With this show, we're glad to welcome you to our new quarters, which are far and away the best we have occupied since we started out, as a small group, at Film Councillors some years ago. Here we have an attractive projection room, neat and business-like, and — essential in the summer months before us — air-conditioned. 12 East 44th Street is five or six minutes' walk from Grand Central Station, and a 2nd Street cross-town bus will land you within two blocks of our location. (We are between First and Second Avenues.) Our new headquarters should prove much more comfortable to our members than our old; to us they are more convenient in that all the projection equipment is already installed, and does not have to be transported back and forth. We have more room and pleasant surroundings, and this too should help to create a more enjoyable social atmosphere. But, like all good things, it has to be paid for. Our running expenses per show will be literally doubled. Naturally, we have no intention of raising our admission price — but we do ask the support of our members in maintaining a good turnout for each show. In recent weeks, the audiences have been good — and as long as we can maintain a good hard core of 50 people at each show, we should be able to break even. As we have pointed out before, the society is quite literally run solely for the benefit of the members. And, too, we are anxious to retain our status as a small group, genuinely interested in film, rather than a large group, only casually interested. So, once again, the existence of the society under increased costs depends wholly on the continued interest and support of our members.

One last point: our projection room is also used occasionally as a film studio, and fire regulations are strict. One of the clauses in our agreement stipulates a "No Smoking" ruling. We are sure that this won't cause our members any undue concern, especially as there is nothing more irritating than columns of smoke swirling up in front of a screen in a smallish projection room. Thankyou — and we hope you like our opening show to "inaugurate" our new base.

Greta Garbo — Marlene Dietrich — Ida Lupino

A trio of early European films


As we go to press we have seen only one third of this 45 minute condensation; hence we cannot say just what material has been deleted, but we can state that it is a fine print, and differs from that circulated by the Museum of Modern Art. It also has English titles. So much has been written about the film, one of the most famous of all the directed by G.W. Pabst, that detailed comment here seems superfluous. Certainly it was one of the best of its genre — though oddly enough, probably the best was D.W. Griffith's masterly "Isn't Life Wonderful?", produced in Germany some time before the German industry itself began producing these defeatist street sagas en masse. Those of our members who saw the Griffith film at the Museum recently, will recognize immediately the very great influence that his work had on Pabst in the making of "The Joyless Street." From Siegfried Krauener's "From Call to Hitler", we select the following comments at random: "Real life was Pabst's true concern ... he once said in conversation: "What use is there for romantic treatment? Real life is too romantic, too ghastly?" the film (soon) won fame in Germany and abroad ... Pabst's uninhating realism in depicting this decline (of Vienna during the inflation) shocked his contemporaries ... versions released (in other countries) were considerably mutilated ... the ruin of the bourgeois family is portrayed with a social consciousness that transforms it into a typical case ... Asta Nielsen as the kept woman demonstrates that uncompromising love is likely to perish in a society in which marketable goods supplant the essentials ... the ghastliness of this world is displayed in scenes that seem to record unaged events ... Pabst "let his characters unfold their plight without the inquisitional rack".


The Cast: Manon Lezcait (LYA DE PUTTI); Des Grieux (Vladimir Gaidarou); Nicheline (Marlene Dietrich); Marshal Des Grieux (Edward Rothausen); Manas de Rie (Fritzi Groener); The Son of de Gr (Robert Von Vergeseln); Manca's aunt (Prida Richard, Emilla Kurs); Susanne (Lydia Peteckina); Tiberia (Theodore Less); Lezcait (Siegfried Arne); Glaire (Trude Haestenberg).
If over a film existed that needed no introduction at all, "EXTASE" is that film. Ever since the film's production, it has been engulfed in a storm of controversy concerning (a) its alleged notoriety, and (b) its legal ownership. The legal matters were, in fact, settled only last month when the lawyers finally decreed that Machaty himself did own all rights. As for its notoriety, this has been sparked constantly through the years by censorship squabbles over reissues, and rehashings of the old stories concerning Fritz Lang's attempts to buy up all the prints following his marriage to Hedy, and his failure to pay one loоse from Mussollini.

