

MOVIES IN CONCERT



FILM MUSIC PERFORMED WITH LIVE FILM

GIOELE MUGLIALDO - CONDUCTOR

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*Education makes a people easy to lead, but difficult to drive; easy to govern but impossible to enslave.
Henry Brougham, Speech to the House of Commons (January 29, 1828)*

Introduction

Let us start from a self-evident but rightful assumption: culture is and ought more and more to be an instrument used to highlight the identity of a country, a region, a city; an instrument apt to create new opportunities for professional advancement and to favour one's acquaintance with the world's artistic heritage.

Culture can be labeled in many ways. A well-known definition of it states that culture is "the sum of a people's, indeed of the human race's traditions and scientific, literary and artistic knowledge". It is a definition that distances itself from narrower concepts - "culture" as a synonym of "erudition", something restricted to an elite - and opens the doors to the idea that culture is what humankind, through its history and in its development, leaves behind in the way of customs and wisdom, that which describes to us a certain civilization or a certain epoch.



Bringing back to life two world-renowned masterpieces of early 20th-century silent cinema such as **Metropolis** and **Ben Hur** is a means to accomplish this target, a way for the public at large to regain possession of a cultural form that is visual and at the same time musical; a mix of cinema and music where sensory perception is amplified and the many means of communication make one's soul's deepest strings vibrate, reviving emotions that one might have thought lost.

This blend of Arts (visual, musical, pictorial, photographic, cultural) aims at making people emotionally involved; it wishes to bring the newer generations closer to forms of expression that they will not be used to and arouse in them a desire to learn and investigate the message that **Metropolis** and **Ben Hur** still carry in our days.

Music and the Silent Film

Historical records aren't clear as to whether or not the first silent films were accompanied by music and other sounds in the last decade of the 19th century, but it's certain that musical accompaniment was adopted very early. Suggested playlists were cobbled together from classical and ballroom favourites and distributed to exhibitors, or house ensembles and solitary theatre pianists filled in from their own repertoires. This meant, of course, that directors had little or no control over whether or not the music accompanying their films was at all appropriate.

An early antidote to this creative uncertainty was Joseph Carl Breil's score for *The Birth of a Nation* (1915). The director D.W. Griffith was, apparently, intimately involved with the music, although some was still borrowed from the works of Weber, Bellini, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Grieg and Wagner.

More thoroughly original and dedicated scores were to follow, such as Hans Erdmann's for *Nosferatu* (1921, directed by F W Murnau), Edmund Meisel's for *The Battleship Potemkin*, Dmitri Shostakovich's for *The New Babylon* (1929, Kozintsev and Trauberg), and Gottfried Huppertz's for *The Nibelungs* and *Metropolis*. Other well-known composers commissioned to write music for silent films were Darius Milhaud, Camille Saint-Saëns, Arthur Honegger, Paul Hindemith, Erik Satie and George Antheil.

Whether or not the initial purpose of musical accompaniment was, as has been suggested, to drown out the noise of the projector, the overriding requirement for music for silent films was that it be continuous. Only very brief periods of silence were permitted to provide dramatic emphases.

To achieve this continuity, many composers took inspiration from the operatic style of Richard Wagner, who popularised the technique of leitmotif, which applies musical 'tags' to recurring ideas, attitudes, characters, objects or places in an operatic, symphonic or, now, cinematic narrative.



Fritz Lang and Brigitte Helm (centre) play jazz on set

RETURN TO
METROPOLIS



A SOUNDTRACK AS YOU'VE NEVER SEEN IT

Metropolis: A Film Icon Restored

In a silent movie, the music is the film's voice. When that music has been planned and composed in close collaboration with the filmmaker and during the shooting itself, then it is an extraordinarily powerful voice, integral to the emotion and drama.

(Among the most famous examples is Prokofiev's music for Eisenstein's 1938 film *Alexander Nevsky*.) By extension, an original silent movie score is in some ways a script – a guide to scenes and pacing.

The 2010 restoration of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* restores scenes previously thought lost, scenes that bring into clearer focus the human element that infuses the science fiction. For film enthusiasts, this is an opportunity to see *Metropolis* in a form that is as close to the 1927 original as we're ever likely to see.

For music enthusiasts, just as exciting is the opportunity we now have to hear Gottfried Huppertz's score in its entirety, and in context. Huppertz's music played a key role in the restoration process.

When the Buenos Aires 16mm copy of the film surfaced in 2008, it was initially thought that the known gaps in previous restorations could simply be filled with the new material. The situation turned out to be far more complicated, and it was the detailed information in the various copies of the score and Huppertz's journal, as well as the music's highly gestural character, that enabled the dramaturgy of the original to be recreated.

There's an atmosphere of extravagance when the full forces of a symphony orchestra accompany a silent film in the concert hall. It's exceptional for us, and yet this is how early films such as *Metropolis* were experienced. There's a reason cinemas were called 'palaces'.

In this case, the extravagance and lavishness of the music complements the ambition and breathtaking conception of Lang's film.



The discovery

It was a film archivist's dream come true.

In 2008, in the vaults of a Buenos Aires film museum, Fernando Peña and Paula Felix-Didier found a 16mm negative of the longest existing version of one of the world's most famous incomplete films, Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* of 1927. The negative contained about 25 minutes of the film that had hitherto been presumed lost. It's hard to overstate the importance of the discovery.

Even in its reduced and somewhat incomprehensible pre-2008 state, Metropolis had achieved legendary status as an important historical work of art, as well as providing the inspiration for many classics of world cinema. James Whale's Frankenstein (1931) and Bride of Frankenstein (1935), for instance, owe much to the technical brilliance of the laboratory that produces Lang's evil robot Maria.

Charlie Chaplin's assembly line in Modern Times (1936) is reminiscent of Lang's frightening images of repetitive drudgery at the Heart Machine, and the exterior of the Tyrell Tower in Ridley Scott's Blade

Runner (1982) bears an uncanny likeness to Lang's New Tower of Babel. Other references reside in Stanley Kubrick's 2001 – A Space Odyssey (1968), Andrei Tarkovsky's Stalker (1979), Jean-Luc Godard's Alphaville (1965), Ken Russell's The Devils (1971), Luc Besson's The Fifth Element (1997), George Lucas's The Phantom Menace (1999), Alan Parker's Pink Floyd The Wall (1982) and John Schlesinger's The Day of the Locust (1974).



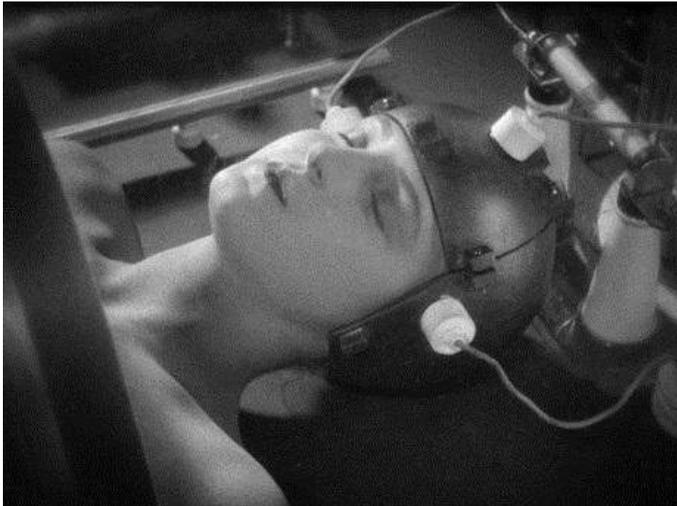
The flooding of the Workers' City was one of the most elaborate scenes of the production. Director Fritz Lang (left) on set.

