

# UFA FILM NIGHTS



BERTELSMANN

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# INTRODUCTION



Exactly 100 years ago, a film premiered in Berlin that produced one of the earliest supervillains of film history and not only held up a mirror to its own time, but also built bridges to ours. Part I of Fritz Lang's mammoth work DR. MABUSE – DER SPIELER (DR. MABUSE – THE GAMBLER), which was released in 1922 just one month before Part II, immediately became a sensation success whose repercussions are still felt today.

At about the same time, another visionary, Arnold Fanck, was planning an expedition to the Dolomites. Loaded down with the heavy cameras of early cinema, he and his camera crew of mountaineers and ski athletes would go on to establish a completely new cinematic genre: the mountain film. In DER BERG DES SCHICKSALS (MOUNTAIN OF DESTINY), Fanck gave a stage to the beauty of the mountain world in a feature-length film for the first time. The film – starring Luis Trenker in his first leading role – premiered in Berlin in 1924.

Meanwhile, a generation of young people was growing up in the European metropolises who had had enough of violence, renunciation, and rigid conventions. Hemlines climbed upward, dances became more exuberant, and women more self-determined.

While Fritz Lang somberly reflected on the depravity of the Weimar

Republic and Fanck brought adventure and romantic mountain scenery to urban audiences, director Richard Eichmann showed that time spent in the big cities could be exceedingly pleasurable as well, with long nights of fun, dancing, and romancing. His 1926 movie DIE KEUSCHE SUSANNE (CHASTE SUSANNE), also brings together the dream couple of early German cinema for the first time: Lilian Harvey and Willy Fritsch.

These three masterpieces of the 1920s, so different from each other, show the different results that can come from contemporary artistic engagement with tumultuous times; times whose uncertainty we can relate to in the present '20s.

The UFA Film Nights 2022 will bring DER BERG DES SCHICKSALS, DR. MABUSE - DER SPIELER I, and DIE KEUSCHE SUSANNE to Museumsinsel, perhaps the most beautiful temporary open-air cinema in the heart of Berlin. All three screenings mark a special occasion: DER BERG DES SCHICKSALS and DIE KEUSCHE SUSANNE are both being publicly screened for the first time in the versions recently restored by the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation and the DFF – Deutsches Filminstitut & Filmmuseum respectively, and DR. MABUSE celebrates its 100th anniversary. We hope you enjoy the UFA Film Nights 2022!

# DER BERG DES SCHICKSALS

MOUNTAIN OF DESTINY



# DER BERG DES SCHICKSALS

(D 1924)

MOUNTAIN OF DESTINY

**Director** Arnold Fanck

**Production** Arnold Fanck

**Cast** Luis Trenker, Erna Morena, Hannes Schneider, Frida Richard, Hertha von Walther, Gustav Oberg, Arnold Fanck jun. u.a.

**Length** 101 Minutes

No one has ever succeeded in climbing majestic Guglia del Diavolo – its steep summit section is considered impregnable. The father (Hannes Schneider) tried time and again – and died trying. The son (Luis Trenker), the best climber in Tyrol, is determined to fulfill his father's dream – and regularly risks his life in the process. Because his mother (Frida Richard) lives in constant fear of losing her only son after her husband, he promises her not to make any more attempts to climb the Devil's Peak. But the Guglia del Diavolo doesn't give a young woman a moment's peace either: Hella (Hertha von Walther), the mountaineer's childhood friend and student, spends hours gazing at the mountain's rocky masses, trying to discern a safe route to the summit. When she thinks she

has found what she is looking for, she tries to persuade her teacher to climb the mountain with her. But he keeps the promise he made to his mother.

Disappointed, Hella sets off on her own. Then a storm comes up and young Hella runs into difficulties. In mortal fear for his daughter, Hella's father appeals to the climber for help. Now he has no choice: he must break his promise to save Hella's life...

Arnold Fanck (1889–1974) is regarded as the inventor of the mountain film, a genre that rapidly gained international popularity in the 1920s with impressive documentary footage of the High Alps, which Fanck used as a backdrop and essentially elevated to the leading role in his movies. The main acting role was played by Luis Trenker, who made his acting debut in DER BERG DES SCHICKSALS.

## Music

UFA Film Nights is screening the world premiere of the movie as restored by the F. W. Murnau Foundation, with a new composition by Florian C. Reithner. The Metropolis Orchestra Berlin will perform under the direction of Burkhard Götze, accompanied on the organ by the composer.



ARNOLD FANCK FILMING ON THE SELLA PASS

# Summiting, Tracking and Other Challenges.

## The Digital Restoration of MOUNTAIN OF DESTINY

When the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation took on the digital restoration of Arnold Fanck's first feature-length film MOUNTAIN OF DESTINY (original title: DER BERG DES SCHICKSALS) in 2018, there was tangible excitement to finally be able to show the film – for the first time since World War II – much as it looked on the evening of its premiere on May 10, 1924.

For a long time it had been assumed that the only surviving complete copy of the film came from the former holdings of the Russian state film archive, the Moscow Gosfilmofond, and had enriched the catalog of the German Federal Archive's film archive since the 1970s.

The fact that the material surviving from this film work was so limited hadn't really surprised anyone: the director himself and all the literature had clearly and repeatedly emphasized over the years the adventurous conditions under which this film had been made. Still, it was a popular

and critical success and later served as the model for an entire film genre.

For never before had drama and images of nature been so strongly intertwined: A circumstance that resulted from Arnold Fanck's unique personality – he was as impassioned a natural scientist as he was a filmmaker.

