



**AT THE PORDENONE SILENT FILM FESTIVAL
THE GREAT EUROPEAN CINEMA OF THE TWENTIES**

**BACK ON SCREEN AFTER 90 YEARS THE COMEDY *JOKEREN*
(THE JOKER), AND ELLEN RICHTER IN *LOLA MONTEZ***

**Monday, October 4th brings us also the Australian athlete Snowy
Baker in *The Man from Kangaroo***

Press release

Back on screen after 90 years, *Jokeren* (The Joker), a Danish production of 1928, will be presented at **the Pordenone Silent Film Festival** on Monday, October 4th at 9PM thanks to the tireless work of the Danish Film Institute. A romantic comedy with a pinch of melodrama, *Jokeren* is set during the Carnival in Nice and is considered a great example of late 1920s cross-European collaboration, with its cosmopolitan mix of actors and beautiful Côte d'Azur scenery. *Jokeren* was produced by Nordisk in the hopes of attracting potential buyers to save the famed Danish production house from financial ruin; the film didn't curb the company's bankruptcy, which was declared a mere three months after the film's release, hindering its distribution. Georg Jacoby, the director, is also featured in this year's Ellen Richter retrospective with his drama *Aberglaube*. In a career spanning nearly 47 years, Jacoby produced almost 150 films including comedies, musicals, thrillers and melodramas. He was a member of the Nazi party, so working in the aftermath of the War wasn't possible for some time. The cast of *Jokeren* includes the German star Elga Brink (Jacoby's wife, a recurring presence in her husband's films from 1923 to 1930), the British actors Henry Edwards and Miles Mander, and the French Renée Héziel and Gabriel Gabrio, who was the unforgettable Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables* of 1925.

Screening before *Jokeren*, ***At the Masquerade Ball*** is a short film penned by **Maie B. Havey**, whose life story remains a mystery but whose career is well documented in American cinema. She began with Griffith, signed contracts with various production houses, including Universal, and worked under different pseudonyms. *At the Masquerade Ball* is her first known credit after her collaboration with Griffith.

Afternoon screenings begin at 2:30PM with ***Lola Montez, Die Tänzerin des Königs*** (1922), **Ellen Richter's** personal favourite. Two years prior, the actress was playing parts of famous women in European history, including Madame DuBarry and Anne Boleyn, as per the fashion of the times, historical biographies mainly championed by Ernst Lubitsch. Staying close to historical facts appears to be optional in *Lola Montez*; what matters most is the scandalous plot of an Irish dancer who becomes the lover of Bavarian King Ludwig I, the extravagant costumes and the variety of locations. Traveling and filmmaking went hand in hand in the life and work of Ellen Richter and her husband Willi Wolff, director of *Lola Montez*. The film did not encounter the success that was expected but was seen favourably by critics who praised Richter's performance as "magnificent, sensual, seductive, beautiful, feline, demonic, yet able to express a sense of serenity." (Film Kurier).

To complete the afternoon programme we present the second installment of the **Korean retrospective** with two educational films discovered by Moscow's Gosfilmofond in 2019:

Geulloui Kkeuteneun Ganani Eopda [If You Work Hard, There Will Be No Poverty] (1925-1929) and *Cheongchun-Eui Sipjaro* [Crossroads of Youth] from 1934, the oldest surviving feature. "Rediscoveries and Restorations" is full of interesting curiosities, taking us first to Africa with an animated German short *In den Dschungeln Afrikas* [In the African jungles], 1924, technically excellent but marked by embarrassing racist clichés; and then to Australia for *The Man From Kangaroo* from 1920, starring the golden boy of Australian sports **Reginald "Snowy" Baker** (1884–1953) and his spectacular physical prowess. Baker won the silver medal in boxing at London's 1908 Olympics and competed in three different categories; he made his Australian cinema debut in 1918 at the age of 34 and then tried his luck in Hollywood. Well aware of his limitations as an actor and his increasing well age, Baker soon wisely chose to make use of his talents and experiences by becoming a coach for stars such as Elizabeth Taylor, whom he taught horseback riding.

The **online** programme for Monday, October 4th starting at 9PM Italian time offers ***An Old Fashioned Boy***, a romantic comedy of 1920 directed by Jerome Storm and written by **Agnes Christine Johnston**. Philip Carli accompanies on piano. Our first book presentations will begin at 5PM. Joining Paolo Tosini will be **Juan Sebastian Ospina Leon**, author of a book on Latin-American melodrama, and **Juri Meden**, who will speak on the impact of digital technology on film preservation, especially as regards the silent era.

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