Film-lovers are indeed fortunate that a negative of *Metropolis* had been acquired for Argentine distribution during the few weeks between the date of the world premiere, in Berlin on 10 January 1927, and April 1927, when the German distributor withdrew *Metropolis* from distribution and replaced it with a drastically shortened version. This was in line with cuts made to the US version released by Paramount in New York on 7 March 1927, reducing the film's length from 4,189 metres to 3,241 metres. The deleted negative footage is presumed destroyed, which means that the most complete remaining version is the copy found in Buenos Aires. It's presumed that the original Argentine 35mm negative was also destroyed, but not before a copy was made by a private collector. This copy was in turn destroyed after a government agency transferred the movie from its (dangerously) inflammable nitrate stock to the safer acetate stock. Unfortunately, the transfer was done only on 16mm acetate stock, which resulted in a serious loss of quality. No attempt appears to have been made to clean the print of dirt and scratches before the transfer, so the resulting copy was what film preservationist Martin Körber called 'the worst material I've ever seen in my life. Never have I seen a film as ruined as this one'.

Before the Buenos Aires discovery, the longest existing version of *Metropolis* had been assembled, in 2001, by the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau Foundation, using the Paramount negative as its basis with help from other copies recovered from New York, London, Moscow and Canberra. The result still ran short by about 25 minutes.

Following the Buenos Aires discovery, the Murnau Foundation combined the 16mm segments of the hitherto missing footage with the best of all the other available 35mm versions to produce a 35mm version that is probably the closest to the original Berlin version we'll ever get to see.

The painstaking reconstruction of *Metropolis* was aided by the existence of a piano version of the music score that accompanied the film at its Berlin premiere.



With its 1,019 cues for synchronising what's happening on the screen, this score remains, paradoxically, the most reliable evidence of the duration and narrative order of the original version of the film. With the Australian premiere presentation of *Metropolis* (1927/2010) – the screening of the restored film accompanied by Gottfried Huppertz's complete score – Sydney audiences are thus in the privileged position of being able to experience, for the first time, the film as it was shown for those few weeks in Berlin in 1927.

Maria's metamorphosis (Brigitte Helm)

The Film And Its Creation

Metropolis was produced in the second period of Weimar cinema (1924–29), when the German currency had been stabilised and art and cinema eschewed post-war Expressionist sensitivities for a style known as *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity, or New Sobriety). The period also witnessed a higher public consciousness of the power of America in influencing Germany's future, through its domination of the international film market and its aggressive pursuit of the new industrial doctrines of Taylorism and Fordism. Traditional German authoritarian values were challenged by *Amerikanismus*, a more open, democratic and modern social order threatening the two main Weimar contestants: the Old Order, smarting over the indignity of war reparations, and the Left, licking its wounds over its failure to establish soviets in the immediate post-war period.



'FaceTime' c.1927. Ruler Joh Fredersen speaks via video link to Grot, warden of the Heart Machine. (Alfred Abel and Heinrich George)

Metropolis was expected to restore German cultural pride in the face of the enthusiastic public reception to cultural challenges from the Soviet Union, spearheaded by Sergei Eisenstein's masterpiece *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), which opened in Germany in 1926. *Metropolis* was a project of the UFA studio, the largest in Germany following the privatisation of the former wartime propaganda unit.

The film's producer, Erich Pommer, had achieved distinction with *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (1920), *The Last Laugh* (1924), and two earlier Lang films: *Dr Mabuse, the Gambler* (1922) and *The Nibelungs*. Lang himself

was the most celebrated director in Germany at the time. He and his screenwriter wife, Thea von Harbou, were riding a wave of popularity after *The Nibelungs* became 'the cultural event of the year 1924'. Von Harbou was a successful author before becoming a leading screenwriter, and her novel of *Metropolis* (which reads much like a film script) was serialised in the press as part of the massive publicity campaign leading to the film's glittering premiere. The press fed the public a regular diet of photographs of celebrities visiting the huge film set, and statistics of the scale and scope of the production, which took 310 days and 60 nights to film, employed 36,000 extras, and used 25,000 special effects.

Metropolis was the most expensive movie made anywhere up to that time, but it was a disaster at the box office. It precipitated a major restructure of the UFA studio and severely dented the German industry's plans to resist US encroachment. Even so, the film is nowadays reckoned as one of the most important films ever made, and its appeal is only bound to increase as the new, virtually complete version becomes known.

How can this be explained? Just what do successive generations of filmgoers find appealing in a science fiction fable about labour relations involving the absolute ruler of a huge metropolis, his pampered son, a female labour agitator, a robotic clone of the agitator created by a mad scientist, and thousands of anonymous, downtrodden and workers?

The film's endurance probably hangs on the inability of German Expressionism ever to be really out of fashion. There always seems to be a time or place where, like now, public disillusionment with the order of things can only be expressed in such a distinctive way as Expressionism did, distorting reality with angry intent. Freder the pampered son doesn't actually see the dreadful machine turn into Moloch, but Lang has no need to paint the scene with a dream sequence to make his point. Nor, too, would the workers change shifts or burn a witch in such precisely choreographed formation, but we are willing to suspend disbelief to appreciate the full horror of their situation.

This is not to say that *Metropolis* is a totally Expressionist film, only that it's the Expressionist elements that survive the test of time. When it comes to the film holding its exalted place in cultural history, the love story, the religious mysticism and the naïve ending on the cathedral steps are trumped by the spectacular architectural sets, the frightening machines, the faceless workers, the mad scientist and his scheming robot.



*"Metropolis took 310 days
and 60 nights to film,
employed 36,000 extras,
and used 25,000 special effects"*



As Berlin critic Willy Haas pointed out on the day after its premiere, *Metropolis* steers a safe course between most of the ideological contests swirling around Weimar Germany at the time, mixing

...a little Christianity with the idea of the 'mediator', of the catacomb meetings, of the holy Mary-figure...; a little socialism with the new machine cult, with the enslavement and dehumanisation of the proletariat, and with the epitome of 'accumulation of capital', to use the Marxist term, in a single, invisible individual ruler; a little Nietzscheanism with the deification of the man of power – everything mixed so carefully so that it glides past every systematic idea and, for God's sake, avoids any 'polemic'.



Haas may be claiming that the film's message was motivated more by fashion than passion, but the word 'polemic' might suggest a more charitable interpretation. The troubles faced by the German distributors of *The Battleship Potemkin* may have alerted Lang to the unlikelihood of his getting any bold 'polemical' statements past his financial backers – which included Paramount – let alone through the national and state censors. Perhaps all Lang felt he could do was present symbols of issues of the day without coming down too strongly in favour of either side. The ten-hour clock that drives the workers to exhaustion is, for instance, symbolic of the industrialists' contemporary attempts to roll back the eight-hour day, wrung from them in a worker-employer accord following the failed 1918 revolution.

Whatever its intentions, Lang's team succeeded in creating a splendid fantasy piece of its time, a document which feeds succeeding generations' imaginations of an extraordinary era in modern history, even if it only canvasses (without resolving) the noisy debates of the period.