After participating in filming an ascent of Monte Rosa in 1913 as a student in Zurich at the age of 24, Fanck discovered his passion for photography and filming, which led him to start the production company "Berg- und Sportfilm GmbH Freiburg" after the end of the First World War.

The shooting of MOUNTAIN OF DESTINY came just a few years later, when Fanck's technical skills had matured enough to cover all the essential roles – photography, screenplay, direction, editing, production.

In the beginning, there was the idea of adapting the story of a mountaineer's fall from the Guglia di Brenna, which Fanck initially approached with nature images, shot in vast quantities, in order to then weave them into a cohesive dramaturgy.

The film director was guided and inspired by his aesthetic tastes, fascinated by the practices of climbing and the idyllic mountain landscapes. The few studio shots serve almost exclusively as transitions to the next nature scene. The result is



BEFORE AND AFTER COMPARISON OF THE FILM MATERIAL

“a kaleidoscopic spectacle, always the same, and always new. One has seldom seen such heavenly settings in film since; their strange charm is based above all on the fact that processes that take many hours to develop in nature are presented here in a few minutes” (S. Krakauer, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, April 9, 1925).

However, the film's unconventional style clashed with the prejudices of distributors, who initially refused to distribute it on the grounds that it had too little plot. They considered BERG DES SCHICKSALS to be mainly a “culture film,” even though the cast featured professional actors

and actresses (with Luis Trenker making his debut in the role of the climber, Erna Morena as his wife, Frida Richard as his mother, and Herta von Walther playing Hella).

So, with meager means, Fanck himself put together a negative from which he had a small number of copies made, with sparse tinting. He invented a genre which he thought up and defined himself for the film: “Natur-Spielfilm” (nature feature film) which became established for all his subsequent productions as well; he entrusted the realization of the publicity poster to the famous illustrator Theo Matejko; and finally, at his own

expense, he rented a movie theater in Berlin, the Nollendorf Theater, where the film was shown twice a day during the summer months. The audience and critics' reaction was beyond enthusiastic: Tickets for the film were sold out nonstop! Years later, the director explained that the film's production costs were recouped several times over with this one theater, which finally convinced the distributors to take on the film.

Equipped with new resources, Fanck reworked the negative, cutting in originally discarded scenes and other material to create an improved basis for new prints. The first version of the film was repeatedly edited and heavily modified until probably the 1930s.

The preserved contemporary footage, which into the 1990s was still believed to be the only copy, contains all these later changes and manipulations, such as cuts, cut-in duplicates, other intertitles, and deviating colorations.

It was a small sensation when another copy, about 200 meters longer, was found in the Bundesarchiv (Federal Archives). It was part of Leni Riefenstahl's private collection until 1984, and is now managed by the Deutsche Kinemathek – Museum für Film und Fernsehen.

After examining this material, the restorers at the Murnau Stiftung

discovered a puzzling fact: The two copies differ greatly from each other, although the marginal information on the filmstrip indicates that both film elements were produced during the same period. The main question of any film reconstruction thus initially remained unanswered: Which of the two cut sequences corresponds to the premiere version of the film?

Normally, in such a case one would rely on "secondary sources"—typically censor cards or dialog lists and scripts. But none of these seem to have survived.

And so a plausible basis had to be elicited from other circumstantial evidence that could be traced back to the production or post-production process. Over one thousand splices were analyzed and compared for each copy.

Based on their nature and form, it was finally possible to deduce the phases of the film's exploitation history from which the major manipulations resulted.

The edits of the longest copy proved the most reliable here, and with only a few exceptions it was taken as a reference, which was then supplemented in combination with the other material. Again, since the tinting was determined to be contemporary, it could serve as guidance for the color reconstruction and the color plan.



The restoration and reconstruction took much longer than planned, with the Covid-19 pandemic also playing a role in delaying the research and technical processing.

A number of people participated in various forms in the digital restoration of the first mountain film, in the process struggling with a symbolic peak to return the film to the splendor that so impressed and delighted audiences a hundred years ago.

*Luciano Palumbo, restorer of  
MOUNTAIN OF DESTINY, Friedrich  
Wilhelm Murnau Foundation*

# About Arnold Fanck

Arnold Fanck, born on March 6, 1889 in the town of Frankenthal in Germany's Palatinate region, was a film director, geologist, photographer, film actor, cameraman, producer, screenwriter, mountaineer, and skier of the very first hour, but above all, he was a brilliant pioneer with extraordinary vision, and the inventor of the mountain film genre.

Due to an asthma condition, Fanck spent many years of his youth in Davos and learned to love the mountains there. He devoted himself to alpinism at an early age, and with enthusiasm and daring; as early as 1913, he was part of the team led by cameraman Sepp Allgeier that climbed Monte Rosa with film cameras and skis to shoot the film *4628 METER HOCH AUF SKIERN* (4628 METERS UP ON SKIS). In the spring of 1920, having earned his doctorate in geology and after a brief intermezzo as a carpet dealer in Berlin, he and several partners founded "Berg- und Sportfilm GmbH Freiburg", the company which would realize his first films in the next few years and is considered the cradle of the "Freiburg School" of mountain films.

Fanck's work took place during a tumultuous period. After World War I,

the November Revolution and the Treaty of Versailles, heroes on skis and ropes braving the indomitable wilds of the high mountains, which were inaccessible to most people at the time, struck a chord with the people of his day.

