

1931



M

STATISTICS

Cinemas: 5066
Viewers: 278 million
Feature films: 144

EVENTS

February

About the situation

Message from the Berlin Chamber of Industry and Commerce: "The crisis in the German cinema industry has come to a head as a result of the increasing collapses of even larger cinema operations. The increased costs for the production of sound films, the decline in income from theaters, which in turn is a consequence of the general economic hardship and the high unemployment rate, are causing ever-increasing losses for all sectors. Production activity has declined extraordinarily sharply. Some of the studios, which were still busy until the end of last year, are empty. The film distribution business was extremely down in the month of February. The theater business is described as more dismal than ever for the month under review." (quoted from the Chronicle of the *Lichtbild-Bühne*, Film Industry Yearbook 1933).

February 19

World premiere of DIE DREIGROSCHENOPER

The film DIE DREIGROSCHENOPER by G. W. Pabst, based on the stage play by Bertolt Brecht, premieres in Berlin. The legal disputes with Brecht, who rejected the film version, are resolved by a settlement.

March 11

Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau †

In Santa Monica, director F. W. Murnau dies at the age of 42 after a car accident. His 14-year-old servant was at the wheel of the rental car. Hollywood is shocked.

March 9 - 15

Chaplin in Berlin

Coming from London, Chaplin arrives by train at the Friedrichstraße station. He stays at the Hotel Adlon, meets, among others, Marlene Dietrich and Albert Einstein and visits various theater performances, most recently "Liliom" with Hans Albers. His visit causes such a stir in the city that he leaves earlier than planned.

April 13

Farewell to F. W. Murnau

The director Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau is buried at the Stahnsdorf cemetery, just outside Berlin. A first funeral service had already been held in Hollywood on March 19. In Stahnsdorf, Carl Mayer and Fritz Lang deliver eulogies. Among others, Robert J. Flaherty, Emil Jannings, Georg Wilhelm Pabst, Erich Pommer and Fritz Arno Wagner are present.

May 11

World premiere of M

Fritz Lang's film M premieres at the 'Ufa-Palast am Zoo'. Peter Lorre plays a child murderer who is wanted by the police and by the underworld. The film is a hit with the public. Joseph Goebbels also finds it "fabulous".

December 10

Color film

BUNTE TIERWELT (Colorful Animal World), the first German film in two-color process, premieres. Filmed in Hagenbeck's zoo. Color quality is not yet considered sufficient for feature films with actors.

FILMS OF THE YEAR

February 19

DIE 3-GROSCHEN-OPER / THE THREEPENNY OPERA

Directed by G. W. Pabst. Written by Leo Lania, Bela Balazs, Ladislaus Vajda, based on the play by Bertolt Brecht. Cinematography by Fritz Arno Wagner. Music by Kurt Weill. With Rudolf Forster, Carola Neher, Lotte Lenja, Valeska Gert, Reinhold Schünzel, Fritz Rasp. - Brecht/Weill's Singspiel from the beggar's world of the Victorian London, atmospherically staged by Pabst and with a top cast. What is missing is a provocative cinematic approach. Brecht objects to the fluid narrativization of his episodic Epic Theater play and tries in vain to legally prevent the film. He lets himself be consoled with a large settlement.

May 11

M

Directed by Fritz Lang. Written by Thea von Harbou. Cinematography by Fritz Arno Wagner. With Peter Lorre, Otto Wernicke, Gustaf Gründgens. - Lang's first sound film. With Lorre as a pathological child murderer. Representatives of the state and organized crime join forces to hunt him down. "It is not his deeds that cause disorder, but the telling of them. This works like an epidemic. A web of false news, announcements, warnings, and rumors spreads over the city. This has directly influenced the form of the film." (Enno Patalas, Kommentierte Filmographie, Fritz Lang, Munich 1976).

September 29

DER KONGRESS TANZT / THE CONGRESS DANCES

Directed by Eric Charell. Written by Norbert Falk and Robert Liebmann. Cinematography by Carl Hoffmann. Music by Werner Richard Heymann. With Lilian Harvey, Willy Fritsch, Conrad Veidt. - A glove-maker's little affair with the Russian czar on the fringes of the Congress of Vienna is entirely dissolved in musical movement. In Vienna, the Ufa sound film operetta is laughed at during its premiere. With the Berlin premiere in October, the film's success begins. Two songs become earworms: "Das gibt's nur einmal" and "Das muss ein Stück vom Himmel sein"

October 8

BERLIN ALEXANDERPLATZ

Directed by Phil Jutzi. Written by Alfred Döblin, Hans Wilhelm, Karl Heinz Martin, based on the novel by Alfred Döblin. Cinematography by Nikolaus Farkas. Music by Allan Gray. With Heinrich George, Maria Bard, Bernhard Minetti, Margarete Schlegel. - A gangster melodrama in which the actually honest hero, Franz Biberkopf, manages to pull his head out of the noose at the end. He sells little stand-up guys. Jutzi makes Döblin's classic big city novel smaller than it is.