The Director



Friedrich Christian Anton Lang was born in Vienna on 5 December 1890. He first studied civil engineering, but switched to art in 1908. After being wounded in World War I, he joined the UFA studio to begin a distinguished career as a writer and director, revealing a fascination for, in his own words, 'cruelty, fear, horror and death'.

His first film hit was *Destiny* (*Der Müde Tod*, 1921), whose influence is evident in Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* (1956) as well as in films by Luis Buñuel, Roger Corman, Mario Bava and Terry Gilliam. Next was *Dr Mabuse, the Gambler* (1922) followed by *The Nibelungs* (1924), which was a local and international success. *Metropolis* followed in 1927, then *Spies* (1928), *Woman in the Moon* (1929) and *M* (1931), the psychological thriller regarded as the precursor of film noir. The final film made in his first German sojourn, *The Testament of Dr Mabuse* (1933), was banned by Joseph Goebbels, precipitating Lang's emigration to France – where he made *Liliom* (1934) – and eventually to the United States, where he stayed for 21 years, becoming a citizen in 1939. Lang directed 21 films in America: films noir, war and crime dramas, and westerns, most notably *Fury* (1936), *You Only Live Once* (1937), *The Return of Frank James* (1940), *Man Hunt* (1941), *The Woman in the Window* (1944), *Scarlet Street* (1945), *Clash By Night*, *Rancho Notorious* (1952), *The Big Heat* and *While the City Sleeps* (1956). Lang returned to Germany in 1959, but eventually went back to America, where he died on 2 August 1976.

The Original Metropolis Score

Gottfried Huppertz's music is an integral part of *Metropolis*. It was composed in collaboration with Thea von Harbou and Fritz Lang, with some sections being written during the shooting. The music perfectly interlocks with the film, creating a complementary (emotional) space for Fritz Lang's filmic construction.

The score is dominated by Huppertz's vivid and imaginative leitmotifs, which serve to guide the audience through what can seem to be a convoluted storyline.



Huppertz offers at least one motif for each main character, and each musical motif links the character, stylistically, to either of the two competing classes, in much the same way as the film's competing visual styles – Expressionist and New Objectivist – are divided between the workers and bosses respectively.

The workers, together with the mad scientist Rotwang and his robot Maria, are accompanied by music that reflects the modernist influences of the day, especially the 'machine-music' of composers like Honegger and Schoenberg's early experiments with tonality. It is, in effect, a stylistic reaction to established order (in this case to the high Romanticism of German music at the end of the 19th century). The music for the ruler Joh Fredersen, his son Freder and the real Maria is, on the other hand, in a decidedly Romantic vein, à la Chopin, Brahms, Zemlinsky and Richard Strauss.

The motifs are mostly very short, and very few are given musical development; they're usually only repeated, or combined with other motifs as required by the dramatic action.

"Gottfried Huppertz's music is an integral part of Metropolis.

The music perfectly interlocks with the film, creating a complementary (emotional) space for Fritz Lang's filmic construction"

GOTTFRIED HUPPERTZ

Born Cologne, 1887

Died Berlin, 1937

Gottfried Huppertz was born in Cologne, Germany on 11 March 1887. He studied music and, during World War I, worked as an opera singer and actor, as well as writing music for the theatre. In 1920 he moved to Berlin, where he met and became close friends with Thea von Harbou and Fritz Lang. This led him into the world of cinema, which became the focus of his career. He had small roles in two Lang films, *Four Around a Woman* and *Dr Mabuse, the Gambler*, and was then hired to write the music for *The Nibelungs* and *Metropolis*. He also played a small part as a violinist in one of the Yoshiwara nightclub sequences in *Metropolis* and in Lang's next film, *Spies*, for which he also wrote the music.

Huppertz's first sound-film score was for *The Judas of Tyrol* (1933, directed by Franz Osten). This was followed by *Elisabeth and the Fool* (1933, Thea von Harbou), *The Assumption of Hannele* (1934, Thea von Harbou), *The Green Domino* (1935, Henri Decoin and Herbert Selpin) and *Through the Desert* (1936, J A Hübler-Kahla). Gottfried Huppertz died of a heart attack on 7 February 1937.

Synopsis

Political and economic power in Metropolis centres on one person. From the New Tower of Babel, Joh Fredersen reigns over the Upper City and the Lower City. He perceives himself as the 'brain'; his people mere 'hands' in the machinery. Human qualities, however – love, friendship, rebellion, revenge – are still powerful enough to shake the foundations of this futuristic domain's technological world.

The rich and powerful reside in the Upper City – playing sports in a gigantic stadium, relaxing in the Eternal Gardens. This is the world of Freder, the ruler's only son. When Maria takes workers' children on a surprise visit to this paradise, Freder falls in love with her gentle beauty. He decides to see her world, the Lower City, and the subterranean machinery seems to him a Moloch, the sacrifices it demands too costly. Aghast, Freder appeals to his father, to no avail. Rather, Fredersen sets a henchman to shadow his son. In the face of an imminent workers' uprising, Fredersen consults the inventor Rotwang, his erstwhile rival. Rotwang shows him his secret creation, a robot he has built to replace Hel, Freder's mother, whom Rotwang had lost to Fredersen.

Fredersen makes a plan: the machine woman is to replace Maria and manipulate the workers. Rotwang pretends to agree, but his real aim is revenge. He wants the fake Maria to destroy the city, and Fredersen's son. Rotwang kidnaps Maria and transfers her likeness to the machine woman, making her both ruthless agitator and lascivious seductress.

The false Maria begins the cataclysmic workers' rebellion. The Heart Machine is destroyed and the resulting flood threatens to drown the Lower City. In the sweeping finale, Freder and the real Maria save the children from drowning. The mob goes after the false Maria and burns her at the stake. Rotwang also dies in the uprising. Fredersen and his foreman Grot seal the reconciliation between the workers and the ruling class with a handshake: 'The heart must be the mediator between brain and hands.'



Recap Info

Director: Fritz Lang

Screenplay: Fritz Lang, Thea von Harbou

Music: Gottfried Huppertz

Starring: Alfred Abel, Gustav Fröhlich, Brigitte Helm

Country: Germany

Year: 1927 (restored version 2010)