Fanck developed his own visual language for this, which – using techniques that are considered perfect to this day – showed alpine nature more authentically than ever before, while at the same time staging it in an artistic and highly aesthetic way. One of the people fascinated by this was a young woman who, inspired by a theater screening of *MOUNTAIN OF DESTINY*, decided to become an actress, and later went on to become one of the most controversial figures of 20th-century film: Leni Riefenstahl. Luis Trenker, who played the lead in *MOUNTAIN OF DESTINY* and later star of the mountain film genre, introduced her to Fanck.

Fanck sponsored the young Riefenstahl and was deeply fond of her, even beyond their professional ties. She starred in his next feature film, *DER HEILIGE BERG* (THE HOLY MOUNTAIN, 1925), and in later years remained faithful to the genre under Fanck's direction. Later, as a filmmaker, she adapted in principle and in detail the techniques developed by Fanck, as well as his aesthetic – an aesthetic with which she would



ARNOLD FANCK, AROUND 1930



LUIS TRENKER

later provide a visual underpinning for the Reich propaganda of the National Socialist Party (NSDAP).

Trenker, who after the war made a name for himself not only as a filmmaker but also, bizarrely, with the fake diaries of Eva Braun, was also temporarily a favorite with the Nazis and also with Italy's fascists (Trenker was from the Italian part of Tyrol) before falling out of favor with the Germans in the early 1940s.

Fanck, on the other hand, refused to cooperate with the "Reich Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda" for a long time. He could not prevent his subject from being appropriated by Nazi ideology – the camaraderie of the rope teams, the unconditional will to conquer the mountain, simply fit too well into the propaganda machine. However, he did not cooperate with the regime for long, and in 1933 even made a Jewish-produced film, DER EWIGE

TRAUM (THE ETERNAL DREAM). He became anathema to the Nazis. His commissions dried up and things got tight financially. In the early 1940s, he finally joined the NSDAP and subsequently worked as an architectural filmmaker for Albert Speer's ministry, a job Riefenstahl arranged for him.

After the war, he was no longer able to continue his old successes, though his old works experienced a brief renaissance in the 1950s. They stand for an era in which the conquest of the mountain world was still a real challenge – far removed from today's mass alpinism and skiing scene. Arnold Fanck died in 1974 in Freiburg after a long illness.

**"To show nature as it is, so beautiful and fertile, so idyllic and dramatic, so sunny and so gloomy, rigid and yet in constant motion – quite simply to convey the experience of nature – was the task I had set myself."**

*Arnold Fanck, 1928*

# DR. MABUSE, DER SPIELER I

DR. MABUSE, THE GAMBLER I



# DR. MABUSE, DER SPIELER I (D 1922)

DR. MABUSE, THE GAMBLER I

**Director** Fritz Lang

**Production** UCO-Film Berlin,  
Erich Pommer

**Script** Thea von Harbou und  
Fritz Lang

**Cast** Rudolf Klein-Rogge,  
Aud Egede-Nissen, Gertrude Welcker,  
Alfred Abel, Bernhard Goetzke, Paul  
Richter, Hans Adalbert von Schlettow

**Length** 155 Minutes

Dr. Mabuse (Rudolf Klein-Rogge) is a man with many different faces and identities. He has secret papers stolen and manipulates the course of the stock market. He masquerades as a reputable scientist and sets his mistress, the dancer Cara Carozza (Aud Egede-Nissen), on the young millionaire Hull (Paul Richter), hypnotizing him and taking a fortune from him at cards.

Through Hull, prosecutor von Wenk (Bernhard Goetzke) gets on Mabuse's trail. Mabuse tries to hypnotize von Wenk at the gambling table as well, but the prosecutor manages to resist the enigmatic doctor's magical powers. Soon afterwards, he narrowly escapes an assassination attempt by

