

1921



Der müde Tod / Destiny

STATISTICS

Cinemas: 3851

Feature films: 370

EVENTS

January/February

October 6

World Premiere of DESTINY

Fritz Lang's film DER MÜDE TOD, "A German Folk Song in Six Verses," premieres in Berlin. The leading roles are played by Lil Dagover, Walter Jansen and Bernhard Goetzke. The reviews are reserved at first, but then improve. The career of Fritz Lang begins.

December

Ernst Lubitsch in America for the first time

Ernst Lubitsch travels to America for the first time for the premiere of his movie THE WEB OF PHARAO. He negotiates unsuccessfully with 'Famous Players' in New York. In mid-January, his stay in America is cut short. . On February 21, the New York premiere of DAS WEIB DES PHARO occurs without the director. The success of the film is extraordinary.

April 17

EFA

he European Film Alliance (EFA) is founded as a German-American link between Hollywood's "Famous Players" and former Ufa employees (Paul Davidson, Carl Bratz, Ernst Lubitsch, Joe May). The company was to be active in production, distribution and theatrical exhibition. The 'Big German Deal' with stars like Pola Negri, Mia May, Emil Jannings and Harry Liedtke is an offensive against Ufa.

May/June

Piel versus Jacobsohn trial

Journalist Egon Jacobsohn and action film actor Harry Piel argue in front of the Berlin Regional Court over Jacobsohn's accusations that Piel allows himself to be doubled in dangerous situations and is responsible for several accidents involving his employees. Although not all of the accusations can be refuted, Piel wins the case and uses it as a publicity stunt.

September 20

Decla-Bioscop merges with Ufa

The company 'Decla-Bioscop AG' decides at a general meeting to merge with Ufa. After Ufa's approval in November, the merger is completed. The cancellation of Decla-Bioscop's debts causes financial difficulties for Ufa.

FILMS OF THE YEAR

January 21

DER GANG IN DIE NACHT / THE WALK INTO THE NIGHT

Directed by F. W. Murnau. Screenplay: Carl Mayer. Cinematography by Max Lutze. Sets: Heinrich Richter. With Olaf Fönss, Erna Morena, Conrad Veidt, Gudrun Bruun-Steffensen. A love triangle between an ophthalmologist, a dancer and a blind painter. The melodramatic constellation ends fatally for the dancer and ultimately also for the ophthalmologist. A film about seeing. "It is the most wonderful thing our heart is capable of: a new music quietly opens its eyes in us. (Willy Haas, Film-Kurier, 14.12.20).

April 27

LUCHTSPIEL / LIGHT PLAY OPUS 1

Design: Walther Ruttmann. Music: Max Butting. - The first "absolute" film from Germany: movements of light and color, geometric forms playing in rhythm. "Here things flit, row, burn, rise, thrust, swell, glide, stride, wilt, flow, swell, dawn; unfold, bulge, spread, diminish, sphere, constrict, sharpen, divide, bend, lift, fill, empty, bloat, duck; bloom and crumple. In short, expressionism in motion. A rush for the student." (Alfred Kerr, Berliner Tageblatt, 6/16-21).

May 27

SCHERBEN / SHATTERED

Directed by Lupu Pick. Screenplay: Carl Mayer. Camera: Friedrich Weinmann. With Werner Krauß, Hermine Straßmann-Witt, Edith Posca, Paul Otto. - A family tragedy in the Sudeten Mountains. A railroad guard kills his superior inspector after the inspector seduces the guard's daughter. Only intertitle: "I am a murderer". Chamber play film with unity of place, time and action. "Under these circumstances, Pick deliberately comes into conflict with all expressionist principles. For, as is well known, the Expressionists repeatedly condemn explanatory psychology, any individual, petty-bourgeois tragedy, any intimate analysis of the soul. (Lotte H. Eisner, The Haunted Screen)

October 7

DER MÜDE TOD / DESTINY

Directed by Fritz Lang. Screenplay: Thea von Harbou. Cinematography: Erich Nitzschmann, Fritz Arno Wagner. Set designers: Walter Röhrig, Hermann Warm, Robert Herlth. With Li! Dagover, Bernhard Goetzke, Walter Janssen. - A German folk song in six verses. Four stories (from Germany, the Orient, Venice and China) about whether love is stronger than death. A frame story is the first story. "In the three episodes Lang is inexhaustible in ideas, and in exploiting photographic possibilities: to the virtuoso handling of mood here are added pace and humor." (Kurt Pinthus, Das Tage-Buch, 10/22/21)

