



THE HITCHCOCK 9 RARE SILENTS RESTORED

“The silent pictures were the purest form of cinema.”—Alfred Hitchcock

Alfred Hitchcock directed a string of exuberantly inventive silent features between 1925 and 1929, but for all the fame of their director, many of these works have been accessible only in inferior prints—if they were available at all. Now, in the most ambitious restoration effort it has ever undertaken, the British Film Institute has digitally restored all nine of Hitchcock’s surviving silents, not only creating cleaner, crisper images but recovering original material that had gone missing from available prints. Presented in conjunction with the San Francisco Silent Film Festival, this series brings “The Hitchcock 9” to the East Bay, offering a chance to discover new dimensions of Hitchcock’s work and observe a master’s style in the making.

By the time he landed his first directing assignment, *The Pleasure Garden*, at age twenty-five, Hitchcock had already worked as a title designer, scriptwriter, art director, and assistant director. His early films evidence both a precocious facility for visual storytelling and an enthusiasm for technical experimentation. “There was much dabbling about in so-called versatility before I found my niche,” he said of his youthful work, and his silent films are indeed varied in genre and tone, including comedies and melodramas as well as the thrillers that would become his stock in trade. Yet these works foreshadow many of Hitchcock’s later themes and motifs—from the ambiguities of guilt and innocence to the blonde object of desire—and show that his stylistic audacity and distinctive humor were well established from the first.

Juliet Clark, Guest Writer

The Hitchcock 9 is presented in conjunction with the San Francisco Silent Film Festival. Series curated by Senior Film Curator Susan Oxtoby. Thanks to the following for their assistance with this retrospective: Margaret Deriaz, Christine Whitehouse, George Watson, Andrew Youdell, BFI; Bruce Goldstein, Eric Di Bernardo, Rialto Pictures; and Anita Monga, Stacey Wisnia, Lucia Pier, San Francisco Silent Film Festival.



1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6



FRIDAY / 8.16.13

THE LODGER: A STORY OF THE LONDON FOG

7:00

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (U.K., 1926) DIGITAL RESTORATION!

LIVE MUSIC Judith Rosenberg on piano

Hitchcock called his third feature “the first true Hitchcock movie.” His first foray into the thriller genre, *The Lodger* introduced the “wrong man” theme (not to mention the obsession with “golden curls”) that would recur throughout his career. Ivor Novello plays the mysterious tenant who may be implicated in a series of Jack the Ripper-style murders; his performance dares the audience to suspect an attractive man of unspeakable crimes. The film’s style is marked by both the long shadow of German Expressionism and Hitchcock’s own visual ingenuity, as in the famous sequence of the lodger pacing in an upstairs room, shot through a floor of glass. JULIET CLARK

Written by Hitchcock, Eliot Stannard, based on a novel by Marie Belloc Lowndes. Photographed by Gaetano di Ventimiglia. With Marie Ault, Arthur Chesney, June Tripp, Ivor Novello. (90 mins, Silent, B&W, 35mm, 20 fps, Restored by the BFI National Archive in association with ITV Studios Global Entertainment, Network Releasing and Park Circus Films, From BFI)

SATURDAY / 8.17.13

THE RING

6:15

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (U.K., 1927) DIGITAL RESTORATION!

LIVE MUSIC Judith Rosenberg on piano

The Ring fascinates because it is not a suspense film and yet experiments with the tropes through which Hitchcock created suspense. There’s something that Raymond Durnat summed up as “petty, edgy, unnerving” here. The setting is the world of boxing in which hungry amateurs vie with professional prizefighters for money, status, and love. A young fairground pugilist marries his ticket-taker girlfriend, only to find himself openly cuckolded by his rival, the Champion. Hitchcock revels in all the fairground “business,” in the grotesque masks of the thrill-seekers, and, as both fighters come up in the world, in the equally frantic flapper society. JUDY BLOCH

Written by Hitchcock, Alma Reville. Photographed by Jack Cox. With Carl Bisson, Lillian Hall-Davis, Ian Hunter, Forrester Harvey. (108 mins, Silent, B&W, DCP, Restored by the BFI National Archive in association with StudioCanal, From Rialto Pictures)

SUNDAY / 8.18.13

THE FARMER’S WIFE

7:00

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (U.K., 1928) DIGITAL RESTORATION!

