

Document Citation

Title	A tribute to Lillian Gish
Author(s)	
Source	<i>American Film Institute</i>
Date	
Type	brochure
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	5
Subjects	Gish, Lillian (1896-1993), Springfield, Ohio, United States
Film Subjects	An unseen enemy, Griffith, D. W., 1912

Lillian Gish



THE UCLA
FILM ARCHIVES
IN ASSOCIATION
WITH
THE AMERICAN
FILM INSTITUTE
PRESENT

A
TRIBUTE
TO
LILLIAN
GISH

APRIL 14
TO
MAY 13
MELNITZ
THEATER
UCLA



The career of Lillian Gish is unique in the history of motion pictures. One of the pioneers of the industry, she was the greatest actress of the silent film era, and she is still flourishing as a film and television actress more than seventy years after her screen debut in D. W. Griffith's *AN UNSEEN ENEMY*.

The subtlety and passionate conviction of her work with Griffith revolutionized the art of screen acting. She starred in his landmark 1915 film *THE BIRTH OF A NATION*, and her performances in such other silent film classics as *BROKEN BLOSSOMS*, *TRUE HEART SUSIE*, *WAY DOWN EAST*, *ORPHANS OF THE STORM*, *LA BOHEME*, *THE SCARLET LETTER*, and *THE WIND* are among the enduring monuments of the medium.

At the peak of her popularity, and in a day when film was not yet generally acknowledged to be an art form, she was recognized universally, as a major artist. The literary magazine *Vanity Fair* dubbed her "The First Lady of the Cinema," and critics hailed her as the equal of the leading European stage actresses, Eleonora Duse, and Sarah Bernhardt.

In 1920, she became one of the first women to direct a feature film, *REMODELING HER HUSBAND*. Soon after that, she assumed artistic control of the films in which she appeared; her contract with MGM in the late silent era gave her a power few other women have achieved in Hollywood. With such productions as *LA BOHEME*, *THE SCARLET LETTER*, and *THE WIND*, she brought the silent film to the summit of its art.

After the coming of sound, she distinguished herself as a stage star while making infrequent film appearances, most notably in *DUEL IN THE SUN*, *THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER*, and *A WEDDING*. In the early days of live television, she again became a pioneer; her work in such programs as *THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF GRANDMA MOSES* and *THE TRIP TO BOUNTIFUL* is fondly remembered.

Throughout her life, Miss Gish has been a tireless advocate of the cause of film preservation. She was instrumental in obtaining the Griffith collection of films for The Museum of Modern Art, and she persuaded Mary Pickford to preserve her films for future generations. She has appeared frequently before governmental bodies, and she has given more than 400 lectures on college campuses to promote appreciation of the art of film.

Lillian Gish was described by Brooks Atkinson as "an American institution." Her life and her work represent the finest traditions of the popular arts in this country.

reprinted from:
**The American Film Institute
Life Achievement Award
Program**

Lillian

EARLY SHORTS
THE UNSEEN ENEMY
TWO DAUGHTERS OF EVE
BURGLAR'S DILEMMA
MUSKETEERS OF PIG ALLEY
HOUSE OF DARKNESS
THE MOTHERING HEART
BATTLE OF ELDERBUSH GULCH
MISUNDERSTOOD BOY
ENOCK ARDEN

SOLD FOR MARRIAGE
1916
 Directed by Christy Cabanne
 16mm
HEARTS OF THE WORLD
1918
 Directed by D. W. Griffith
 16mm

BIRTH OF A NATION
1915
 Directed by D. W. Griffith
 35mm, color tinted

BROKEN BLOSSOMS
1919
 Directed by D. W. Griffith
 35mm, color tinted
TRUE HEART SUSIE
1919
 Directed by D. W. Griffith
 35mm, black and white

WAY DOWN EAST
1920
 Directed by D. W. Griffith
 35mm, Nitrate
ORPHANS OF THE STORM
1921
 Directed by D. W. Griffith
 35mm



SATURDAY, APRIL 14
 Live Organ Accompaniment Robert Israel
 In honor of Miss Gish's reception of the Life Achievement Award from the American Film Institute, the 12th, the UCLA Film Archives presents this five week retrospective of her film concentrating on her achievements up to her retirement from film (temporarily) in 1933. Tonight's program focuses on the shorts, one reels and two with which her career began including her first screen role, **THE UNSEEN ENEMY** (1912). The program includes, **TWO DAUGHTERS OF EVE** (1913) **HOUSE OF DARKNESS** (1913) **THE BURGLAR'S DILEMMA** (1913) **ENOCK ARDEN** (1914) **THE MOTHERING HEART** (1913) **MISUNDERSTOOD BOY** (1913) **MUSKETEERS OF PIG ALLEY** (1912) and **THE BATTLE OF ELDERBUSH GULCH** (1914). All films directed by D. W. Griffith except **ENOCK ARDEN**, directed by Christy Cabanne. All prints 16mm. Total program about 120 min.