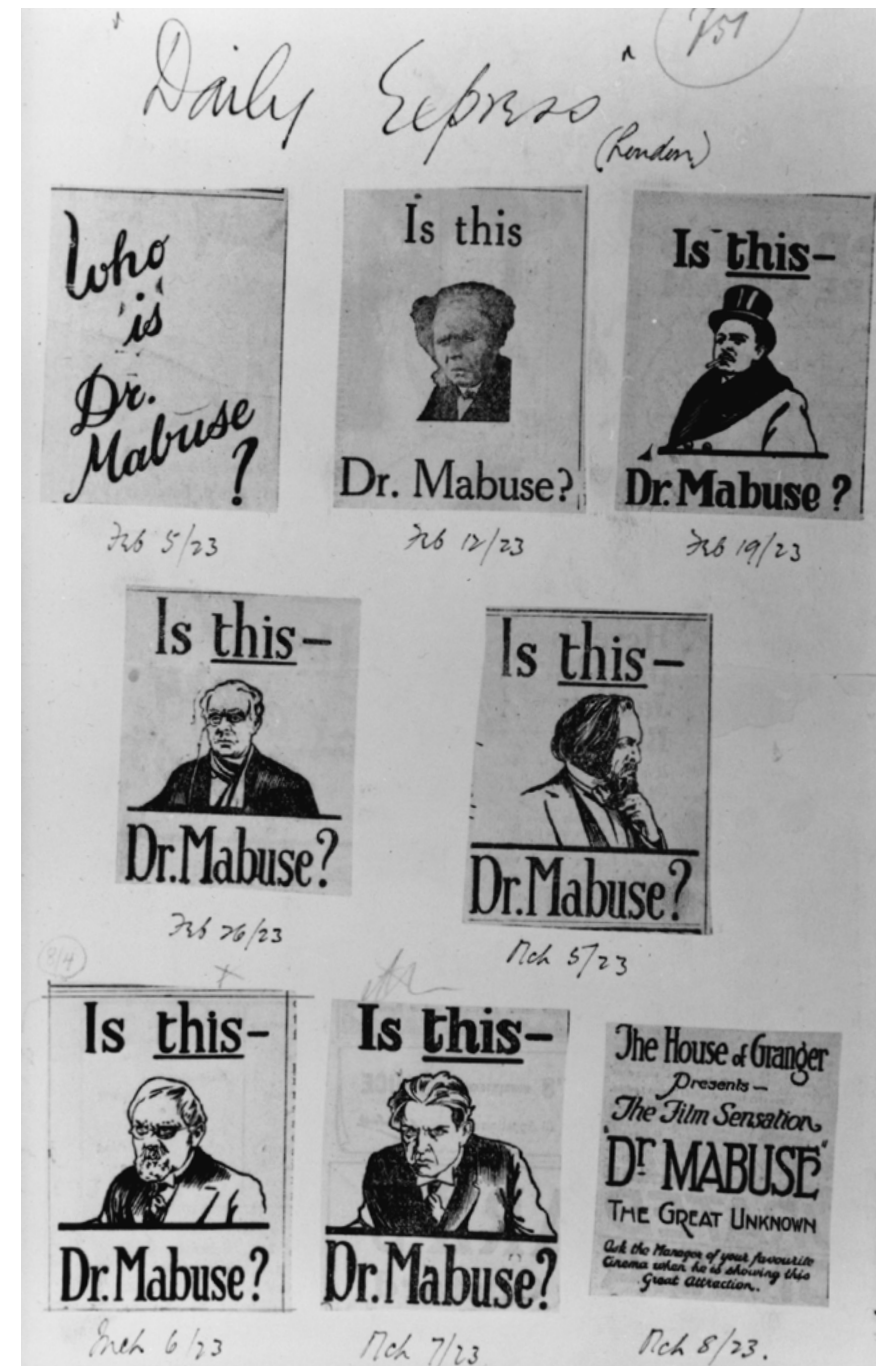
Mabuse. A large-scale police operation against Mabuse fails to capture him. The public authorities seem to be powerless against the criminal mastermind who, hiding behind the mask of a dignified citizen, places himself above law and order.

Based on the bestseller of the same name by Norbert Jacques (1880–1954), Fritz Lang's two-part movie paints a social panorama of the early 20th century, covering a wide range of themes that defined the zeitgeist of the time, such as acceleration, financial crises, parapsychology, white-collar crime, and the quest for world domination and other conspiracy theories.

A film with unmistakable references to the present day of the 21st century. UFA Film Nights presents Part I of Fritz Lang's two-part mammoth work.

## Music

Following his acclaimed performances at the 2017 and 2019 UFA Film Nights, DJ legend Jeff Mills has created a new score for DR. MABUSE, THE GAMBLER I, which will premiere at this year's UFA Film Nights.



# A Panorama of Unhinged Times: DR. MABUSE

Fritz Lang called his mammoth four-and-a-half-hour work a “Zeitdokument” – a document of the times. How fitting: On April 27, 1922, the day Part I of DR. MABUSE celebrated its premiere, the press circulated a warning from British Prime Minister Lloyd George, who saw the danger of a “world conflagration” given the many unresolved issues in Europe. In Berlin, two dozen illegal gambling clubs were shut down by order of the police. And finally, the foreign exchange market reported “wild fluctuations” due to general nervousness in the face of internationally unclear political conditions. Inflation rose rapidly, and the daily exchange rate for one dollar was 277 Reichsmarks<sup>1</sup>.

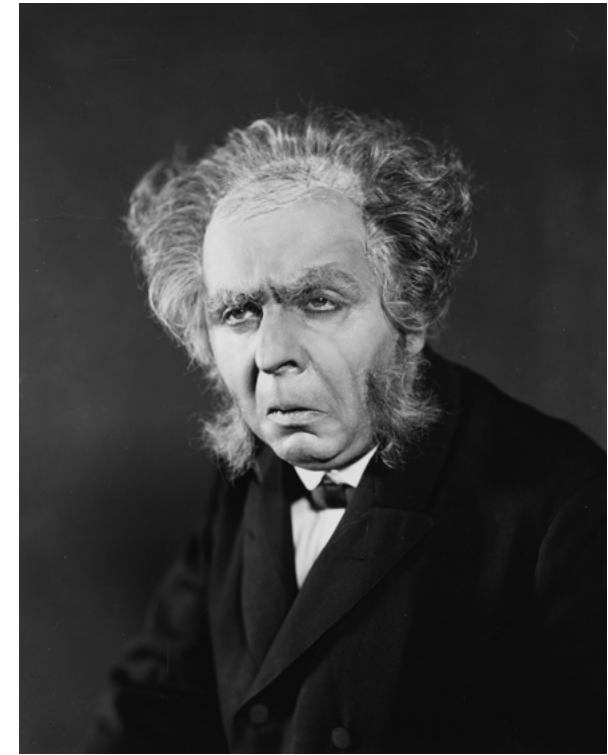
On the surface, Fritz Lang’s film is an action thriller about a ‘genius’ criminal who outwits the police by constantly changing disguises, and systematically enriches himself through forgery and manipulation of the stock market. What drives him is nothing less than a quest for world domination. He is

assisted by submissive assistants who fear him as much as they revere him as a “master.” He deftly adapts to his surroundings, chameleon-like, landing one spectacular coup after another and disappearing before he can be recognized and confronted. The authorities always arrive too late, their methods are too conventional. Mabuse’s omnipresence and the fact that his many identities make him impossible to capture are what make this rogue figure so threatening.

