

The Museum of Modern Art Department of Film

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TRADITIONS, PART TWO OF THE MAJOR RETROSPECTIVE BRITISH FILM, TO OPEN MARCH 15 Dame Anna Neagle To Be Guest of Honor at First-Night Screening

TRADITIONS, the main body of the comprehensive retrospective BRITISH FILM, will open on March 15 in the Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 1 of The Museum of Modern Art. The largest film exhibition ever organized by the Museum, BRITISH FILM opened in October 1984 with a survey of the films of producer Michael Balcon. With the start of Part Two of the series, TRADITIONS, the Museum enters into an extensive survey of all nine decades of British cinema history. The exhibition will continue till late 1986.

TRADITIONS is a critical history presented chronologically within the specific traditions that collectively distinguish British film, whose rich and consistent history this exhibition should make better known in America. Those aspects that help define British filmmaking--listed in order of presentation--include British Values: Spirit, Class and Empire, The Literary Tradition: Book and Stage, Realism (in both fiction and documentaries), The Musical and Comedy Tradition, and Melo-dramatics. British Values: Spirit, Class and Empire opens with a salute to Dame Anna Neagle, who for generations of audiences has embodied those values on the British screen. Directed by Herbert Wilcox, she has starred in some of the most popular and fondly remembered successes of British cinema, including Nell Gwyn (1934) and Spring in Park Lane (1947), which will inaugurate TRADITIONS. Dame Anna will introduce the screening of Spring in Park Lane on March 15 at 6:00 p.m.

As another special event during the opening week of Part Two, Colin Sorensen, noted film historian and Keeper of the Modern Department of The Museum of London, will give an illustrated lecture on the importance of London to British filmmaking. The lecture will take place on Monday, March 18, at 6:00 p.m.

The first films in TRADITIONS illustrate a theme familiar to British film: "character" as broadly exemplified in spirit, class, and empire. In March, Alfred Hitchcock's rarely seen drama Downhill (1927) will be screened, as will the recently rediscovered narrative of the IRA, The Dawn (1936). Two celebrated films--each by a Korda brother--will also be shown: Alexander's jolly court portrait, The Private Life of Henry VIII (1933), and Zoltan's stirring Raj adventure, The Four Feathers

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(unabbreviated version, 1939). A penny travels through George V's England and several episodes (each by a different filmmaker) in Royal Cavalcade (1935), a survey of events of 1910-1935. George Arliss as a sultan threatens British diplomacy in East Meets West (Herbert Mason, 1936), and Leslie Howard stars in and directs Pimpernel Smith (1941), a wartime masquerade in which British pluck wins out.

With the exception of Victor Saville's South Riding (1938), a memorable and popular drama of county machinations, the films in the April schedule are wartime and rousing. Carol Reed's The Young Mr. Pitt (1942, written by Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat) focuses on the early days of the Napoleonic wars; Reed's The Way Ahead (1944, written by Eric Ambler and Peter Ustinov) celebrates the coming together across boundaries of class and self-interest of the fighting people of Britain. David Lean's This Happy Breed (1944, written by Noel Coward) centers on the suburban Gibbons family, an exemplar of the notion of steadiness under pressure.

BRITISH FILM would not have been possible without decades of work in acquiring and preserving British films by the staff of the National Film Archive, a division of the British Film Institute, London. In 1985, the NFA celebrates its 50th year; as does The Museum of Modern Art's Department of Film; our close collaboration during the joint anniversaries is both fitting and appropriate. The shape and content of BRITISH FILM were determined by the curatorial staffs of both institutions; the majority of prints in this exhibition will be 35mm copies borrowed from the National Film Archive. Special thanks go to Sir Richard Attenborough, Chairman, and Anthony Smith, Director, the British Film Institute, and to David Francis, Curator of the National Film Archive, for their co-operation.

Co-directing BRITISH FILM in New York are Adrienne Mancina and Larry Kardish, Curators in the Department of Film; from London, Clyde Jeavons, Deputy Curator of the National Film Archive; Elaine Burrows, Viewings Supervisor, NFA; and David Meeker, Feature Films Officer, NFA. Scott Meek, former Feature Films Officer, also participated in the selection.

Supplementing Part Two of BRITISH FILM will be a major book on the traditions of the British cinema, edited by Charles Barr and published by the British Film Institute in association with MoMA's Department of Film. The 270-page softcover book is scheduled for publication in October 1985.

