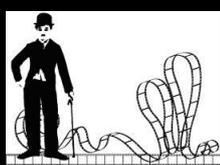




A U S T R A L I A ' S
silent film
F E S T I V A L



SEP 11, 6PM at the Uniting Church, 264 Pitt Street
SEP 16 & 23, 7PM at the Wesley Conference Centre, 220 Pitt Street
**SEP 18 & 25, 10.15AM – 6.30PM: 4 sessions at the Wesley Conference
Centre, 220 Pitt Street**



AUSTRALIA'S
Silent Film Festival



For the Term of His Natural Life: Vidor: Ozu: Clair: Keaton: Chaplin: Laurel & Hardy: Caligari



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**THE UNITED STATES
STUDIES CENTRE**
at the University of Sydney

Welcome to Australia's Silent Film Festival

~ 11, 16, 18, 23, 25 September 2010 ~



“As I write from far-off California, I smile knowing how you will enjoy these wonderful films from the USA, Japan, France, Germany, Russia and yes, Australia, at this 2010 edition of Australia's Silent Film Festival; and how these presentations of silent cinema with live music have already branched out across Sydney and regional NSW and will take place in Queensland and Victoria.

I am one of the very few people in 2010 that earns a fair livelihood from silent movies: I restore them and produce digital editions (several included in this festival) that are sold on DVD and exhibited on American cable television. In this age of the Internet, I can be found with a few keystrokes with the result that young people from all over the USA become phone and e-mail buddies to tell me how passionately they have come to care for these old films.

How to explain that this Festival selection of eighty and ninety-year-old movies and their predecessor, the magic lantern show, will attract, engage and satisfy audiences in the 21st century? Above all, the organizers have selected excellent, valid works of film art.

Silent films are not just sound films without the talking. They reach us through the poetry of motion, of metaphor, of meaning expressed through visual subtlety and magnification of detail. Although there were successful silent-era film experiments in 3-D, wide screen, color and sound; early film artists learned to convey ideas and emotions through inference and suggestion with tremendous emotional impact and in ways which sound would render unnecessary at best; obvious or clumsy at worst. As you will see, the innovators and masters of this art raised visual storytelling to a level that remains valid, moving, and even awe-inspiring in the 21st century. One would not pity Scarlatti who composed without benefit of the modern piano, or Mozart who never had the resources of the modern symphony orchestra; similarly, the brains and sensibilities behind these silent films understood the potency they could achieve with what they had — moving pictures. Treat their work with kindness and respect and it will reward you by casting its own magic spell.”

■ David Shepard
■ Film Preservation Associates, USA
■ Lobster Films, Paris
■ August 2010

The Festival acknowledges the generous assistance and guidance by David. As the world's leading figure in silent films, their restoration and promotion, he supports us in the screening of many of the films offered at Festival events. His warmth and experienced insights generate the ideal environment for the Festival to grow.

The drive, talents and insights of Barbara Underwood-Burkowsky, Giselle Hoarau, Lynette Robinson and Stephanie Khoo have enhanced the 2010 Festival.

~ Program Notes by Barbara Underwood-Burkowsky ~

~ Films are restored and screened through digital presentation ~

Australia's Silent Film Festival Program

For the Term of His Natural Life 1927 • Australia	Date: Saturday, 11 September 2010 Time: 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm Location: Pitt Street Uniting Church 264 Pitt Street, Sydney
Tickets: \$20 / \$15 concession & children	
Passing Fancy, <i>Dekigokoro</i> 1933 • Japan	Date: Thursday, 16 September 2010 Time: 7.00 pm to 9.00 pm Location: Wesley Conference Centre 220 Pitt Street, Sydney
Tickets: \$20 / \$15 concession & children	
The Last Great Magic Lantern Show Australia	Date: Saturday, 18 September 2010 Time: 10.15 am to 12.00 pm Location: Wesley Conference Centre 220 Pitt Street, Sydney
Tickets: \$20 / \$15 concession & children	
Comedies for Kids and the Young at Heart! USA	Date: Saturday, 18 September 2010 Time: 12.15 pm to 2.15 pm Location: Wesley Conference Centre 220 Pitt Street, Sydney
Tickets: \$20 / \$15 concession & children	
The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari <i>Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari</i> 1920 • Germany	Date: Saturday, 18 September 2010 Time: 2.30 pm to 4.15 pm Location: Wesley Conference Centre 220 Pitt Street, Sydney
Tickets: \$20 / \$15 concession & children	
Miss Mend Part One, <i>Mess Mend</i> 1926 • Russia	Date: Saturday, 18 September 2010 Time: 4.30 pm to 6.30 pm Location: Wesley Conference Centre 220 Pitt Street, Sydney
Tickets: \$20 / \$15 concession & children	
The Italian Straw Hat <i>Un chapeau de paille d'Italie</i> 1927 • France	Date: Thursday, 23 September 2010 Time: 7.00 pm to 9.00 pm Location: Wesley Conference Centre 220 Pitt Street, Sydney
Tickets: \$20 / \$15 concession & children	
Buster Keaton and Snub Pollard! USA	Date: Saturday, 25 September 2010 Time: 10.15 am to 12.00 pm Location: Wesley Conference Centre 220 Pitt Street, Sydney
Tickets: \$20 / \$15 concession & children	
Bardelys the Magnificent 1926 • USA	Date: Saturday, 25 September 2010 Time: 12.15 pm to 2.15 pm Location: Wesley Conference Centre 220 Pitt Street, Sydney
Tickets: \$20 / \$15 concession & children	
Fashion and the 1920s	Date: Saturday, 25 September 2010 Time: 3.00 pm to 4.00 pm Location: Wesley Conference Centre 220 Pitt Street, Sydney
Tickets: \$10 / \$5 concession & children	
Chicago 1927 • USA	Date: Saturday, 25 September 2010 Time: 4.30 pm to 6.30 pm Location: Wesley Conference Centre 220 Pitt Street, Sydney
Tickets: \$20 / \$15 concession & children	

For the Term of His Natural Life

Saturday, 11 September 2010

Pitt Street Uniting Church – 264 Pitt Street, Sydney

1927 • Australia

6.00pm to 8.00 pm

98 minutes

Restored in 1981 by Graham Shirley, Senior Curator at the NFSA. The Festival acknowledges the generous assistance of the National Film and Sound Archive and its staff in the screening of this film.



