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Other worlds...

With Soundtracks
September 11, 18 and 25 Saturdays at 2pm
Epic of Everest- Tabu- King Kong

High definition digital restorations

Metcalfe Auditorium State Library NSW Macquarie St Sydney

Epic of Everest (1924)

Tabu (1931)

King Kong (1933)

Tickets through festival website and call t 0419 267318

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NEW SOUTH WALES

Sunday September 11 at 2pm

Epic of Everest (1924)

85 minutes A film by Captain John Noel

Australian premiere of the digitally restored edition with soundtrack.

The official film record of the legendary Everest expedition of 1924 is one of the most remarkable films in the BFI National Archive.

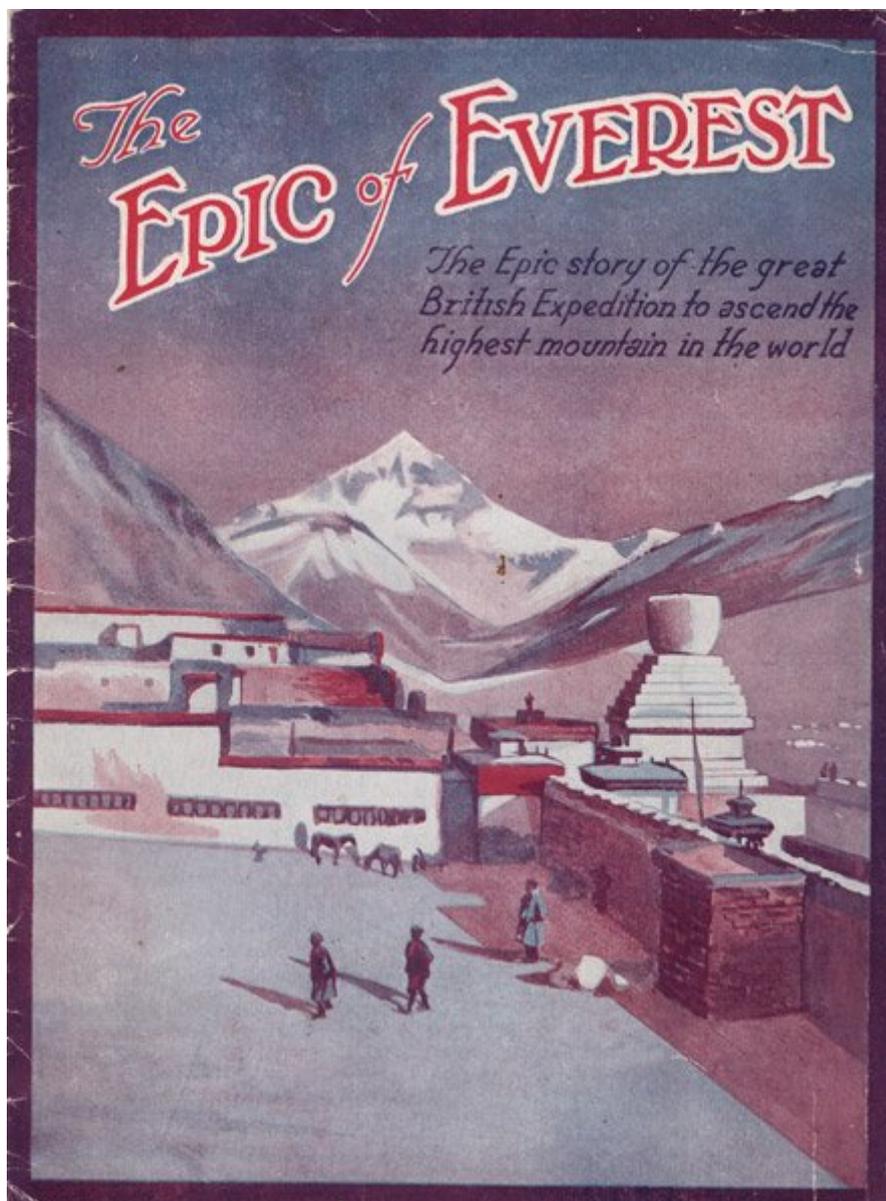
BFI: "The third attempt to climb Everest culminated in the deaths of two of the finest climbers of their generation, George Mallory and Andrew Irvine, and sparked an on-going debate over whether or not they did indeed reach the summit.

Filming in brutally harsh conditions with a hand-cranked camera, Captain John Noel captured images of breathtaking beauty and considerable historic significance. The film is also among the earliest filmed records of life in Tibet and features sequences at Phari Dzong (Pagri), Shekar Dzong (Xegar) and Rongbuk monastery. But what

resonates so deeply is Noel's ability to frame the vulnerability, isolation and courage of people persevering in one of the world's harshest landscapes.

The restoration by the BFI National Archive has transformed the quality of the surviving elements of the film and reintroduced the original coloured tints and tones. Revealed by the restoration, few images in cinema are as epic – or moving – as the final shots of a blood red sunset over the Himalayas.

