

2015

TIME	SESSION	ROOM
8.50-9.20am	REGISTRATION	SCR
9.20-9.30	Introduction and Housekeeping announcements	NASH (K2.31)
9.30-10.30	CINEMA BEFORE 1918	
9.30-9.50	1. Andrew Shail - Max Linder and the Emergence of Film Stardom in Europe	
9.50-10.10	2. Stephen McBurney - Kaleidoscopic Colours in William Walker's Cinematograph Show	
10.10-10.30	3. Agata Frymus - Egyptomania in early British Cinema.	
10.30-10.50	4. Stephen Morgan - 'The longest film yet made': <i>The Story of the Kelly Gang</i> (1906) in Britain	
11.00- 11.30	COFFEE	RIVER
11.30-1.00	FIRST WORLD WAR & RELATED	NASH (K2.31)
11.30-11.50	5. Lucie Dutton - <i>High Treason</i> : Looking forward to 1940 or reaching back to the Great War?	
11.50-12.10	6. Rebecca Harrison - The Objective Camera and the Subjective Screen: The Language of First World War Cinema in Britain	
12.10-12.30	7. Pierluigi Ercole - One Hundred Years On: Little Italy, the Great War and the Anglo-Italian Film Industry.	
12.30-12.50	8. Emma Heslewood - Preston on film: Will Onda and the First World War	
1pm-2pm	LUNCH	
2.00-3.30	1920s BRITISH CINEMA	NASH (K2.31)
2.00-2.20	9. Tony Fletcher - Salvation Army in India	
2.20-2.40	10. Charles Barr - Cutts and Hitchcock	
2.40-3.00	11. Amy Sargeant - Further Adventures in Ruritania	
3.00-3.20	12. Jo Pugh - The trials of Miss Dinah Shurey	
3.30-4.00	COFFEE	RIVER
4.00-6.00	TRANSITION TO SOUND	NASH (K2.31)
4.00-4.20	13. Malcolm Cook - "Sensation form": Len Lye and the coming of sound	
4.20-4.40	14. Geoff Brown - His Master's Voice Goes to the Movies: New Technology, the Gramophone, and British Cinema's First Sound Features	
4.40-5.00	15. Laraine Porter - British Cinema's Transition to Sound: <i>A Cottage on Dartmoor</i> (1929)	
5.00-5.20	16. Nyasha Sibanda - Invasion: Legitimate Language and the Coming of Sound in <i>the Nottingham Evening Post</i> , 1928-1930	
5.20- 6.00	17. Questions and Symposium round up	
6.30 - 8.30pm	SCREENING	LUCAS

BRITISH SILENT FILM SYMPOSIUM 2015

ABSTRACTS

Session 1 (9.20-11.00) – CINEMA BEFORE 1918

Andrew Shail: Max Linder and the Emergence of Film Stardom in Europe

This paper argues that the first film star – that is, the first film-only performer treated by her/his employer as a production value – anywhere in the world was Max Linder. Though it has long been common to assert that Linder was the first *international* film star, the first film star to attain a level of fame beyond his own nation, none have yet made well-evidenced claims that he was actually the first film star of any kind. I will show that he was actually the first film star *anywhere* in either Europe or North America; while I have updated Richard deCordova's 1990 account of the earliest publicity campaigns for 'picture personalities' in North America, the earliest such campaign nonetheless did not commence until more than three months after Pathé Frères' campaign for Max Linder.

I will look at the events that motivated Pathé Frères to overcome a norm amongst employers of systemic anonymity for performers who were not already celebrities, when they decided, at a point around the 20th of August 1909, to launch a concerted publicity campaign for Linder, a campaign that commenced in the first days of September 1909, and which initiated a general shift in European film marketing towards the use, in publicity directed at the general public, of the identities of film-only performers as production values. I will also look at how film-historical coincidences have led to Linder's temporal priority being obscured.