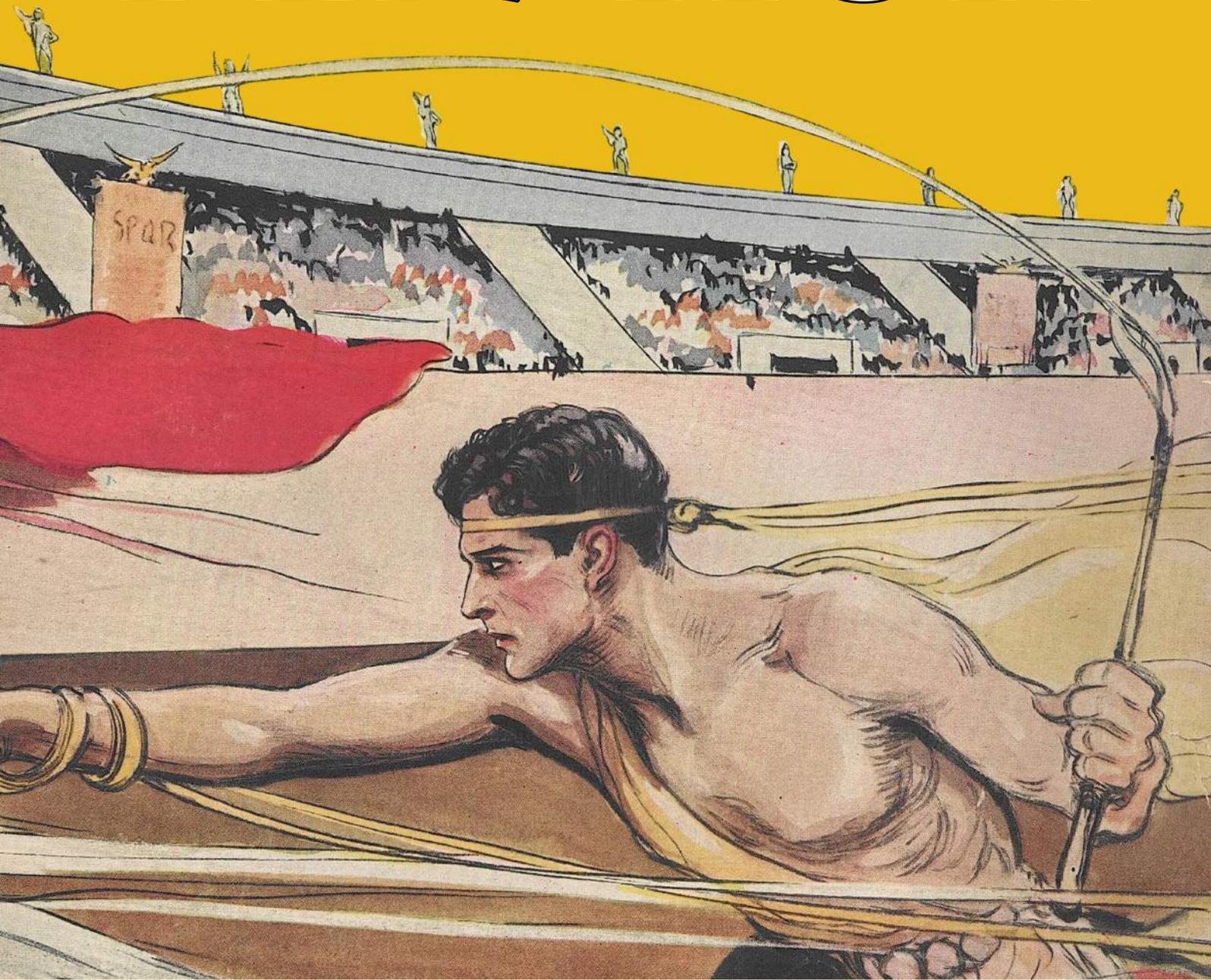
Genre: drama, science fiction

Running time: 153'

Symphonic orchestra: 60/77 musicians

Chamber orchestra: 23/32 musicians

THE AWAKENING OF BEN-HUR



WHAT A MUSIC!
WHAT A FILM!

"There is no such thing as silent film. The music was one half of it"
Lilian Gish – Star of the Silent Era

Ben-Hur 1925: The Most Expensive Silent Film Ever Made

At almost four million dollars, the 1925 version of Lew Wallace's *Ben-Hur* is widely considered the most expensive silent movie ever made. Expenses for the movie began in 1919 with the initial negotiations with Henry Wallace and with Abraham Erlanger, producer of the successful stage play. Erlanger eventually concluded a deal with MGM for generous profit participation and total control over the production. Cost escalation accelerated in 1923 when filming of the movie began in Italy. There were accidents, changes in directors, corporate mergers, and changes in cast, including the hiring of Ramon Navarro as Ben-Hur replacing George Walsh. Walsh had been hired to play the title role and went to Italy, but he felt he was being treated shabbily and went home in a huff.



As the MGM publicity machine continued its promotion emphasizing the quality of the production, actors wearing heavy costumes who jumped overboard to escape burning ships during the sea battle had to be rescued from drowning and horses were being maimed and killed with alarming regularity because of the punishing demands placed on them. Even the building of the elaborate sets by Italian craftsmen was delayed by Italy's new

leader, Benito Mussolini. In a bold move, Irving Thalberg, MGM's head of production, closed the Italian operation and moved the entire effort to Hollywood to contain costs. This was an early instance where the "business side" of show business significantly curtailed the "show side." Because of the cost overruns in Italy, for decades after *Ben-Hur*, most movies were mounted on Hollywood's back lots so that the business men could keep an eye on the productions and their bottom lines.

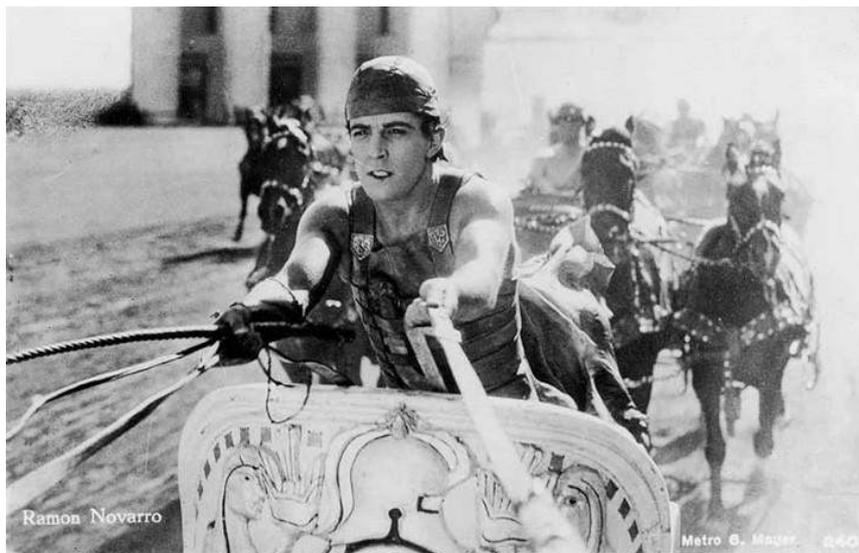
Filming ran from October 1923 through August 1925—almost two full years. This lengthy filming and final editing of the movie also added to the expenses. For instance, 42 cameras were used and over 200,000 feet of film was shot for the chariot race—in the final cut of the movie only 750 feet of the filmed race was used.

Also, sections of the movie boasted an early 2 tone version of Technicolor using red and green filters. While not the first movie to boast color sequences, it was an early use of this technology raising its production value and audience interest. The enormous chariot race arena was constructed at what is now the intersection of La Cienega and San Vicente Boulevards in Los Angeles.

The chariot race sequence was filmed in one day and MGM made the most of it. They made the day of filming a holiday for the studio which gave the day a circus like feel. With the exception of the leading men, Ramon Navarro and Francis X. Bushman, the other titled characters from the movie are today largely unknown. However, because of the holiday, established stars such as John and Lionel Barrymore, Joan Crawford, Marion Davies, Douglas Fairbanks, John Gilbert, Dorothy and Lillian Gish, Harold Lloyd, and even America's sweetheart—Mary Pickford made special appearances in the crowd scenes. While they weren't

matinee idols, Samuel Goldwyn and Sid Grauman (of the Chinese Theater) also showed up on screen rooting for Ben-Hur. Although the movie made over nine million dollars in its original run, it was not considered to have made any money for the studio because of the production and promotion costs and because of the deal struck by Mr. Erlanger. In subsequent releases it continued to make money for the studio, but more importantly, it cemented MGM's reputation as the quality studio in Hollywood. This reputation helped Thalberg and his associates leverage other successful projects and for the next three decades allowed MGM to attract more stars than there were in the heavens.

