

## Document Citation

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You only live once, Lang, Fritz, 1937

Dr. Mabuse, der spieler (Dr. Mabuse, the gambler), Lang, Fritz, 1922

Die Nibelungen, Lang, Fritz, 1924

While the city sleeps, Lang, Fritz, 1956

Frau im mond (Woman in the moon), Lang, Fritz, 1929

Cloak and dagger, Lang, Fritz, 1946

Human desire, Lang, Fritz, 1954

Clash by night, Lang, Fritz, 1952

Man hunt, Lang, Fritz, 1941

Das testament des Dr. Mabuse (The testament of Dr. Mabuse), Lang, Fritz, 1933

Spione (Spies), Lang, Fritz, 1928

Hangmen also die, Lang, Fritz, 1943

Die spinnen (Spiders), Lang, Fritz, 1919

Ministry of fear, Lang, Fritz, 1944

Rancho Notorious, Lang, Fritz, 1952

Western Union, Lang, Fritz, 1941

Beyond a reasonable doubt, Lang, Fritz, 1956

# Application Form

Please mail this form along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope and your check made payable to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90036, Attention: Ticket Desk.

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## Films

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### The Films of Fritz Lang

October 3-November 22, 1969. A cycle of the director's work, 1919-1963.

Motion picture art has few instances where the work of a major creative personality is really felt for more than a single significant year or two. Fritz Lang was born in Vienna and began writing his first film scripts while hospitalized during World War I. After the war he went to Berlin and soon began directing. *Destiny* (1921), *Dr. Mabuse* (1922) and *Siegfried* (1923) established him as a major talent, confirmed by *Metropolis* (1926), *The Spies* (1927) and *Woman in the Moon* (1928).

But it was "*M*" (1932) and *Liliom* (France, 1934) which broke precedent in motion picture history by revealing Lang as much a master of the new sound medium as he was of the "silent" film. Here Lang showed that his great visual flair was equalled by an original use of sounds and silences to deepen and enrich atmosphere and mood.

Coming to America in mid-depression, Lang immediately assumed an important position with *Fury* (1936) and *You Only Live Once* (1937), two outstanding Hollywood films which put social comment ahead of mere entertainment.

In the 1940's Lang directed a series of films which characterized the best work of an entire decade. In *Man Hunt* (1941) and especially *Woman in the Window* (1944), Lang's distinctive low-key photography and "psychological camera" came to typify an era and best illustrate a genre which the French critics identify as "*Le Film Noir Americaine*."

Beginning October 3 with *Liliom* (1934), a major cycle of Fritz Lang's films will be presented in the Museum's Leo S. Bing Theater. Thirty feature films will be screened on Friday and Saturday evenings at 8:30 and Saturday afternoons at 3:00 according to the schedule below. This cycle provides an opportunity to study in depth the work of a master and to see certain films which, so to speak, did much to create the language of cinema.

—Philip Chamberlin



*Fritz Lang*



## Liliom (1934)

**Friday, October 3 at 8:30.** A brilliant “lost” film, rarely seen since its release thirty-five years ago, Lang’s version of the Molnar fantasy is a richly inventive work and remains his only tragi-comedy. Charles Boyer, as the self-centered *Carrousel* operator, turns in a solid, winning performance. The scenes in Heaven are all intact and provide a visually imaginative conclusion.

## Man Hunt (1941) and The Ministry of Fear (1944)

**Saturday, October 4 at 8:30.** Walter Pidgeon plays the part of a big-game hunter in a *Man Hunt* stalking Hitler at Berchtesgaden. A mood of menace hangs over this early World War II film, drawing the spectator into an ominous, Nazi infested world.

*The Ministry of Fear* was adapted from Graham Greene’s novel, telling of a man (Ray Milland) who becomes involved with Nazi saboteurs in wartime London. These two films form a powerful brace of anti-Nazi thrillers, underscoring the ominous character of the Third Reich.

## Die Nibelungen: Siegfried (1923) and Kriemhild’s Revenge (1924)

**Friday, October 10 at 8:30.** This massive, studio-produced work is a landmark in the history of cinema. This mythic quality of the Siegfried saga was captured by Lang in scenes of classic pictorial beauty. Despite the fact that American audiences were not imbued with appreciation for sagas, legends, and epic poems, the visual sweep of *Siegfried* was not altogether lost upon them. On the other hand, *Kriemhild’s Revenge* has been more enthusiastically received here, perhaps because its tragic dimensions, style and theme of vengeance were more easily appreciated. Each half of *Die Nibelungen* runs about two hours in length. Contemporary audiences, conditioned by so-called epics like *Dr. Zhivago*, are thus even better prepared to appreciate the authentic grandeur of *Die Nibelungen*.