A newly commissioned score composed, orchestrated and conducted by Simon Fisher Turner (The Great White Silence) features a haunting combination of electronic music, found sounds, western and Nepalese instruments and vocals....”



Restoring The Epic of Everest

<http://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/news-bfi/features/restoring-epic-everest>

Bryony Dixon: “Captain John Noel was the official photographer on the 1924 British Expedition to Mount Everest, famed for the tragic loss of mountaineers, George Mallory and Andrew Irvine.

Noel was an adventurous explorer who had tried but failed to get to Everest through Tibet in 1913. It is this centenary that the BFI is celebrating with the restoration of his film, which Noel financed himself and released as [The Epic of Everest](#) in 1924. He toured extensively around the world, lecturing with the film footage and beautiful colour slides.

The BFI National Archive’s restoration, undertaken in collaboration with Sandra Noel, the director’s daughter, has transformed the quality of the surviving elements of the film. It has reintroduced the original coloured tints and tones and overcome some serious damage and deterioration inherent in the material, to do full justice to this heroic feat of exploration cinematography.....

It was the film print which Noel carried around for his lectures which was the key to the film’s eventual restoration, safeguarded by his daughter Sandra and donated to the BFI National Archive some years ago.

Its superior condition meant the restoration team could substitute many shots from this print to improve the replace damaged sequences from the Archive’s full-length original nitrate print.

However, the Sandra Noel print was incomplete and lacked the intertitles and the film’s original colour tints and tones. These were scanned at a resolution of 4K using a wet gate to eliminate scratches. A new technique was developed by our image quality specialist to scan selected scenes using individual colour LED’s to get the best possible results from parts of the image compromised by deterioration of the blue toning and the severe mould damage. The team then chose the best quality shots from the two source prints to make the final continuity.

Noel’s film was made under extremely difficult conditions at high altitudes and in very low temperatures. The negatives were sent down the mountain and across the Tibetan plains by yak to



The Epic of Everest (1924)

Darjeeling where Noel had set up a special laboratory to process the films.

During processing some marks were introduced which appear in the surviving film as black specks – these were left in as being original to the artefact. Other processing marks which appeared as white marks in one print but not the other were restored out and 89 years of wear and tear were cleaned up by our commercial partners at Deluxe Digital.

The Epic of Everest is now fully preserved for future generations on film as well as in digital versions and the original nitrate films have gone back to the new sub zero vaults at Gaydon in Warwickshire. “





KINO
CLASSICS

F.W. Murnau

MURNAU STIFTUNG

A FILM BY
F.W. MURNAU

A STORY
OF THE
SOUTH
SEAS

TABU



Sunday September 18 at 2pm

Tabu (1931)

A Story of the South Seas

Directed by F W Murnau

Written by F W Murnau and Robert Flaherty

86 minutes

Australian premiere of the digitally restored film with soundtrack.

“Just as the film industry was converting to sound, two of the silent era's most visionary artists fled to the South Seas to collaborate on a work of pure visual beauty untainted by Hollywood's latest technical obsession. F.W. Murnau was a supreme stylist who had crafted dreamlike fables both in Germany (*Faust*) and the U.S. (*Sunrise*). Robert J. Flaherty was a groundbreaking documentarian whose *Nanook of the North* and *Moana* defined the ethnographic film movement. Over the course of nine months, they immersed themselves in Tahitian culture. Drawing inspiration from the topography and people of the surrounding islands, they (with Murnau at the helm) fashioned an emotionally rich story of the flowering romance between a young man and woman, as the shadow of civilization begins to fall upon their island paradise.” Kino Lober



“F. W. Murnau (1888–1931) made six or seven great or near-great films in his all-too-brief career. All save his last film were tightly controlled, studio-stylized works that (although they were beautiful and often moving) were thoroughly planned artifice. One might even use the contemporary expression “tight-assed” in describing them. His final film, *Tabu* (1931), however, seems almost the complete antithesis. *Tabu* is one of cinema’s simplest, most lyrical and masterful expressions of a despairing romanticism succumbing to the realities of a world from which none of us can escape.

The original idea was for the film to be jointly made by Robert Flaherty and Murnau. Flaherty, the great ethnographic documentarian, had already met critical success with another Polynesian project, *Moana* (1926). Although Flaherty was a romantic in his own fashion, the two personalities did not mesh, and Flaherty somewhat bitterly sailed for home. Murnau, after the relative imprisonment of Weimar Berlin and mad Hollywood, loved Tahiti, Bora Bora, and the smaller islands. The informality and laxity of

