

The Museum of Modern Art

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"DAVID O. SELZNICK'S HOLLYWOOD": MAJOR RETROSPECTIVE OF LEGENDARY PRODUCER AT MoMA

DAVID O. SELZNICK'S HOLLYWOOD, a major retrospective exhibition of 51 feature films associated with that legendary producer, opens at The Museum of Modern Art on Thursday, February 28, 1980 with the screening of two films directed by William Wellman, NOTHING SACRED (1937) at 2:30 PM and A STAR IS BORN (1937) at 6 PM, and one directed by Alfred Hitchcock, REBECCA (1940) at 8:30 PM.

The retrospective is presented in cooperation with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and selected with the assistance of RONALD HAVER, its Director of Film Programs and author of the forthcoming book, DAVID O. SELZNICK'S HOLLYWOOD, who will introduce the opening day screenings of A STAR IS BORN and REBECCA. Mr. Haver will give an illustrated lecture, "The Making of GONE WITH THE WIND", at 6 PM, Friday, February 29.

In conjunction with the retrospective, an exhibition of 32 film stills will be on view in the Auditorium Gallery. This exhibition was organized by Mary Corliss, Curatorial Assistant in the Department of Film, and designed by Nora Sheehan.

The retrospective is in two sections: the first runs through April 25 and includes many original 35mm prints from the Selznick archive, made available through the courtesy of Daniel Selznick; the second runs from June 2 through June 18 and comprises all newly restored 35mm prints from The Museum's own Film Archive.

"Selznick was one of that small band of legendary men which included Irving Thalberg, Samuel Goldwyn, Hal Wallis, and Daryl Zanuck -- men who reshaped the look, style, and impact of the American motion picture in the years following the introduction of sound," writes Ronald Haver. "...it was Selznick who carried the function of producer to its logical extreme ... He was, in a sense, the first and perhaps the only 'auteur'- pro-

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ducer, for more often than not, his films reflect his own sensibilities and attitudes than they do those of the craftsmen who helped him achieve his ends. Selznick's work as a picturemaker -- his success and influence, his feeling for the emotional and intellectual responsiveness of his audience -- make him the most important figure in American films after D. W. Griffith."

David O. Selznick produced perhaps the most famous and beloved American motion picture ever made: GONE WITH THE WIND. "If he had done nothing else, his place in the pantheon of the film industry would be secure," continues Haver. "But the shadow of this monolithic creation has thrown into relative obscurity Selznick's other achievements as a picturemaker; his career spanned forty years, out of which emerged sixty-six features, three short subjects, and one television production. He was actively producing films in the Hollywood studios from 1926 to 1960, years which many historians acknowledge as the most creative, productive period in the area's sixty-five year history as a film production center. By the time of his death in 1965, Selznick had been a part of the film industry for more than fifty years. He had watched from the inside the rise of the star system, the development of mass production techniques and interlocking distribution/exhibition methods. Together he and the movie industry went through two world wars, the depression, the social change and cynicism of the post-World War II period and the introduction of the atomic and television ages. He saw the decimation of the major studios as individual producing entities, much as he had predicted, and the break-up of their production/distribution/exhibition monopolies.

"In 1939, Selznick was awarded the coveted Irving G. Thalberg Memorial Award given 'for the most consistent high quality of production.' And basically that is the focus of this retrospective tribute to David O. Selznick: fifty-one features, carefully, painstakingly labored over, handcrafted in almost every detail, produced with taste, imagination, intelligence and a love for the moviemaking process which was the true hallmark of the Selznick style."

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