

1928



Vormittagsspuk / Ghosts before Breakfast

STATISTICS

Cinemas: 5267
Viewers: 353 million
Feature films: 224

EVENTS

January 13

People's Association for Cinematography

In Berlin, progressive film lovers found the 'Volksverband für Filmkunst' (People's Association for Cinematic Art) to fight against the decline in the quality of cinema. Among the founding members are Heinrich Mann, Käthe Kollwitz, Erwin Piscator, Leonhard Frank, Béla Balázs, Karl Freund, and G. W. Pabst. At the first event, Heinrich Mann says: "In everyday film production, spirit and taste come up short. The minds that make it have blinders, and the world they present is one-sided. The fables and stories are childishly imagined; they pass by the facts of our lives."

January 26

Titania Palace

In Berlin-Steglitz, the 'Titania-Palast' is opened as a modern and representative premiere cinema. 1,924 seats in stalls and tiers. A 30-meter-high lighting tower becomes a landmark on Schloßstrasse. The comedy SPRUNG INS GLÜCK is shown as the premiere film.

May 16

Dacho

The 'Umbrella Organization of German Filmmaking Artists' is founded in Berlin. It is to represent the artistic and professional interests of its members vis-à-vis the corporations. The director Lupu Pick takes over as chairman. The founding meeting is attended by, among others, Joe May, G. W. Pabst, Erna Morena, Gustav Fröhlich, Karl Freund and Robert Liebmann.

June 24

Glass studio destroyed

Emelka's glass studio in Geiseltal is destroyed by a heavy hailstorm. Since lighting technology has developed rapidly in the meantime, the new studio is built as a solid stone building.

August 30

Sound Image Syndicate

Foundation of the 'Tonbildsyndikat (Tobis) AG', originating from the 'Tri-Ergon-Musik AG'. It holds various patents and prepares to produce sound films. Capital: 12 million marks.

September 15

Universum at Kurfürstendamm

The 'Universum' on Kurfürstendamm in Berlin opens. Architect: Erich Mendelsohn. 1,791 seats. Premiere of the Ufa film LOOPING THE LOOP by Arthur Robison. Despite its architectural sophistication, the cinema is a problem child for Ufa because - in the lower area of the Kurfürstendamm - it is not conveniently located. From 1931, the company uses it as a repertoire theater.

October 8

Sound film

Foundation of 'Klangfilm GmbH' by the companies AEG and Siemens. Capital: 3 million Marks. A short time later, the record company 'Polyphon' also becomes a shareholder.

October 18

Lichtburg in Essen

When it opened, the Lichtburg was the most modern cinema in Germany. It has around 2,000 folding seats that have electrical contact with the box office in the entrance area. When someone sits down, it can be seen there. Installed is the currently largest Wurlitzer organ for silent film accompaniment.

November 10

Anita Berber †

In Berlin, the dancer and actress Anita Berber dies at the age of 29 as a result of tuberculosis and/or morphine overdose. As a nude dancer, she was a star of Berlin nightlife. She had film appearances, especially in Richard Oswald films. She is considered a prototype of the "wild" 1920s.

November 14

Emelka

The German Reich government under Hermann Müller (SPD), previously holding a 10 percent stake in the Bavarian Emelka, increases its shares to 36 percent in order to create a balance against the conservative-oriented Ufa.

FILMS OF THE YEAR

March 22

SPIONE / SPIES

"Spione" is directed by Fritz Lang. Screenplay: Lang, Thea von Harbou. Cinematography: Fritz Arno Wagner. Sets: Otto Hunte, Karl Vollbrecht. With Rudolf Klein-Rogge, Gerda Maurus, Willy Fritsch. - Bank director Haghi leads a double life as a super spy. Detective Danald Tremaine, assisted by Haghi's assistant, gets on his trail. An agent thriller with full use of all means of transport and communication. Different reactions: "Luxury edition of a ten-penny detective book, nothing more" (Rudolf Arnheim) - "A world throwback" (Hans Feld).

July 14

VORMITTAGSSPUK / GHOSTS BEFORE BREAKFAST

Experimental short film by Hans Richter. Camera: Reimar Kuntze. - A grotesque. Objects - hats ties, cups, records, a garden hose - come alive for a short time and oppose the people. The bureaucracy is to be thrown off balance. When the clock strikes twelve, the haunting is over. Richter's Etude, a commissioned work for the Baden-Baden Music Week, is a mix of animation, collage, single frame recording and rewinding. It has the appeal of momentary weightlessness.. Hindemith and Milhaud play along.

August 29

HEIMKEHR / HOMECOMING

Directed by Joe May. Written by Fred Majo (d.i. Joe May), Fritz Wendhausen, based on the story Karl und Anna by Leonhard Frank. Cinematography: Günther Rittau. Sets: Julius von Borsody. With Lars Hanson, Dita Parlo, Gustav Fröhlich. - Two friends are prisoners of war in Siberia. One manages to escape. When the other returns home, he feels that he has lost his wife to his friend. Leonard Frank is appalled by the film script, critics polemicize against the film, which only gains significance when viewed from a distance in time.

