



Production still from *Il Fauno (The Faun)* (detail) 1917 | Director: Febo Mari | Image courtesy: Museo Nazionale del Cinema, Turin

EXTRAVAGANT CINEMA: FROM CABIRIA TO THE INFERNO AUSTRALIAN CINÉMATHÈQUE 28 May – 2 June 2010

Presented by the Australian Cinémathèque, Gallery of Modern Art, in collaboration with the Consulate of Italy in Brisbane and the Museo Nazionale del Cinema, Turin.

For Italian Week, Brisbane, in 2010, four of the most celebrated films of the Italian silent cinema will be presented with live musical accompaniment at the Australian Cinémathèque, for the first time in Australia on restored 35mm prints, including Giovanni Pastrone's epic masterpiece, *Cabiria* 1914.

'I will never forget the first time I saw Giovanni Pastrone's extraordinary Cabiria. I wasn't quite prepared for the sheer scope and beauty of this film. And I was completely unprepared for having my sense of film history realigned. (...) Cabiria is not a collection of great moments or choices, but a magnificent, entrancing whole.'
Martin Scorsese

PROGRAM



***Il Fauno (The Faun)* 1917**

Fri 28 May 8.30pm

65 minutes at 18fps (1325m), Director: Febo Mari

Live musical accompaniment by Mauro Colombis (Piano)



***Cabiria* 1914**

Sat 29 May 2.00pm

166 minutes at 16fps (3037m), Director: Giovanni Pastrone

Live musical accompaniment by Mauro Colombis (Piano)



***Maciste all'Inferno (Maciste in Hell)* 1926**

Sun 30 May 11.00am

100 minutes at 20fps (2306m), Director: Guido Brignone

Live musical accompaniment by David Bailey (Wurlitzer Organ)



***Maciste in Vacanza (Maciste on Holiday)* 1921**

Wed 2 Jun 6.00pm

72 minutes at 20fps (1644m), Director: Luigi Romano Borgnetto

Live musical accompaniment by David Bailey (Wurlitzer Organ)

Talk

The historical imagination of Cabiria | Dr Tiziana Ferrero-Regis, Queensland University of Technology
4.00pm Wed 26 May 2010 | Australian Cinémathèque, GoMA | Cinema A

The roots of Italian cinema's enduring fascination with history can be traced to the silent era and in particular to Giovanni Pastrone's *Cabiria*. Dr Tiziana Ferrero-Regis will speak about history and memory in this landmark of Italian silent cinema, as well as discussing the role that celebrated author and co-scriptwriter, Gabriele D'Annunzio, played in the production.



Il Fauno (The Faun) 1917 Ages 15+

Fri 28 May 8.30pm

35MM, COLOUR, 65 MINUTES AT 18FPS (1325M), SILENT, ITALY, ITALIAN INTERTITLES (ENGLISH SUBTITLES) / DIRECTOR/SCRIPT: FEBO MARI / PRODUCTION: S.A. AMBROSIO / PRINT SOURCE: MUSEO NAZIONALE DEL CINEMA, TURIN

A fantastical version of the Pygmalion story, *Il Fauno* holds an importance place in the history of Italian symbolist cinema. 'Various works from the "decadent" period of Italian cinema quickly slide towards the more extravagant themes that made the fortune of our "divas". Febo Mari (Alfredo Rodriguez, 1881-1939) was one of the main authors of this tendency, which we can place between 1915 and 1920. He acted, wrote, and directed (also with the supervision of such figures as Pastrone) films based on the degree of psychological exploration that was possible at that time, and often connected to creativity or inspired by celebrated literary sources (Grazia Deledda's *Cenere*, 1916, with Eleonora Duse; Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, 1919). *Il Fauno* is his own original story. In the dream, an amorous inclination materialises, expressed through the coming to life of a statue of mythological inspiration. The film is a work in which all behaviour, however predictable, is carried to excess: to today's eyes a sort of serial romance, and a shade kitsch. Yet the care for a subtly sensual atmosphere, realised in the splendid camerawork of Vitrotti, and the real absence of emotions, which are only illustrated and not shared, make *Il Fauno* superior to other more celebrated works by Mari, such as *Il Fuoco* (1915) or *Tigre reale* (1916). He works through subtraction, as if the form might render the content almost superfluous.' (Carlo Montanaro)