Though this star-system-initiating event is meaningful to the UK in that it was the key moment in the inception of a new dimension in film culture in Europe and therefore in these islands, the UK has a prominent place in the Linder story, in two respects: first, it was one of those countries outside France in which Pathé's publicity campaign for Linder commenced *before* it commenced in France; second, though Pathé did not commence their Linder campaign in the US until February 1910 (*after*, I will show, the first publicity campaign in the US), it is nonetheless feasible that this campaign prompted the US production companies to initiate their own star system, as a major player in the US trade war was almost certainly exposed to it while in the UK during the late summer of 1909. This paper will therefore also lay out a strand of causality for the emergence of the star system in the US that, though it started in France and relates to Europe-wide circumstances, stops off, however briefly, in the UK.

Stephen McBurney: Kaleidoscopic Colours in William Walker's Cinematograph Show

William Walker, Aberdeen's earliest filmmaker and exhibitor, was arguably the most successful Scotland-based practitioner during the medium's first ten years. Yet there remains a tendency to merely exemplify him as one of many travelling exhibitors, and his influence on the experience and development of early film remains under-researched. The recent growth of digital archives has enabled this void in cinema history to be addressed, and in the process trace some of the most distinctive features of his programmes.

Early in his film career Walker quickly gained a reputation for innovation and experimentation. In 1898 he became the first to use sound effects in Aberdeen, the following year he exhibited a locally produced film in colour, and in 1906 he became an advocate for stencil-coloured film in Aberdeen. This paper, however, focuses on another of Walker's innovations: his simultaneous use of the cinematograph and kaleidoscope.

Contemporaneous to Walker's first exhibitions of this feature in 1898, London County Council released strict guidelines for exhibitors, forcing Walker to make last minute amendments for his upcoming engagement in the capital. The stipulation that at least two projectionists attended each lantern, and that no more than three projectionists be present at any one time in the projectionists' box, rendered the logistics of two lanterns in simultaneous operation impossible. Although not a feature of his London performance, the kaleidoscope became a staple in Walker's Scottish circuit for the next five or six years, as exhibitors enjoyed freedom from safety legislation.

This paper explores the consequences of London County Council's intervention, and how it in turn encouraged a diverse experience in the exhibition and reception of films. In contrast with the often London-centric histories of early film, through empirical research this paper highlights the distinctive features of early Scottish cinema, and sheds light on the innovative practices of a forgotten pioneer.

Agata Frymus: Egyptomania in early British Cinema.

Fascination with Egypt permeated British culture since 18th century. The increase of interest in pharaohs and mummies came in waves throughout the Victorian period and continued into the 20th century, reaching its crescendo in 1923, after the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb. Egyptomania coincided with popularisation of cinema; tales of mummy's curses found their way onto the silver screen in *The Wrath of the Tomb* (1915) (considered to be one of the very first British horrors) and *The Beetle* (1919). I argue that Egypt served as a powerful, colonial symbol, where 'against sultry stage sets of (...) pyramids, men and women revert to a primitive condition, magnetically drawn together by extremities of passion and desire'¹. Apart from providing a plethora of narrative opportunities, these accounts facilitated cinema's power to create illusion. In drawing a link with ancient Egypt, filmmakers could display full potential of the medium, using technical tricks such as overexposure.

Stephen Morgan: 'The longest film yet made': *The Story of the Kelly Gang* (1906) in Britain

When the Australian film *The Story of the Kelly Gang* (1906) was exhibited to British audiences in 1908, it was introduced by a lecturer as 'the longest film yet made'. Built upon the considerable popular legend of real-life bushranger Edward 'Ned' Kelly and his gang, and based in part on prior theatrical productions, the film has since emerged from relative obscurity to cement its place in the canon as the world's first narrative feature film, a fact enshrined by its 2007 addition to UNESCO's Memory of the World register.

Influenced by their successful exploitation of Charles Urban's *Living London* (1904) in Australia, the concert promoter Tait brothers began to make their own films, producing similar views of Melbourne and other cities before embarking on an

¹ Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995): 138.

ambitious plan to bring the exploits of the notorious Kelly Gang to the screen. Thus, this paper highlights the origins of *The Story of the Kelly Gang* in the Anglo-Australian circulation of early cinema, before focusing on the distribution, marketing and reception of the film in Britain.

