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BROKEN BLOSSOMS

May 13, 1919. U.S.A.

D. W. Griffith Corporation. Directed by D. W. Griffith. Script by D. W. Griffith based on "The Chink and the Child" by Thomas Burke. Photographed by G. W. (Billy) Bitzer. Special effects by Hendrick Sartov. With Lillian Gish, Richard Barthelmess, Donald Crisp.

Available in three versions: B&W, silent; color, silent; or color, sound. All 92 min., 18 fps (see further explanation below).

The search for the elements of film art that took place in the twenties led filmmakers to neglect the natural world in favor of the studio-made film, where it was easier to control these ingredients, particularly settings and lighting, more precisely. Following his big spectacle films, Griffith turned in this direction. He changed from the large canvas to this allegorical story of a waif of the London slums, loved by a gentle and idealistic Chinese boy, and beaten by the brutal Battling Burrows. *Broken Blossoms* is small in scale, with few characters, filmed in the artificial settings of the studio and characterized by its poetic atmosphere and psychological intensity. It was immediately influential on a worldwide basis. Audiences were overwhelmed by this new kind of film and especially by its intimate acting style. Filmmakers took note of its rhythms: a slow cadence, harmonious images, shimmering lighting, soft-focus, contrasted with sequences of quick cutting, disordered compositions, sharp lens, stark lighting, and bare sets. Together these served to express the differences between an idealistic world and a savage, uncivilized one. Our recently acquired color prints are taken directly from the beautifully tinted original nitrate footage. The film may be ordered silent, or with orchestral accompaniment, including Gaylord Carter at the organ, from the original score by Louis Gottschalk and D. W. Griffith. This sound version must be projected at 18 frames per second, with the sound turned on, using a projector that has the technical capability to play sound at this slower speed.