Live musical accompaniment is provided by noted Italian pianist Mauro Colombis, who has been involved in silent film accompaniment since 1993 and has performed at Pordenone Silent Film Festival every year since 2002. This restoration of the film was completed in 1994 by the Cinémathèque Royale du Belgique de Bruxelles and by the Cineteca del Friuli di Gemona, in collaboration with the Museo Nazionale del Cinema, Turin.



Cabiria 1914 Ages 15+

Sat 29 May 2.00pm

35MM, COLOUR, 166 MINUTES AT 16FPS (3037 M), ITALY, SILENT, ENGLISH INTERTITLES / DIRECTOR: GIOVANNI PASTRONE / SCRIPT: GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO, GIOVANNI PASTRONE / PRODUCTION: ITALIA FILM / PRINT SOURCE: MUSEO NAZIONALE DEL CINEMA, TURIN

Cabiria is epic cinema, featuring a cast of thousands and extravagant staging. Set almost two thousand years ago, the film recounts the story of Princess Cabiria, sold into slavery after the commotion caused by an eruption of Mt Etna. The character of the kind slave, Maciste, created by Pastrone and Gabriele D'Annunzio in *Cabiria*, features in a string of later popular films. Celebrated author and co-scriptwriter, D'Annunzio, wrote the intertitles for the film and created the names of the characters.

'No film in the history of Italian silent cinema can equal *Cabiria* in importance and success. The film was made between 1913 and 1914, and was distributed worldwide, starting in March 1914. The attention and public success it achieved at the time have rightfully earned it a place in the history of cinema, alongside many Hollywood blockbusters of later eras.

Pastrone's masterpiece was immediately popular. Right from the beginning it attracted the attention of industry executives and producers, as well as the press, for its impressive advances in the development of the dawning art form of the cinema. Today, no book about cinema history can fail to exalt the film's peculiarities, list its merits, and underline its main characteristics. *Cabiria* is justly celebrated as a triumph of period super-productions, Italy's most important contribution demonstrating the power and spectacular resources of staging, and one of the first and most masterly attempts to unite the newly invented art form of cinema with the expressive means of literature, painting, architecture, music, and theatre.

It is no surprise that today *Cabiria* represents a seminal film in the history of cinema as art and entertainment, a film which undoubtedly had an influence on the great American filmmakers of the time –

above all, D.W. Griffith and Cecil B. De Mille – who found direct inspiration for those historical epics for which Hollywood was later to become famous. The boldness of Pastrone's project established a series of records, many "firsts". It was the first film ever to run more than 3 hours. No Italian producer had ever before dared to invest a sum that was 20 times higher than the average cost of a film at the time (1 million lire, as opposed to the usual 50 or 60 thousand). No director had ever sensed – and taken advantage of – the expressive potential inherent in the movements of a movie camera when mounted on a wheeled trolley, the forerunner of a dolly. Thanks to this invention, which Pastrone developed with his ingenious collaborator Segundo de Chomón, the camera finally began to move around the set, which took on real, 3-dimensional forms, of monumental proportions. No one had ever before dared to take elephants and several hundred extras to the Alps, in the dead of winter, to film Hannibal's crossing, although the scene lasted only a couple of minutes onscreen. No one had ever completely understood the importance of a real marketing campaign, one which might still be the envy of marketing strategists today.

