

Extract from Jay Weissberg's speech at the Giornate press conference (Pordenone, 25.07.2016)

"Notwithstanding the budgetary worries that every Italian cultural activity is feeling at the moment, we've succeeded in putting together a high-profile program that I know will capture the attention as well as the imagination of our loyal attendees as well as the general public. This starts with the opening night, with the screening of *The Mysterious Lady* starring Greta Garbo. Garbo is... Garbo. The film has never screened at the Giornate, and making the event even more exciting, maestro Carl Davis will be returning to the festival to conduct his score, performed by the Orchestra San Marco di Pordenone.

The closing night is just as exciting. For decades the original score by Mortimer Wilson for *The Thief of Bagdad*, commissioned by Douglas Fairbanks, was forgotten. In recent months, Maestro Mark Fitz-Gerald has been working on transcribing and re-orchestrating the score, and we're thrilled to be premiering the landmark accompaniment, with the Orchestra San Marco, for this truly magical epic, which will also be repeated on the Sunday after the festival has finished.

The Thief of Bagdad is the culmination of our retrospective on the work of the legendary scenografo di Hollywood, William Cameron Menzies, who won the first scenografo Oscar in 1929. We'll be screening 6 features and 2 shorts, highlighting the collaborative role he played with major directors in creating designs that were both meaningful to the stories and characters as well as simply stunning to look at.

Last year we had a program entitled Other City Symphonies, which focused on a particular genre of avant-garde film of the late 1920s that celebrated the hustle-and-bustle of post-War urban landscapes, with all their promises of freedom and movement. This year we're continuing this theme and are especially pleased we've been able to track down a number of rarely seen films made in cities across the globe: Buenos Aires, Tokyo, San Paolo del Brasile, Toronto, Budapest, Praga, Vienna e Belgrado. Just a few days ago we added one more title to the programme: *À propos de Nice*, by Jean Vigo. We've all felt utterly torn up inside following the tragedy that took place in Nice last week, and decided this was a way of expressing our solidarity with the people of the city, as well as celebrating why Nice, with all its extremes, remains close to our hearts.

I'm especially pleased that we have an exciting line-up of Italian films this edition, including two recent discoveries that were considered lost for more than 90 years. The first is *L'onore riconquistato* from 1913, which includes scenes shot "from life" during the Italo-Turkish war in Libya. This was discovered in the Danish Film Institute, and forms part of our programme celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Institute.

The other newly discovered film comes from the same collection in Buenos Aires that brought to light the missing footage from *Metropolis*. Recently, the Museo del Cine discovered a print of *Una donna funesta* di Camillo De Riso, an Italian adaptation of the novel by Émile Zola, *Nana*. The film was made in 1917 but the censors were not at all happy with what they saw, and it wasn't allowed to be released until 1919. It stars the forgotten diva Tilde Kassay, and the Giornate will be the first to screen the film since its discovery.

This October sees the second installment of our tribute to the great Italian film pioneer Luca Comerio. Though one of the most important and influential directors of the peninsula, and a name that appears frequently in all textbooks, his work rarely gets screened. The scholar Sergio Germani has made a programme this year of Comerio's work before the Grande Guerra, including non-fiction works like the *Il terremoto in Messina* from 1909 and the Italian royal family meeting the Kaiser in Venezia in 1908, to comedies such as *Cocciutelli in guerra* from 1912. Next year we'll be completing this look at Comerio with a larger program encompassing his later films as well as those made during the Italo-Turkish war.

The Giornate has always been on the front lines of re-evaluating and championing works that have been passed by in the history books. In February I went to Varsavia to look at the holdings of their National Archive, and what I found were terrific films that clearly demonstrate the influence of Italian, Scandinavian, Russian and German films of the period. I've selected five Polish features as well as a score of newsreels, to demonstrate the cosmopolitan nature of the Polish film industry of the time, and highlight some of their great filmmakers."