Partnering with British entertainment entrepreneur, brass-band promoter, and sometime cricketer John Henry Iles, the Tait brothers bypassed the increasingly important renters and major venues of London, touring the film themselves under the auspices of the newly established Colonial Picture Combine. Debuting in January 1908 at the Assembly Rooms in Bath, the Colonial Picture Combine show – a bill comprised of the Kelly Gang film and supporting one-reelers alongside vocal and musical performances – toured halls, swimming baths, and open-air auditoriums across the south of England, south Wales, and the Midlands, as well as establishing arguably the first dedicated film exhibition venue in Ireland.

Already a considerable success across Australia, *The Story of the Kelly Gang* eventually earned an estimated £25,000, making it – by some accounts – the most successful Australian feature film of all time. The international circulation of the film has long been considered an important element of that success, but very little has been written about the film's British release. Drawing on articles in newspapers, trade publications, as well as archival materials, this paper reveals some of that story, and adds further to the legend of 'the longest film yet made'.

Session 2 (11.30-1.00) – FIRST WORLD WAR

Lucie Dutton: *High Treason*: Looking forward to 1940 or reaching back to the Great War?

In 1929, Maurice Elvey was in the middle of making *High Treason*, to add to a run of successful (silent) works such as *The Flag Lieutenant*, *Hindle Wakes* and *Palais de Danse*. Part way through shooting, in Elvey's own words: 'Sound came in, so we had to ... adapt our equipment to taking sound. ... Unfortunately, we were a long time editing, cutting and arranging, doing all sorts of things and my rival at that time – and very good friend – was Alfred Hitchcock [who] got out first, with the first English sound picture: the famous production of *Blackmail*.'

This paper will explore the way in which Elvey – ever interested in new innovations – adapted his plans for the silent *High Treason* to turn it into a sound film. Some sequences were shot in both silent and sound versions, while other silent sequences were used as originally filmed, with Elvey himself adding voiceovers using a variety of accents and voices. He was well placed to do so, having contributed to a special course about the impact of sound on film acting arranged by the Federation of British Industries at RADA in May 1929.

Inspired by a futuristic vision of 1940 and influenced by Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927), Elvey depicts modern cityscapes, a Channel Tunnel, communications via videophone (the "televisor"), the "Hesitation Waltz", fencing in nightclubs and the conscription of women, despite the efforts of a worldwide League of Peace. Elvey's portrayal of the League of Peace showed "all the countries of the world, the ordinary people had refused to fight, any more, each other ... they'd had enough of the First World War.' Despite the future gazing, Elvey seems to be returning to the preoccupations of *The Life Story of David Lloyd George* and its final intertitle: 'There must be no 'next time.'

In many ways, *High Treason* seems to reflect the anxieties of the past rather than look

to the future. I would argue that the contemporary review of the *Manchester Guardian* (August 9 1929) is correct in that 'the general mentality of the film is shown by the fact that when the soldiers are about to shoot, [the heroine] cries out: "They dare not fire on women," which, considering that women have taken on the responsibilities of men and walk about in breeches, is shirking the question [...] More radical changes have taken place in Germany and Russia since the war than are shown in these States a decade hence.' While the addition of sound should have enhanced *High Treason's* vision of the future, it actually highlights the backward-looking nature of the plot.

Rebecca Harrison: The Objective Camera and the Subjective Screen: The Language of First World War Cinema in Britain

This paper explores how British film was conceived between 1914 and 1918, accepting the invitation of the conference call to reflect on cinema and the First World War. In a 1916 poem printed in *The Times* entitled 'The War Films', Henry Newbolt described the 'living pictures of the dead' projected in movie theatres across Britain. The soldiers who were shot marching across battlefields were a 'fellowship' with a 'phantom tread' that appeared onscreen long after the men had died. Newbolt's allusions to film's haunting and spirit-like qualities were endemic in British popular culture throughout the First World War. Yet, simultaneously, the daily press cast cameras as scientific, optical instruments that offered greater clarity and objectivity than the human eye.

The paper therefore asks: how, and why, did commentators apply contrasting terminology when describing film? How did the spiritual and the logical intersect in First World War cinema? And what might the two vocabularies tell us now about how the war was conceptualised in contemporary British culture?

