

Document Citation

Title	Asphalt
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Source	<i>London Film Festival</i>
Date	2007
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Asphalt, May, Joe, 1929

Asphalt – BFI 51st London Film Festival 2007

Romance and crime in the Weimar Republic

The largely undersung *Asphalt*, a vibrant portrayal of Weimar street life, was one of the last and best collaborations between the German UFA Studio's respected director-producer team of Joe May and Erich Pommer, both of whom subsequently moved to Hollywood, May to direct mainly B-pictures.

In an entertaining imitation of UFA's arty Kammerspiel-style movies, complete with eye-catching sets, a lovely prostitute-thief (Betty Amann in Louise Brooks mode) uses all her seductive charms to prevent a young policeman (Gustav Fröhlich) from arresting her, and their lives become intricately entwined.

The film is justly celebrated for its evocative opening sequence (strongly influenced by Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City*, made two years earlier) which shows the evening bustle on Potsdamer Platz, store and street lights ablaze, with shoppers and workers on their way home.

Asphalt is preserved at the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung and in the Berlin Filmmuseum, whose conservator Martin Koerber will introduce and present the film with recorded music based on a contemporary score.

Thanks to Transit Films

Clyde Jeavons

Directed by:

Joe May

Written by:

Rolf E Vanloo, Fred Majo, Hans Szekely

Cast:

Gustav Fröhlich, Betty Amann, Else Heller

Country:

Germany

Year:

1928

Running time:

94 mins