Fritz Lang first encountered a screen hero with countless masks during a study visit to Paris in 1913, where he saw Louis Feuillade’s FANTOMAS at the cinema: the film adaptation of a popular French novel series whose protagonist is a master thug who wreaks havoc by changing disguises without the police being able to catch him – he even appears wearing their uniform at some point.

DR. MABUSE was also based on a literary novel of the same name by the Luxembourg-born journalist, author and globetrotter Norbert Jacques. His story about a psychoanalyst and supervillain with ambitions of omnipotence appeared as a serialized novel in the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* starting September 1921, reaching a wide readership. A book full of sensational effects and lurid twists, it culminates in a utopian colony in Brazil under the

RUDOLF KLEIN-ROGGE  
AS DR. MABUSE



leadership of the doctor, freed from the “corruption and rot” of old Europe. Fritz Lang’s adaptation of the Mabuse novel doesn’t go that far. Instead, he used only its basic outlines and, together with co-author Thea von Harbou, derived further inspiration from a biography of the legendary American gangster Al Capone and an account of a French car bandit. In general, the director preferred colportage-like stories as models for his films, which he considered more suitable for cinema than works

of “high literature” because of their richness of plot.

And yet DR. MABUSE is more than an elaborately staged crime thriller.

The visuals of this film, which takes place almost exclusively at night, are gloomy throughout. Even the fine, elaborately furnished upper-middle-class salons that Mabuse regularly frequents, as well as the backyard speakeasies, gentlemen’s clubs, and erotic cabarets, exude the sinister atmosphere of rooms into



FRITZ LANG ON THE SET OF DR. MABUSE

which sunlight never penetrates. The people who populate them seem like nightshade plants: mentally damaged, driven by their own obsessions, enslaved by alien powers. Their conversations revolve around nervous disorders, cocaine use, hypnosis. "I need life, the strong breath of the unusual, the sensation, the adventure," confesses a countess who runs a secret gambling club.

*Friedemann Beyer, Film Historian, Author and Curator of the UFA Film Nights*

Although Fritz Lang does not specify the geographic location of his MABUSE film, the director provides an easily recognizable topography: it is Berlin in the early 1920s, a city scarred by the aftermath of World War I and the Revolution, by hunger, inflation, crime and the dissolution of familiar securities. Incidentally, at that time it was also the capital of sex tourism for all tastes. A city that only found relative stability from the mid-1920s, before the world economic crisis of 1929 ruined everything again – with the well-known political consequences.

In DR. MABUSE, THE GAMBLER, Fritz Lang shows the panorama of a time gone off the rails, in which crime plays a leading role. His protagonist's unscrupulousness and the striving for world dominion reflect the flirtation with totalitarianism that was also part of the zeitgeist of those "wild" 20s and continues to be topical today, a century later. This

# DIE KEUSCHE SUSANNE

CHASTE SUSANNE



# DIE KEUSCHE SUSANNE

(D 1926)

CHASTE SUSANNE

**Director** Richard Eichberg

**Production** Richard Eichberg-Film  
GmbH

**Script** Hans Sturm

**Cast** Ruth Weyher, Willy Fritsch,  
Lilian Harvey u.a.

**Length** 121 Minutes

Naughty Susanne (Ruth Weyher) leads an thrilling double life between her hometown and Paris: In her hometown in the provinces she is seen as the ever virtuous and down-to-earth girl next door, while in the metropolis, to which she regularly escapes, she is the queen of the night, fashionable and seductive, desired by many men. In Paris, she meets René (Willy Fritsch) and begins to court him, but she has an aristocratic rival: Jacqueline (Lilian Harvey). A lively love triangle ensues, complicated by the interventions of uncomprehending fingerwagging do-gooders. The story reaches its fitting finale at the Moulin Rouge.

Based on the popular operetta of the same name by Jean Gilbert, who appears in a cameo in the movie, this musical romcom mixes French esprit,

the big-city tempo, and the dance-loving spirit of the 1920s with a healthy dash of frivolity. Here, Lilian Harvey and Willy Fritsch, the later dream couple of the UFA talkie era, appear in their first – albeit silent – film together. Film restoration by Deutsches Filminstitut & Film-museum (DFF) Frankfurt/M.

## Music

The music for the film is presented by the Silent Light Ensemble under the direction of pianist, composer and arranger Ekkehard Wölk, with the addition of violinist Matthias Leupold. The ensemble will premiere a composition inspired by the successful operetta of the same name by Jean Gilbert, but influenced by the dance music of the 1920s and elements of modern jazz.



LILIAN HARVEY AS JACQUELINE IN DIE KEUSCHE SUSANNE

# The Restoration of CHASTE SUSANNE

DIE KEUSCHE SUSANNE is Richard Eichberg's film adaptation of the eponymous operetta by Jean Gilbert, who incidentally has a cameo appearance in the film as a conductor at the Moulin Rouge. Eichberg's name had long been synonymous with mass cinema entertainment in the Weimar era: "An Eichberg film has only one ambition: to entertain – in professional circles they say: 'Eichberg makes commercial movies'" wrote *Die Filmwoche* in 1926. He was even thinking about international blockbusters:

"During my stay in South America, Gilbert's operetta was performed there too, of course. The enthusiasm this masterpiece of cheerful art aroused on the other side of the pond is best demonstrated by the fact that South Americans at that time had the opportunity to hear the operetta not only in German or Spanish, but also in French, English or Italian. I have always emphasized the need to get the German film the largest possible foreign distribution. It is, after

all, necessary not only to strengthen the material foundations of the German film industry, but also to interest foreign countries in our production from an ideation point of view. There is hardly any material which would seem to lend itself more to a film comedy than 'Die keusche Susanne', which has been performed in all languages on all stages of the world." (Richard Eichberg, in: *Deutsche Filmwoche*, No. 47, Nov 19, 1926).