November 17

KAMERADSCHAFT / COMRADESHIP

Directed by G. W. Pabst. Written by Ladislaus Vajda, Karl Otten, Peter Martin Lampel. Cinematography by Fritz Arno Wagner, Robert Baberske. With Fritz Kampers, Alexander Granach, Ernst Busch, Gustav Püttjer. - A mining accident on the border, shortly after the World War, unites Germans and French. Filmed bilingually, dedicated to understanding.

November 28

MÄDCHEN IN UNIFORM / GIRLS IN UNIFORM

Directed by Leontine Sagan. Written by Christa Winsloe, F. D. Adam, based on the stage play by Winsloe. Cinematography by Reimar Kuntze, Franz Weihmayr. Music by Hansom Milde-Meißner. With Dorothea Wieck, Hertha Thiele. - The subtle affection between a teacher and a student becomes a boarding school conflict to be resolved in Prussian fashion. It plays in the present. Only women are involved. One of the greatest international successes of German cinema.

December 2

EMIL UND DIE DETEKTIVE / EMIL AND THE DETECTIVES

Directed by Gerhard Lamprecht. Written by Billie Wilder, based on the novel by Erich Kästner. Cinematography by Werner Brandes. Music by Allan Gray. With Fritz Rasp, Käte Haack, Rolf Wenkhaus, Inge Landgut. - The well-known story of 12-year-old Emil Tischbein, who has 120 marks stolen from him on the train ride from Neustadt to Berlin. Together with a bunch of Berlin boys and girls, he hunts down the robber (wonderful: Rasp) who is wanted by the police. The children make an effort to appear like adults.

December 22

DER HAUPTMANN VON KÖPENICK / THE CAPTAIN OF KÖPENICK

Directed by Richard Oswald. Written by Carl Zuckmayer, Albrecht Joseph, based on the stage play by Zuckmayer. Cinematography by Ewald Daub. Music by Anton Rubinstein. With Max Adalbert, Max Gülstorff, Friedrich Kayßler, Ilse Fürstenberg. - Nine months after the theater premiere, the film opens, staged as a tragic folk comedy. On stage, Werner Krauß was the cobbler Voigt. Alfred Kerr raves about Max Adalbert: "And how he flits and looks now, And how he sputters and spits sentences, Scrawling, gruff, cynical, And then doesn't bat an eyelash: Berlinerish at its deepest core."

MORE FILMS

January 16

DIE PRIVATSEKRETÄRIN / THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

Director: Wilhelm Thiele. Written by Franz Schulz, based on the novel by Stefan Szomahazy. Cinematography by Otto Heller, Reimar Kuntze. Music by Paul Abraham. With Renate Müller, Hermann Thimig, Felix Bressart. - Musical comedy about a young woman who finds the man of her life while looking for a job.

January 20

1914, DIE LETZTEN TAGE VOR DEM WELTBRAND / 1914

Directed by Richard Oswald. Written by Heinz Goldberg, Fritz Wendhausen. Cinematography by Mutz Greenbaum. With Albert Bassermann, Reinhold Schünzel, Oskar Homolka, Theodor Loos, Viktor de Kowa, Heinrich George, Eugen Klöpfer, Paul Bildt. - Historical film about the days after the shots of Sarajevo at the great courts of Europe.

January 22

DANTON

Directed by Hans Behrendt. Written by Heinz Goldberg, Hans J. Rehfish. Cinematography by Nikolaus Parkas. Music by Artur Guttman. With Fritz Kortner, Lucie Mann heim, Gustaf Gründgens, Alexander Granach. - Historical drama about the revolutionary who himself became a victim of the revolution.

January 22

DER MANN, DER DEN MORD BEGING / THE MAN WHO COMMITTED THE MURDER

Directed by Kurt Bernhardt. Written by Heinz Goldberg, Hermann Kosterlitz, Harry Kahn, based on the novel by Claude Farrere. Cinematography by Curt Courant. Music by Hans J. Satter. With Conrad Veidt, Trude von Molo, Heinrich George, Erich Ponto. - Marriage drama on the Bosphorus before the outbreak of World War. A French colonel shoots an English lord because he brutally tortures and blackmails his wife. The crime goes unpunished.

February 6

DER MÖRDER DIMITRI KARAMASOFF / THE MURDERER DIMITRI KARAMASOFF

Directed by Fedor Ozep. Written by Leonard Frank, Ozep, Victor Trivas, based on the novel by Fedor Dostoyevsky. Cinematography by Friedl Behn-Grund. Music by Karol Rathaus. With Fritz Kortner, Anna Sten, Fritz Rasp - Psychological crime film about the eternal problems between father and son, love and jealousy, guilt and atonement.

