



## LE GIORNATE DEL CINEMA MUTO – 43RD PORDENONE SILENT FILM FESTIVAL

**BRYONY DIXON AND MARK-PAUL MEYER RECEIVE 2024 JEAN MITRY AWARD**

***PAVEMENT BUTTERFLY* STARRING THE CAPTIVATING ANNA MAY WONG:  
THE CHINESE-AMERICAN ACTRESS WHO ENAMoured EUROPEAN AUDIENCES**

**GREAT CLASSICS FOR THE CANON REVISITED INCLUDE ROBERT WIENE'S  
EXPRESSIONIST MASTERPIECE BASED ON *CRIME AND PUNISHMENT***

**THE DOCUMENTARIES OF CLAUDE AND DINA LÉVI-STRAUSS IN MATO GROSSO**

**The programme for Friday, 11 October 2024**

[Press release](#)

PORDENONE - In 1986, four years after it was founded, the Pordenone Silent Film introduced the **Jean Mitry Award**. Initially sponsored by the Province of Pordenone and subsequently by the **Friuli Foundation**, the award remembers one of the most important cinema theorists of the twentieth century, a founder of the *Cinémathèque Française*, and the first Chairman of the festival. The prize celebrates figures and institutions who have distinguished themselves in the field of conservation and study of silent-film heritage. This year's award goes to **Bryony Dixon**, a curator at the BFI National Archive in London, responsible for the silent film collection, and **Mark-Paul Meyer**, who is retiring as senior curator of the Eye Filmmuseum in Amsterdam. The presentation ceremony will open the evening of Friday, 11 October 2024 at Teatro Verdi, at 9.00 p.m.

This will be followed by a screening of **Großstadtschmetterling: Ballade Einer Liebe** (Pavement Butterfly, DE/GB, 1929) by **Richard Eichberg** with musical accompaniment from a trio featuring Günther Buchwald, Frank Bockius and Mirko Cisilino. This is the second European film starring **Anna May Wong**, shot at the Neubabelsberg studios and outdoor locations in Montecarlo, Nice, Menton and Paris. Like the previous film *Song*, here too the story is inspired by Madame Butterfly (making the most of the star's ethnicity), with cabaret-esque comic moments to lighten the dramatic atmosphere of the picture. One eye-catching wide shot captures Anna May Wong exiting the scene, walking away from the camera in her sequin-hemmed evening dress, alone, before disappearing into the darkness. **Großstadtschmetterling** was her final silent film. Towards the end of 1929 she learnt German and French in order to make her first talking picture, filmed in three languages. Thanks to her multilingual talent, Wong had no difficulty in the transition from silent film to talkies and, in the wake of her European success, returned to the United States in October 1930 to begin a new chapter in her career as a star of the stage.

The programme for Friday, 11 October 2024 presents other exciting features. These include the 2.00 p.m. screening of **Raskolnikow**, the 1923 expressionist masterpiece by **Robert Wiene**, as part of the Canon Revisited series. The film is a cinematic adaptation of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. The actors were all selected from Konstantin Stanislavsky's Moscow Art Theatre, the celebrated theatre company that transferred to Berlin in the wake of the October Revolution. The film saw success across many countries: in Bucharest it filled two thousand seats at the Ekorina Cinema for four weeks running. It was equally well received by critics, with a German magazine

writing that “no German actor could have done what these Russians achieved with such natural ease, humanity and devastating realism...”

For the retrospective on Uzbekistan, the festival presents the 1930 film **Arabi** (9.45 a.m.). This is a typical propaganda film, singing the praises of the collective in raising Karakul sheep of the highest quality. The director, **Nadezhda Zubova**, was the daughter of an aristocratic family from Saint Petersburg and one of the first female students of the Moscow film school. Throughout the twenties, she worked as an actress; **Arabi** is the only fiction film this fascinating and understudied director ever made.

**Alla Nazimova**, the Russian actress, stars in the role of an Indian dancer in **Stronger than Death** (US, 1920) by **Herbert Blaché**, with set design by Ben Carré, starting at 11.00 a.m. at the Teatro Verdi. At the end of his collaboration with Tourneur’s company, the 36-year-old Carré was a sought-after professional, and this is how he came into contact with the production company that Nazimova had founded with her husband, Charles Bryant. Working on **Stronger Than Death** was an experience that Ben Carré remembered very fondly thanks to the harmony created on set, and the splendour of the settings and scenes widely celebrated by the critics.

The third programme of films on **Sicily**, at 12.45, focuses on natural disasters, including powerful scenes captured by **Luca Comerio** on the day after the Messina earthquake.

At 5.45 p.m., the series on **Latin America** presents the last known example of Peruvian fictional silent film, the 1936 **Bajo el sol de loreto**, directed by **Antonio Wong Rengifo**. Set at the start of the twentieth century in the Amazon, in the lands of the Aushiri people, the film combines ethnographic documentary with the narrative structure and aesthetics of an American western.

The documentaries created by the great anthropologists **Claude Lévi-Strauss** and his wife, **Dina**, in Mato Grosso, central-eastern Brazil, are highly important for their scientific value. In addition to the films, the results of the expedition — funded by the Musée de l’Homme in Paris and Sao Paulo Department of Culture, then headed by writer Mario de Andrade — were also documented through text and photographs. In particular, the two illustrious academics captured images of two groups of very different indigenous peoples, the Bororo and the Kadiwéu, showing their customs, rituals and traditions.

The day’s programme will also feature several Studio Ivens films, starting at 4.30 p.m., including **Heien** (NL, 1929), one of the first attempts by Ivens himself, commissioned by the General Union of Dutch Construction Workers, with images of works for the reclamation of wetlands around Amsterdam.

The final film of the day, at 11.00 p.m., for the series dedicated to Swedish nature films, will be **Sten Nordenskiöld’s Farornas ö** (SE, 1930), filmed in very challenging conditions in the summer of 1929. The film is set in the outermost of the Faroe Islands in the North Atlantic, which were very difficult to even reach. Imagining the small troupe setting off with all of their heavy and cumbersome equipment, we start to realise just what an impressive endeavour this film was.

At the Ridotto del Teatro Verdi venue, at 5.30 p.m., the festival presents the final book presentation: Paolo Caneppele with his *Il catalogo del mondo. La belle époque al cinema. Cinegiornali in Italia 1910-1914* (Kaplan); Hans Kitzmüller *Lontano da Vienna. Frammenti di un’autobiografia di Nora Gregor* (Casa Editrice Vita Activa) and Christian Lovato *Charlie Chaplin a spasso tra i media. Il vagabondo come personaggio. (Italian only event)*

The **online programme** for Friday, 11 October 2024, at 9.00 p.m. is dedicated to Restorations & Rediscoveries: **Peg o’ Mounted** (US, 1924) by Alfred J. Goulding, with Baby Peggy, and **Folly of Vanity** (US, 1924) by **Maurice Elvey** and **Henry Otto**, accompanied by Philip Carli on piano.

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Le Giornate del Cinema Muto Silent Film Festival – Press Office

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