## Fury (1936) and Moonfleet (1954)

**Saturday, October 11 at 8:30.** *Fury* was Lang’s first American film, a remarkable protest against mob rule, with Spencer Tracy in one of his most demanding roles. The story begins casually, even routinely, and builds slowly toward an explosive, disturbing climax.

*Moonfleet*, a Gothic melodrama with romantic overtones, is set in mid-eighteenth century England and is distinguished by exceptional CinemaScope photography.

## Die Spinnen (The Spiders): *The Golden Sea* (1919) and *The Slave Ship* (1919)

**Friday, October 17 at 8:30.** (Tentative). Originally, *The Spiders* was conceived as a four-part cycle, but only the first two films were completed.

*The Golden Sea (Part I)*, legendary burial place of fabulous Inca treasures, lures “The



*Nibelungen: Siegfried*



Spiders," a fanatical gang of criminals. Led by the beautiful but evil Lio Sha, the Spiders are bent on seizing the wealth and gaining world domination. They are opposed by American sportsman, Kay Hoog.

*The Slave Ship (Part II)* details the further adventures of Kay Hoog, now attempting to foil the Spiders in their plot to take possession of a precious diamond which is hidden on the Falkland Islands.

## Woman in the Window (1944) and You Only Live Once (1937)

**Saturday, October 18 at 8:30.** Edward G. Robinson delivers one of his finest and most sympathetic performances for Lang in *Woman in the Window*. Lang takes a simple story and, through careful use of sounds, images and actions, shows what the film medium can do to draw a spectator into the position of his protagonist.

*You Only Live Once* argues for the rehabilitation of ex-criminals, but does not allow social protest to slow down the headlong rush of meaningful action. Lang directs a young Henry Fonda (a three-time loser) to show the necessity for fighting against the strictures imposed by society and one's own background.



*Woman in the Window*

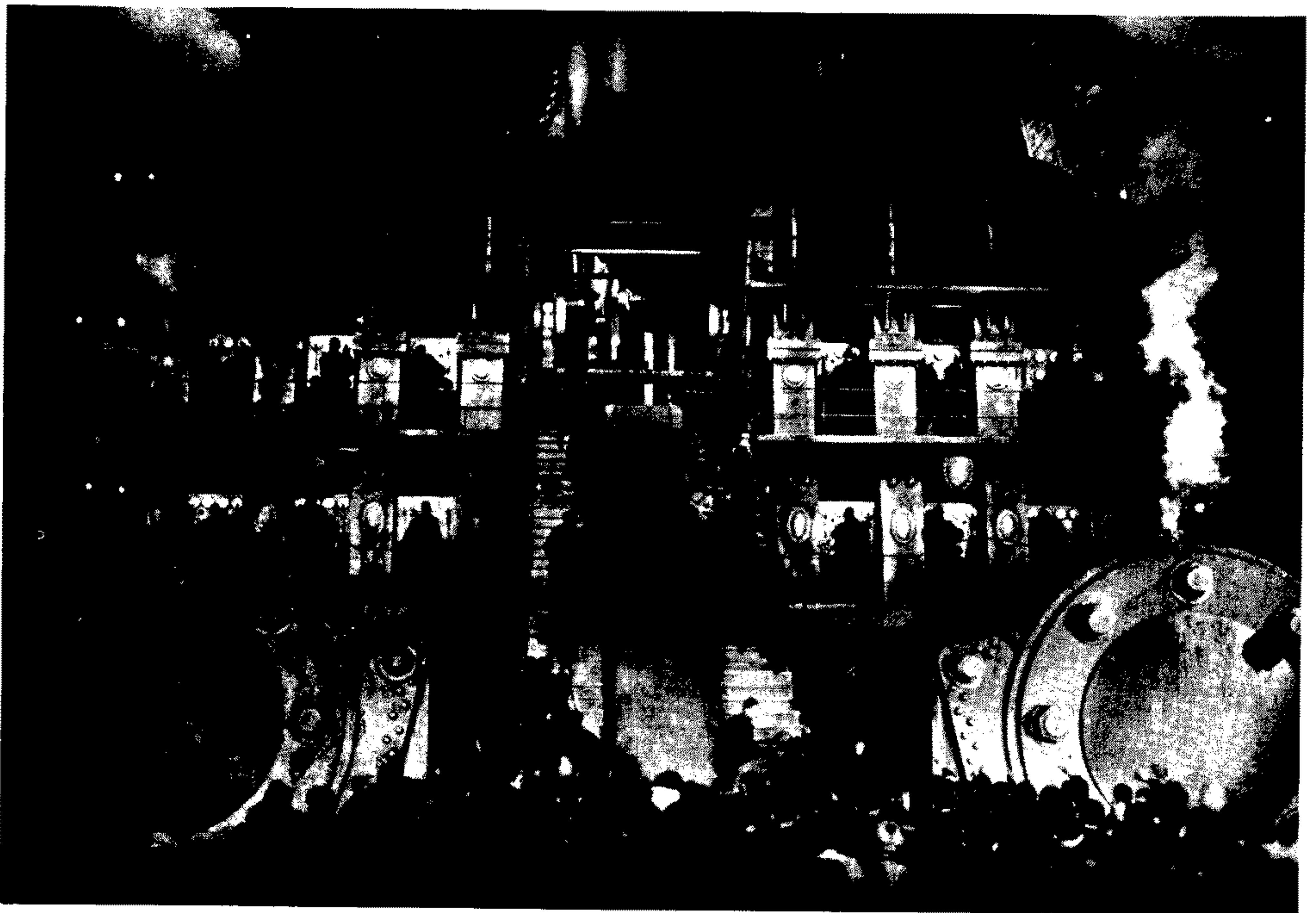
## Metropolis (1926)

