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Nosferatu, Eine Symphonie des Grauens

Nosferatu, A Symphony of Horror

F.W. Murnau

GERMANY, 1922

86 minutes ■ Black and White/35mm

Production Company: **Prana-Film**

Producer: **Enriko Dieckmann, Albin Grau**

Screenplay: **Henrik Galeen, from the novel "Dracula" by Bram Stoker**

Cinematographer: **Fritz Arno Wagner, Günther Krampf**

Production Designer: **Albin Grau**

Music: **Hans Erdmann**

Principal Cast: **Max Schreck, Alexander Granach, Gustav von Wangenheim, Greta Schröder, G.H. Schnell**

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SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

Last year, Festival audiences were thrilled to see Sergei Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky* accompanied by a live rendition of Prokofiev's "Alexander Nevsky Cantata". Now, in our second annual collaboration with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Toronto International Film Festival presents a screening of F.W. Murnau's silent classic *Nosferatu, A Symphony of Horror* with a live performance of a version of Hans Erdmann's haunting original score, reconstructed by Berndt Heller.

A landmark in German Expressionism, *Nosferatu* is considered the hallmark film of the vampire genre and one of Murnau's greatest works. Now 80 years old, the film remains lush, menacing and atmospheric. It is renowned for being one of the first works in the Expressionist movement to abandon staged exteriors and shoot outdoors. *Nosferatu* demonstrated a number of other new techniques, including Murnau's startling use of negative images, featuring white trees against a black sky.

Based on Bram Stoker's "Dracula", the film follows Hutter (Gustav von Wangenheim), a young clerk who travels to Transylvania to do business with the mysterious Count Orlock (a delightfully gruesome Max Schreck), better known as the notorious vampire Nosferatu. Enchanted by a photo of Hutter's wife, Ellen (Greta Schröder), Orlock leaves for Bremen to slake his bloodlust, with Hutter in pursuit.

The film is as profoundly romantic as it is horrific and Nosferatu's piteous longing is every bit as engaging as it is ghastly. Erdmann's score lends looming suspense and visceral

passion, accompanying the monster through his moments of torment as well as his acts of terror. The story of the score's reconstruction is remarkable in its own right: Considered lost for many years, Erdmann's work was diligently recreated from a journal he kept, in which the composer presented his score for *Nosferatu* as a prime example of his beliefs regarding how film scores should be approached and written.

The "silent cinema" was never really silent and film and music lovers alike should seize this rare opportunity to experience a genuine symphony of horror.



F.W. Murnau was born in Bielefeld, Westphalia in 1888. He studied art history at the University of Heidelberg and acted in Max Reinhardt's theatre company. Considered one of the greatest film directors of the silent era, he moved to Hollywood in 1926. His brief, celebrated career ended tragically when he was killed in a car accident in 1931. Selected filmography: *The Child In Blue* (19), *Nosferatu, A Symphony of Horror* (21), *The Last Laugh* (24), *Faust* (26), *Sunrise* (27), *Four Devils* (28), *City Girl* (30) and *Tabu* (31).

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