

Kracauer particularly comments on the subtle comparison of the opening and closing balcony scenes, and remarked that "...the film involved a range of deep emotions genuinely motivated".

HEIMKEHR (HOMECOMING - THE PRISONER'S SONG) 1928 UFA

Director: Joe May Supervisor: Erich Pommer From the Leonhard Frank novel "Karl and Anna".
Photography: Gunther Rittan (who worked on "Metropolis"). Released in the USA by Paramount.
Opened in New York in 1929 at the Film Guild theatre on West 8th St. A Broadway production
of "Karl and Anna" with Otto Kruger and Alice Brady was also presented in 1929.
Cast: Gustav Frolich as Karl; Dita Parlo as Anna; Lars Hanson as Anna's husband, Richard.

This film has been known under several titles, "Homecoming" being the US release title, and
"The Prisoner's Song" the British title. The story deals with two German war prisoners, Richard
(Lars Hanson, fresh from Hollywood disillusion) and Karl (Gustav Frolich, a rising young actor
who had scored as the hero of "Metropolis", and is still prominent in Germany as an actor/
writer/director) in Siberia - their escape, and their poignant passion for the same woman,
Anna, the wife of one of them. Dita Parlo, as Anna, was also a Hollywood deserter, later to
reach acclaim in Vigo's "L'Atalante" and Renoir's "Grand Illusion". May translated Frank's
fine novel quite freely, but was successful in preserving the spirit of the author's work.
Incidentally, the story was the basis, later, for the Greer Garson-Bob Mitchum opus "Desire
Me" at Metro. The less said about this talkie version the better; several directors lent their
talents in an attempt to doctor the film, but the end result was so bad that none of them would
accept screen credit. May's film, on the other hand, fared very much better, and was praised
unanimously by the New York critics. May later worked in America of course, directing
such films as Universal's "The Invisible Man Returns".

ZUR CHRONIK VON GREISHAUS - THE CHRONICLE OF THE GREY HOUSE. (1923) UFA Union Production

Director: Arthur Von Gerlach. Scenario: Thea von Harbou, from a novel by Theodor Storm
Camera: Karl Drews, Fritz Arno Wagner and Erich Nitschman. Sets: Walter Roehrig, Robert
Herlth and Prof. Poelsig.
Stars: Lil Dagover, Paul Hartmann, Arthur Kraussneck, Rudolph Rittner, Rudolph Foerster,
Josef Peterhaus, Gertrud Welcker, Gertrud Arnold.

It would be hard to find a more Germanic story than this; in almost every respect it contains
all of the elements of tragedy so dear to the hearts of German audiences. Unlike other German
films of the same period, "Chronicle..." moves into the open air and is unconfined by studio
sets. The warm and rich camerawork gives a remarkable picture of the Prussian heath and
expansive landscapes. Lil Dagover has never been seen to better advantage, and Hartmann makes
a sincere if somewhat "scene-chewing" hero. The Gothic-like lighting of the interiors, as well
as the lovely exteriors, are a tribute to the splendid photographic work of the three cameramen.
For the benefit of those who may have difficulty with the French subtitles, we print a synopsis
herewith:

On the great Prussian heath is the castle of Greishaus, where lives an old Prussian junker and
his elder son Hinrich. The younger son Detlev returns, having married a noblewoman, and finds
that the property has been willed to Hinrich. Hinrich has fallen in love with Barbara, a
lovely bondswoman, and refuses to give her up. Before the father can change the will, he
dies suddenly. Hinrich marries his beloved in true heavy-handed German fashion at his dead
father's bier, and by marrying a bondswoman forfeits his right to the estate. Detlev and
Hinrich fight on the heath, and the former is killed. At the same time, Hinrich's bride gives
birth to a son, Enzio. Hinrich flees the country, not knowing that his wife has died in
childbirth. Years later he returns incognito, and sees his now ten-year-old son who has
inherited the estate. During the night, Detlev's widow has little Enzio kidnapped in order to
herself inherit the estate. But the ghost of Barbara warns Hinrich. Gliding over the heath,
the spirit leads Hinrich in pursuit of the kidnapers. Under the cover of darkness, and in a
violent storm, Hinrich liberates the boy but in so doing is mortally wounded. He carries the
lad to the castle where the boy learns that his rescuer is his lost father. Hinrich dies and
joins the spirit of his beloved wife.

PIGCADILLY (1928-29) British International Productions. Director: E.A. Dupont

Camera: Werner Brandes Art Director: Arthur Junge (later credits: "Stairway to Heaven",
"I Know Where I'm Going"). Story and screenplay by Arnold Bennett. Asst. Director: Ronald
Goets, M.C. Edited by J.W. McCaughey.

Cast: Mabel Greenfield (GILDA GRAY); Valentin Wilton (JAMESON THOMAS); Shosho (ANNA MAY WONG)
Jim (King Ho-Chang); Victor Smiles (Cyril Ritchard); Bessie (Hannah Jones);
a guest (Charles Loughton).

American premiere: Little Carnegie theatre NY, July 14, 1929.

"Piccadilly" is particularly interesting in that it shows that Dupont could duplicate, successfully, his famed "Variety" technique. BIP imported Dupont (who soon after made the talkie "Atlantic" for the same company), Jung and Brandes in an effort to improve their productions at this period.

Although she was starred in American films prior to "Piccadilly", Gilda Gray was never offered another opportunity to demonstrate her "shimmy" wares as well as her thespian abilities. Nor was Anna May Wong cast importantly, although she was recognized as a great talent. Incidentally, "Piccadilly" marks Laughton's first appearance in a feature film, although he had appeared (quite prominently) in several short comedies earlier.

E.A. Dupont, for long inactive, has suddenly re-appeared - none too promisingly - on the Hollywood scene. After the extremely interesting (if not quite successful) "The Scarf" of two years back, he has settled down to a steady output of cheap quickies - sex exploitation thrillers, science-fiction and adventure epics, and horror yarns of the calibre of "Neanderthal Man", currently in UA release.

IMPORTANT NOTICES

As of the date of our going to press with these notes, we have not had an opportunity to screen these particular prints. For our members' guidance however, we should state that we anticipate a running time of approximately FOUR HOURS for this programme.

Short introductions and explanations will be made with each film to cover any serious gaps in continuity (if any) which may have resulted from the re-editing.

We also ask our members to note that screenings will take place every other Tuesday until further notice, to avoid conflicting with Cinema 16 programmes. On Wednesday October 14th. Cinema 16 are screening Kirsanov's "Menilicant" and a collection of latest UPA shorts.

We look forward to seeing a full turnout for this unique screening next Tuesday, and once again offer our thanks to Mr. Mitchell for his cooperation.

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