In order to rescue film from its position as mere popular entertainment, and raise it to the level of art, the director-producer sought to enlist collaborators who would ensure cultural endorsement and prestige, and secured contributions from two of the greatest Italian intellectuals of the time: the writer Gabriele D'Annunzio and the composer Ildebrando Pizzetti, to whom he attributed a large portion of the merit of the film's creation, merit which, in fact, they did not deserve. Actually, D'Annunzio's collaboration did not go further than writing the intertitles and inventing the names of some of the main characters (including the extremely popular Maciste), while Pizzetti's collaboration was marked by a certain amount of conflict. To the point that the noted composer limited himself to creating the famous Symphony of Fire (an 11-minute mini-masterpiece), while the rest of the score was an excellent work of compilation by another musician, Maestro Manlio Mazza.' (Alberto Barbera)

Live musical accompaniment for this one-time only event and Australian premiere of the restored print is provided by noted Italian pianist Mauro Colombis, who has been involved in silent film accompaniment since 1993 and has performed at Pordenone Silent Film Festival every year since 2002. Restored in 2006 by the Museo Nazionale del Cinema, Turin.



Maciste all'Inferno (Maciste in Hell) 1926 Ages 15+

Sat 30 May 11.00am

35MM, COLOUR, 100 MINUTES AT 20FPS (2306 M), ITALY, SILENT, ITALIAN INTERTITLES (ENGLISH SUBTITLES) / DIRECTOR: GUIDO BRIGNONE / SCRIPT: RICCARDO ARTUFFO / PRODUCTION: FERT-PITTALUGA / PRINT SOURCE: MUSEO NAZIONALE DEL CINEMA, TURIN

'*Maciste all'Inferno* is "devilishness in five acts", set in a sensual, Baroque hell... As usual Maciste works his magic, defeating a fleet of devils, though in the end it is not his strength that wins but a child's prayers. *Maciste all'Inferno* is the last film in the series starring Bartolomeo Pagano, who ends with one of his best performances... The new joint restoration [2009] by Cineteca di Bologna and Museo Nazionale del Cinema in Turin, includes the original intertitles which describe the underworld with Dantesque tercets.' (Stella Dagna & Claudia Gianetto, Museo Nazionale del Cinema, Turin). Federico Fellini cites *Maciste all'Inferno* as an early cinematic influence.

Live musical accompaniment is provided on the Australian Cinémathèque's restored 1929 Wurlitzer Style 260 (Special) theatre pipe organ by organist David Bailey.



Maciste in Vacanza (Maciste on Holiday) 1921 Ages 15+

Wed 2 Jun 6.00pm

35MM, COLOUR, 72 MINUTES AT 20FPS (1644 M), ITALY, SILENT, ITALIAN INTERTITLES (ENGLISH SUBTITLES) / DIRECTOR: LUIGI ROMANO BORGNETTO / SCRIPT: ALESSANDRO DE STEFANI / PRODUCTION: ITALA FILM / PRINT SOURCE: MUSEO NAZIONALE DEL CINEMA, TURIN

'The stress of the frantic pace of modern life spares no one, not even Maciste, over-burdened with work and besieged by fans. A reinvigorating holiday is what he desires, above all if he can frolic through the countryside in his new little one-seat automobile, baptised "Diattolina" and loved by the giant like a wife. The honeymoon is doomed however by the price of popularity. In the street, the hotel, or the restaurant, everyone has problems to put before the hero of the cinematograph: mischievous brothers, annoying wives, cows that don't give milk, loves not reciprocated... there is nothing which cannot be solved by Maciste! An abandoned castle seems the only refuge in which to find peace, but even this proves a deception. Like every castle it hides secrets, bandits, and intrigues, and a crazy Miss America in search of a husband, who makes Maciste and his steadfast celibacy waver. *Maciste in vacanza* stands out as one of the most anarchic and amusing titles of the series, one of the few in which Maciste's difficulty in establishing relations with women becomes the object of knowing irony. A mischievous vein runs through the whole film, thanks to the acting of Henriette Bonard and to the play of overtones implicit in the dilemma which haunts a Maciste who is never just an ordinary man: is it better to elope with a woman or with a motor car? The film has been restored working with a tinted nitrate positive print with Italian intertitles, conserved in the Cineteca Nazionale in Rome; a dupe safety negative, with sound and without intertitles, and negative fragments conserved by the Filmoteca Española in Madrid; and a safety positive copy derived from the Madrid dupe negative and conserved in the Museo Nazionale del Cinema in Turin. The re-integration of the Italian intertitles and the identification of lacunae have been possible thanks to the production documentation conserved at the Museo. In particular, the colour samples have allowed us to verify the tinting of the Rome print and to reconstruct the tinting of scenes that exist only in the Madrid copy. The restoration was carried out at the Immagine Ritrovata laboratory in Bologna in September 2008' (Stella Dagna & Claudia Gianetto, Museo Nazionale del Cinema, Turin).