To answer the questions, I examine First World War cinema in three ways. First, I trace cinema and photography's representation in the daily press. Second, I examine the newsreels projected in cinemas throughout the conflict. Third, the paper situates film in a broader historical narrative that encompasses both technological advances and the popularity of séances. I argue that while the two vocabularies—the preternatural and the rational—seem at odds with one another, both emerged from a desire to make sense of the conflict by distancing humans from the machines of modern warfare.

Pierluigi Ercole: One Hundred Years On: Little Italy, the Great War and the Anglo-Italian Film Industry.

On 23 May 1915, nine months after Britain had declared war on Germany and Austro-Hungary, the Italian government decided to enter the war on the British side. The following day, according to the *Manchester Guardian*, London's Little Italy 'was sunning itself within its smeared and cosy limits, only mildly interested in Italy's fateful hour'. However, during the war a series of patriotic events took place in the capital in order to show to the British public the war effort of the Italian allies. To commemorate the centenary of Italy's 'fateful hour' my presentation will discuss the role played by the cinema in creating a sense of national pride among the members of the Italian community and in mobilizing support for the war amongst the British public. The paper will discuss the special events organized by the Italians working in the British film industry, and focus on the forgotten histories of those involved in the screening of Italian war films in London.

Emma Heslewood: Preston on film: Will Onda and the First World War

My paper will introduce the life and films of Will Onda, a Victorian acrobat who became a topical film maker, cinema owner and film distributor in Lancashire in the first half of the twentieth century. It will focus on his work during the First World War, including his Roll of Honour films. I will present short clips of several of his films from this era and discuss the background and impact of his work.

Background: On his death in 1949 Will Onda left his entire topical film collection covering nearly 40 years to Preston Council who later deposited the majority of the films with the National Film Archive (BFI). All the films featured in my presentation are from the British Film Institute, and have been copied from the original nitrate film as part of the Preston Remembers Project led by Preston City Council, with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and BFI.

Session 3 (2.00-3.30) – 1920s BRITISH CINEMA

Tony Fletcher: Salvation Army in India

This talk will showcase surviving material from *Through India's Coral Strand* (1925), a film made by the Salvation Army in India. One of the film's intertitles gives a clear account of the subject and purpose of the film:

Nomadic and gypsy like inhabitants, the criminal tribes of India constitute a continual menace to society, a terror to the police and a problem to the government. Their hand is against every man and every man's hand is against them. Social parasites, they exist by robbery, theft, burglary, blackmail and even murder. Highly organised, independent and fearless - numbering one and a half million. the Problem of their reform is being tackled by the government on broad, magnanimous lines, in a statesmanlike manner. In this work, the Salvation Army has pledged an important part, having under its care about eight thousand people of the tribe.

(DVD extract. Courtesy of BFI and SA archives)

The film fragment that survives consists of documentary sequences interspersed with re-created scenes made especially for the feature film; ie. a prisoner brought into a S.A. Compound in shackles.

Charles Barr: Cutts and Hitchcock

'He was by all accounts not much of a director (none of his films from this period seems to have survived)'. This was the lazy and inaccurate, but sadly influential, dismissal of Graham Cutts by John Russell Taylor, in his authorised biography of *Hitch* in 1978. Even then, several of Cutts's silent films were known to survive in the archives, and this event has shown more than one of them; by now it is easy to access, in whole or part, five of the seven films of his that Hitchcock worked on before starting his own career as a director. This paper offers an overview of the Cutts-Hitchcock partnership, as examined (*advert alert*) in more detail in a new book 'Hitchcock, Lost and Found: the Forgotten Films', co-authored with the Parisian scholar Alain Kerzoncuf and due for publication by the University of Kentucky Press in March. It is hoped that copies of the book will be available on the day.

Amy Sargeant: Further Adventures in Ruritania

Following last year's screening of *The Vagabond Queen*, the proposed paper will continue the Ruritanian theme with a discussion of Graham Cutts' 1927 *The Queen Was in the Parlour*. The paper will identify the literary sources for Noel Coward's 1926 stageplay (produced by Basil Dean) and suggest some explanation for Coward's singular, opportunistic foray into the territory and its ready adaptation to film. Coward's name, it will be noted, was by the mid 1920s already a selling-point. Coward's concerns (destiny and the burdens of duty) are echoed in the early 1930s - in, for instance, *The Queen's Affair* (1934). Whereas *The Vagabond Queen*, in 1929, portrays monarchical protocols and paraphernalia as farce, the earlier film is played as melodrama tinged with tragedy.