LIVE MUSIC Judith Rosenberg on piano

Hitchcock was worried that the stage roots of *The Farmer’s Wife* . . . might show through in his film adaptation. It was a needless worry. This semi-comic story of a widowed farmer’s attempts to find himself a new wife is shot, as François Truffaut observed, “like a thriller.” The camera, on occasion handled by Hitch himself, observes the action cinematically. . . . Each prospective wife—the horsy one, the hysterical one, the high-spirited one—is presented as a comic stereotype. Rejected by each, the farmer ultimately discovers what has been literally staring him—and the audience—in the face all the time: his young, attractive, and devoted housekeeper. BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE

Written by Eliot Stannard, Hitchcock, based on a play by Eden Phillpots. Photographed by Jack Cox. With Jameson Thomas, Lillian Hall-Davis, Gordon Harker, Gibb McLaughlin. (107 mins, Silent, B&W, DCP, Restored by the BFI National Archive in association with StudioCanal, From Rialto Pictures)

WEDNESDAY / 8.21.13

THE PLEASURE GARDEN

7:00

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (U.K., 1926) DIGITAL RESTORATION!

LIVE MUSIC Judith Rosenberg on piano

In his first feature, filmed at the UFA studios in Germany and on location in Italy, Hitchcock adds a certain Continental flair to a tale of two chorus girls and their respective loves. As the increasingly fevered melodrama follows the fortunes of good girl and bad, pointed edits play up the moral contrasts: one woman’s water, another’s champagne. A melancholy honeymoon at Lake Como demonstrates the director’s mastery of lyrical unease, and the opening scene, in which we view the chorus line through an aging ogler’s binoculars, shows that Hitchcock’s signature mix of visual invention, sexual provocation, and winking humor was there from the start. JULIET CLARK

Written by Eliot Stannard, based on a novel by Oliver Sandys. Photographed by Gaetano di Ventimiglia. With Virginia Valli, Carmelita Geraghty, Miles Mander, John Stuart. (90 mins, Silent, B&W/tinted & toned, 35mm, 20 fps, Restored by the BFI National Archive in association with ITV Studios Global Entertainment and Park Circus Films, From BFI)



- 1 *Blackmail*, 8.23.13
- 2 *The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog*, 8.16.13. Courtesy British Film Institute.
- 3 *Downhill*, 8.24.13
- 4 *The Pleasure Garden*, 8.21.13
- 5 *The Ring*, 8.17.13
- 6 *The Manxman*, 8.31.13
- 7 *Easy Virtue*, 8.30.13. Courtesy British Film Institute.

FRIDAY / 8.23.13

BLACKMAIL

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (U.K., 1929) DIGITAL RESTORATION!

LIVE MUSIC Judith Rosenberg on piano

Blackmail is a dark, expressionist, guilt-obsessed tale that reveals Hitchcock's deep-seated fear that the forces of law and order can themselves be corrupt. It tells the story of a young woman who, like the heroine in *The Lodger*, is dissatisfied with her policeman suitor and seeks a more exciting lover. But the man attempts to rape her and she stabs him to death. Her policeman lover, assigned to the case, prevents her from confessing, and hounds a would-be blackmailer to suicide. The girl goes free, but does she really? Made in 1929, *Blackmail* appeared in both silent and sound versions; we present the silent. MARILYN FABE

Written by Hitchcock, Benn Levy, Michael Powell, based on a play by Charles Bennett. Photographed by Jack Cox. With Anny Ondra, Sara Allgood, John Longden, Cyril Ritchard. (75 mins, Silent, B&W, DCP, Restored by the BFI National Archive in association with StudioCanal, From Rialto Pictures)

SATURDAY / 8.24.13

DOWNHILL

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (U.K., 1927) DIGITAL RESTORATION!