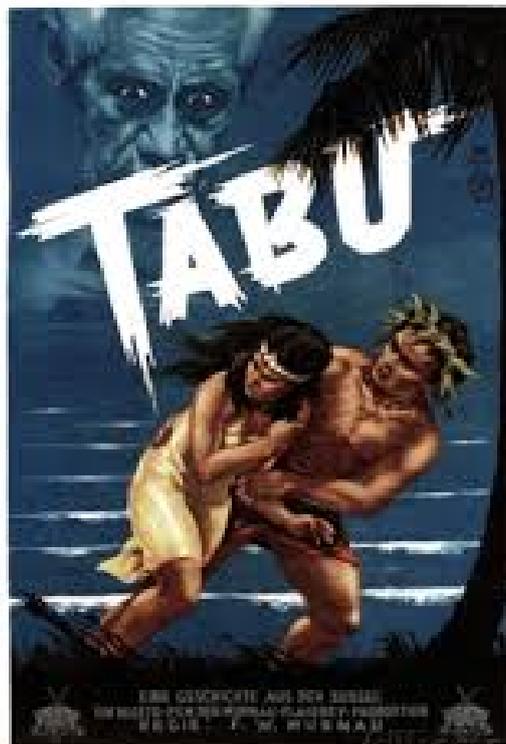
strictures on behavior (including sexual ones) seemed a kind of rebirth.

Whether attributable to Murnau finally finding or accepting a truer path to his genius, or to something as mundane as not having any money, *Tabu* is a great treasure to the lovers of cinema. Its haunting imagery is intrinsically lovely, its rhythms unique, its denouement.

Part of the legend of *Tabu* is that Murnau moved a sacred rock to get a better camera placement. In any event, back in California, while driving back from getting money from his erstwhile star, George O'Brien (*Sunrise*), for the music and effects track for his film, Murnau's car went off the road and he was killed. More than a little bit of the future potential of the cinema probably died with him."

Charles Silver Curator, Department of Film

https://moma.org/explore/inside_out/2010/09/07/f-w-murnaus-tabu/





Sunday September 25 at 2pm

King Kong (1933) 100 minutes

Chief Technician Special Effects Willis H. O'Brien

Original Music Max Steiner

Directed by Merian C. Cooper, Ernest B. Schoedsack

Australian premiere of the digitally restored edition with soundtrack. “ From a modern movie-going point of view, the idea of a giant gorilla falling for a beautiful blonde sounds rather corny and silly, maybe even somewhat schmaltzy. But that's precisely the concept of 'King Kong (1933)' — a beauty and the beast tale with an adventure-fantasy-horror angle. From today's digital perspective also, the special effects appear more charming and quaint than astonishing and sensational. But released at the height of the Great Depression, this other-worldly spectacle of a herculean ape battling ferocious dinosaurs offered exactly the sort of visionary escapism the American public needed. For a moment, hardworking individuals paid to forget their economic hardships and retreat to a mythical island with wondrous beasts, turning this RKO production into a massive box office smash.

Beyond the film's simplicity and public reception, there is also more going on with 'King Kong.' The Eighth Wonder of the World lives up to its moniker by being the forerunner and granddaddy of the creature feature. The film, in effect, kick-started the monster movie craze that flooded theaters up to the late 1950s, when the genre moved into Z-movie grade. 'Kong' is also a landmark film in terms of

its special optical effects and a stunning, pioneering achievement for the wizardry of Willis O'Brien, whose protégé, Ray Harryhausen, would later become a big name during the aforementioned 50s craze. As charming and quaint as they may be, the stop-motion animation remains a fanciful, visual feast of escapism, enhancing a film ripe with symbolism and imagination. After almost 80 years, Kong remains the king of the monster movie.”

<http://bluray.highdefdigest.com/1842/kingkong1933.html>



“...King Kong is a good, old-fashioned *American* creation. He emerged from the gloomy bottom of the Great Depression to reinvent film Horror as a modern item unrelated to ancient superstitions or primitive folklore. The Skull Islanders worship their monster god but we know that he's a colossal joke played by Charles Darwin -- the fossil bones discovered by all those dry professors are suddenly alive and kicking, and ready to bite.

Kong's status as a modern myth is well-earned, as no movie monster before or since is as interpretable in terms of social politics, -isms and artistic innovations. The 20th century with its mechanized wars, towering cities and out of control economies seemingly came falling down with the Stock Market crash, a near-cosmic event that brought chaos to our cities. If the economy and the government no

longer function, what will? The world of art and literature had been predicting this chaos ever since the Armistice. Everybody had heard of Surrealism but few knew anything about it, except that it involved shocking people and outraging accepted standards of decency (as did all good ideas in the 1920s).....”

Glenn Erickson

<http://www.dvdtalk.com/dvdsavant/s3252kong.html>





The Festival appreciates the invaluable and generous support from the renowned David Shepard, Film Preservation and Associates and Blackhawk Films, Lobster Films, George Watson and the BFI, Jonathan Hertzberg, Kino Lorber, Mark Spratt and Potential Films, Flicker Alley, Robert Gamlen, Samantha Hagan, Marcelo Flaksbard, Hilton Prideaux, Leslie Eric May and the sublime flair and talents of Stephanie Khoo.

Please visit and read about your favourite silent film with the superb reviews at Amazon by the Festival's tireless supporter, Barbara Underwood.



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