Despite all this, the film's somewhat doubtful reputation is quite undeserved. The film's one really strong sex sequence - the beautifully handled seduction episode - is scarcely over mentioned. The nudity sequence remains in the foreground, only one assumes, because Laemmle was the protagonist. It is quite a short sequence, and one that Machaty hardly inserted for purely "exploitation" reasons.

Nudity in film is actually far more common than is generally supposed - even in the American cinema, though primarily in the silent period of course. Yet several semi-nude shots of Marg Helgenberger in the recently released talkie "Mr. Robinson Crusoe" raised not a murmur, and one never hears mentioned the two or three reels of nude material in Fedor Oppen's "Amok".

(Admittedly, the film is banned here in America, but it has been widely shown all over Europe, including England. Machaty's films were, it is true, somewhat preoccupied with sex, and they were often highly erotic in a luxurious and stylised way (especially in his German film "Notturno", a little gem of eroticism) but they approached pornography and suggestiveness much less than such modern American films as "Man on a Tightrope", "Carnival Story" and others, which seem wholly preoccupied with overt suggestive and各个环节 adolescent sex.

"EXTASE" is quite certainly a leader in that rare (and not obsolete) classification, the film-poem. Photographically it is superb, though possibly a little dated now in its concern with cutting for cutting's sake, and in its sentimental symbolism. Writing about it in "The Film Till Now", Paul Rotha remarks: "Perhaps the only Czech film of the period ... to achieve a reputation outside its land of origin was Gustav Machaty's extraordinary ‘Extase’ which unhesitatingly became known more for its shots of Hedy Lamarr in the nude than for its very real qualities of good film-making. It reveals a powerful yet deeply sensitive approach to the psychological study of a sex-frustrated young wife. With much of its action shot in natural surroundings, Machaty's direction was as good as anything being made in Europe in the thirties. His use of editing to build up moments of high tension, such as the automobile drive to the level-crossing, his sense of movement and symbolism and his very delicate handling of situations that could easily have become laughable, put him with the best directors of the period. Its attempt to create a sound track which would be easily translatable for international markets by having only one sequence in direct synchronous speech is worth analysing, as indeed was its ingenious use of off-screen sound. The photography was superb."

(Continued on page three)
Our print is silent, which matters hardly at all, although the original did have a rather lovely musical score. Dramatically, the film needs no dialogue and in fact had almost none. Even the two or three subtitles (in English and Dutch) on our print are quite unnecessary. Incidentally, this print, which is of French origin, is one of the best and most complete that we have ever seen, either here or in Europe. Most prints in theatrical distribution are poor, grainy dupes—cure is clear and sparkling throughout.

During the years, varying versions of "Extase" have appeared on varying markets. The need for a separate French version has never seemed abundantly clear, inasmuch as dialogue was non-existent to a great degree, and the French names supplied were not boxoffice names anyway. However, for the record it is worth noting that the French male lead has a pronounced Gallic leer as opposed to the sympathetic smile of the Czech original. Colleague Herman G. Weinberg assures us that in one version Miss L. was also made in the cabin love scene—but frankly this seems unlikely, and none of the versions we have seen lend credence to this belief, fascinating though it is. When the re-editable Sam Cummins released the film in the U.S. through Jewel Productions, he added a "true confession" type narration, and shot additional scenes of a girl in a two-piece bathing suit to be spliced in with the other bathing footage to pacify the censors into the belief that the girl was perfectly normally attired. For non-censorship states, Mr. Cummins shot further nude footage to pad the sequence, overdubbing things a little however by filming the nymphs disporting themselves in the woods! Yet another version has a strange epilogue in which the heroine rushes in silhouette, to meet her lover—the presence of a substantial baby and other items suggesting attainment of married bliss!