**Friday, October 24 at 8:30.** Disturbed by forces which make men into parts of the industrial machine, Lang filmed *Metropolis* as a warning. One-third of a century later, the warning has even more force. One of the most imaginative and dramatically exciting fantasies ever conceived for the screen, *Metropolis* brought Expressionism to its most successful filmic form. The original version was shortened by distributors, but we have succeeded in obtaining the most complete copy known to exist.

## Cloak and Dagger (1946) and Beyond A Reasonable Doubt (1956)

**Saturday, October 25 at 8:30.** *Cloak and Dagger* casts Gary Cooper as an atomic scientist, somewhat suggestive of Robert Oppenheimer, who goes on an O.S.S. mission to occupied Europe during the second World War. Innocent facades hide destructive forces here as in many Lang films.

*Beyond A Reasonable Doubt*, Lang's last American film, dramatizes the ambivalent nature of guilt and innocence through a story that keeps switching the labels: "appearance" and "reality." Dana Andrews and Joan Fontaine play the principal roles.



*Metropolis*



## Dr. Mabuse: *The Gambler* (Part 1, 1922) and *The Big Heat* (1953)

**Friday, October 31 at 8:30.** King of all the “thrillers,” *Dr. Mabuse* is set in the underworld with crooks, spies, trickery, secret identity, and other nefarious doings. Dr. Mabuse is the film prototype of all the evil geniuses who have haunted the screen during the past half-century. Like most films of the period, *Dr. Mabuse* is deliberate in pace. But it is almost hypnotic in its effect.

*The Big Heat* is another study of vengeance, this time with Glenn Ford as a police detective whose ideals are shattered by a ruthless mobster. As the police officer picks his own path toward revenge, his methods and even his characters take on quite a different aspect from his former ideals.

## The Return of Frank James (1940)

**Saturday, November 1 at 3:00.** Lang brought a fresh approach to the western *genre*, rather as if Lord Byron had decided to write lyrics for a popular song. Henry Fonda was cast as Frank, the brother of Jesse, trying to live as a farmer and avoid the shadow which fell across his family name. But events conspire against him.

## Scarlet Street (1945) and Human Desire (1954)

**Saturday, November 1 at 8:30.** These two films are not so much re-makes as different approaches to the same material which Jean Renoir filmed in *La Chienne* (1931) and *La Bête Humaine* (1938). The challenge to compare two films drawn from a single source is unavoidable, especially since the Renoir version was shown here in February.

*Scarlet Street* casts Edward G. Robinson as the unhappy but talented painter who falls in love with “The Bitch,” marvellously portrayed by Joan Bennett.

*Human Desire* derives from Zola’s story about a railway boss (Broderick Crawford) who murders a man with whom his wife (Gloria Grahame) has had an affair. The wife then attempts to kill her husband using another lover (Glenn Ford).

## Destiny (1921) and While The City Sleeps (1955)

**Friday, November 7 at 8:30.** *Der Muede Tod* (*Destiny* or *Weary Death*) is a kind of *chanson* which sings three stories. A young girl pleads with Death for the return of her lover and is given three opportunities to save one human life: hence the three stories which follow her attempts in old Baghdad, in seventeenth century Venice, and in a Baroque, fairy-tale China. The film has many haunting touches of fantasy and mysticism.

*While the City Sleeps* follows the belated attempt of a young man (Dana Andrews) to enter a sort of contest in solving a murder. Others in the excellent supporting cast are: Ida Lupino, Rhonda Fleming, George Sanders, Vincent Price, Thomas Mitchell, Howard Duff, and John Drew Barrymore.





## Western Union (1941)

**Saturday, November 8 at 3:00.** Lang's second western tells about certain colorful hazards encountered in stringing the first telegraph wires from Omaha to Salt Lake City. A film set in the 1860's, *Western Union* used authentic locations, pleasantly decorated by Randolph Scott, Robert Young, Virginia Gilmore, John Carradine, and Slim Summerville.