April 22

VORUNTERSUCHUNG / INQUEST

Directed by Robert Siodmak. Written by Robert Liebmann, based on a play by Max Alsberg, Ernst Hesse. Cinematography by Konstantin Tschet. With Albert Bassermann, Gustav Fröhlich, Charlotte Ander, Hans Brausewetter. - Psychological crime film about a false suspicion based on circumstantial evidence.

August 31

BOMBEN AUF MONTE CARLO / BOMBS ON MONTE CARLO

Directed by Hanns Schwarz. Written by Hans Müller, Franz Schulz, based on the novel by Fritz Reck-Malleczewen. Cinematography by Günther Rittau. Music by Werner Richard Heymann. With Hans Albers, Anna Sten, Heinz Rühmann, Ida Wüst, Kurt Gerron. - A cruiser captain threatens the gambling house with cannon fire if he is not compensated for his high losses.

October 12

24 STUNDEN AUS DEM LEBEN EINER FRAU / 24 HOURS FROM THE LIFE OF A WOMAN

Directed by Robert Land. Written by Harry Kahn, Friedrich Raff, based on the novella by Stefan Zweig. Cinematography by Otto Kanturek, Friedl Behn-Grund. With Henny Porten, Walther Rilla, Friedrich Kayßler, Margo Lion. - Drama of a lonely widow and a young, obsessive gambler.

November 10

LIEBESKOMMANDO / LOVE'S COMMAND

Directed by Géza von Bolvary. Written by Fritz Grünbaum, Roda Roda. Cinematography by Willy Goldberger. Sets by Andrei Andreyev, Robert Dietrich. With Livio Pavanelli, Dolly Haas, Walter Edthover, Gustav Fröhlich. - To continue her family's military tradition, a girl, disguised as a boy, attends the military academy.

December 2

DIE KOFFER DES HERRN O.F. / THE TRUNKS OF MR. O.F.

Directed by Alexis Granowsky. Written by Leo Lania, Granowsky. Cinematography by Reimar Kuntze. Music by KaroRathaus. With Alfred Abel, Peter Lorre, Harald Paulsen, Ludwig Stoessel, Hedy Kiesler, Margo Lion. - Satire about speculation fever and growth fantasies in a remote provincial town.

December 8

NIEMANDSLAND / HELL ON EARTH

Directed and written by Victor Trivas. Cinematography by Alexander von Lagorio. Music by Hanns Eisler. With Ernst Busch, Vladimir Sokoloff, Hugh Stephens Douglas, Georges Pecket, Louis Douglas. - Five men of different nations and races experience the world war in 1914. A multilingual parable that calls for solidarity.

FILM BOOKS

Ilya Ehrenburg

Die Traumfabrik

Berlin: Malik. 310 pp. - Shifting between novel, pamphlet and colportage, the Russian writer and foreign correspondent, aims to expose the 'wire-pullers' of the international film industry between Hollywood (Adolph Zukor, Will Hays) and Berlin (Ludwig Klitzsch). "This Ehrenburg is a strange man. He sits where the best people sit today: between the chairs. To the Russians, he is a captious half-Burjui [half-bourgeois], to the good citizens, he is considered a disreputable Bolshevik. So there must be something about him. There is also something about him." (Kurt Tucholsky, *Die Weltbühne*, 2.2.32).

René Fülöp-Miller

Die Phantasiemaschine

Berlin: Paul Zsolnay. 202 pp. - 'A saga of profit-seeking'. The description of the difficult relationship between art and merchants, substantiated with many biographies. "Two things interest Fülöp-Miller: personal gossip and academic theories of art. The one tempts him into Caesarian portraits of life; the other into dusty, formal aesthetic problems with which little can be done. The result is a distinctly intellectual book with the not entirely uncommon mixture of gossip and sophistry." (Axel Eggebrecht, *Die Literarische Welt*, 5/27/32).

Nicholas Kaufmann

Filmtechnik und Kultur

Stuttgart, Berlin: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachf. 94 pp. - More and more, technology is penetrating the cultural sphere. Kaufmann, born in Switzerland, a physician and for decades the leading figure of the Ufa Kulturfilm, offers reflections on the special relationship between cinematic art and technology. The focus is on the Kulturfilm and newsreel.

Wolfgang Petzet

Verbotene Filme

Frankfurt am Main: Societäts-Verlag. 160 pp. - "The film critic of the 'Kunstwart' has compiled with knowledge and temperament a small compendium against the mischief of film censorship. With pleasing firmness, he takes a stand against the ever more oppressive political and moral paternalism. Very instructive and in a saddening way amusing to read are the parts of the excellently written book in which the fearful docility of the industry is shown by examples." (Axel Eggebrecht, *Die Literarische Welt*, 5/27/32)

Paul Zucker/G. Otto Stindt

Lichtspielhäuser. Tonfilmtheater

Berlin: Ernst Wasmuth. 168pp.- 15 movie theaters in Germany and the USA are presented as architecturally, technically, visually, or acoustically outstanding cinemas: with a text characterizing the buildings and details of the technical equipment. Illustrated.