Our version is quite faithful to the original, and only four scenes are missing:

1) During the swimming episode, an inconsequential medium shot of Hedy floating
2) The sequence of the mating of the horses
3) A brief superimposed flashback of the husband killing a bee (the original shot is there, also the sequence over which the flashback is usually superimposed)
4) An involved shot of water dripping from a pump into a barrel—said shot being taken from baby water level in the barrel

On the other hand, the print includes some shots that we have never seen before in any version:

some scenes of files struggling on a fly-paper, intercut with the husband’s suicide.

Machaty’s other films of the same period included "From Saturday to Sunday" (1921), the afore-mentioned "Romeo", "Raha" and "Fred Maturian", all of which, like "Extase", used extensive use of natural backgrounds. In the early forties, Machaty came to the United States where his filmic output was incredibly minute. One or two excellent "Crime Does Not Pay" shorts for MGM were followed by his only American feature, "Jealousy". An odd, neurotic sort of film, it was again a strong sex drama—this time with trappings of melodrama and murder—filmed in the same stylized manner as "Extase". Machaty surrounded himself with old European confères (Hugo Haas, Alma Strelczyk, Hana Fiserova), and although it emerged as one of the most interesting "B" films ever made for Republic, it was largely ignored.

COMMITTEE OF THE FILM SOCIETY: Charles Turner (Chairman); Herman G. Weinberg; Warren G. Roethenberger; Robert G. Young; Dorothy Lovell (Secretary); Richard Kraft; William K. Everson (Program Notes & Enquiries).

OUR NEXT PROGRAM—TUESDAY JULY 6th, 8:30.

VICTOR SKEATON'S "THE SCARLET LETTER" (MGM, 1926) starring LILLIAN GISH, LARS HANSON and HENRY B. WALSHALL, with Karl Dane. Nine reels.

CARL DREYER'S "THE SEVENTH AGE" (1946) A moving little documentary from one of the most individual of all movie-makers. Two reels.

MACK BENNITT'S "SKYLARKING"—an outstanding early Samuel, with a wonderful assortment of stars and gags. One reel.
THEODORE HUFF MEMORIAL FILM SOCIETY

"EXTASE"

Following our program notes on the above film, with the remark that the existence of a second nude sequence seemed unlikely, an urgent memorandum was received from Herman G. Weinberg. Since in such matters Mr. Weinberg's word is law, we reprint his comments intact for the record:

"I just read your program notes on "Extase" and you made it seem as if my allegation that in one version Miss Lamarr was also nude in the cabin scene, was the result of wish-fulfillment on my part. Without necessarily denying that as a possibility, the fact is (which you omitted to state) that the man who told me he saw it was a Czech, now living in New York, who was co-producer of "The Golem" made by Duvivier in Prague and who knew Machaty very well and who saw the scene as described with his own eyes. Or so he claims. It could be that he too, was a mesmerized victim of wish-fulfillment, before me. Anyway, his name for the record is Frank Kassler and I will be glad to produce him to the Film Society as proof, should it be required of me. Maybe it's like the Hindu rope-trick. No one has actually ever seen it. Many however, know others who have seen it. Will you mention this to the members at the night of the showing - in partial vindication of my not wishing to "pull the Film Society's leg" - as the saying goes?"

Further second thoughts on the program notes for "Extase":

We were a little conservative in stating that only four scenes were missing from our print. A later examination showed other minor deletions here and there - fragments of the storm sequence for example. But none of the key material is affected in any way, and it's usually just a matter of a few odd frames that are missing.

Finally, our reference to a "strange epilogue" was perhaps worded rather badly, and we seem to have unwittingly created the impression that this was one of Mr. Cummings' brain-storms. Actually it was in the original Czech version (and in the English prints too) and was definitely made by Machaty. It showed Lamarr fondling a child at the end, in an allegoric-symbolic scene glorifying the ageless and universal ecstasy of motherhood.