



**THE GIORNATE CLOSES SATURDAY 8 OCTOBER WITH
THE MANXMAN,
HITCHCOCK'S LAST SILENT.
(REPEATED SUNDAY 9 OCTOBER AT THE TEATRO VERDI)**

The Ruritania retrospective will continue next year with a second part, but bids goodbye for this edition with a brace of comedies: *Rupert of Hee Haw*, with a freewheeling **Stan Laurel** poking fun at the romanticism of the genre. In the afternoon another short, *Long Fliv the King*, features a formidable trio of comedians, **Charley Chase**, **Max Davidson**, and **Oliver Hardy**.

Press Release

According to **Hitchcock** the silent film was the purest form of cinema. He said this to François Truffaut, in the famous interview book published in 1966. In the same text, when asked about *THE MANXMAN*, his last silent, the director dismissed it in a few words, saying it was not a Hitchcock picture. We can judge for ourselves when *The Manxman* is shown as the Giornate's closing special event on the evening of Saturday 8 October at 21.00 in the Teatro Verdi (repeated the following day, Sunday 9 October, at 16.30 in the Teatro Verdi). In Hitchcock's extraordinary career two films emphasized their original authors in the opening credits, **Sir Hall Caine** for *The Manxman* (1929) and Daphne Du Maurier for *Rebecca* (1940), which clearly reflect a situation that hampered his preferred strategy of free adaptation. Nevertheless, both films can now be appreciated as landmarks in his career. Only in recent years has critical attention been turned to *The Manxman*. The fact that Hitchcock did not recognize it as entirely his is likely due to external conditions, that he did not have complete control. *Rebecca*, Hitchcock's first American film, was higher in his estimation in later years, undeniably influenced by the film's great success (it won two Oscars, for Best Film and Cinematography), but it still wasn't *his* film; producer David O. Selznick was known for his incessant detailed memos, and the best-selling novel was too well known to be altered. As in all of Hitchcock's films, at the centre of *The Manxman* is a woman, among the most moving in his *oeuvre*, brought to life by the Czech actress **Anny Ondra**, whom the director also cast in his next project, *Blackmail*, his first sound film. Ondra was the first "Hitchcock Blonde" in his gallery of leading ladies. Re-evaluating *The Manxman* also means paying homage to screenwriter **Eliot Stannard**, who worked with Hitchcock throughout the silent period, and sadly died poor and forgotten. A new score for *The Manxman* by **Stephen Horne** will be performed by the **Orchestra San Marco of Pordenone**, conducted by Ben Palmer.

The **Ruritania** retrospective waves farewell this year (there will be a return engagement in 2023), with *Rupert of Hee Haw* (1924), directed by **Percy Pembroke**. A brilliant parody of the works of Anthony Hope, author of *The Prisoner of Zenda*, it unleashes Stan Laurel on this romantic genre. *Rupert of Hee Haw* precedes the Hitchcock film; it can be said that this combination represents an excellent culmination of a week of silent cinema.

Laughter will also be heard in the afternoon, at 17.00, with a short by **Leo McCarey**, *Long Fliv the King* (1926), featuring a formidable trio of comedians, **Charley Chase**, **Max Davidson**, and **Oliver Hardy**; while the *The Runaway Princess* (1929) directed by **Anthony Asquith**, an English-German co-production inspired by a novel by Elizabeth von Armin, starring Mady Christians, presents a perfect synthesis of Ruritanian themes and characters in comic mode.

The homage "Venice 90" at 14.00 presents *Tikhi Don* (The Quiet Don / And Quiet Flows the Don, 1931), the first screen adaptation of one of the most famous novels of Russian literature, whose author, Mikhail Sholokhov, was awarded the Nobel Prize in the 1960s. For the first time in Soviet cinema the

landscape became an active character; and the two directors, **Olga Preobrazhenskaya** and **Ivan Pravov**, employed many talented young actors who would appear in classic Soviet films, and also involved the peasants of the Cossack farm where the film was shot in the production, as both performers and local consultants. The Association of Workers of Revolutionary Cinematography denounced the film's ideology as *petit-bourgeois*, and expelled its makers. Only the intervention of Sholokhov made the film's release possible, after a six-month ban.

On our last day, a special mention for the Italian film ***Profanazione*** (1924-1926) by **Eugenio Perego**, active with Lombardo Film of Naples, which features the company's principal star, Leda Gys, the mother of Goffredo Lombardo, founder and the head of Titanus Film for many decades. The careers of both Perego and Leda Gys were in the silent period. The print was digitized by the Cineteca del Friuli of Gemona, and the screening is scheduled for **Saturday 8 October at 10.30 at Cinemazero**, as the Teatro Verdi, home of the festival's screenings, will be occupied with rehearsals by the Orchestra San Marco for ***The Manxman***.

The **online festival** on **MYmovies** presents its last two programmes, at 17.00 [***Japan i Fest***] and Norma Talmadge in ***The Lady***; and at 21.00 the comedy ***Up in Mabel's Room***, starring Marie Prevost.

The complete festival programme can be consulted at www.giornatedelcinemamuto.it.

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Le Giornate del Cinema Muto – Press Office

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