Live musical accompaniment is provided on the Australian Cinémathèque's restored 1929 Wurlitzer Style 260 (Special) theatre pipe organ by organist David Bailey. Restored in 2008 by the Cineteca del Comune di Bologna, the Cineteca Nazionale di Roma and the Museo Nazionale del Cinema, Turin.

LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT

Mauro Colombis

Mauro Colombis is an Italian classically trained musician with international concert experience. He has two masters in piano performance (from Tchaikovsky Moscow Conservatory in 1998 and Venice Conservatory in 2005) and a Bachelor of Art, Music and Spectacle from the University of Bologna. After returning to Italy from Moscow, he developed his own improvisation method, which embraces different styles, and began to compose and improvise for silent movies. Since 2002 he has played every year at the Pordenone Silent Film Festival in Italy, the leading silent film festival internationally.

He moved to Sydney in 2005 and has continued to play for silent films, performing in Australian major cities and film festivals. In 2006 he was commissioned by the National Film and Sound Archive to create a piano accompaniment for the Australian silent classic *The Story of the Kelly Gang* (Charles Tait, 1906), released on DVD in 2007. Colombis first performed at the Australia Cinémathèque during the *Out of the Shadows: German Expressionism and Beyond* film program in 2008, accompanying *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Robert Wiene, 1920) and *Faust* (F. W. Murnau, 1926). Colombis returns to perform the live musical accompaniment for the Australian premieres of the restoration prints of *Il Fauno (The Faun)* 1917 by Febo Mari, on Friday 28 May at 8.30pm and *Cabiria* 1914 by Giovanni Pastrone, on Saturday 29 May at 2pm.

David Bailey

Brisbane based Australian musician David Bailey developed a deep fascination with early 20th Century music at a young age which led to studies in piano and in particular the world of ragtime. As a teenager Bailey stumbled on the world of the cinema organ and was captivated by the rare and vast tonal and dynamic abilities of these instruments. A transition to organ studies followed and a deep passion grew for the music of the 20's and 30's and inturn their relationship to the world of silent cinema. Today Bailey is immersed in this musical world and personalities such as Sophie Tucker, Billie Holiday and Stephane Grappelli as well as theatre organists Sidney Torch and George Wright.

Bailey continues to perform in concert for many organ societies in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia and New Zealand. Since the installation of the rare Wurlitzer style 260 organ in the Australian Cinémathèque in 2006 (originally housed in Brisbane's Regent Theatre) he has composed and performed new film scores for many of the silent cinema programs held at the Gallery of Modern Art. These programs include *Buster Keaton* (2007), *Silent Clown: Max Linder and Charlie Chaplin* (2008), *German Expressionism: Out of the Shadows and Beyond* (2008), *Hollywood on the Hudson* (2009) and *Charles and Elsa Chauvel* (2009). Bailey returns to perform the live musical accompaniment for the Australian premieres of the restoration prints *Maciste all'Inferno (Maciste in Hell)* 1926 by Guido Brignone on Sunday 30 May at 11.00am and *Maciste in Vacanza (Maciste on Holiday)* 1921 by Luigi Ramano Borgnetto on Wednesday 2 June at 6.00pm.

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