Antony Balch presents  
A Svensk Filmin industri presentation  

BENJAMIN CHRISTENSEN'S  

WITCHCRAFT  
THROUGH THE AGES  

(Häxan)  

THE CAST  
The Witch..........................Mara Pedersen  
The Nun..............................Clara Pontoppidan  
The Young Monk......................Elith Pio  
The Fat Monk .......................Oscar Stribolt  
The Kleptomaniac.....................Tora Teje  
Chief Inquisitor....................Johs Andersen  
The Devil and the fashionable Doctor.....Benjamin Christensen  

with  
Poul Reumert, Karen Winther, Kate Fabian, Alice O'Fredericks, Astrid Holm, Gerda Madesen, Aage Hertel, Ib Schonberg, Frederick Christensen, Emmy Schonfeld, Ella la Cour, and Elizabeth Christensen.  

English narration spoken by  
William Burroughs  

THE CREDITS  
Written and directed by............Benjamin Christensen  
Director of Photography............Johan Ankerstjerne  
Art Director........................Richard Louw  
Musical score.......................Daniel Humair  

'X' certificate .................76 minutes  

Distributed by Antony Balch Films  

ABOUT THE FILM  
Benjamin Christensen was a Danish medical student who left medicine for the theatre and left the theatre for the movies. He worked in Denmark, Sweden, Germany and Hollywood. WITCHCRAFT THROUGH THE AGES, or "Häxan", is his most famous film.  

(continued)
ABOUT THE FILM

It begins with images from early civilisations and then goes straight to the Middle Ages. A Monk’s housekeeper gets a magic potion from an old hag to drop in his drink and make him randy. ... Karna, the old hag in her den, is busy cooking her brews with toads, and severed hands from corpses stolen from the galloways. (Legend has it that the bits of corpses Christensen used were real).

Two sincere graverobbers cut up a corpse “to discover the cause of a painful sickness”.

A drunken man who has the courage to tell an old witch to shut up is cursed by her and rendered dumb. Jesper le Rielien lies sick in bed. The local witch hunting specialist, Peter Titta, is called in to find out if Jesper’s sickness is the result of a witch’s curse. Titta passes a ladle of molten lead over Jesper’s body. He plunges the lead into cold water to solidify it into a lump and pronounces that the “markings” on the lead indicate Jesper has been bewitched. Jesper’s wife, Dame Anna, asks Peter Titta “who is this abominable witch?” “You’ll see her sooner than you wish”, replies the foul-toothed mouth of Peter Titta and right on cue old Marie the Seamstress slobbers in scrounging for food. She is arrested and brutally tortured by the inquisition as she reveals how she and her fellow witches have flown to the sabbath, kissed the Devil’s arse and taken part in all sorts of secret ceremonies. Meanwhile, Dame Anna, who has touched the heart of the youngest officer of the inquisition, rouses the suspicion of the inquisitors against the rest of poor Jesper’s household. Anna is arrested and made to confess and thus the whole of Jesper’s household, with the exception of his baby son, is wiped out.

The phenomena of witchcraft, sorcery and magic is then transformed into a pre-Freudian documentation of psychopathic manifestations of today—today being 1920—where strange old women are confined to homes for the aged and “the therapeutic shower has replaced the tortures of former times”.

To find his original material, Christensen for almost two years went through hundreds of medieval documents, judicial manuscripts and ancient books, some of them rare single copies in existence.

Obsession with witchcraft has haunted the history of all religions. Witches have been burnt as recently as 1872 (in the evangelical Canton of Glarus in Switzerland). In 1585, all the inhabitants of two villages near the German town of Trier, except two, were burnt in a mass auto-da-fe and in a village called Quedlinburg a single day saw 133 people burnt at the stake as witches and “werewolves”. Altogether it is estimated that 8 million men and women fell victim to the persecution practised by religious zealots. Christensen’s attitude towards the church shows the Holy Inquisitors as worse than the devils they purport to fight.

The cast consists of a mixture of professional actors and non professionals. Two poor old women discovered in a Copenhagen crowd, play the witch and the old woman suspected of being a witch. From the stage came Tora Teje in the role of the war widow in the modern sequence; the Danish comedian Oscar Stribolt plays the part of the Monk seduced by his housekeeper.

WITCHCRAFT THROUGH THE AGES was originally released in Europe in 1922 in the heart of the golden age of silent era, but in various censored versions. Now for the first time you can see the complete uncut WITCHCRAFT THROUGH THE AGES with a modern sound track narrated by William Burroughs.
THE SENSATIONAL SWEDISH MOVIE
... KEPT SECRET FOR 50 YEARS!

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WITCHCRAFT THROUGH THE AGES 'x'
NARRATED BY WILLIAM BURROUGHS
AUTHOR OF 'NAKED LUNCH'

SCARIFYINGLY BRILLIANT EVOCATION OF WITCHCRAFT... The GUARDIAN

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