Cast:	George Fisher, Eva Novak, Dunstan Webb, Jessica Harcourt, Arthur McLaglen, Katherine Dawn and Arthur Tauchert	Live Music:	Colin Offord
Directors:	Norman Dawn	Presenter:	Bruce Elder, Senior Entertainment Writer with the Sydney Morning Herald
Written by:	Marcus Clarke		

Colin Offord's project was generously supported by the Regional Arts Development Fund of the Queensland Government and Redland City Council partnership to support local arts and culture.

This grand Hollywood-style Australian epic was a huge success at its release in 1927, and would no doubt have achieved even greater acclaim if not for the advent of sound in moving pictures at the end of the 1920s. To ensure its success in the USA, the leading cast and crew were American, but it was filmed entirely in Australia, and of course, the story is based on the Australian classic, *For the Term of His Natural Life*, written by Marcus Clarke and first published in 1870.

The first motion picture version of Clarke's novel was in 1908, and was one of the world's first full-length movies, produced and directed in Australia by an Australian, Charles McMahon, and ran a total of 22 minutes – a long film in the infancy of cinema! It was even re-released in 1913 with live narration by a popular Australian celebrity, which made it a hit all over again. Some years later, in 1918, the story was again brought to life in an altered version under the titles *His Convict Bride*, aka *For the Term of Her Natural Life*.



By the mid to late 1920s, silent films had become fully mature, visually expressing story, emotions, concepts and characters in various creative and artistic ways which could not be continued once technology enabled sound to be synchronized with moving pictures. As a result, the 1927 production of *For the Term of His Natural Life* contains all the best elements of sophisticated films that had been developed in the first 30 years of moving pictures.

The rather complex but rewarding story moves along at a fresh, brisk pace, with consistently stunning and beautiful scenery and sets, all filmed in Australia: the charming old town of Berrima in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales; Sydney Harbour; Port Arthur, Tasmania; Wombeyan Caves and Bondi Junction, Sydney for the interiors.

Unfortunately, the ravages of time have reduced this stunning epic to a shorter length due to occasional missing and damaged scenes, but it has been faithfully restored, using stills and extra intertitles to fill the gaps in the story. The result is still a gripping saga of a man wrongfully accused and sent to the harsh penal colony of Van Diemen's Land – for the term of his natural life.

For the Term of His Natural Life depicts much more than the hardships of life in early colonial Australia, however. An intriguing plot involving two look-alike men (both played by American actor, George Fisher) and a colourful cast of characters keeps the audience in suspense until the very end. Mistaken for his murderer-double, wealthy Englishman Richard Devine is sent to the penal colony, giving the false name of Rufus Dawes to protect his mother's reputation.

Later, Dawes crosses the path of his look-alike, John Rex, who continues to scheme and plot all the way back to England where Rex attempts to take the place of Richard Devine who had been presumed dead for nearly 20 years. Meanwhile, there is the bitter heartache of a sweet love, found and lost, and finally found again for 'the good Mr. Dawes', as a young Sylvia (played by American actress, Eva Novak) called him when he rescued her and a small group of survivors stranded in the wilderness.

Passing Fancy, Dekigokoro

Thursday, 16 September 2010

Wesley Conference Centre – 220 Pitt Street, Sydney

1933 • Japan

7.00pm to 9.00 pm

101 minutes

Cast:	Takeshi Sakamoto, Nobuko Fushimi, Den Obinata, Choko Iida, Tomio Aoki, Reiko Tani	Live Music:	Riley Lee World class master of the shakuhachi
Directors:	Yasujiro Ozu	Presenter:	Dr Carol Hayes, Senior Lecturer, Japan Centre, School of Culture, History and Language College of Asia and the Pacific, the Australian National University
Written by:	Tadao Ikeda		
Director of photography:	Shojiro Sugimoto		

Peace through a bowl of tea.

The Festival is pleased to present prior to the screening from 6.15-6.45pm a demonstration of a Japanese tea ceremony. This unique and rich event for Festival supporters is presented by the Japan Foundation and Chado Urasenke Tankokai Sydney Association Inc. The Festival acknowledges the assistance of Wakao Koike; Masafumi Konomi, Yoshiaki Matsunaga,, Ryoko Freeman and David Freeman.

Titled *Dekigokoro* in its original Japanese, **Passing Fancy** is a unique and special part of early cinema even by Japanese standards, being the twenty-third silent film by renowned Japanese director, Yasujiro Ozu. The film focuses on the relationship between a father and son living in poor conditions, but helped by neighbours and friends as the bungling father tries to sort out his life and himself.



Ozu received high acclaim for his special cinematic style in directing movies of the 1940s and '50s, and is best remembered for his realistic portrayals of family life in medium-class Japan. He developed a remarkable insight into human nature and relationships which he was able to convey visually in an original and unique style. Watching Ozu's films feels like stepping into the lives of real people with all their thoughts, feelings and problems, as if you were right there among them. Attention to details, natural acting and a tendency to linger on what seems like mundane daily actions all add to this overall impression of actually being involved in the film, not just being a distant observer.

This skill was already honed to perfection by the time Ozu directed **Passing Fancy** in 1933, when the Western world had already embraced sound films. He directed his first sound film, *The Only Son*, in 1936 and began a genre of more sombre family dramas. His earlier silent films, including **Passing Fancy** belong to a light comedy style, thus making this silent film festival feature a pleasant and refreshing new look at Ozu's earlier work.

In Ozu's close study of people, the camera seems to unobtrusively capture a feeling of intimacy and realism, of everyday life in Japan, as well as real-life situations, revealing their irony or humour. Adding to the feeling of intimacy is how Ozu captures many glimpses into people's lives with indoor scenes of their homes, their washing, clothes and other belongings, of people eating, drinking, getting dressed or undressed.

Passing Fancy is structured like a sound film, using quite a lot of dialogue which appears to be just general conversation, but like the visual images, it subtly tells a story and leaves the viewer with a deep impression of the characters and their lives. Drama intensifies almost imperceptively when the young boy expresses his shame and frustration with his father for being a lazy, uneducated drunk by repeatedly slapping him across the face. Further tension arises when the boy gets sick and there is fear that he might die, which is the beginning of realization and decision-making for the father.