Reception



The studio's publicity department was relentless in promoting the film, advertising it with lines like: "The Picture Every Christian Ought to See!" and "The Supreme Motion Picture Masterpiece of All Time". Although audiences flocked to *Ben-Hur* after its premiere in 1925 and the picture grossed \$9 million worldwide, its huge expenses and the deal with Erlanger made it a net financial loss for MGM. It recorded an overall loss of \$698,000. In terms of publicity and prestige however, it was a great success.

"The screen has yet to reveal anything more exquisitely moving than the scenes at Bethlehem, the blazing of the star in the heavens, the shepherds and the Wise Men watching. The gentle, radiant Madonna of Betty Bronson's is a masterpiece," wrote a reviewer for Photoplay. "No one," they concluded, "no matter what his age or religion, should miss it. And take the children." It helped establish the new MGM as a major studio.

Note: the color sequences were removed from the 1925 film and replaced with black and white footage when it was re-released. These Technicolor scenes were considered lost until the 1980s when Turner Entertainment (who by then had acquired the rights to the film) found the crucial sequences in a Czech film archive. (The restoration of the 1925 film by Turner Broadcasting includes these color sequences).

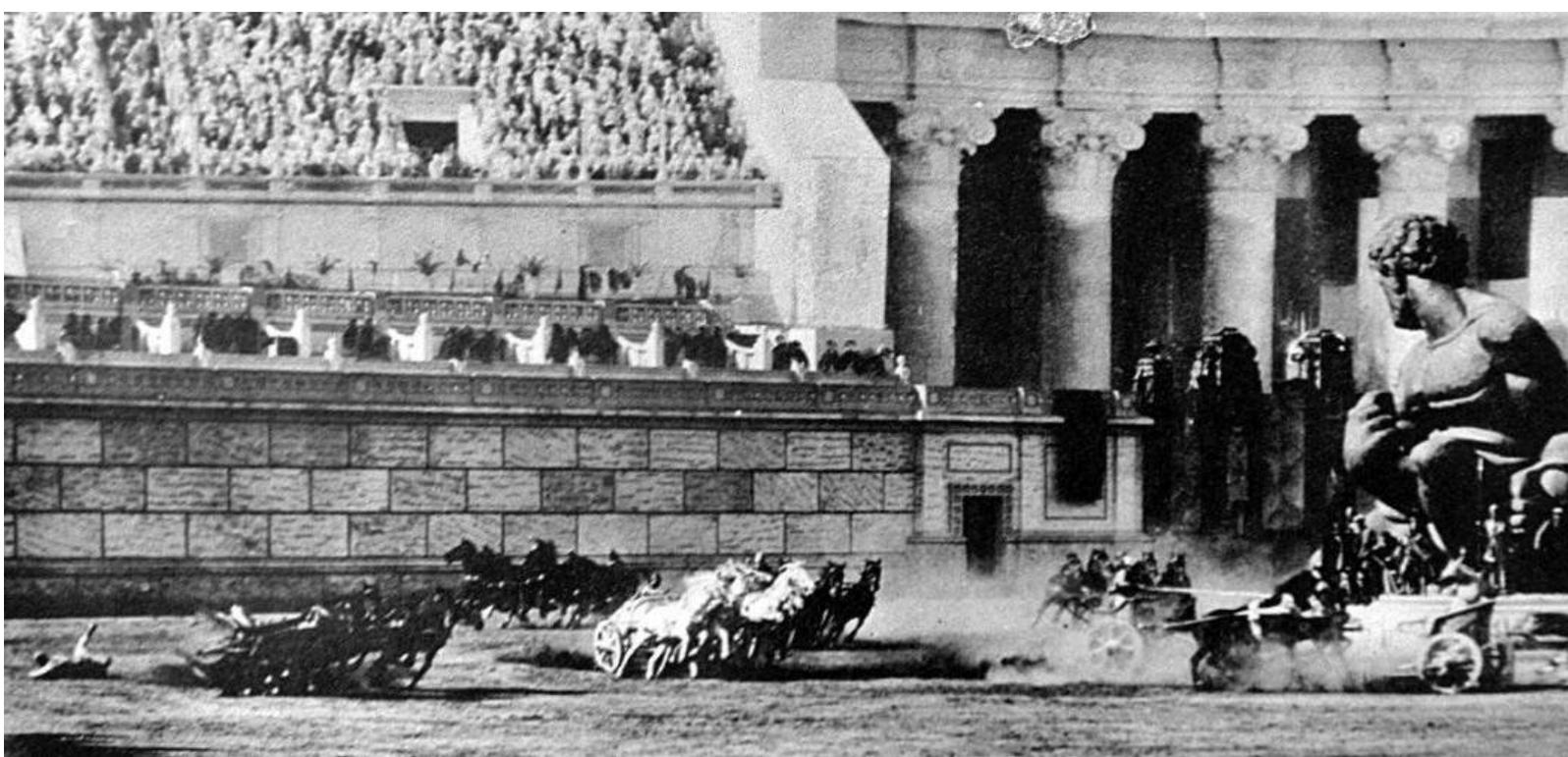
The film was re-released in 1931 with an added musical score, by the original composers William Axt and David Mendoza, and sound effects.

1987 New Restoration

In 1987, film historians Kevin Brownlow and David Gill, working in conjunction with the Czechoslovakian Film Archive and Turner Entertainment Company, produced the 35mm restoration of *Ben-Hur*, complete with the original color tints and two-strip Technicolor sequences. Brownlow writes, "It was a great privilege to be able to work on *Ben-Hur*. Turner had taken good care of their dupe-negative, but the Technicolor sequences had faded to a muddy brown ... so we made enquiries and discovered that the Czech Film Archive had all eleven Technicolor sequences in one complete, uncut roll. A shot censored at the time, Christ's hand on the cross, came from a private collector in Germany. By following the cutting continuity — or post-production script — we were able to restore all the tints to the film, which had been preserved in black and white." In addition, a new score was commissioned from Carl Davis for a 1989 Thames Television screening of the film.

Synopsis

Ben-Hur is a wealthy Jew and boyhood friend of the powerful Roman Tribune, Messala. When an accident leads to Ben-Hur's arrest, Messala, who has become corrupt and arrogant, makes sure Ben-Hur and his family are jailed and separated. Ben-Hur is sentenced to slave labor in a Roman war galley. Along the way, he unknowingly encounters **Jesus**, the carpenter's son who offers him water. Once aboard ship, his attitude of defiance and strength impresses a Roman admiral, Quintus Arrius, who allows him to remain unchained. This actually works in the Admiral's favor because when his ship is attacked and sunk by pirates, Ben-Hur saves him from drowning. Arrius then treats Ben-Hur as a son, and over the years the young man grows strong and becomes a victorious chariot racer. This eventually leads to a climactic showdown with Messala in a chariot race, in which Ben-Hur is the victor. However, Messala does not die, as he does in the more famous 1959 remake of the film. Ben-Hur is eventually reunited with his mother and sister, who are suffering from leprosy but are miraculously cured by Jesus



Ben-Hur, The New 2016 Remake

MGM and Paramount Pictures have finally announced that they have begun filming Ben-Hur, the much-awaited remake of William Wyler's classic. Direction has been entrusted to the Russian Timur Bekmambetov (Wanted and The Legend of Vampire Hunter), who has at his disposal a huge budget; Mark Burnett and Roma Downey are executive producers.