Until 1930, the director believed that Europe would soon catch up with America, and in 1937 he shot the monumental films THE TIGER OF ESHNAPUR and THE INDIAN TOMB – which are currently also being restored by DFF – in several language versions for the pan-European market. What Eichberg later hoped to achieve for monumental sound films was already possible in 1926 through the music of the operetta: the songs were pressed as hits on record, played on the radio, and sold as sheet music. And so, soundtracks were one of the first forms of merchandising spawned by cinema.

The storyline of the film involves three love triangles that are intertwined in a screwball fashion: The title character, Susanne, is to marry her uncle in the French countryside, but – being not at all chaste – has begun an affair with bon vivant René in her other life, which takes place in



LILIAN HARVEY AND WILLY FRITSCH

Paris nightlife. René tries to secretly end this liaison in order to marry the aristocratic Jacqueline, but it soon comes to light, causing Jacqueline's family to break off the engagement. Meanwhile, Jacqueline's father has also taken a secret lover at the Moulin Rouge, a fact that René and Jacqueline take advantage of in order to become engaged after all, and restore all relationships to some semblance of order. Susanne is simply given to Jacqueline's brother, and her uncle is abandoned at the Moulin Rouge, utterly confused.

Apart from its star-studded cast and some original animation

technique in the intertitles and slow-motion sequences, DIE KEUSCHE SUSANNE serves up outdated stereotypes about ethnicities and genders, which are confirmed and subverted at the same time. The social order is suspended merely for the sake of a temporary gag.

Eichberg was generally known for discovering stars, especially female ones, and early on he relied on an in-house star system with "Richard Eichberg-Film GmbH". "In my next film, I want to introduce the audience to a young lady in whom I see a great hope for German cinema: Lilian Harvey," Richard Eichberg



ORIGINAL NEGATIVE

told the *Neue Illustrierte Filmwoche* in 1924. Harvey, whose real name was Lilian Helen Muriel Pape and whose cinematic legacy is preserved in the DFF archives, would become "Eichberg-Film GmbH's" most important star before she was poached by UFA and eventually rose to become the biggest German film star of the 1930s. In *DIE KEUSCHE SUSANNE*, one can observe how her momentous curly hair is established as a trademark and staged in a variety of ways. Harvey was also a trained ballet dancer and fluent in several foreign languages. Since it became common practice in early talkies to shoot several language versions in parallel, Harvey – who thus did not have to

be replaced - advanced to become the European film star of early talkies. In *DIE KEUSCHE SUSANNE*, Harvey also first appeared as Willy Fritsch's film partner; the two subsequently consolidated their status as Germany's most popular screen couple in ten more films.

In all available film prints, the title language was taken directly from the film's test report, in neutral type. Even the love letters, invitations and envelopes with their hidden details, which are important for the plot, were designed with the same neutral letters, which meant that part of its charm was lost. A positive copy from Russia's Gosfilmofond made it possible to reinsert not only the original



RESTORED VERSION

intertitles, but also the secret correspondence with its accompanying calligraphy. The titles were shortened due to a possible translation and are now only available as flash titles, i.e. as single images, a maximum of three. These have been lengthened for better readability and used in alignment with the materials in the DFF's inventory. Two plates that were missing in the Russian material were added in the course of this and set in neutral type.

Thanks to a gentle scan of a contemporary print and intensive retouching, this digitization produced images that had not been seen on the screen for a long time: the details of each shot can be seen clearly, and the

backgrounds are once again recognizable. In October 1926, Berlin's *Filmwoche* magazine wrote about *DIE KEUSCHE SUSANNE*: "A film for really letting off steam." Today, for the first time, it can once again be enjoyed in all its former brilliance.

With the kind support of the Förderprogramm Filmerbe (FFE) funded by BKM (German Ministry of Culture), Länder (German State funds), and FFA. In cooperation with Gosfilmofond.

*Thomas Worschech, Head of Film Archive, DFF – Deutsches Filminstitut & Filmmuseum*