The natural acting by both adults and, along with Ozu's apparent easy and casual approach of glimpsing into family life with understanding, compassion and a little bit of wicked humour are all the qualities highlighted in **Passing Fancy**, while marriage and family, especially the relationship between the generations, are among the most persistent themes in his entire body of work.

Despite never conforming to Hollywood conventions of filmmaking, Ozu went on to direct many more successful films, inspiring modern art films and causing much discussion and debate among his peers and film critics. Most famous of his works are *Late Spring* (1949), *Tokyo Story* (1953) - considered to be his masterpiece, *The Flavour of Green Tea Over Rice* (1952) and *Floating Weeds* (1959). Altogether, Ozu directed fifty-four films, almost all of them for the Shochiku film company, and he often worked with the same cast and crew.

The Last Great Magic Lantern Show

Saturday, 18 September 2010
Wesley Conference Centre – 220 Pitt Street, Sydney

Australia

10.15am to 12.00pm
75 minutes



Presented by Professor Ian and Margery Edwards and Antony Catrice

This year, Australia's Silent Film Festival is proud to introduce a very special event in the festival program: "The Last Great Magic Lantern Show", presented by Professor Ian Edwards, and whose family has been exponents of magic lanterns since 1898.

Magic lantern shows, with live drama and music, provided entertainment for many generations before moving pictures became the norm, and as such, are an important part of the silent film festival, capturing the exciting atmosphere our forefathers enjoyed. These shows demonstrate the technology which preceded the moving picture era and offer a wondrous illustration of the delights of the well- focused image on the screens of the day through proven optics and the phenomenon known as the 'persistence of vision'. These developments allowed the "flicks" later to achieve their successful illusion of movement on the screen.

Generally regarded as the prototype of the modern slide projector, magic lanterns can be traced back as far as the 1570s, using candles or oil lamps, and developing over the centuries as the source of light improved and more intricate slides were made, including mechanisms to make the images move.

Magic Lantern shows had a variety of subjects and themes, from comedy to all kinds of stories, much like the different genres of films today. The nature of the magic lantern made exotic special effects possible, just like Georges Melies, for example, found the new technology of motion pictures perfectly suited to his magic shows of tricks and illusions. In fact, it was the use of such special effects that gave the lantern its name, the *magic* lantern.

In the late 18th century in particular 'phantasmagoria' became a popular form of entertainment. It involved using the magic lantern to create ghostly images and phantoms to entertain audiences; much like the horror movie genre still does today. The subject of Professor Edwards's Magic Lantern Show, however, is Australia's colonial history, featuring rare glimpses of life in 19th century Victoria. Humorous advertisements, action slides and other early colonial images bring the era wonderfully to life to a modern audience, making this show suitable for the whole family.

Highlights of the Magic Lantern Show are: Queen Victoria's death; the astounding size of the diamond in Queen Alexandra's crown; Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York in Melbourne for the official declaration of the Commonwealth of Australia, and cheering Melbourne crowds as the American marines marched through the city to the exhibition buildings in 1908. These are the events that shaped our nation, vividly brought back to life for a modern audience to enjoy and appreciate.

Comedy and has always been a major part of any entertainment show, and authentic period humour is also part of this Magic Lantern Show, such as 'Grandpa eating plump black mice in his sleep', which audiences found delightfully horrible, and even caused 'ladies of delicate disposition to faint'!

Live drama is also a main feature of any good Magic Lantern Show, and Professor Edwards is joined by his wife, Margery, in this charming re-enactment of Victorian-era entertainment. The third member of the Team is the Projectionist Antony Catrice, who is an Archivist at Melbourne Campus of Deakin University with a special interest in re-enactments of early Australian history.

Professor Ian Edwards has had 30 years involvement in field Archaeology in the Middle East and Central Asia, and is recently retired as Professor in charge of the Archaeology and Materials Research Unit at Deakin University.

He is currently involved in the re-establishment of the Australian Institute of Archaeology as a Research Institute at Latrobe University along with its Director, Christopher Davey, as well as being the Curator of "The Rev. PJT Edwards Visual Archive of Magic Lantern Equipment and Glass Slides" (established 1898) and with his wife, Margery, a presenter of public Magic Lantern re-enactments using 1870s equipment and 19th century slides. The show won an award for the best historical presentation at the American & Canadian Magic Lantern Society Convention in Washington DC in 2008, and featured as a very successful Victorian period re-enactment in Plymouth UK in 2009. This year the show will be the feature event at several centenary celebrations around Australia.



Comedies for Kids and the Young at Heart!

Saturday, 18 September 2010

Wesley Conference Centre – 220 Pitt Street, Sydney

USA

12.15pm to 2.15pm

90 minutes

Directors &	Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Laurel and Hardy,	Live Music:	Mauro Colombis
Cast:	Max Sennett, Billy Bevan and Winsor McKay	Presenter:	Dr Stephen Juan, Anthropologist

Anthropologist Dr Stephen Juan is a commentator on all things human in books, newspapers, on radio and television. For more than three decades he taught at the University of Sydney where in retirement he remains the Ashley Montagu Fellow. The author of several best-selling books and member of Channel Nine's *Today*, Stephen has long had an interest in cultural history generally and films in particular.



No Silent Film Festival would be complete without a session dedicated to the Great Clowns of silent comedy whose antics continue to entertain each generation – which is in itself the best testimony to their skills and talents. These films were made for young and old; for kids and those who are young at heart and can still delight in the innocent fun of these timeless gags and skits.

This popular session highlights the origins of motion picture comedy and the legendary pioneers who set the benchmark for all film comedians to follow: Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Mack Sennett and Laurel and Hardy.

These comedies of approximately twenty minutes in length use the general story line as an excuse for an assortment of hilarious gags, with the emphasis on carefully orchestrated slapstick comedy. Yet once again, even the most serious viewer has to admire the unexpected, clever ideas that pop up, such as Chaplin on the run from the police in *The Adventurer*, who quickly dons a large lamp shade and is overlooked by his chasers who mistake him for a standing lamp.

Yet beyond the funny façade even serious film enthusiasts cannot fail to marvel at the precise choreography of movements, stunts and action which create a moment of thrills and laughs. This painstaking planning is most evident in the chase and action scenes performed by Charles Chaplin and Buster Keaton, in particular Keaton's *Cops* in which a ladder is used like a see-saw over a fence as Buster once again tries to elude the police.. *Cops* is also highly regarded as a classic short comedy for its impressive scenes of crowds and dozens of cops chasing Buster through city streets.



