



## THE 43<sup>rd</sup> EDITION OF THE PORDENONE SILENT FILM FESTIVAL

INAUGURAL NIGHT FEATURING THE WESTERN *3 BAD MEN* BY JOHN FORD  
WITH MUSIC BY TIMOTHY BROCK PERFORMED BY THE PORDENONE CHAMBER  
ORCHESTRA

FILMS ON LATIN AMERICA AND UZBEKISTAN, THE CANON REVISITED, TRAVELS  
AROUND SICILY AND A HOMAGE TO ANNA MAY WONG ALSO LAUNCHING

Programme for Saturday, 5 October 2024 at Pordenone's Teatro Verdi

### Press Release

Prior to masterpieces such as *Stagecoach* and *The Searchers*, John Ford filmed many Westerns in the silent era, already demonstrating a coherence in the handling of themes and settings that distinguished the artist's work throughout his career. One excellent example is *3 Bad Men* (US 1926), which will officially inaugurate the 43rd edition of the Giornate del Cinema Muto / Pordenone Silent Film Festival at the Teatro Verdi in Pordenone on 5 October 2024 at 9.00 p.m. Following the great success of *The Iron Horse* two years before, Fox gave the young Ford free rein. This can be seen in the choice to shoot outdoor scenes in Wyoming and the Mojave desert, where the director filmed the most spectacular sequence in *3 Bad Men*, featuring a chaotic land-rush scene with hundreds of extras, horses and carriages. The film was based on Herman Whitaker's novel, *Over the Border*, but Ford altered the period and location of the story, setting it in 1876, South Dakota, where thousands of people rushed to occupy lands stolen from the Sioux. Amongst a host of outlaws and cowboys, the film follows the "3 bad men" of the title. In the end, they manage to redeem themselves, revealing a rather unexpected sense of honour. For *3 Bad Men*, the orchestra pit of the Teatro Verdi will host the **Pordenone Chamber Orchestra** led by musician **Timothy Brock**, who has composed a wonderfully evocative score.

There is plenty to enjoy on the opening day of the festival. The programme will begin at 1.00 p.m. at the Teatro Verdi with the **Biograph Project** of the Library of Congress and the Film Preservation Society. This will present films directed by **D.W. Griffith** in 1908, the year in which he began his collaboration with the American Mutoscope and Biograph Company, for which he created one-reelers including *The Adventures of Dollie*, considered a milestone in cinema history. The Pordenone Silent Film Festival, which already presented the entire body of Griffith's work from 1997 to 2008, revisits some of the master's work now in 2024, but only with copies restored in the context of this project, obtained by scanning the original paper prints of the Library, with results that would have previously been impossible. Finally, films that only existed in poor-quality copies or were even unplayable, can now be enjoyed with image quality close to the originals.

The afternoon will also see the start of a programme of films dedicated to **Sicily**, curated by Elena Beltrami and Gabriele Perrone in collaboration with Italian, European and South American archives. This will launch the festival's journey around the different regions of Italy in future editions, giving audiences an opportunity to go back in time and see Italy from a century ago.

In the first screening of classics for **The Canon Revisited** section, we present *Sorok Pervyi* (The Forty-First, USSR 1926) by Yacov Protazanov, a director who represents the continuity of Russian cinema before and after the October Revolution. The tone that dominates the film, which is also a love story, is neither idyllic nor romantic, but rather speaks of the tragedy of civil war. The screening

of *Sorok Pervyi* will be preceded by the first of 14 mysterious films in the “**Sine Nomine**” section, featuring extracts from six different film libraries to be identified through the experience and knowledge of the festival’s audiences.

A great retrospective curated by Paolo Tosini is dedicated to **Latin America** and includes films from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. The focus will first fall on **Mexico**, with the Ottavio Moreno Toscano collection of films covering the key events in the country’s history between 1910 and 1922, including images of revolutionary leader Emiliano Zapata. There will also be screenings of a documentary about the 1931 earthquake in Oaxaca, captured almost in real time by Sergej Eisenstein before filming started on his ill-fated *Que viva Mexico!*, and a moralising melodrama by Salvador Pineda on the dangers of alcohol. Next, a curious cinematic hybrid, *Zitari*: part documentary on archaeological sites and part fiction with Luxembourgian actress Hermine Kindle Flutcher (screen name Medea de Novara).

The Giornate del Cinema Muto / Pordenone Silent Film Festival pays homage to **Anna May Wong**, the first Chinese-American star, long marginalised due to the racism that dominated Hollywood. Only more recently has she been properly recognised, with the minting of a quarter featuring her portrait on the rear and release of a collector’s Barbie doll carrying her name. She appeared in more than 70 films, 37 of which were silent pictures, in America, Germany, France and the UK. The first on the programme is *Dinty* (US 1920), in which the actress, aged just 15, does not even receive a credit. The art director was **Ben Carré**, another subject of one of the festival’s retrospectives.

The film is preceded by an extract of *Five Days to Live* (US 1922) by Norman Dawn, with the famous Japanese Hollywood star, **Sessue Hayakawa**, another victim of racial hatred, which developed towards the Japanese in the years after the First World War.

The programme for the day will close with an exceptional home-movie featuring the family of Piedmontese industrialist **Riccardo Biglia**, held at the Archivio Nazionale Cinema Impresa in Ivrea, and the short by Alfred J. Goulding, *Peg O’ the Mounted* (US 1924), shot in Yosemite national park and starring **Diana Serra Cary**, the Hollywood child prodigy known as Baby Peggy. John Ford’s *3 Bad Men* will be followed by the first film in the programme dedicated to the cinema of Uzbekistan. *Qlic* [Klych; I Want to Be a Train Engineer], from 1935, was directed by Iuldash Agzamov — an important figure in central-Asian cinema — and tells the story of a boy living in a remote rural village who goes off to discover the big city.

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Pordenone Silent Film Festival / Le Giornate del Cinema Muto – Press office

#### **Info festival**

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