SUNDAY, APRIL 15
 Live Organ Accompaniment by Robert Israel
SOLD FOR MARRIAGE (1916)
 Directed by Christy Cabanne
 Long thought lost, this rare film was unearthed as part of the program for the Life Achievement Award for Miss Gish. AFI gave the negative to EM GEE Films, from which this 16mm print was secured. Costarring Frank Bennett and A. D. Sears. 44 min.
HEARTS OF THE WORLD (1918)
 Directed by D. W. Griffith
 A neglected masterpiece of spectacular scenic scope and emotional range that deserves to rank with the other war epics of Griffith. The story of a French village that becomes the focal point of some of the bitterest fighting of WWI. Its inhabitants have led quiet, peaceful lives—a young girl living with her grandparents, the boy who loves her, the town flirt, a carpenter, musician, etc.—when in strides the spectre of war; the town is mobilized and the peaceful life violently shattered. When the Germans occupy the village the lovers are torn apart and only reunited amidst the ashes of the war-ravaged world. With Dorothy Gish, Robert Harron and Kate Bruce, Erich Von Stroheim and in a bit Noel Coward. 122 min. 16mm print.

SATURDAY, APRIL 21
 With live accompaniment by Robert Israel
BIRTH OF A NATION (1915)
 Directed by D. W. Griffith
 One of the most important films of the silent era, this epic treatise on a war-torn nation featured Lillian Gish as Elsie Stoneman, a Northern Senator's daughter in love with a Confederate soldier. Her first great popular success, the film's basic narrative has in recent years been attacked as racist. For Griffith, a Southern progressive, it was a liberal message proclaiming the need for National Unity and idealistic peace. And despite its racist depictions (at points) the film is a masterwork of narrative and characterization; the first film to earn an extraordinary sum, produced for \$100,000 it gathered over 14 million dollars. 35mm, color tinted Original.

SUNDAY, APRIL 22
 Live organ accompaniment by Robert Israel
BROKEN BLOSSOMS (1919)
 Directed by D. W. Griffith
 With the advent of *Broken Blossoms* Miss Gish became universally recognized as the world's finest film actress. Playing Lucy Burrows, the daughter of a sadistic prizefighter, she is rescued by her Chinese protector, Richard Barthelmess, only to later meet a tragic end. The emotion between Gish and Barthelmess is superb with some moments that are exquisitely touching and subtle. Her biographer has called this, "the film role for which she will be longest remembered, the part that for artistic conception and delineation and sheer beauty has not been surpassed by herself or by any other." 35mm Original. Color tinted print courtesy MOMA. 76 min.
TRUE HEART SUSIE (1919)
 Directed by D. W. Griffith
 The story of a girl who makes sacrifices for the boy she loves, with Robert Harron, the film was not recognized in its time. A sentimental melodrama somewhat thematically close to the archetypal Mary Pickford film, it's a lesser film than *Broken Blossoms*, but it's a film illuminated by the fragile grace, gentle humor and appealing timidity of country-girl Gish. 35mm 105 min.

SATURDAY, APRIL 28
 Live Accompaniment by Robert Israel
WAY DOWN EAST (1920)
 Directed by D. W. Griffith
 The story of Anna, a country girl tricked into a fake marriage by a city playboy who deserts her when she discovers she's pregnant. Ostracized as an unwed mother, she is cast out into the snow and although harassed again by the playboy she ultimately finds love with one who befriended her. Famous for its climax, one of the most dangerous and thrilling scenes ever filmed, a last minute rescue across the ice floes of the Connecticut River. The sequence required three weeks of shooting in frigid temperatures during which four members of the cast and crew died. Gish's performance is called the bravest an actress had ever accomplished by fellow actress Miriam Cooper. 35mm Nitrate print. 119 min.
ORPHANS OF THE STORM (1921)
 Directed by D. W. Griffith
 Gish's last picture with Griffith, it's a spectacular film set during the French Revolution. The biggest film of 1921 in popularity, it tells the story of two orphans marooned in Paris who become separated in the maelstrom of the Revolution. Befriended by Danton, one orphan is released from the Bastille and seeks to find her sister. With the Gish sisters and Joseph Schildkraut and Monte Blue. 126 min. 35mm print.