In *Wrong Again*, made in 1929, Stan and Ollie are working as stable hands when they overhear that there is a \$5,000 reward for the return of the stolen 'Blue Boy', but they miss the part explaining that 'Blue Boy' is a painting. Believing 'Blue Boy' is the horse in their care, they take it to a wealthy home in eager expectation of the reward. When the rich owner simply instructs them to take Blue Boy inside and put him on top of the piano, many hilarious moments ensue.

Perhaps the ultimate representative of silent slapstick comedy is Mack Sennett, founder of Keystone Studios in 1912 and producer of the world's best known silent comedies, the Keystone Kops. *Lizzies of the Field* counts as one of the classics even though it was made in 1924, long after the Keystone Kops era in the mid 1910s, and it features one of the greatest and most astounding car chase scenes ever filmed, with impressive stunt and camera techniques. In the lead role is Australia's very own **Billy Bevan** as Nick Pliers, a mechanic in one of two rivaling garages, determined to beat his opponent in the thrilling cross-country car race.

Billy Bevan was born in Orange, NSW in 1887 and began his career here in Australia, touring with the Pollard theatre troupe which went to the US, where Mack Sennett later discovered him. With the advent of sound in 1929, Bevan continued to enjoy a productive Hollywood career until his retirement in 1950, doing mostly small to medium roles in dozens of movies. He portrays the innkeeper in *Lloyds of London* (1936), Jerry Cruncher in *Tale of Two Cities* (1935), the policeman in Alfred Hitchcock's *Rebecca* (1940) and the ticket taker in Hitchcock's *Suspicion* (1941).



The Pet – **Winsor McKay**. Winsor McKay was America's first great cartoonist and animator, paving the way for Walt Disney and others to follow in later decades. Starting with comic strips in newspapers in 1903, he began making animation for moving pictures in 1911, demonstrating astonishing versatility and skill. Dedication and passion were also required in order to create the four thousand pen and ink drawings necessary to make a moving cartoon picture for only several minutes in length.

The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari

Saturday, 18 September 2010

Wesley Conference Centre – 220 Pitt Street, Sydney

1920 • Germany

2.30pm to 4.15pm

76 minutes

Cast:	Werner Krauß, Conrad Veidt, Lil Dagover, Friedrich Fehér, Hans Heinz, Rudolph Lettinger, Rudolf Klein-Rogge	Live Music:	Mauro Colombis
Directors:	Robert Wiene	Presenter:	Klaus Krischok Director, Goethe-Institut Australien
Written by:	Hans Janowitz and Carl Mayer	Set design:	Hermann Warm
Produced by:	Decla-Bioscop AG	Artists:	Walter Reimann and Walter Röhrig

In the 1920s, Germany was one of the countries pioneering revolutionary new styles in motion pictures, combining cinema with the modern art movements popular at that time. *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* is the result of this blend with modern art and Expressionism, and was an attempt to elevate motion pictures from commercial and popular entertainment to high art and culture.

Essentially a horror movie and inspired by a real-life murder of a girl at a fairground, the story underwent some changes and was originally assigned to legendary German director Fritz Lang, who proposed further changes but had prior commitments. His successor, Robert Wiene, worked closely with artists Röhrig and Reimann, as well as designer Hermann Warm, to create a work of modern art in film, based on the style of the Expressionist group, *Der Sturm*.

The silent film is the perfect medium for such artistic expression due to the emphasis on the visual sense, which in turn brought out more creative expressiveness by cast and crew to convey feelings, moods, thoughts and concepts in various ways. As a result, pantomime is frequently used in German Expressionism cinema, and during the 1920s the style influenced many filmmakers from other countries, Alfred Hitchcock being one of them.

In Expressionist silent films, lighting and shadows were used to create mood and atmosphere, emphasizing strong and deep emotions with heavy shadows and other photographic techniques such as unusual camera angles. The themes were often rather gloomy, heavy or intense, and expressed the culture and mentality of the period, using mystic ideas which were popular at the time. Mysticism, hypnosis and esoteric teachings blend with fantasy and horror in many Expressionist films.

The Cabinet of Dr Caligari stands out as a milestone in German Expressionism and even in cinema history in its attempt to bridge both the popular/commercial and the artistic/intellectual worlds. By doing so, it also set the mould for a certain style within the Expressionist movement, and history shows that it was successful because very few films have attracted so much interest, curiosity and discussion, nor inspired so many filmmakers and directors for decades later.

The Cabinet of Dr Caligari combines an extreme Expressionist setting with a 'narrative' story with which cinema audiences were already well familiar. It is effective because the story is about mental illness, fear and horror, and the painted sets with harsh, angular forms express these feelings and concepts very poignantly. Basically, the film externalizes inner mental and emotional states in a unique and very effective manner.

Although only revealed at the end of the film, the main character in *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* is mentally ill, and the horror story he tells a man sitting on the garden bench next to him turns out to be only an illusion of his sick mind. It is therefore quite brilliant that only the scenes of the imagined story feature unnatural, angular, distorted, threatening and disturbing painted sets and backgrounds. This underscores the fact that this part of the film is a hallucination of a mentally ill person who has a distorted perception of the world.

Apart from all these unique characteristics, *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* also features several giants of the silver screen, Conrad Veidt being the best known star to Western audiences. He was one of the best paid stars of Ufa, the German film production company, before leaving Germany in 1933 to continue his successful career in England and then the USA. In *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* Veidt is unforgettable as the somnambulist under the hypnotic control of Dr Caligari.

The other two stars continued to have very successful and productive film careers in Germany over several decades; Lil Dagover, playing the part of Jane, starred in many silent films and became internationally famous, while Werner Krauss is perfect in the role of Dr Caligari.