# About the UFA Film Nights



# Historical Paths

## Ufa, Bertelsmann and the establishment of the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation

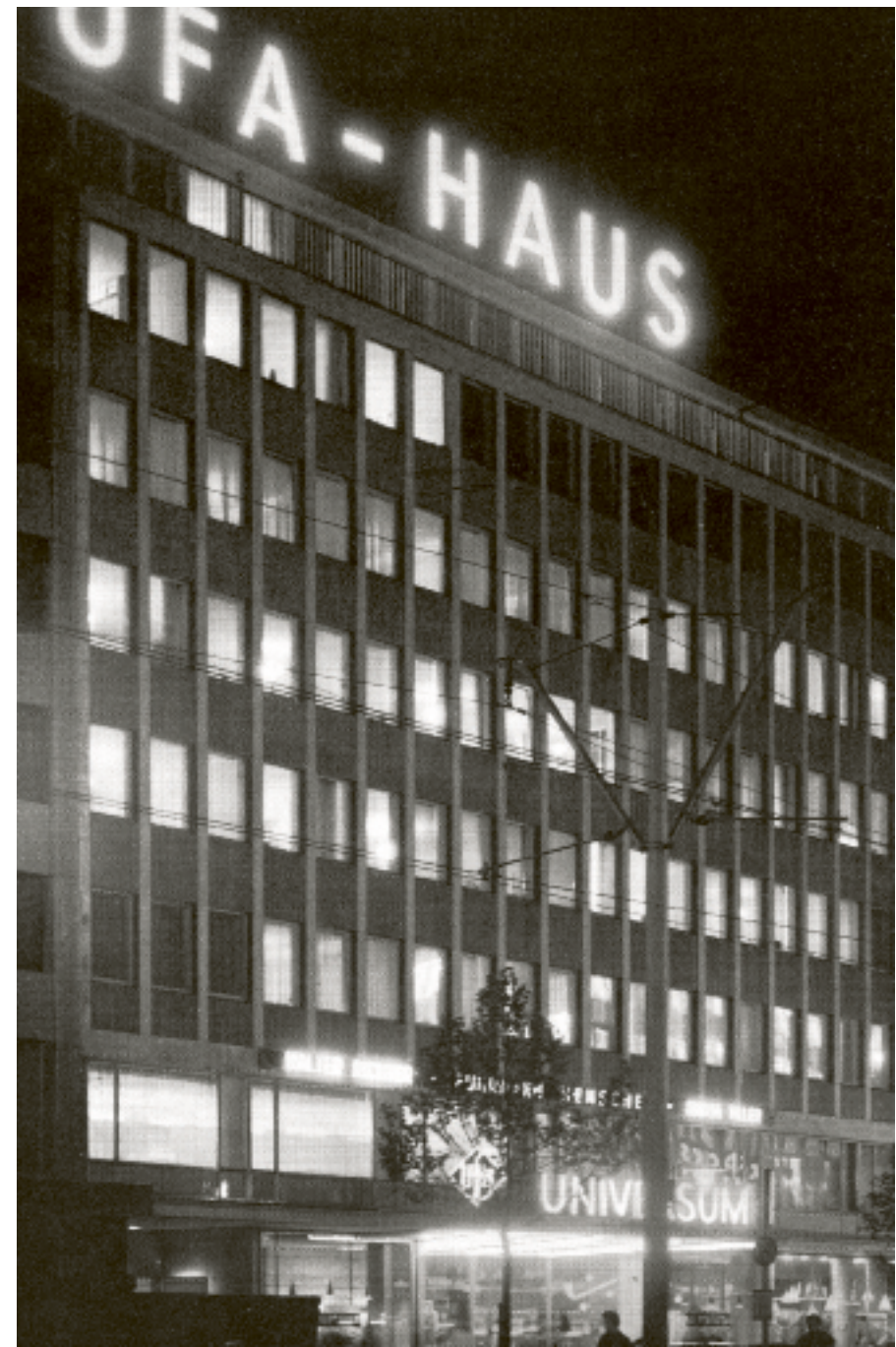
For several years now, Bertelsmann has been working to preserve Germany's silent-film heritage, at various levels and in pan-European context: The UFA Film Nights, a festival originally established in Berlin, went on to achieve great popularity in other European countries as well; and eight years ago Bertelsmann became the main sponsor of the digital restoration of the classic *THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI*. The world premiere of this version of the Expressionist masterpiece at the Berlinale 2014 became a major media event. Since then, Bertelsmann has organized further screenings in Berlin, Brussels, Madrid and New York.

In this connection, it also provided the financial support for the digital restoration of Fritz Lang's *DESTINY* (2016), Paul Czinner's *THE FIDDLER OF FLORENCE* (2018), and most lately Ernst Lubitsch's *CARMEN*, which was presented for the first time in its largely reconstructed version at the UFA Film Nights 2021. Ultimately, however, the efforts of Europe's largest media house tie in

to a historical connection that began more than 50 years ago.

Effective January 1, 1964, Bertelsmann acquired Universum-Film AG (Ufa), which had gone bankrupt after the reprivatization, and in so doing achieved its long-desired entry into the television production business. At that time, expansion was the order of the day in Gütersloh. Founded in 1835, the publishing house had taken its first step out of pure-play (printing and) publishing in 1950 with the establishment of the Bertelsmann Lesering, and had enjoyed rapid growth ever since. In the early 1960s, the first Lesering offshoots in other European countries were founded. Above and beyond this, Reinhard Mohn (1921–2009), the “post-war founder,” CEO and owner of Bertelsmann, was determined to expand into new lines of business, a process that had begun with the founding of the Ariola record label in 1958. And while the next step – the path to commercial television, which had moved within reach at the end of the 1950s (“Adenauer-Fernsehen”) – was still a long way off, content production for public-service TV appeared to be a worthwhile business for the future.

With the purchase of Ufa, Bertelsmann had not only acquired the brand but also Ufa's stake in Deutsche Wochenschau GmbH, Ufa Tonverlag



THE UFA-HAUS IN DÜSSELDORF, 1964

including Vienna-based Bohème Verlag, Ufa Industrie- und Werbefilmproduktion, Ufa Fernsehproduktion, and exploitation rights to Ufa's inventory of films. Initially, Mohn had little interest in cinema productions or even the legendary silent film heritage that is so inseparably linked to the name Ufa, because after the purchase of Ufa, the focus was clearly on the television business. Bertelsmann Fernsehfilmproduktionsgesellschaft and Playhouse Studio Reinhard Mohn, which had only been founded a few years earlier, were integrated into the newly acquired Ufa in 1964. However, the Bertelsmann credo, that media such as books, films, television and records should not compete, but should complement each other as a chain of creative content, inexorably led the company in the direction of film in the following years. In April 1965 the newly acquired Ufa cinema chain was expanded by the acquisition of Pallas Filmverleih GmbH and Merkur Filmtheater. With the 15 Merkur theaters, Ufa-Theater AG now had a total of 44 movie theaters. Just three months later, on July 1, 1965, Bertelsmann acquired a 60-percent stake in the successful Constantin Film GmbH. The focus was on a common feature film production. These investments, coupled with the relatively good 1964 financials of Ufa-Theater AG, seem to have given

the film industry, which was definitely ailing at the time, a glimmer of hope. "There can be no doubt," wrote the trade magazine *Filmblätter* in March 1966, "that the secret high command of German film expansion is currently based in Gütersloh."