The film, according to the official outline, will go back to the origins of Lew Wallace's epic novel, with a focus on Faith, telling the story of a wrongly accused nobleman who survives through years of slavery in order to avenge himself on his best friend, guilty of betraying him. Revenge or forgiveness? That is the decision that both men will have to face at the end.

Jack Huston, as Ben-Hur, is the unquestionable protagonist; as his antagonist, Morgan Freeman is Ilderim; Toby Kebbell portrays Massala, and Nazanin Boniadi Esther. The cast also includes Rodrigo Santoro as Jesus Christ; Pilou Asbæk as Pontius Pilate; Sofia Black D'Elia, Ayelet Zurer and Moises Arias. Oliver Wood is Director of Photography (The Bourne Identity); Naomi Shohan is Production Designer; and Varvava Avdyusko Costume Designer. Filming began in Matera, European Capital of Culture in 2019, then moved to Rome's Cinecittà Studios. The movie is scheduled to be released on 26th February 2016.

A Movie That Will Live Forever

This remake is only the last version of a story that, over the years, has been portrayed several times, from the first English short film, to the cinema and television renderings. Following is a list of its adaptations, which clearly shows its everlasting appeal, always confirmed by ample critical and public success:

- 1907 Ben-Hur, short film – England
- 1925 Ben-Hur – A Tale of the Christ
- 1959 Ben-Hur, US movie directed by William Wyler, starring Charlton Heston
- 2003 Ben-Hur animation film by Bill Kowalchuk
- 2010 Ben-Hur television miniseries in 2 parts by Joseph Morgan
- 2016 Ben-Hur directed by Timur Bekmamb



“The march of [the events of the film] is like the oncoming of a mighty phalanx hurled without reserve or question at the one objective of victory. They are rich, lavish, and prodigal to a degree unimagined and unprecedented...Yet—all of these things pale and become naught before such a magic touch as that when a hand mystically linked with divine eternity stretches forth to extend a cup of water to the driven, crushed and beaten here as he struggles across the desert to the sea under the lash of the Romans”

Carl Davis's New Soundtrack

Carl Davis embarked on his third such score in 1987 (the first two were *Napoléon* and *Intolerance*).

Ben-Hur offered a different challenge in that the story is truly Biblical, requiring an element of religious spirituality. Davis hit on the brilliant idea to incorporate the 'Dresden Amen', famously quoted by Mendelssohn and Wagner, for those moments in the film where purely religious figures are depicted. Otherwise the music is new so as to fit the drama of the story.

Davis does a wonderful job in capturing the feelings inherent in each scene; tenderness, exoticism, fury, excitement, grandeur. The film itself has all these requirements to fulfil.

In many ways the score to *Ben-Hur* is as strong and resplendent as the movie itself. Written for a large orchestra, it is fun to spot the influences that permeate Davis's music. There are too many to list but the integrity of the score shines forth.

The ghost of Richard Strauss hovers over the entire score, especially in the harmonic language and orchestrations. As such, the music has an early century late Romanticism that still feels contemporary yet never seems out of place alongside the 60-year-old images it was written for. *Ben-Hur* and Esther's love theme is voiced in a tender violin and cello duet. The slinky music for Iras the Egyptian has a sultry, *Salome* bent, in which the Straussian orchestrations ooze desert and sexual heat.

For the 1959 remake, director William Wyler filmed the famous chariot race nearly shot-for-shot from the 1925 original.

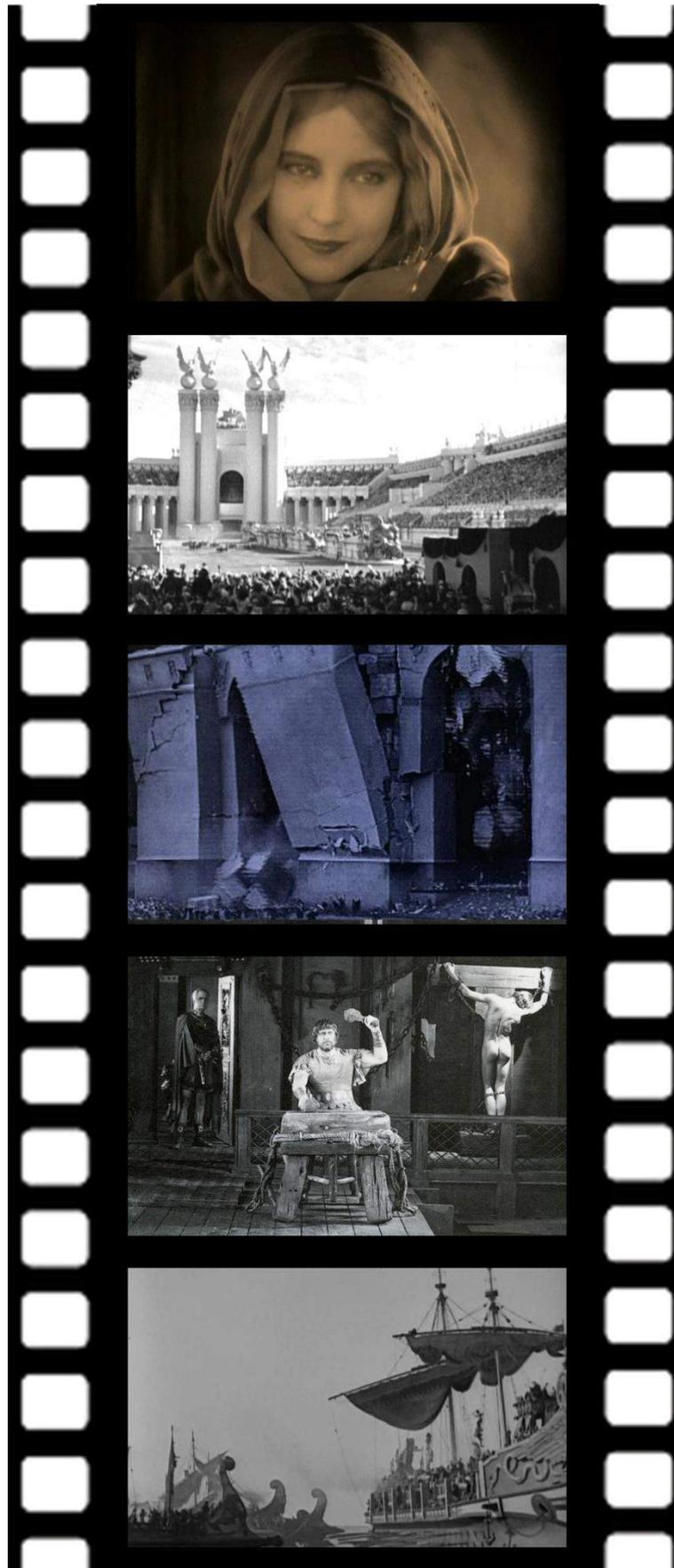
However, the scene plays without music, focusing instead on the cheers of the spectators and the sounds of the race itself.

Davis's cue for the silent film version is a 10-minute orchestral *tour de force* that captures all the excitement of this legendary scene. Heroic trumpet statements of *Ben-Hur*'s theme battle with the lower brass of Messala, while dueling forces in the double sets of timpanis underscore the rousing race theme.