Miss Mend, Part One

Saturday, 18 September 2010

Wesley Conference Centre – 220 Pitt Street, Sydney

1926 • Russia

4.30pm to 6.30pm

88 minutes

Cast:	Natalya Glan, Igor Ilyinsky, Vladimir Fogel, Boris Barnet, Sergei Komarov, Ivan Koval-Samborsky, Natalya Rozenel and Mikhail Rozen-Sanin	Live Music:	Maria Okunev
Directors:	Fedor Ozep (aka. Fyodor Otsep)	Presenter:	Dr Karen Pearlman
Written by:	Boris Barnet and Fedor Ozep		Head of Screen Studies, Australian Film, Television and Radio School

Many viewers will be surprised and delighted to see this intelligent and thoroughly entertaining Soviet adventure serial, of which the Silent Film Festival is presenting the first of three parts. Packed with action, drama, suspense and comedy, all at breakneck speed, *Miss Mend* is a world removed from its famous Soviet Avant Garde contemporaries such as *Battleship Potemkin*, *Earth* and *Fall of St. Petersburg*, to name a few.

While such visually artistic motion pictures are today regarded as great cinema classics, the general Russian audience gravitated towards the American action-adventure films, seeking fun entertainment rather than highbrow culture. Consequently, Russian filmmakers Boris Barnet and Fedor Ozep decided to make a Soviet production to rival, if not even surpass the popular American style.

The result was a serial in three parts, each about ninety minutes in length, balancing all the essential ingredients of the successful American film: “maximum amount of movement, primitive heroism and an organic link with contemporary life,” as leading Russian filmmaker Lev Kuleshov wrote in his 1922 article entitled *Americanism*.

Any slowing down of the pace and unfolding of the complicated plot in order to focus more deeply on characters, psychology or philosophy was avoided in the making of *Miss Mend*, and instead her character is reminiscent of popular American screen heroines like Pearl White and Helen Holmes who played superwomen in the serials *The Perils of Pauline* (1914) and *The Hazards of Helen* (1914-17)

Loosely based on the Russian adventure novel *Mess-Mend, or Yankees in Petrograd* by Marietta Shaginian, it has American heroes because American-style pulp fiction had also become very popular in the 1920s. Miss Vivian Mend represents the modern Western progressive ideal which fascinated Russian audiences: an independent, strong, fashionable and attractive young woman who holds her own among all kinds of men and even gangsters.

In the fast-moving opening scenes, we see Miss Vivian Mend, secretary at a Cork Factory, bounce into action when the police attempt to stop strike action by workers, and at the same time she meets reporters Barnet (Boris Barnet, who wrote and co-directed *Miss Mend*) and Fogel. Together they set out to stop a biological attack on the USSR by the evil mastermind, Chiche, becoming involved in the conspiracy behind the assassination of a wealthy businessman whose son hides his true identity from her in an attempt to win her heart.

The exciting action, in imitation of many American films, including car chases and frequent fisticuffs, is tempered with brilliant photography, often capturing the beauty in even an ordinary scene. City and streetscapes, buildings and snow scenes contrast effectively with close-ups and good portrait shots of the stars who radiate a distinct quality of individuality and strong character.

Between breathtaking chases, fights and twists in the plot, there are also some darker moments involving Miss Mend’s young nephew whom she has taken care of by herself since the murder of her sister; as well as her ill-fated romance with a man who turns out to be the enemy she is after.

While the overall effect is that *Miss Mend* is not at all a typical American film or serial, it is also obvious that it doesn’t really pretend or intend to be, and therein, perhaps, lies its success. And because ‘imitation is the sincerest form of flattery’, *Miss Mend* manages to get away with clichés, irony and satire which audiences on both sides of the old ‘iron curtain’ could appreciate and even chuckle over.



The Italian Straw Hat

Thursday, 23 September 2010

Wesley Conference Centre – 220 Pitt Street, Sydney

1927 • France

7.00pm to 9.00pm

105 minutes

Score compiled from historic photoplay music by Rodney Sauer. Rodney, pre-eminent composer for silent film and performer with the Mont Alto Motion Picture Orchestra, generously provided the score for this screening.

Cast:	Albert Préjean, Geymond Vital, Olga Tschechowa	Live Music:	Sharolyn Kimmorley
	Paul Ollivier, Jim Gerald and Alex Allin	Presenter:	Jason di Rosso
Directors:	Rene Clair		Associate Producer, <i>Movie Time</i>
Written by:	Eugene Labiche and Marc Michel		ABC Radio National and Film Writer
Produced by:	Alexandre Kamenka		with GQ
Cinematography:	Maurice Desfassiaux and Nikolas Roudakoff		



Also known as *The Horse Ate the Hat* and in the original French, *Un Chapeau de Paille d'Italie*, **The Italian Straw Hat** is a charming and delightful escape to late 19th century France, even though it was made in 1927 and based on a play originally set in 1851. Renowned French filmmaker and director, Rene Clair, earned his reputation as one of the greatest directors in the early 1930s already, but for many decades since then, his earlier silent films have been overlooked; this farcical comedy being one of them.

However, **The Italian Straw Hat** is now considered one of Europe's most elegant and wittiest comedies ever made. It has very few intertitles, especially compared to other movies made in 1927, which means that the story was carried along by the action and gestures of the performers in such a way as to make intertitles unnecessary most of the time. This is one of the hallmarks of the perfectly-executed work of art that is the silent film.

But the artistry of **The Italian Straw Hat** doesn't end here: the setting in France of 1895 appears beautifully authentic, with close attention to details in every respect, making it feel like an authentic glimpse back in time to that era. Based on a popular stage comedy by Eugene Labiche and Marc Michel, Clair successfully adapted the gags and humour to the moving picture medium, at the same time adding his touch of European sophistication and style.

Unlike vaudevillian slapstick, the comedy action in **The Italian Straw Hat** is more subtle, and the story itself is quite amusing on its own. Clair successfully managed to combine the pace of the popular slapstick and vaudeville comedies with a satirical portrayal of the bourgeois lifestyle and manners. It was also his idea to change the setting from 1851 to 1895 so that audiences could better appreciate the delicate humour.

The simple plot takes place on a couple's wedding day, when the groom's horse eats a lady's straw hat which sets off a chain reaction of events, making it appear as if there is much ado about nothing. The lady whose hat was eaten cannot return home to her husband without it for fear it would reveal her clandestine meeting with her officer-lover.

The Lieutenant, desperate to find a hat exactly like it as a replacement, goes to extreme lengths, thereby causing further turmoil. This fluffy, light comedy style appears simpler than it is, and the viewer can still become immersed in the settings, characters, costumes and finer details of the film.

