



LE GIORNATE DEL CINEMA MUTO, PORDENONE

MONDAY 3 OCTOBER

LA DIXIÈME SYMPHONIE, BY ABEL GANCE

ONE OF CINEMA'S MOST INGENIOUS AND POWERFUL DIRECTORS,
NOT ONLY OF SILENTS

Today's programme also includes Jean Epstein's 1923 documentary *La Montagne infidèle*, with very close shots of the eruption of Mount Etna

Press Release

Abel Gance is a legend in cinema history: director, screenwriter, actor, theorist, editor, and producer, he was active for more than half a century, a protagonist in both the silent and sound eras. Even before his monumental *Napoléon*, his masterpiece (its screening at the 2001 Giornate was unforgettable), he was already considered one of the most ingenious innovators of the new art form, and with Louis Delluc, Germaine Dulac, and Jean Epstein was a leader in the founding of the French avant-garde, whose films were defined as Impressionist "for the manner in which filmmakers employed mobile camerawork, fast-paced, rhythmic editing, and visual fluidity to render emotionally lyrical or dramatic sensations", per the critic Edoardo Bruno. Gance filmed *La Dixième Symphonie* (screened Monday 3 October at 21.00 in the Teatro Verdi) in 1917, during the First World War, but it wasn't released until a year later, after the end of the conflict. Gance relied on his favorite team: director of photography **Leonel-Henri Burel** and the actors **Séverin-Mars**, **Emmy Lynn**, and **Jean Toulout**. The story is pure melodrama: Eve Darnat is victimized by the despicable blackmailer Fred Ryce, who threatens to destroy her happy home and marriage to the famous composer Enric Damor. The composer, shocked by Ryce's insinuations, immerses himself in the composition of what he sees as his masterwork, *La Dixième Symphonie* (the Tenth Symphony). In true romantic tradition, art is the fruit of torment and suffering. The composer character, inspired by Beethoven, obsessively working on a symphony, is part of the gallery of great characters featured in much of Gance's work, accentuating a tendency for the titanic which often became an impediment to the realization of many of his projects.

Very appropriately, alongside the screening of Abel Gance's film, today's Giornate schedule also includes *La Montagne infidèle* by Jean Epstein, at 17.00 in the Teatro Verdi. This short 1923 film, documenting an eruption of Mount Etna, was long considered lost, but has been found and restored by the **Filmoteca de Catalunya**. It begins with an idyllic vision of the Sicilian countryside and the serenity of Nature, which are soon disrupted by the destructive fury of the lava. The images of patron saints and the presence of Fascist guards, guarantors of order under the new regime that has just come to power, who are seen in one shot facing a balcony, are futile against the power of Nature.

Completing the programme is the first part of a selection of Dutch Colonial Films, at 9.00 in the Teatro Verdi, which illustrate the progress that Europeans wanted to introduce to their Asian domains. Travelogues of Japan and Morocco are presented as part of Norway's **Hans Berge** Collection on Monday 3 October at 11.00 and 21.00. And as part of our "Venice 90" programme commemorating 90 years of the Venice Film Festival (Mostra d'Arte Cinematografica), we are showing several silents from its first edition of 1932. At 14.00, we begin with *Regen* (*Rain*, 1929), the celebrated short by **Joris Ivens** and **Mannus Franken**, noted for the poetic quality of its photography and for its editing; followed by the feature *Po Horách, Po Dolách* (*Over Mountains, Over Valleys*, 1930), by the Slovak director **Karel Plicka**, who recorded the traditional culture of his country before it changed forever.

The **Norma Talmadge** retrospective continues at 11.00 with ***The Forbidden City*** (1918) by **Sidney A. Franklin**, a director who worked often with Norma and her sister Constance. Here Norma Talmadge interprets a dual role, playing a Chinese woman and her Chinese-American daughter, relying solely on makeup, posture, and costume.

The daily meetings begin of the **Collegium**, which are also open to the public. Monday 3 October at 13.00 the topic will be **Ruritania and the fabled realms of Eastern Europe**, the setting for the films of this retrospective.

Also starting on Monday 3 October are the **Masterclasses** for silent film accompaniment, led daily by the musicians of the Giornate, which this year reach the milestone of their 20th edition.

And on Monday, at 16.00 in the Ridotto of the Teatro Verdi, are the first of the encounters with the authors of the **FilmFair**.

The **Online Festival**, digitally streaming on **MYmovies**, continues at 21.00 with ***Profanazione*** (1924-1926) by **Eugenio Perego**.

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