

The Museum of Modern Art

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FILM PRESERVATION: THE AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE COLLECTION

The Museum of Modern Art is inaugurating a series of programs in recognition of the film preservation efforts of institutions like the American Film Institute, the George Eastman House, the Library of Congress and the Museum's own archive. The initial program in the series, titled "Film Preservation," is devoted to the American Film Institute. Consisting of 19 pictures, both silent and sound, it starts November 4 with "The Sky Pilot," made in 1921 by King Vidor. The films, dating from 1914 to 1933, include several that have not been shown since their original release. All of the pictures have been rescued by the American Film Institute.

Obtained from various sources that have been carefully explored in the search for surviving nitrate, the American Film Institute films include "The Criminal Code" (1931), Howard Hawks' gritty prison drama with a powerful performance by Walter Huston; "The Kiss Before the Mirror" (1933), James Whale's stylish melodrama of marriage and murder with Nancy Carroll and Paul Lukas; and "The Goose Woman" (1925), Clarence Brown's detailed study of an aging recluse, with Louise Dresser in a bravura performance. These films are among the examples of sole surviving nitrate prints and negatives in studio vaults.

Now transferred to safety stock and permanently preserved in the American Film Institute Collection, the films will soon be available to audiences throughout the nation through non-theatrical distribution or theatrical re-release. Examples of films acquired from private collectors are: "Timothy's Quest" (1922), a moving fable of childhood faith and authentic Americana shot on location in New England; "The Cruise of the Jasper B" (1926), the almost totally unseen Valentino epic; and "The Sky Pilot" (1921), a melodrama of the Canadian Northwest directed by King Vidor. These are among the thousands of silent films that have disappeared from studio vaults

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and have survived through the efforts of private collectors, whose enthusiasm and love of the medium impelled them to save 35mm nitrate prints, even though knowing that eventually and inevitably the films would disintegrate.

Among the "rescues" are an important number of black films produced by blacks for black audiences. "Spyin' the Spy" (1918) and "The Scar of Shame" (1926), for example, represent an aspect of our film heritage that has been almost totally neglected. As a reflection of the stereotypes that blacks themselves accepted and reproduced in films, they are sociological documents as well as engaging films.

The American Film Institute Collection is a tangible expression of the American Film Institute's commitment to promote the American film. The films in this series still retain the power to capture an audience and make their own case for their right to be preserved and seen, according to Sam Kula who, together with David Shepard, is responsible for the direction of the archives of the American Film Institute. The American Film Institute, it is reported, has in the past three years added 4500 titles to its collection which, under a collaborative agreement with the Library of Congress, forms part of the national film collection. The collection, available to students and scholars, is stored and maintained by the Library of Congress. It is in urgent need of films from the three decades of the nitrate era of 1912 to 1942. when the Library could not accept or store films of perishable and inflammable nitrate stock.

The schedule of American Film Institute films follows:

Wednesday, November 4

2:00, 5:30 THE SKY PILOT. 1921. Directed by King Vidor. With Colleen Moore, John Boyers. Silent.

Thursday, November 5

2:00, 5:30 PLAYING DEAD. 1915. Directed by Sidney Drew. Silent. THE WISHING RING. 1914. Directed by Maurice Tourneur. With Vivian Martin, Chester Barnett. Silent.

8:00 THE GOOSE WOMAN. 1925. Directed by Clarence Brown. With Louise Dresser, Jack Pickford. Silent.

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Friday, November 6

2:00, 5:30 LET KATIE DO IT. 1915. Directed by Sydney Franklin. Silent. HOW
MOLLY MALONE MADE GOOD. 1915. Directed by Burns Mantle. With
Julian Eltinge, May Robson, Henry Kolker. Silent.

Saturday, November 7

3:00, 5:30 THE LOVE TRAP. 1929. Directed by William Wyler. With Laura La
Plante, Neil Hamilton. Silent.

Sunday, November 8

2:00, 5:30 THE BELOVED ROGUE. 1927. Directed by Alan Crosland. With John
Barrymore, Conrad Veidt, Marceline Day. Silent.

Monday, November 9

1:30 TIMOTHY'S QUEST. 1922. Directed by Sidney Olcott. With Joseph
Depew. Silent.

Wednesday, November 11

2:00, 5:30 BEGGAR ON HORSEBACK. 1925. Directed by James Cruze. With Edward
Everett Horton. Silent. PATHS TO PARADISE. 1925. Directed by
Clarence Badger. With Raymond Griffith. Silent.

Thursday, November 12

2:00, 5:30 THE CRIMINAL CODE. 1931. Directed by Howard Hawks. With Walter
Huston, Phillips Holmes. Sound. 97 min.
8:00 THE KISS BEFORE THE MIRROR. 1933. Directed by James Whale. With
Nancy Carroll, Frank Morgan. Sound. 66 min.

Friday, November 13

2:00, 5:30 ARROWSMITH. 1931. Directed by John Ford. With Ronald Colman, Helen
Hayes, Richard Bennett. Sound. 108 min.

Saturday, November 14

3:00, 5:30 IT'S THE OLD ARMY GAME. 1926. Directed by Edward Sutherland. With
W.C. Fields. Silent.

Sunday, November 15

3:00, 5:30 SPYIN' THE SPY. 1917. Silent. ca. 15 min. THE SCAR OF SHAME. 1926.
Directed by Frank Perugini. With Harry Henderson, Norman Joanstone.
Silent.

Monday, November 16

1:30 HIS PEOPLE. 1925. Directed by Edward Sloman. With Rudolph Schild-
kraut, Rosa Rosanova. Silent.

Tuesday, November 17

5:30 THE CRUISE OF THE JASPER B. 1926. Directed by James W. Horne.
With Rod la Rocque, Mildred Harris. Silent.

Additional information available from Lillian Gerard, Film Coordinator, and Mark
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