But the company was looking forward, not back; and at first it remained unclear how one would go about exploiting Ufa's legendary film inventory, which after all represented a major asset of the newly acquired company. As early as spring 1964, an outcry was heard in the (trade) press: A sale of the films to the US-American company Seven Arts, as was apparently planned, was unthinkable ... and was then promptly prohibited by the German government, via the "Ufi liquidation committee." A directory published in 1966 in the magazine *Filmecho* shows just how extensive the collection was: it comprised "film rights from around 1,000 silent films and 900 sound films, 1,200 cultural films and 106 post-war films, as well as some 200 unfiled material rights."

After intensive discussions between the German government, Bertelsmann and Germany's leading cinematographic organization SPIO, it was finally agreed at the beginning of 1966 to establish a non-profit foundation under civil law, which took over both Bertelsmann's and

Bavaria's film holdings for a total of DEM 13.8 million, for which it received a loan from the UFI liquidation proceeds, that it was expected to repay in the following years. The Wiesbaden-based foundation was named after the renowned German silent film director Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau. For Bertelsmann, this closed the chapter of Ufa's silent film legacy.

Meanwhile, the potential of the large Ufa brand has been exploited further, particularly after the advent of private television in the 1980s. Today, UFA is a powerful program creator within the Bertelsmann Group, which has continuously consolidated its leadership of Germany's film and television production market. And yet: To this day, its historical legacy forms an essential part of the brand's charisma. One year after the 100th anniversary of the "old" Ufa, today's UFA still successfully invokes an artistic tradition that once began with Fritz Lang, F. W. Murnau and many others.

As a media company that places creativity at the center of its value creation and corporate culture, Bertelsmann is also committed to safeguarding and preserving important creations of the past. Today's diversity and the Group's large, multi-digital media offering worldwide have historical roots. This is one of the reasons why Bertelsmann feels

its commitment to Europe's cultural heritage is so important.

*Helen Müller, Head of Cultural Affairs and Corporate History, Bertelsmann*

## About Bertelsmann

Bertelsmann is a media, services and education company that operates in about 50 countries around the world. It includes the entertainment group RTL Group, the trade book publisher Penguin Random House, the music company BMG, the service provider Arvato, the Bertelsmann Printing Group, the Bertelsmann Education Group and Bertelsmann Investments, an international network of funds. The company has 145,000 employees and generated revenues of €18.7 billion in the 2021 financial year. Bertelsmann stands for creativity and entrepreneurship. This combination promotes first-class media content and innovative service solutions that inspire customers around the world. Bertelsmann aspires to achieve climate neutrality by 2030.

As a creative content company with a history stretching back nearly 190 years, Bertelsmann is engaged in cultural efforts at various levels. Its "Culture@Bertelsmann" activities are focused on preserving important cultural assets and making them accessible to a broad public, e.g. through digitization or exhibitions and concerts. For many years, Bertelsmann has organized the popular UFA Film Nights, a silent film festival in Berlin, and has repeatedly acted as the main sponsor for the digital restoration of important silent films. The Group also owns

the Archivio Storico Ricordi in Milan, which houses a wealth of unique testimonies to 200 years of Italian opera history. Bertelsmann is indexing the archive holdings according to the latest standards and makes thousands of documents, set and costume designs, libretti, and items of business correspondence publicly accessible online. With the Blaues Sofa (Blue Sofa) literature format, Bertelsmann and its partners ZDF, Deutschlandfunk Kultur, and 3sat have provided authors with a prominent stage for their latest works for over 20 years.

## About UFA

UFA has created unforgettable images over the past 100 years. It serves as the umbrella company for all German production activities of the international media and entertainment company Fremantle, the worldwide production arm of Bertelsmann's RTL Group division. In 2017, UFA celebrated its centennial, which makes it one of the oldest entertainment brands in the world. With more than 3,500 hours of programming aired per year, the present day UFA Group is a powerful creator of programs that has steadily expanded its market leadership as a film and TV producer in Germany in recent years. UFA programs inspire and captivate millions of viewers every day.

Over the years, UFA has evolved from a program creator and TV producer into a content specialist offering solutions for digital and multimedia content exploitation – for all major broadcasters in Germany as well as for numerous other partners.

UFA is comprised of the units UFA Fiction, UFA Serial Drama, UFA Show & Factual, and UFA Documentary. Its wideranging portfolio offers a unique variety of complementary programs such as TV movies, serials, and TV events as well as documentaries, hybrid documentary, and serial features.

Nico Hofmann (CEO) and Joachim Kosack are the company's Managing Directors.

BERTELSMANN

UFA

Partners

*F. W. Murnau*  
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## Footnotes

1 *B.Z. at Noon*, April 27, 1922  
2 Cf. Jörg Schöning, “*Es wurde  
um ein Butterbrot verkauft*”. *Das  
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