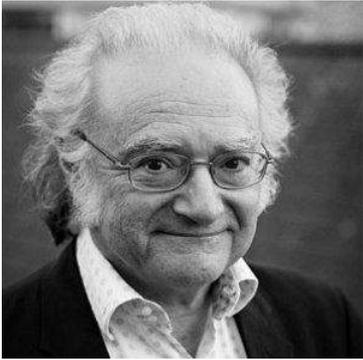
Davis depicts the action with such polish and professional artistry that his score for BEN-HUR is music of epic, biblical proportions.

Above all Carl Davis's work assists the movie's ambition to stir the mind and the heart.

What a film, what a score!



Carl Davis



Since moving to England in the 1960s, American-born conductor/composer Carl Davis has been a leading figure in both the concert hall and in film music, carving out a unique niche in each. Born in New York City, Davis attended Bard College and later studied composition with Paul Nordoff, Hugo Kauder, and Per Nørgård. He served as a conductor with the New York City Opera and the Robert Shaw Chorale, and earned an award for his 1959 off-Broadway revue *Diversions* (written in collaboration with Steven Vinaver). He became active in England at the outset of the 1960s with the Edinburgh Festival (where *Diversions* was performed in 1961), and this led to his being commissioned by producer Ned Sherrin to compose the score for the satiric television series

That Was the Week That Was. The success of his work on that series led to further work on British television and, later, commissions from the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre. Davis first began gaining international recognition in 1973, when he was engaged to write the score for Thames Television's landmark 26-hour documentary series *The World at War*, which was an immediate hit in the United States and was widely shown for decades after -- his grim, often irony-laced scoring was among the most haunting ever heard in a television series.

As a film composer, Carl Davis has worked on notable contemporary movies, most notably *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, which won him a British Academy Award and an Ivor Novello Award. His most unusual film work, however, has been in the authorship of new scores for such renowned silent films as the European restoration of Abel Gance's *Napoleon*, and *The Thief of Bagdad*. Davis has scored more than 50 silent films, earning him the sobriquet "Mr. Silent Movie," and by 2005 Davis had scored all 12 of Charlie Chaplin's Mutual films, key early Chaplin shorts that Chaplin had not scored himself. Davis' score for *Napoleon* earned him the Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres from the French Ministry of Culture in 1983, and he had the privilege of returning to *Napoleon* when a new five-and-a-half hour long restoration was unveiled in 2005. The US premiere of the restored version was scheduled for 2012, with Davis conducting the Oakland East Bay Symphony.

Since the 1970s, Carl Davis has been an active recording artist, principally as a conductor, most notably for EMI with a collection of film music by Sir William Walton and on the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra's own imprint with a compilation of his own film music. In 1991, Davis assisted Paul McCartney in the composition of his *Liverpool Oratorio*, and subsequently Davis led the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic's Summer Pops Concert series from 1993 to 2001. Davis has also written concert works, including a symphony, a clarinet concerto; a fantasy for flute, strings, and harpsichord; and a programmatic work entitled *A Circle of Stones*. Ballet is a form in which Davis is particularly productive, and his ballets include *A Christmas Carol*, *A Simple Man*, *Alice in Wonderland*, and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Davis' ballet of *Cyrano de Bergerac* appeared in the spring of 2007, followed by *The Lady of the Camellias* in 2008. Though American born, in 2006 Davis was awarded an honorary CBE from the British government for his contributions to music.

**The making-of:
Fred Niblo
on the set of Ben-Hur**



Recap Info

Director: Charles Brabin, Fred Niblo

Screenplay: June Mathis, Carey Wilson, Bess Meredyth, Katharine Hilliker

Based on: *"Ben-Hur": A Tale of the Christ* by Lew Wallace

Starring: Ramon Novarro, Francis X. Bushman, May McAvoy, Betty Bronson

Genre: Biblical Drama

Country: US (New York)

Distributed by: Metro Goldwyn Mayer

Year: 1925 (restored version 1987)

Music: Carl Davis (1987)

Running time: 141'

Orchestra: 70/80 musicians



The Conductor

An eclectic and versatile musician, Gioele Muglialdo has mastered the styles of a wide and multifaceted repertory that ranges from classical music (symphonic, operatic, chamber) to musicals, film scores, and even American music bordering on jazz.

Muglialdo began to study in Turin, graduating in Composition and Conducting at a very young age with brilliant marks from the local “Giuseppe Verdi” Conservatory. He went on to add an international perspective to his training, travelling all over Europe to perfect his conducting with teachers of the Russian School, among them Yuri Ahronovitch. He came second in the 4th International Competition of Budapest, where he led the Hungarian Symphony Orchestra. Also of fundamental importance in his formative years was the figure of Nello Santi, whom he assisted for several years in various productions.

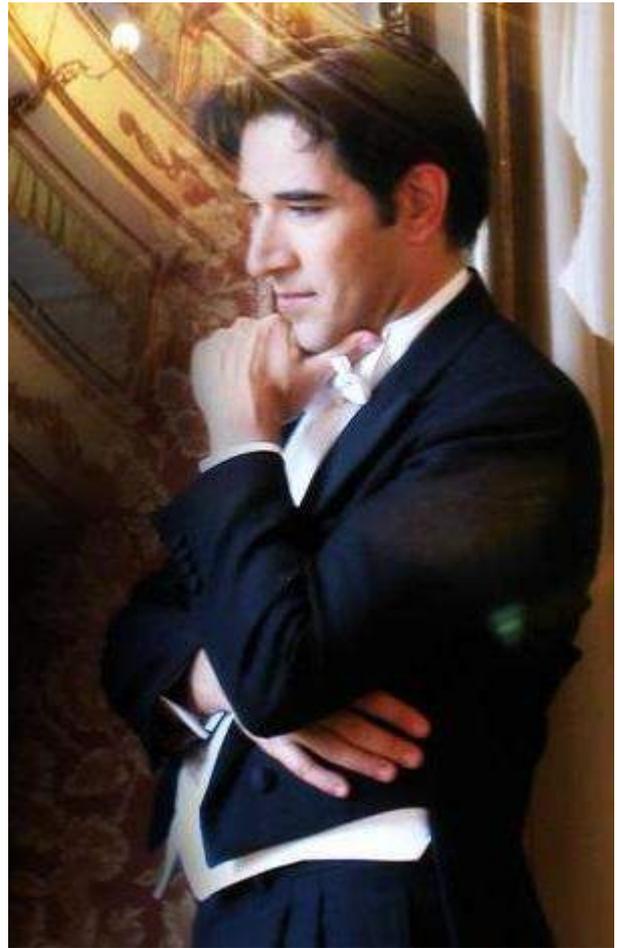
Muglialdo has conducted numerous Italian, European and South-American orchestras. Among them the ‘Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI’, the Filarmonica Arturo Toscanini, “I Pomeriggi Musicali” of Milan, the Teatro Regio Orchestra of Turin, the Emilia Romagna Regional Orchestra, the Italian Philharmonic Orchestra, the Teatro Coccia Orchestra of Novara, the Orchestra of Sassari’s ‘Marialisa De Carolis’ Concert Society, the Teatro Donizetti Orchestra of Bergamo; Münchner Symphoniker, Westfalen New Philharmonic Orchestra, Solisten the “Solisten der Essener Philharmoniker”, the Pilsen Philharmonic Orchestra, the Rouse State Philharmonic, the Thessaloniky State Orchestra, the Plovdiver Symphoniker, the Macedonian Philharmonic Orchestra, the Orchestra of the Novaja Opera Theatre of Moscow, and the National Symphony Orchestra of Peru.