Jo Pugh: The trials of Miss Dinah Shurey

Silent film producer Dinah Shurey endured much abuse from an industry deeply sceptical of women operating outside of carefully prescribed roles. Famously she went to court to contest the verdict of critic Nerina Shute that it was "pathetically obvious that women can't produce films". But the Film Weekly case was not Shurey's first involvement in a legal action and it would not be the last. Ultimately her career was ended by an attempt to acquire the rights to a dramatisation of the life of Robert Clive. Her failure to bring 'Clive of India' to either stage, or screen (in what she envisaged as her first 'talkie') and the court case and bankruptcy hearing which followed epitomise the crushing loss of status endured by many in the silent industry. That the adaptation in question was swiftly produced in Hollywood by Darryl Zanuck added salt to a demeaning wound. On or off the stand, Shurey was stubbornly reticent in naming her financial backers. Focusing on Shurey's background and business dealings and using documents detailing her court appearances beyond her libel action, this paper will examine Shurey as a producer; her pioneering contracts with the Navy and her later failure to bring G.W. Pabst to British audiences. Christine Gledhill has written of Shurey's "male backers" and female "nemesis". This paper aims to complement this work by discussing Shurey's principal female backer and introducing her male 'nemesis', the scenarist William Lipscomb.

Session 4 (4.00-6.00) – THE TRANSITION TO SOUND

Malcolm Cook: "Sensation form": Len Lye and the coming of sound

Music was central to the abstract animated films produced by Len Lye in Britain in the 1920s and 1930s. It not only played an integral role in the films' formal construction but also served as a theoretical model: as Lye wrote 'if there was such a thing as composing music, there could be such a thing as composing motion'. Yet Lye's work began in the late silent period and as such offers a revealing case study of the introduction of mechanically synchronised sound that indicates an alternative history that does not lead simply or exclusively to 'the talkies'. Lye's first film, *Tusalava* (1929) was funded by the Film Society but this did not extend to the cost of creating a synchronised sound print of the kind that were increasingly common in commercial cinemas in this period. Instead Lye's film was accompanied live by a pianist, playing a specially prepared score by Jack Ellitt. This score was intended for two pianos used in a purely percussive manner to create rhythm rather than melody, suggesting an aspiration towards a non-specific tribal music that would echo the hand drawn imagery of the film, which was influenced by

African, Aboriginal, and Samoan artwork. However, the limitations of this live performance, both in translating a score for dual pianos for a single performer and the difficulty in maintaining synchronisation, led to the presentation being deemed a failure.

Lye's next film *Peanut Vendor* (also known simply as *Experimental Animation*) was made in 1933. This was a short sequence of stop-motion animation featuring a puppet monkey 'singing' the Cuban song *El manisero* (*The Peanut Vendor*) as performed by Red Nichols and the Five Pennies. While *Peanut Vendor* does not use the same ethnic imagery as *Tusalava* it nevertheless may be seen as an extension of the aesthetic concerns of that film. This paper will show how its choice of music can be understood as continuing the cultural 'primitivism' of Lye's earlier film, albeit a more complex one rooted in the colonial heritage of both Lye and the jazz music. Yet the adoption of synchronised sound also allowed a shift to a perceptual primitivism, in which the close co-ordination of music and image could produce what Lye would call 'sensation form' in which there is no hierarchy between the visual and the auditory and instead the spectator is offered a synaesthetic primitivism of the senses.

Lye's pair of late silent and early sound films may be seen as complicating any easy narrative of the adoption of synchronised sound that opposes commerce and art, with this experimental filmmaker embracing the possibilities of this new technology, establishing a pattern that would continue throughout Lye's work in the 1930s. Lye's work, and *Peanut Vendor* in particular, may also be seen as an example of a more widespread aspect of the coming of sound. In its direct address to the audience, tacit encouragement of their participation, expression of musical (rather than linguistic) sound, and refusal to subordinate sound to the visual, *Peanut Vendor* is characteristic of a range of musical and singalong films in this liminal period that offered a very different model of sound cinema from 'the talkies'.