In summary, **The Italian Straw Hat** can be seen as a meeting of American cinema and French finesse, as the European attitude of keeping up appearances is exaggerated and satirized. Complementing the comedy and characters dressed in lovely period costumes, are magnificent scenery and set design, along with splendid décor for interiors.

Not only is the director of **The Italian Straw Hat** a legendary name of cinema history, the cast is also quite formidable, with Albert Préjean in the lead role as Ferdinand, and especially Olga Tschechowa, known as the baroness of German film, in the co-starring role of Anais de Beauperthuis. While Préjean had a successful career in French films spanning several decades and nearly a hundred roles, the Russian-born Olga became a huge star in Germany during the silent era, appearing in forty silent films and nearly a hundred sound films until the mid 1970s. Her mysterious and colourful past make her a character larger than life, having been photographed with Adolf Hitler and having other Nazi leaders among her suitors.

Buster Keaton and Snub Pollard!

Saturday, 25 September 2010
Wesley Conference Centre – 220 Pitt Street, Sydney

USA

10.15am to 12.00pm
72 minutes

Directors &	Buster Keaton and Snub Pollard	Presenter:	Jason di Rosso
Cast:			Associate Producer, <i>Movie Time</i>
Live Music:	Robert Constable		ABC Radio National and Film Writer with GQ

No doubt the most recognized name and face of silent comedy next to Charlie Chaplin is Buster Keaton, whose films are still cherished and admired by fans and film critics alike down to this day. In fact, many modern-day scholars of film history believe Keaton was the greatest comedy master of them all, and Australia's Silent Film Festival is pleased to present a Buster Keaton feature showing three outstanding examples of his typical short comedies during the 1920s.



Raised in a family of vaudeville performers, Buster quickly rose to fame when he entered the world of moving pictures in 1917 doing slapstick comedies with other established stars like Roscoe 'Fatty' Arbuckle.

Neighbours is a fine example of Buster Keaton's skill in blending astonishing physical feats, stunts and acrobatics with side-splitting humour and gags. A sweet and innocent exchange of love letters through a hole in a fence quickly escalates into a war between two neighbouring families when the couple's parents discover the romance. Trying to get his girl away from her disapproving father, Buster demonstrates some amazing acrobatic feats to get from his top window across the yard to her top window. Later, when a wedding takes place, other clever gags take centre stage, such as Buster's too-big pants which keep falling down.

The Playhouse is like several acts in one 20-minute show, starting with Buster entering a theatre, only to find that all performers are clones of himself! Some of them are struggling with malfunctioning instruments in the orchestra pit, and others are on the stage as part of 'Buster Keaton's Minstrels'. Look closely at the members of the audience, as they are also Buster in various disguises! In the next part, Buster is a stagehand who steps in for a monkey act when he accidentally sets the real monkey free from its cage. Buster impresses once again with his imitation of a primate with body language and facial make-up, as well as his diverse skills and flexibility, quickly re-appearing as a 'Zouave guard' doing a Cossack-like dance routine.



My Wife's Relations. Fully absorbing entertainment from start to finish, this riotous short comedy has Buster and a large, unsightly woman married in Polish when they thought they were complaining to a judge. His bride's family is just as ungainly and obnoxious as she is, but with his usual deadpan expression, Buster takes everything in his stride, even finding ways to outsmart his unruly in-laws. When a letter arrives with news of a large inheritance, they suddenly treat Buster with kindness and respect, but after moving 'from the alley to the avenue' into a wealthy estate, more trouble and antics ensue. Among the clever and skillful gags is Buster rolling up inside a carpet, and getting lost in the foam caused by too much yeast in the bootleg brew.

It's a Gift. Australian comedian Harold Fraser began his performing career in Tasmania, and was ready to pursue a successful career in Hollywood by 1910, his vaudeville experience and trademark large droopy moustache putting him in the league with comedy greats, Chaplin and Keaton. Changing his name to Snub Pollard, he worked mostly at Hal Roach's studios during the silent era, of which ***It's a Gift*** is his most famous comedy short today.

In this short comedy, which was the first in Pollard's own series as 'Inventor Pollard', he demonstrates his wit and skill by interacting with all kinds of mechanical gadgets – from pulleys to bring him breakfast in bed by means of the most ridiculous and useless gadgets, to a bullet-shaped vehicle that zooms along the streets merely by magnetic attraction to other passing cars. Brilliant in both its simplicity and complexity, ***It's a Gift*** was a popular hit at a time when audiences were fascinating by fast-developing technology, mechanics and gadgetry.

More detailed information about Snub Pollard can be found on the Hall of Fame page at Australia's Silent Film Festival website at www.ozsilentfilmfestival.com.au.

Bardelys the Magnificent

Saturday, 25 September 2010
Wesley Conference Centre – 220 Pitt Street, Sydney

1926 • USA

12.15pm to 2.15pm
91 minutes

Cast:	John Gilbert, Eleanor Boardman, Roy D'Arcy, and Lionel Belmore	Live Music:	Robert Constable
Directors:	King Vidor	Presenter:	Jason di Rosso
Written by:	Rafael Sabatini, adapted by Dorothy Farnum		Associate Producer, <i>Movie Time</i>
Produced by:	Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer		ABC Radio National and Film Writer with GQ

Bardelys the Magnificent is a silent film that was previously believed to be lost until a near-complete film was found in France in 2006. Such a discovery is always exciting, but when it concerns a silent screen legend almost forgotten and much neglected in modern times, the find is even more important.

Until recent years, John Gilbert has been remembered mostly as Greta Garbo's co-star in several sultry and unforgettable silent films of the late 1920s, such as *Flesh and the Devil* and *A Woman of Affairs*, at which time it was John Gilbert who received first billing in the credits.

In the King Vidor production of ***Bardelys the Magnificent***, Gilbert also rivals another silent screen legend, namely Douglas Fairbanks, Sr. who starred in famous and immensely popular swashbuckling action-adventures such as *The Three Musketeers*, *The Mark of Zorro* and *The Iron Mask*.



Although one reel is missing from this exciting discovery of a once-lost film, the use of stills and extra intertitles taken from a continuity script fills the missing part nicely and does not detract from the overall smooth, stylish and sophisticated feeling of the film.

The film is set in the reign of King Louis XIII where Bardelys is a popular character and womanizer who enters a wager to win the heart of a certain cold-hearted Roxalanne de Lavedan. Along the way, he comes across a wounded and dying man, taking his papers and assumes his identity, only to find out later that this man is a traitor to the king.