December 11

HINTERTREPPE / BACKSTAIRS

Directed by Paul Leni and Leopold Jeßner. Written by Carl Mayer. Cinematography: Karl Hasselmann, Willy Hameister. Sets: Paul Leni, Karl Gorge. With Henny Porten, Wilhelm Dieterle, Fritz Kortner. - Three people are involved in a dark drama of jealousy: a maid, her fiancé and the letter carrier. Only the letter carrier survives. "Here the film is an act. The step towards seriousness. The elevation of the genre in one fell swoop. Nothing more disturbing. Without pauses. There is no shame in thinking back. The film is here on the way to becoming an internalized work of art." (Alfred Kerr, Berliner Tageblatt, 12.12.21). The centerpiece of Carl Mayer's trilogy of chamber plays, which also includes SCHERBEN and SYLVESTER.

MORE FILMS

February 9

HAMLET

Directed by Svend Gade, Heinz Schall. Written by Erwin Gepard, based on the Norwegian saga, not the Shakespeare play. Cinematography: Curt Courant, Axel Graatkjaer. Sets: Gade, Siegfried Wroblewsky. With Asta Nielsen, Paul Conradt, Mathilde Brandt, Lilly Jacobsson. - Family drama.

April 7

SCHLOSS VOGELÖD

Directed by F. W. Murnau. Written by Carl Mayer, based on the novel by Rudolf Stratz. Cinematography: László Schäffer. Sets: Hermann Warm. With Arnold Korff, Lulu Kyser-Korff, Lothar Mehnert, Paul Hartmann, Paul Bildt, Olga Tschechowa. - The revelation of a secret: tragedy of two marriages.

April 12

DIE BERGKATZE / THE MOUNTAIN CAT

Directed by Ernst Lubitsch. Screenplay: Hanns Kräly, Lubitsch. Cinematography: Theodor Sparkuhl. Sets, costumes: Ernst Stern. With Pola Negri, Wilhelm Diegelmann, Victor Janson, Paul Heidemann, Hermann Thimig. - Comedy about a robber chief's daughter. Among Lubitsch's films, one of the few total failures.

May 5

DANTON

Directed by Dimitri Buchowetzki. Book: Buchowetzki, based on motifs of the drama Danton's Death by Georg Büchner. Cinematography: Arpád Viragh. Sets: Hans Dreier. With Emil Jannings, Werner Krauß, Eduard von Winterstein, Charlotte Ander, Maly Delschaft. - Historical drama. Siegfried Kracauer sees here the French Revolution degraded to a questionable adventure. The highly praised film surpasses even MADAME DUBARRY in its misjudgment of history. (From Caligari to Hitler).

October 20

LADY HAMILTON

Directed by Richard Oswald. Written by Oswald, based on novels by Heinrich Vollrath Schumacher. Cinematography: Carl Hoffmann. Sets, costumes: Paul Leni. With Liane Haid, Conrad Veidt, Werner Krauß, Reinhold Schünzel. - Life story of the mistress of the English naval hero Lord Nelson, who ends up in abject poverty after his death.

October 22

DAS INDISCHE GRABMAL / THE INDIAN TOMB

Directed by Joe May. Screenplay: Thea von Harbou, Fritz Lang. Cinematography: Werner Brandes. Sets: Martin Jacoby-Boy, Otto Hunte, Erich Kettelhut, Karl Vollbrecht. With Olaf Fönss, Mia May, Conrad Veidt, Erna Morena, Lya de Putti. - Part 1: THE MISSION OF THE YOGHI. Part 2: THE TIGER OF ESCHNAPUR premieres on November 17. Exotic adventure films.

FILM BOOKS

Urban Gad

Der Film

Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler. 286 pp. - The Danish director (1877-1947) directed the films with Asta Nielsen in the 1910s. His reflections on film-aesthetic and dramaturgical questions were processed into an insightful book. Egon Friedell: ". . . the first attempt to give a kind of dramaturgy of the film, to circumscribe the artistic means and aims of cinematographic technique." (*Freie Deutsche Bühne*, 1923).