Geoff Brown: His Master's Voice Goes to the Movies: New Technology, the Gramophone, and British Cinema's First Sound Features

Generated as part of the AHRC-funded project *British Silent Cinema and the Transition to Sound, 1927-1933*, my presentation, drawn from trade papers and other contemporary sources, will explore a forgotten drama from the years of technological turmoil in the British film industry in late 1920s, when amplified recorded sounds made increasing inroads on film exhibition and production.

In 1928, anxious to exploit a growing market, the prestigious record company His Master's Voice began to generate its own music and effects discs for cinema use to accompany silent films. The next year, HMV took the leap into sound film production, forming a partnership with Herbert Wilcox's British and Dominions company, and placing its technical expertise and distinguished artistes at B & D's disposal. Four films were made, including *Rookery Nook* and *The Loves of Robert Burns*; while a biography of Beethoven was begun and expensively abandoned. But after ten months, before most of the films had been publicly shown, the marriage praised by the press as "the most important development in British talking film enterprise" ended in divorce. HMV had lost all confidence in the financial viability of the production programme.

This is a story of a particular time and place; but within it lie some perennial ingredients of periods of fast technological change: corporate ambition and naivety, and the thrills and spills of rushing to find new platforms to exploit in the commercial jungle.

Laraine Porter: British Cinema's Transition to Sound: *A Cottage on Dartmoor* (1929)

'Sound changed *everything* ... Sound standardised movies, made them less malleable, less open to individual interpretation ... dialogue literalised every moment, converted it from subjective to objective'. (Eyman)

Synchronised sound cinema had been a possibility since the early 20th Century but was only exploited by Hollywood in the late-1920s and adopted somewhat apprehensively in Britain thereafter and following the commercial successes of American imports *The Jazz Singer* (1927) and *The Singing Fool* (1928). Much has been written about the impact of the 'talkies' on the American film industry, but relatively little about what happened in Britain at any level of the industry. Using an extract from Anthony Asquith's part-synchronised sound film, *A Cottage on Dartmoor* (1929), in which a cinema audience are shown reacting to the new sound technology, this presentation will use this scene as a springboard to trace the various narratives and back-stories to the transition in Britain. It will use a range of testimonies, technical data and critical voices to outline changes in production practices, performance technique and the impact of the new breed of sound technicians into the production process, to 'talkie' distribution patterns, the effects on cinema management and cinema presentation, audiences and critical responses. This presentation is part of an AHRC-sponsored three-year research project into the impact of new sound technology on British cinema between 1927 and 1933.

Nyasha Sibanda: Invasion: Legitimate Language and the Coming of Sound in the *Nottingham Evening Post*, 1928-1930

Historians tend to place the arrival of sound cinema within the public experience in 1927, with the American premiere of *The Jazz Singer*. Yet British audiences did not hear the talkies until the film's London premiere in 1928, and sound did not reach Nottingham until a year after that. For most British audiences, particularly those outside of London, the coming of sound was almost entirely witnessed through the reportage of the press. In this presentation, I explore the ways in which provincial newspapers discussed the coming of the talkies, focusing in particular on stories from the *Nottingham Evening Post* between 1928 and 1930. Sound cinema in the early years was almost entirely an American phenomenon, and worries brewed about the damaging effects of American English. The influx of talkies from Hollywood served as a concentrated and unprecedented challenge to linguistic hegemony. This presentation argues that a nationalist narrative directly informed the reporting of sound cinema during the late 1920s. I will explore this idea in two ways. Firstly, with an exploration of the rhetoric and identity politics of the mainstream press, discussing these characteristics as they appear in reporting on the talkies in the *Nottingham Evening Post*. Secondly, with a focus on the question of language specifically, using a Bourdieusian framework of linguistic economics as a mode of understanding, and touching upon issues of class and social power.

Screening (6.30-8.30) – THE WOMAN HE SCORNE

Presented as a part-talkie, with live piano accompaniment by Neil Brand.