Wounded after fighting the king's soldiers, he ends up in the castle of Lavedan where Roxalanne nurses him to health, but their love has to overcome a number of obstacles first. As suspense and action builds up to a climax, audiences are thrilled to see Gilbert bounce and bound across the screen in dynamic Fairbanks-like feats and stunts.

John Gilbert's highly successful film career began in 1915, and by the early 1920s he was well on track to experience his best years in the mid to late twenties, with nearly a hundred roles to his credit already. Unfortunately, his personal life was not at all so successful, and alcoholism led to his premature death at age forty, after working on only a handful of sound films in the early 1930s.

Gilbert's co-star in ***Bardelys the Magnificent*** was Eleanor Boardman, a popular actress during the mid-1920s, and under King Vidor's direction, they made a successful on-screen team, adding to the charm and appeal of the movie.

A year earlier, King Vidor had already enjoyed success directing *The Big Parade*, which also starred John Gilbert, and in the late twenties he directed the silent classics *The Crowd* and *Show People*. Some of his best works in the following decades of sound film include *Ruby Gentry* (1952), *War and Peace* (1956), *Duel in the Sun* (1946) and *Stella Dallas* (1937) with Barbara Stanwyck.

Worthy of special mention is Australian actor, John T. Murray, who played Lafosse in ***Bardelys the Magnificent***. Born in 1886 in Melbourne, Murray was most successful in comedies, often with his comedienne wife, Vivian Oakland, in silent short comedies. He had some significant roles in 'B' movies, as well as small appearances in famous classics, such as the two Frank Capra films *Mr Deeds Goes to Town* (1936) and *Lost Horizon* (1937), as well as *Boomtown* (1940).

Fashion and the 1920s

Saturday, 25 September 2010

Wesley Conference Centre – 220 Pitt Street, Sydney

3.00pm to 4.00pm

60 minutes

Presented by Charlotte Smith

Silent films have played a significant part in the evolution and development of fashion, and it is therefore very appropriate to include this special session in our journey back in time through the silent film medium. Besides being a time capsule by giving us a fascinating and entertaining glimpse into how people lived and dressed in the past, silent films of the 1920s also presented fashion styles to a worldwide audience and to all classes of society. Many silent screen stars became fashion icons, leading new fashion trends and inspiring people of all walks of life to dress in a similar way.

Charlotte Smith, author of the best-selling book, *Dreaming of Dior: Every Dress Tells a Story* (HarperCollins Australia) is the curator of the famous Darnell Collection, having inherited it from her godmother, Doris Darnell, in 2004. Since then it has continued to grow to number over 5500 pieces representing 23 different countries, and is considered the largest private vintage clothing collection in Australia. Charlotte has been a guest on The Collectors ABC TV and on national radio. <www.thedarnellcollection.blogspot.com>

Included are many internationally recognized 20th century designers such as Lucile, Vionnet, Dior, Chanel, Balenciaga, Pucci, Jean Muir, Zandra Rhodes, Westwood, Versace, Dolce & Gabbana and Jil Sander among many other names.

The Darnell Collection plays an important role in fashion history as a design resource. Preserving fashion in such collections helps to educate and inspire, as well as improve understanding and appreciation of the art of fashion. And this presentation of 1920's clothing will enhance our viewing experience of silent films, involving us in living history as we see how movies escalated the spread of fashion and trends, right up to our day.

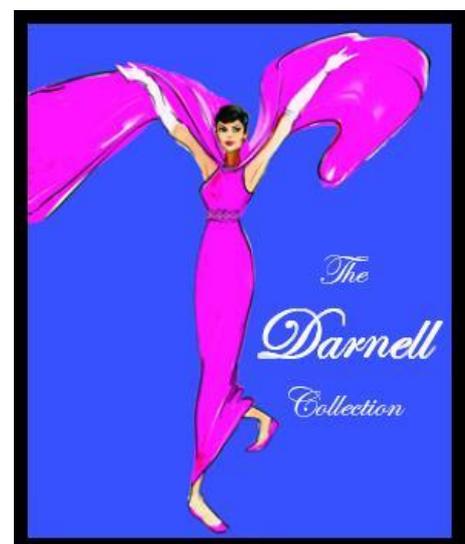
Some of the best-known fashion icons of the silent era who inspired woman to wear the same style of clothes, accessories, hairstyle and make-up are Gloria Swanson, Louise Brooks, Greta Garbo and Dita Parlo, to name a few. While Gloria Swanson oozed sensual Hollywood glamour, especially in Cecil B DeMille productions such as *Male and Female* and *The Affairs of Anatol*, Louise Brooks conveyed the playfully naughty 'flapper' image of the Twenties' Jazz Age in silent classics such as *Pandora's Box*.

Greta Garbo and other European actresses such as Dita Parlo (*Au Bonheur des Dames*) and Brigitte Helm (*Metropolis*) represented the cool, sophisticated elegance of Europe. One of the trends at this time saw women's clothes becoming very masculine, leading some European stars like Marlene Dietrich to wear men's suits with shirt and tie.

The work of famous fashion designer, Coco Chanel, came to prominence in the 1920s, promoting styles associated with 'flappers', and she also introduced the knitted jumper for both men and women, allowing a more casual, free and comfortable look. <www.dreamingofchanel.blogspot.com>

The Darnell Collection is the product of one woman's passion for fashion, collecting clothes and accessories over a 70-year period. A Quaker from Pennsylvania, Doris Darnell was also keenly interested in the history and people associated with a fashion item, and kept any written documents, letters and photographs linking them to their owners or donors. In this way, every item of the Darnell Collection becomes a part of living history, and far more than textiles and threads, or a designer label. <www.dreamingofdior.blogspot.com>

The Darnell Collection contains every aspect of a woman's wardrobe since 1720 to present day, including wedding dresses, shoes, hats, handbags, gloves, jewellery, lace, buttons, fans and feathers. Charlotte Smith has written a second book, *Dreaming of Chanel*, also published by HarperCollins Australia, which will be in all good bookshops in November this year. She has a background in antique furniture, textiles and paintings, a BA in Art History, and shares her passion for the history of fashion by lecturing and presenting items from the Collection.