LIVE MUSIC Judith Rosenberg on piano

(a.k.a. *When Boys Leave Home*). *Downhill* mixes cynical humor with sexual horror as it tracks Ivor Novello's descent from upstanding British schoolboy to Montmartre gigolo, the downhill road laid for him by a series of scheming women. Hitchcock's formal audacity is on flamboyant display in false flashbacks, upside-down POV shots, and massive foreground objects dwarfing the characters behind them. The film reaches a psychological and stylistic climax with delirious, nightmarishly vivid visions of an evil feminine conspiracy. "I wanted to embody the dream in the reality, in solid, unblurred images," Hitchcock later said. JULIET CLARK

Written by Eliot Stannard, based on a play by Ivor Novello, Constance Collier. Photographed by Claude McDonnell. With Novello, Isabel Jeans, Robin Irvine, Ian Hunter. (105 mins, Silent, B&W/tinted & toned, 35mm, 20 fps, Restored by the BFI National Archive in association with ITV Studios Global Entertainment and Park Circus Films, From BFI)

WEDNESDAY / 8.28.13

CHAMPAGNE

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (U.K., 1928) DIGITAL RESTORATION!

LIVE MUSIC Judith Rosenberg on piano

Champagne stars the bubbly Betty Balfour as a frivolous flapper whose millionaire father looks to teach her a lesson in frugality by letting her think he's gone bankrupt. The movie brims with sight gags, with a swaying camera mimicking the roll of an ocean liner to generate several humorously queasy moments. But the comedy also has an unsettling undercurrent in the way the men in Betty's life—her father, her fiancé, a mysterious admirer—seem eager to see her shamed. Throughout, Hitchcock revels in provocative uses of POV, including a look through the dregs of a glass of champagne that brackets the picture. JULIET CLARK

Written by Hitchcock, Eliot Stannard, based on a novel by Walter Mycroft. Photographed by Jack Cox. With Betty Balfour, Jean Bradin, Ferdinand von Alten, Gordon Harker. (105 mins, Silent, B&W, DCP, Restored by the BFI National Archive in association with StudioCanal, From Rialto Pictures)

FRIDAY / 8.30.13

EASY VIRTUE

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (U.K., 1927) DIGITAL RESTORATION!

LIVE MUSIC Judith Rosenberg on piano

Hitchcock's adaptation rearranges the plot of Noël Coward's play to begin and end in divorce court, where the camera peers through the dour judge's monocle at the accused, Larita Filton (Isabel Jeans). Wrongly convicted of "misconduct," Larita flees from her reputation to the South of France, where she meets and marries an Englishman. Unfortunately, her ever-so-proper in-laws read the *Tatler*, and when they discover her identity, she can only fulfill their scandalized expectations. Hitchcock enlivens this lesson in the brutality of British polite society with bits of business such as a marriage proposal played out entirely in the reactions of an eavesdropping telephone operator. JULIET CLARK

Written by Eliot Stannard, based on a play by Noël Coward. Photographed by Claude L. McDonnell. With Isabel Jeans, Franklyn Dyal, Ian Hunter, Rob Irvine. (70 mins, Silent, B&W, 35mm, 21 fps, Restored by the BFI National Archive in association with ITV Studios Global Entertainment and Park Circus, From BFI)

SATURDAY / 8.31.13

THE MANXMAN

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (U.K., 1929) DIGITAL RESTORATION!

LIVE MUSIC Judith Rosenberg on piano

Hitchcock retrospectively asserted that this melodrama of love, class, and social mores in a small fishing village was "not a Hitchcock movie," its uncharacteristically sober tone dictated by the reputation of Hall Caine's source novel. But what it lacks in Hitchcockian humor it makes up in dramatic intensity, with a triangle of strong performances by Carl Brisson, Malcolm Keen, and especially Anny Ondra as the barmaid who has pledged herself to one man but given herself to the other. The film's moral landscape is as harsh as its settings are picturesque, with the cliffs and cottages of Cornwall standing in for the Isle of Man. JULIET CLARK

Written by Eliot Stannard, based on a novel by Hall Caine. Photographed by Jack Cox. With Carl Brisson, Malcolm Keen, Anny Ondra, Randle Ayrton. (100 mins, Silent, B&W, DCP, Restored by the BFI National Archive in association with StudioCanal, From Rialto Pictures)

