

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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LEGENDARY SILENT FILMS WITH LIVE MUSIC

APPEARING AT NATIONAL GALLERY IN JULY

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Five rarely seen silent films with live musical accompaniment, including a performance by members of the National Symphony Orchestra, will be featured free of charge on Saturday afternoons in July at the National Gallery of Art's East Building Auditorium. Several of the events showcase newly restored prints with original musical arrangements that have not been heard since their movie premieres more than sixty years ago.

"Grand Music Cinema: 1904-1928" is presented in association with the Library of Congress. Music for all the films is under the direction of Gillian Anderson, conductor, musicologist, and music librarian for the Library of Congress. Seating is on a first-come, first-served basis.

The series opens on July 3 with Old Ironsides, a patriotic film about the War of 1812. The original musical score by Hugo Riesenfeld and J. S. Zamecnik will be performed by nine members of the National Symphony Orchestra. This is the first time this newly restored score will be heard since the film's premiere in 1926.

On July 10, pianist Christine Niehaus will perform the original arrangement for Wings, the story of World War I fighter pilots, starring Buddy Rogers, Clara Bow, and Richard Arlen. Wings was the first movie to receive an Academy Award for best picture. On July 17, Niehaus will accompany The Wind, the classic 1928 film with Lillian Gish, in a score compiled by the Museum of Modern Art.

Reconstruction of an early multi-media event incorporating Thomas A. Edison's film Parsifal takes place on July 24. As presented in 1904, this film of eight short episodes will alternate with an illustrated slide lecture on the life of Richard Wagner and the Parsifal legend. For this performance, the text of the original lecture will be recited by Judith Farr, professor of English at Georgetown University.

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The original musical score will be sung by soprano Linda Mabbs, accompanied by Niehaus on piano. The Parsifal print, restored and hand-colored by the Library of Congress Film Laboratory in Dayton, Ohio, will be introduced by Patrick Loughney and Ken Weissman of the Library's motion picture, broadcasting, and recorded sound division.

The final program on July 31 features Cecil B. DeMille's 1915 film of the opera Carmen, starring Geraldine Farrar. Soprano Linda Mabbs, tenor Gene Tucker, and baritone Jason Stearns will sing the principal parts accompanied by Niehaus. The afternoon concludes with short operatic films featuring major stars of the 1920s recorded in an early synchronized sound process known as Vitaphone. Paul Spehr of the Library of Congress motion picture, broadcasting, and recorded sound division will introduce this presentation.

Gillian Anderson has participated in the restoration and reconstruction of the original orchestral scores for eleven silent films, including four in this series. She has conducted live performances at major film festivals and with symphony orchestras in the United States, Canada, Europe, and South America. Later this year, she will conduct the world premiere of Charlie Chaplin's The Circus and The Gold Rush. She is the author of Music for Silent Films (1898-1929): A Guide.

Pianist Christine Niehaus has performed concerts around the world, including at Carnegie Hall in New York, at the Kils Piano Dagar and Musik vid Siljan festivals in Sweden, and at The White House and Phillips Collection in Washington. Niehaus has also performed as solo pianist for silent films in festivals in Paris, Yugoslavia, Rome, and at the New York Film Festival. She is currently chairman of the piano department at the Harlem School of the Arts and Brooklyn College Preparatory Center for the Performing Arts.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

<u>Old Ironsides</u> (1926), director James Cruze	July 3, 4:00 p.m.
<u>Wings</u> (1927), director William Wellman	July 10, 3:00 p.m.
<u>The Wind</u> (1928), director Victor Sjöström	July 17, 3:00 p.m.
<u>Parsifal</u> (1904), director Thomas Edison	July 24, 3:00 p.m.
<u>Carmen</u> (1915), director Cecil B. DeMille, and Vitaphone shorts	July 31, 3:00 p.m.

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