NEIL BRAND is a pianist, composer, performer, writer and broadcaster who has spent most of his career specialising in music and early film, but is now best-known for appearances on Radio 4's Film Programme and his BBC4 series' Sound of Cinema and Sound of Song. Starting as a silent film pianist in 1984, his work has taken him around the world and to festivals such as Midnight Sun, Telluride, Dublin, New York, Bologna, Pordenone and Glastonbury. Meanwhile he has written much music for TV and radio and now has a fruitful relationship with the BBC Symphony Orchestra who have played British premieres of his scores for Hitchcock's Blackmail and Chaplin's Easy Street as well as commissioning, with the Barbican Concert Hall, his score for Asquith's Underground (subsequently released in 5.1 by BFI Film and Video) and his acclaimed radio drama adaptations for actors and orchestra, Wind in the Willows and A Christmas Carol. He is also a regular performer with The Dodge Brothers, with whom he has toured to great acclaim with scores for Beggars of Life, The Ghost that Never Returns and Hell's Hinges. He has also toured regularly with Paul Merton presenting silent comedies and has had a big success with his own one-man-show The Silent Pianist Speaks. Neil has scored upwards of 30 DVD releases of silent comedy and films for distributors including BFI, Kino, Lobster Films, Flicker Alley, Cinematheque Francaise and Criterion. He is a director of the British Silent Film Festival, a visiting Professor of the Royal College of Music, co-founder of the School of Music and Image at Pordenone and a Fellow of University College of Wales, Aberystwyth.

Neil recently released a CD of some of his music for films, entitled *Out of the Dark*, which is available to download.

POLA NEGRI IN A TALKIE: "The Woman He Scorned."
The Manchester Guardian (1901-1959); May 2, 1930;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Guardian and The Observer
pg. 12

POLA NEGRI IN A TALKIE.

"The Woman He Scorned."

LONDON, THURSDAY.

After many delays since her departure from Hollywood, Pola Negri comes to the screen again in a British production. But although it is directed by Paul Czinner, who has made some good films, "The Woman he Scorned" gives prestige neither to the British screen nor to its foreign star. It is slow, old-fashioned, and cumbersome. Pola Negri walks into a café with feathers in her hat and a feather boa round her neck; we at once know the type of woman she is meant to be. But it does not do after Greta Garbo. "The Woman he Scorned" was trade-shown the morning following the private view of "Anna Christie," and suffered by comparison, the star seeming lifeless in a part that has to be made dynamic if it is to interest us any longer.

Herr Czinner has tried to deal simply with his story of a French prostitute married by a lighthouse-keeper and brought to a small village on the English coast. By stressing the picturesque side of the sea and of the man's occupation he seems to hope to make an equivalent to "Finis Terræ." But though the rocks and the village streets are undeniably real, Pola Negri does not fit into them, being ill at ease out of a studio. The film is interesting, however, because the director has done his best to express a few simple emotional states. Even when they are beyond the scope of his actors it is amusing to watch his methods, his cutting, and angles.

The film is accompanied by music composed by Elizalde, and it is part talkie. It does not, however, solve the problem of whether Pola Negri records well or not, because the synchronisation is so uncertain that it is not convincing. The dialogue has clearly been grafted on afterwards, and rarely succeeds in catching up with the speaker's lips. The voice accompanying Pola Negri also varies in timbre and accent from sequence to sequence. The main question which the film had to answer thus remains unsettled, leaving its appeal doubtful.

R. H.

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SCREENING (6.30-8.30) In the ARTHUR AND PAULA LUCAS THEATRE

THE WOMAN HE SCORNE (Paul Czinner, 1929)



Presented as a part-talkie, with live piano accompaniment by Neil Brand.

DRAMA. A prostitute leaves her gambler lover for a lighthouse keeper, but their happiness is spoiled when the lover returns and she learns that her husband still despises her. (BFI)

Starring

POLA NEGRI as Louise

WARWICK WARD as Maxim

HANS REHMANN as John

Directed by PAUL CZINNER

Production Company CHARLES WHITTAKER PRODUCTIONS

Scenario by PAUL CZINNER

Musical accompaniment by NEIL BRAND