swedish Film; The Documentary Film; The Independent Producer; The Comedy Tradition; The Star Vehicle; Ace Directors; The Western Film; and so forth.

A strange little film made in England in 1910, Possibilities of War in the Air, will be one of the eight subjects comprising the first program of this series which will be shown June 30 and July 1. Now, three decades later, in the midst of grim actualities of war in the air, this prophetic film seems at once archaic and timely with its balloon-like raider overcome by a somewhat embryonic plane while an inadequate tar-paper tank bobs about on the ground shooting off anti-aircraft popguns.

The first three programs which will be given from June 30 to July 5 have films of special interest to children. An early English film, Rescued by Rover, was made shortly after the American Great Train Robbery and, like the American film, was shown all over the world. It tells the story of a kidnapped baby and a faithful collie leading rescuers to the kidnappers' den. Also on this first program is Shootin' Mad, starring "Broncho Billy" Anderson, the original cowboy-hero, whose four hundred films delighted young America three decades ago.

The second and third programs are comprised of films by Melies, Zecca, Cohl and Durand, which include early trick pictures such as Slippery Jim, Fun After the Wedding, The Pumpkin Race and The Joyous Microbes.

Part II. of the Cycle of 300 Films will be announced later. Admission to the Museum, which is twenty-five cents to adults, and ten cents to children under sixteen, includes admission to the film showings at no extra charge. Museum hours are 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. weekdays, except Wednesdays when the Museum is open until 10 P.M., and Sundays from 12 Noon to 6 P.M. Film showings are at 4 P.M. daily including Saturdays, and at 2 and 4 P.M. on Sundays.