MORE FILMS

January 25

ALRAUNE

Directed by Henrik Galeen. Screenplay: Galeen, based on the novel by Hanns Heinz Ewers. Cinematography: Franz Planer. Sets: Walter Reimann, Max Heilbronner. With Brigitte Helm, Paul Wegener, Ivan Petrovich, Valeska Gert, Wolfgang Zilzer. - An artificial creature ruins its creator.

February 1

SCHINDERHANNES

Directed by Kurt Bernhardt. Book: Bernhardt, Carl Zuckmayer, after his play. Camera: Günther Krampf. Sets: Heinrich Richter. With Hans Stüwe, Frida Richard, Bruno Ziener, Albert Steinrück, Lissy Arna, Fritz Rasp. - The historical story of the Rebel of the Rhine.

February 22

THÉRÈSE RAQUIN

Directed by Jacques Feyder. Script: Fanny Carlsen, Willy Haas, based on the novel by Emile Zola. Cinematography: Frederik Fuglsang, Hans Scheib. Sets: Andrei Andreyev, Erich Zander. With Gina Manès, Wolfgang Zilzer, Hans-Adalbert Schlettow. - Drama of an adultery that ends in murder and suicide.

April 21

ABWEGE

Directed by G. W. Pabst. Written by Adolf Lantz, Ladislaus Vajda. Cinematography: Theodor Sparkuhl. Sets: Hans Sohnle, Otto Erdmann. With Brigitte Helm, Gustav Diessl, Jack Trevor, Hertha von Walther. - Melodrama about a woman who is bored in marriage and begins to love other men until her husband accepts that he also has duties as a husband.

August 3

ZUFLUCHT

Directed by Carl Froelich. Written by Friedrich Raff. Cinematography: Gustave Preiss. Sets: Franz Schroedter. With Henny Porten, Franz Lederer, Margarete Kupfer. - Psychodrama of a disillusioned revolutionary.

September 14

LOOPING THE LOOP

Directed by Arthur Robison. Written by Robert Liebmann, Robison. Cinematography: Carl Hoffmann. Sets: Robert Herlth, Walter Roehrig. With Werner Krauß, Jenny Jugo, Warwick Ward. - Circus film about a famous clown who wants to be loved not only "as a comic act".

October 24

GESCHLECHT IN FESSELN / SEX IN CHAINS

Directed by Wilhelm Dieterle. Script: Herbert Juttke, Georg C. Klaren. Cinematography: Walter Robert Lach. Sets: Max Knaake, Fritz Maurischat. With Dieterle, Mary Johnson, Gunnar Tolnaes. - About the sexual fantasies of homosexual prisoners and the oppression of sex by the state.

FILM BOOKS

Guido Bagier

Der kommende Film

Stuttgart, Berlin, Leipzig: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. 96 pp. + 119 illustrated pages - "What was? What is? What will be?" asks the author, who is also director of the Berlin sound picture syndicate 'Tobis'. His answers are demands: the separation of film as entertainment from film as a work of art, the liberation of film from the compulsion to succeed, the opening of film to forms of abstraction. "The coming film is a synthesis of conscious technique and intuitive application."

Stefan Lorant

Wir vom Film

Berlin: Theater- und Filmverlagsgesellschaft. 128 pp.. - 'The Lives, Loves, Sufferings of Movie Stars'. The editor, cinematographer and successful film journalist, wrote short biographies for prominent actors - including Charlie Chaplin, Greta Garbo, Emil Jannings, Asta Nielsen, Henny Porten, Conrad Veidt, Paul Wegener - which were more or less authorized by the persons concerned. The texts are integrated into original picture sequences.

Vsevolod Pudovkin

Filmregie und Filmmanuskript

Berlin: Verlag der 'Lichtbild-Bühne'. 251 pp. - The theoretical reflections of the Russian director (1893-1953), dealing primarily with questions of screenplay, actor direction, and montage. With script excerpts by Thea von Harbou, Luise Heilborn-Körbitz, Carl Mayer, and a contribution by S. Timoshenko. Translated from the Russian by Georges Friedland.

Hermann Treuner (Ed.)

Filmkünstler

Berlin: Sibyllen-Verlag. 548 pp. - 'We About Ourselves'. 269 short autobiographies, from Truus van Aalten to Wolfgang Zilzer: actors and actresses (mostly), directors, film composers from Europe and America. In most cases, the personal-sounding biographies may have been penned by PR agents. Nevertheless, an interesting kaleidoscope to the end of the 1920s.

Curt Wesse

Großmacht Film

Berlin: Deutsche Buchgemeinschaft. 311 pp. - 'The creature of art and technology' has now also become an economic factor. The author - lyricist, epic poet and active in the film industry - comprehensively presents the technical and artistic processes involved in filmmaking. "Reading the book, which uses all the tools of exact science, is an aesthetic pleasure. Its ease of understanding makes it the first great popular film book." (Wolfgang Benning, Die Weltbrille, March/April 1929)