The Department of Film would also like to thank the following American distributors for the loan of films and their permission to screen prints borrowed from Britain:

Janus Films, Films Incorporated, Kino International, and MGM/UA. Thanks are also given to William K. Everson, New York, and Geoff Brown, London, for their advice and guidance on BRITISH FILM.

BRITISH FILM is sponsored by Pearson, Goldcrest Films and Television, and Thorn EMI, London. Additional support comes from the National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, the British Council, London, and The Roy and Niuta Titus Fund.

For further information, the public may call (212) 708-9500. For a recorded announcement of the day's film schedule: (212) 708-9490.

MARCH - APRIL SCHEDULE IS ATTACHED

February 1985

For further PRESS information, please contact Stuart Klawans, Film Press Representative,
The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, NY 10019 (212) 708-9752.

TRADITIONS

Part Two of BRITISH FILM

British Values: Spirit, Class and Empire--March - April Schedule

- Fri. 3/15 2:30 Nell Gwyn. 1934. Herbert Wilcox. With Anna Neagle, Cedric Hardwicke. 85 min.
- 6:00 Spring in Park Lane. 1947. Herbert Wilcox. With Anna Neagle, Michael Wilding, Tom Walls. 100 min. Dame Anna Neagle will introduce the screening.
- Sat. 3/16 2:00 Spring in Park Lane.
- 5:00 Nell Gwyn.
- Sun. 3/17 2:00 Downhill. 1927. Alfred Hitchcock. With Ivor Novello, Isabel Jeans. c. 90 min. Silent, with live piano accompaniment.
- 5:00 The Private Life of Henry VIII. 1933. Alexander Korda. With Charles Laughton, Binnie Barnes, Robert Donat, Elsa Lanchester, Merle Oberon. 97 min.
- Mon. 3/18 6:00 "The Influence of London on the Development and Character of British Film," an illustrated lecture by Colin Sorenson, Keeper of the Modern Department, The Museum of London.
- Tue. 3/19 2:30 The Private Life of Henry VIII.
- 6:00 The Dawn. 1936. Thomas G. Cooper. With Tom Cooper, Eileen Davis, Brian O'Sullivan. 89 min.
- Fri. 3/22 2:30 Royal Cavalcade. 1935. Herbert Brenon, Norman Lee, Walter Summers, Will Kellino, Thomas Bentley, Marcel Varnel. 104 min.
- 6:00 Downhill. Silent, with live piano accompaniment.
- Sat. 3/23 2:00 The Four Feathers. 1939. Zoltan Korda. With Ralph Richardson, C. Aubrey Smith, June Duprez, John Clements. 130 min.
- 5:00 Royal Cavalcade.
- Sun. 3/24 2:00 Pimpernel Smith. 1941. Leslie Howard. With Leslie Howard, Mary Morris, Francis L. Sullivan. 121 min.
- 5:00 East Meets West. 1936. Herbert Mason. With George Arliss. 74 min.

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SCHEDULE

Page 2

- Mon. 3/25 2:30 The Four Feathers.
 6:00 The Dawn.
- Tue. 3/26 2:30 East Meets West.
 6:00 Pimpernel Smith.
- Fri. 4/26 2:30 The Young Mr. Pitt. 1942. Carol Reed. With Robert Donat,
 Robert Morley, Phyllis Calvert, John Mills. 118 min.
- Sat. 4/27 2:00 The Young Mr. Pitt.
 5:00 The Way Ahead (The Immortal Battalion). 1944. Carol Reed.
 With David Niven, Stanley Holloway, Raymond Huntley, Peter Ustinov,
 Leo Genn, Trevor Howard. 91 min.
- Sun. 4/28 2:00 South Riding. 1938. Victor Saville. With Ralph Richardson,
 Edna Best, Edmund Gwenn, Ann Todd. 91 min.
 5:00 This Happy Breed. 1944. David Lean. With Robert Newton,
 Celia Johnson, John Mills, Kay Walsh, Stanley Holloway. 114 min.
- Mon. 4/29 2:30 South Riding.
- Tue. 4/30 2:30 This Happy Breed.
 6:00 The Way Ahead.

All screenings will be held in the Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 1. Updated schedules will be issued approximately every two months. Schedule is subject to change without notice; for best information, please phone (212) 708-9490 on the day of the screening.

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