Among the theatres and concert halls where he has performed are the Auditorium RAI “A. Toscanini” of Turin, the Teatro dal Verme of Milan, the Teatro Municipale of Piacenza, the Teatro Comunale of Sassari, the Teatro Donizetti of Bergamo, the Teatro Coccia of Novara, the Politeama Rossetti of Trieste; the Gasteig and the Herkules Saal of Munich, the Meistersinger Halle of Nuremberg, the Liederhalle Stuttgart, the Franz Liszt Museum of Budapest, the Los Incas Auditorium of the Lima National Museum (Peru); in Japan, the Minato Mirai Hall of Yokohama and the Hokutopia Tsutsuji Hall of Tokyo; in China, the Xinghai Concert Hall (*Guangzhou*).

He has collaborated with prestigious institutions, such as the Toscanini Foundation of Parma, the Teatro Comunale Foundation of Modena, the ‘Serate Musicali’ of Milan, the National Cinema Museum of Torino, the Renata Tebaldi International Lyrical Competition, the Ruggero Leoncavallo Festival, the Shroud Diocesan Commission, the Italian Cultural Institute for Hungary of Budapest, the Instituto Nacional de Cultura (INC) and the Pontificia Universidad Católica of Peru, and the Alejandro Granda International Opera Festival of Lima.

In the course of his career Muglialdo has perfected his sensitivity and specific technical competence with regard to vocal music, also through his experience as repetiteur.

Among the opera productions he has conducted – fully staged, in concert form and/or highlights – are: *Così fan tutte*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *I Lombardi alla prima crociata*, *Il trovatore*, *La traviata*, *Nabucco*, *Suor Angelica*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Tosca*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Zanetto*, *Pagliacci*, and *L’elisir d’amore*. He has collaborated with directors such as Massimo Scaglione, Stefano Vizioli, Massimo Gasparon, Jaime Martorell, Jean-Louis Pichon.



Having mastered the peculiar technique of music-image synchronization, and thanks to the experience he has gained in this sector, Mugliardo is today one of the most skilled and qualified conductors of live classic soundtracks; he is indeed one of the very few specialists of this genre, which is enjoying a veritable renaissance.

His interest in cinema has then led him to approach the great American repertory, with *One Night on Broadway*, where he put to good use his passion for pop music and jazz. Numerous, indeed, are the instrumentations and arrangements commissioned to him by various institutions.

More recently, he has also dedicated himself to sacred music, playing a leading role in events of great renown. He conducted a *Sacred Concert* in Lima's Plaza Mayor, Fauré's *Requiem* at the Cathedral of Turin, Boccherini's *Stabat Mater* at the "Real Chiesa di S. Lorenzo" in Turin. As a future project he has been commissioned a new Mass by the Archdiocese of Lima's Cathedral.

His activity as a pianist, which he has cultivated alongside that of conductor, allows him, equally, to be involved in the field of chamber music and to take part in important vocal events, both as a collaborator to renowned singers and as an opera coach. Among the performers he has collaborated with are Giuseppe Valdengo, Magda Olivero, Alessandro Corbelli, Francesca Patanè, Enzo Dara, Masako Deguchi, Sue Patchell, Ignacio Encinas, Dimitra Theodossiu, Nicola Ulivieri, Ildar Abdrazakov, Elisabete Matos, Ernesto Palacio, Claudio Desderi, Franca Mattiucci, Luca Canonici, Anna Maria Chiuri, Linda Campanella, Giorgio Cebrian, Piero Giuliani, Chiara Taigi, Anna Pirozzi, Claudio Sgura, Juan Diego Flórez.

Note

It is only right, indeed important to draw attention once again to a fundamental aspect of Maestro Mugliardo's curriculum vitae, which in this specific project becomes a strategic factor, a sort of diamond point: his by now long-time experience in the peculiar technique of synchronizing music and images (without any technical equipment), which places him in the very restricted, exclusive number of conductors specialized in cine-concert, that is to say the screening of films with live orchestral accompaniment. At the moment he is the only Italian conductor skilled in this technique and with a solid and varied repertoire. His experience and professionalism in this field are a guarantee of quality both at the rehearsing stage and in the actual performance, which is always of a very high standard. Among his last cine-concert performances, we ought to mention *Metropolis* at Turin's A. Toscanini Auditorium, at the head of the RAI National Symphony Orchestra; and *Deutschland von Oben* at Munich's Gasteig, leading the Münchner Symphoniker. His future engagements include his debut at the Monte Carlo Opéra in 2016, at the prestigious Salle Garnier, once again performing *Metropolis*.



MOVIES IN CONCERT

Film music performed with live film
Gioele Mugliardo, conductor



Metropolis (1927) – Fritz Lang

Music: **Gottfried Huppertz**

Symphonic orchestra, 67/77 musicians | Chamber Orchestra: 27 musicians

Duration 153'

Metropolis is a pearl of the collective imagination, a real cult movie; it is the example of how the success of a movie is closely linked to its sound track, which is an integral and necessary part of it.



Ben-Hur (1925) – Fred Niblo

Music: **Carl Davis** new version 1987

Orchestra: 70/80 musicians

Duration: 141'

In 1925 Ben-Hur cost almost four million dollars, which makes it the most costly silent movie ever made. The new sound track that Carl Davies has composed for it blends all of the story's elements: romantic, dramatic and religious.



The Circus (1928) – Charlie Chaplin

Music: **Charlie Chaplin**

Orchestra: 30/40 musicians

Duration: 71'

This film, one of Chaplin's greatest masterpieces, earned him what was then called an Academy Award (Oscar) "*for versatility and genius in acting, writing, directing and producing The Circus*".



City Lights (1931) – Charlie Chaplin

Music: **Charlie Chaplin**

Orchestra 42/53 musicians

Duration: 103'

Today, critics consider it not only the highest accomplishment of Chaplin's career, but one of the greatest films ever made In 1949, the critic James Agee referred to the final scene in the film as the "greatest single piece of acting ever committed to celluloid".



Battleship Potëmkin (1925) – Sergej Ejzenstejn

Version 1 – Music: **Dmitrij Šostakovič** – Orchestra: 60 musicians

Version 2 – Music: **Edmund Meisel** – Orchestra: 50/60 (reconstructed original score)

Duration: 75'

“*Battleship Potëmkin* “ is one of the most famous films in the history of cinema: for its technical and aesthetic merits it is considered one of the best propaganda films ever made, as well as one of the greatest achievements of the seventh art.



Cabiria (1914) – Giovanni Pastrone

Music: **Mazza / Pizzetti**

Orchestra: 16/20 musicians

Duration: 168'

It is the most famous Italian silent movie and the second mammoth production in the history of cinema after “*Quo vadis?*”, celebrated as one of the first, deliberate attempts, through the new art of cinema, to blend the expressive means of literature, painting, architecture, music and theatre.



The Adventures of Prince Achmed (1926) – Lotte Reiniger, Carl Koch

Music: **Wolfgang Zeller**

Symphonic Orchestra: 38 musicians | Chamber Orchestra: 25 musicians

Duration: 65'

Inspired by *One Thousand and One Nights*, it is considered the first European animated feature film. Using the technique of silhouette animation – which revives the tradition of shadow puppets – this film represents a turning point of extraordinary importance in the history of cinema.

Project and texts by Gioele Mugliardo - All rights reserved ©

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