Chicago

Saturday, 25 September 2010
Wesley Conference Centre – 220 Pitt Street, Sydney

1927 • USA

4.30pm to 6.30pm
112 minutes

Cast:	Phyllis Haver, Victor Varconi, Eugene Palette, Virginia Bradford, May Robson, Clarence Burton Warner Richmond, Julia Faye	Live Music:	Mauro Colombis
Directors:	Frank Urson	Presenter:	Bruce Elder, Senior Entertainment Writer with the Sydney Morning Herald
Written by:	Maurine Dallas Watkins	Screenplay:	Lenore J. Coffee
		Produced by:	DeMille Picture Corporation



After 172 successful Broadway shows in 1926, the first film adaptation of *Chicago* was made by the DeMille Production Company, and like most silent films attached to the name of Cecil B DeMille, it contains all the elements of a top-quality Hollywood production. This successful production was based on the original stage play and subsequent first motion picture from 1927, which writer Maurine Dallas Watkins based on a real-life murder trial which she covered as a journalist for the *Chicago Tribune* in 1924.

As a non-musical film adaptation, attention is directed at the main characters and the story of the infamous murder and trial. The beautiful, blonde Roxie Hart, whose adoring husband is devoted to her, hides a dark double life which is exposed when she shoots her lover and kills him. Claiming self-defense because she feared the thief and stranger who broke into her home would rape her, an all-male jury acquitted her of murder charges, but it is the way in which she manipulates her surroundings to her own benefit that is expertly conveyed in this film.

Using her attractiveness and sex appeal, Roxie plays the sweet and innocent maiden to the hilt, with coaching from her lawyer to appeal to the sympathy of the jurors. The feminine wiles she over-acts in these cases are humorous indeed, but not when the result in real life is an acquittal solely due to her appearance and behaviour in court. Her main victim is Amos Hart, her husband, who stoops to stealing in order to pay for her legal fees, and stands by her throughout the trial despite his eyes having been opened to her true nature.

Typifying superficial people obsessed with their attractiveness, Roxie is self-absorbed, feisty, money-hungry and opportunistic, and craves attention and publicity. Accomplished actress, Phyllis Haver had already appeared in nearly a hundred films, beginning her career ten years earlier as one of Mack Sennett's *Bathing Beauties* – the pedestal for other successful silent screen stars such as Mabel Normand and Gloria Swanson. In contrast to the vibrant character of Roxie, Hungarian-born actor, Victor Varconi, is equally effective in his portrayal of the pathetic husband who silently observes his wife's charade.

Also in the impressive list of cast members is Australian actress May Robson, who plays Mrs Morton, the matron. Embarking on her acting career both in films and on stage to support her children after the death of her husband, she found success in silent films in the late twenties and especially in the sound era of the 1930s and early 40s. A fine character actress, she was often cast as a gruff and domineering grandmother or matron type. Another Australian-born star appearing in *Chicago* is Sidney Bracey, in the role of the bill collector. Born in Melbourne in 1877, Sidney was performing on stage in Australia the 1890s, and began working in films for the Vitagraph Company of America in 1909. His mother, Clara T. Bracey, was also active in films as early as 1908, working for Biograph and with D.W. Griffith, but Sidney's film career greatly overshadowed that of his mother.



The use and abuse of journalism and sensationalism are also shown effectively in this superbly crafted silent film, visually expressing transparent motives, feelings and a great deal about human nature without much dialogue. A poignant ending without words adds the finishing touch, and it is no surprise that *Chicago* was presented to a sellout house of 1,400 people at the San Francisco Silent Film Festival.

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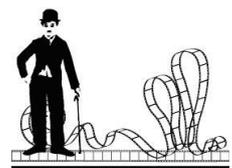
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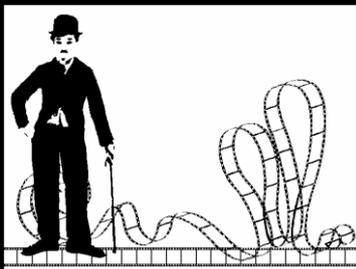
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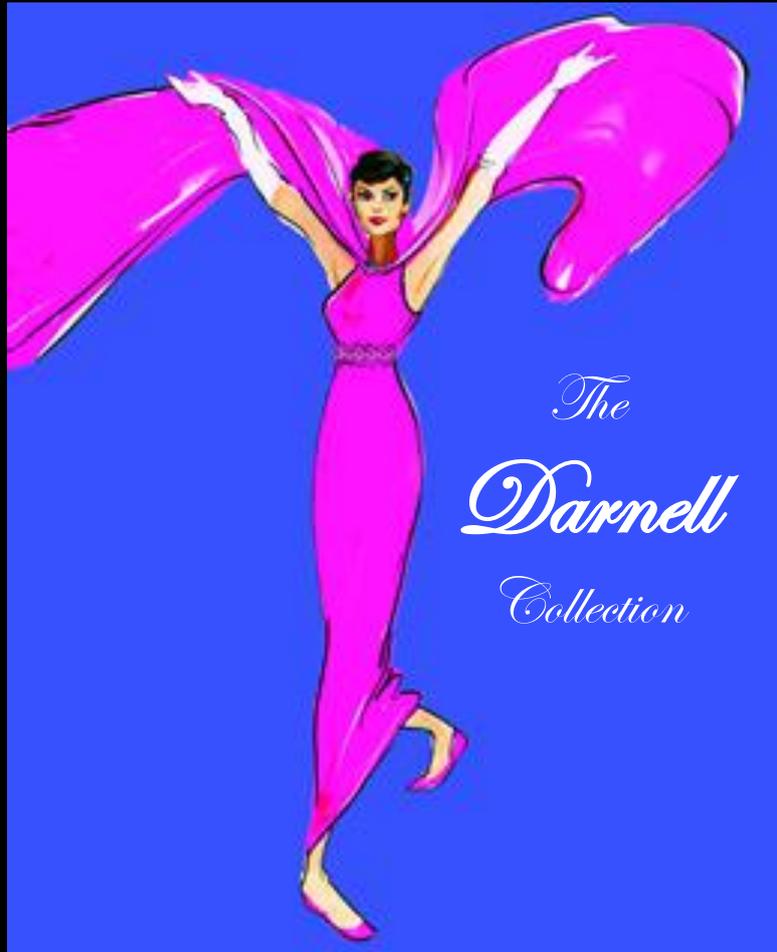
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