## "M" (1931) and Hangmen Also Die (1942)

**Saturday, November 8 at 8:30.** "M" is the mark chalked hastily on the back of a mentally disturbed child murderer (Peter Lorre). His crimes disrupt the status quo, so both police and underworld unite to hunt him down. The methods used by the police and by the underworld are shown in parallel. "M," uncontestably a masterpiece, is frequently placed by critics among the greatest works of the screen.

*Hangmen Also Die!* was conceived by Lang and Bertolt Brecht in 1942 when the news media reported the death of "Hangman" Heydrich, a Nazi official, who had been assassinated in Prague. A fictional story was constructed around this event. The subsequent film is something of a landmark among resistance documents.

## Featured speaker: *Lotte H. Eisner*

**Wednesday, November 12 at 8:30.** *Symposium on the Films of Fritz Lang.* Lotte Eisner is on the staff of the Cinémathèque Française, has won an international reputation with her definitive study of German Expressionist Cinema, and comes to the United States this fall as an authority on the films of Fritz Lang. Miss Eisner's monumental book on Lang, already several years in preparation, will be published late in 1970. Her much discussed work, *L'Ecran Demonique*, will be published this fall by the University of California Press in a revised edition called *The Haunted Screen*. Other members of the symposium will be announced late in October.

## Spies (1927) and Woman in the Moon (1928)

**Friday, November 14 at 8:30.** *Spies* tells of a super-criminal who maintains a world-wide network of espionage agents bent on disrupting society. Filmed with rare bravura and in the style of classic melodrama, *Spies* is rich in detail and consistently fascinating to watch.

*Woman in the Moon* has a rocket-launching sequence which seems oddly like those at Cape Kennedy. Odd, that is, until one discovers that Willy Ley and Professor Hermann Oberth were Lang's technical advisors on the film forty years ago.

*Note:* Both films on this program will be accompanied by the distinguished organist, Chauncey Haines.

## Dr. Mabuse, (Part II): Inferno (1922) and Clash by Night (1952)

**Saturday, November 15 at 8:30.** Following a recapitulation of Part I, there are more





*Dr. Mabuse*

disguises, gas bombs, super-charged touring cars, counterfeiting, police pursuits and fleeing through sewers, all in deep-dish Expressionistic style, evoking the strange *milieu* of urban Germany immediately after World War I.

*Clash by Night* is about a woman (Barbara Stanwyck) whose husband is a simple, trusting Monterey fisherman (Paul Douglas). She has an affair with her husband's friend (Robert Ryan) and this brings out themes of deception, selfishness and responsibility which Lang handles with insight and imagination.

**Rancho Notorious (1951) and The Testament of Doctor Mabuse (1933)**

**Friday, November 21 at 8:30.** *Rancho Notorious* gave Marlene Dietrich one of the most interesting parts of her career, that of a retired dance hall queen whose ranch is really a hide-out for outlaws. The film is a fresh and original western and, like the innocent facade of Miss Dietrich's ranch, it hides a number of ideas which the patron of conventional westerns is usually not required to face.



*Fritz Lang directing (1926)*

*The Testament of Doctor Mabuse*, like *Rancho Notorious*, presents a front masking dangerous criminal activity. Dr. Baum, director of an insane asylum, is really under the hypnotic spell of Dr. Mabuse and is eventually shown to be more insane than any of his patients. But a much deeper opposition of reality and appearance is appreciated when one suddenly realizes that Baum is babbling Nazi slogans. In the Germany of 1933, the lunatics had taken over the asylum.

## Le Mepris (1963)

**Saturday, November 22 at 8:30.** (Epilogue). *Contempt* was written and directed by Jean-Luc Godard and based on Alberto Moravia's novel, *Ghost at Noon*. The story concerns an actress (Brigit Bardot), a writer (Michelle Piccoli), a producer (Jack Palance) and a director named Fritz Lang who are making a film version of *The Odyssey*. The film is one of the best which Godard has made and it is particularly fitting that such a film should cast Lang as Fritz Lang, a director working in the face of severe difficulties imposed by a producer. The last shot in this film has Lang directing an actor who portrays Ulysses looking expectantly toward the horizon.

## Ticket Information

Tickets may be obtained at the Ticket Desk in the Leo S. Bing Center Tuesday through Friday, 11:00-4:00, and one hour prior to performances. Or you may send your check together with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Ticket Desk, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles 90036.

Tickets are \$2.00 for the general public or \$1.50 for Members. Student tickets are \$1.50 and are available only upon presentation of student identification.

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Note: Owing to delays often encountered in the shipment of films from abroad, some substitutions in the above program may be necessary. In this event, other Lang films will be chosen.

For the still photographs above, we are indebted to Forrest J. Ackerman, David Bradley and The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.