WHITE SISTER
1923
Directed by Henry King
35mm
ROMOLA
1924
Directed by Henry King
16mm

SCARLET LETTER
1926
Directed by Victor Sjöström
16mm
LA BOHEME
1926
Directed by King Vidor
35mm

TELEVISION
TRIP TO BOUNTIFUL (excerpt)
1953
I, MRS. BIBB
1955
MORNINGS AT SEVEN
1956

THE WIND
1927
Directed by Victor Sjöström
35mm

ONE ROMANTIC NIGHT
(THE SWAN) 1930
Directed by Paul L. Stein
HIS DOUBLE LIFE
1933
Directed by Arthur Hopkins
and William C. DeMille
35mm



SUNDAY, APRIL 29, 1984

Live accompaniment by Robert Israel
THE WHITE SISTER (1923)
Directed by Henry King
Gish's silent screen sufferings are unparalleled in this all too sad tale of a woman who joins a convent when she thinks her fiancé has been killed in the war. The film co-stars a very young and dashing Ronald Colman. 35mm.
ROMOLA (1924)
Directed by Henry King
Gish's most expensive silent film, this was a lavishly mounted drama set in Florence during the Renaissance. A 15th Century city was built for the filming. The only prints which exist now are dupes off of a 8mm copy that actor William Powell had made for his own use. Powell played Gish's villainous husband in one of his first film roles. Print courtesy David Shepard. 16mm.

SATURDAY, MAY 5

THE SCARLET LETTER (1926)
Directed by Victor Seastrom
In this classic tale of Nathaniel Hawthorne's, Lillian Gish stars as an adulteress who rather than endanger the reputation of her lover, suffers punishment and humiliation for years by being forced to wear a scarlet "A" on her breast. 35mm. Live accompaniment by Robert Israel.
LA BOHEME (1926)
Directed by King Vidor
Lillian Gish returned from Europe to sign a two-year, \$800,000.00 contract with MGM. The extraordinary deal gave her artistic control of her productions, including her choice of director, co-stars, and cameraman. For the first film at MGM, she picked La Boheme, from the story on which Puccini based his opera. She hired John Gilbert and director King Vidor because she was impressed with their work on The Big Parade. During the filming of La Boheme, cameraman Hendrik Sartov used his specially designed "Lillian Gish Lens" to create the distinctive visual effects associated with her close-ups—sharply detailed facial features surrounded by a soft, halo-like glow. 35mm. Live accompaniment by Robert Israel.

SUNDAY, MAY 6

Three notable examples taken from Ms. Gish's career in TV. PHILCO TV PLAYHOUSE: "TRIP TO BOUNTIFUL," NBC, 3/1/53. Horton Foote (To Kill A Mockingbird, Tender Mercies) authored this finely wrought portrait of an elderly woman (Gish), who has been living unhappily with her son and daughter-in-law, and who now dreams of returning to her home town. In this 10-minute excerpt, Gish, on a train for home, meets a young woman (Eva Marie Saint) whose husband has recently left for war. KRAFT TELEVISION THEATER: "I, MRS. BIBB," NBC, 10/19/55. Gish stars in this story of a senator's widow who is chosen to succeed her late husband in office. Featuring Richard Kiley, Patricia Smith, Russell Hicks. Directed by Richard Dunlap. 60 minutes. ALCOA HOUR: "MORNINGS AT SEVEN," NBC, 11/4/56. Robert Wallsten adapted Paul Osborn's play about four sisters and their rather unusual problems including the trouble between a middle-aged son and his fiancée; one husband's sudden desire for privacy; another's strange "spells"; and the curious relationship between a third husband and the lone spinster sister. "MORNINGS AT SEVEN" features Dorothy Gish playing the part of Ally, which she originated on Broadway in 1939. Also starring June Lockhart, David Wayne, Evelyn Warden, Dorothy Stickney and Wallace Rooney. Produced and directed by Alex Segal. 60 minutes. All prints courtesy of the ATAS/UCLA Television Archives.

**LIVE ORGAN
ACCOMPANIMENT
ON INDICATED
PROGRAMS BY
ROBERT ISRAEL**

SATURDAY, MAY 12, 1984

THE WIND (1927)
Directed by Victor Sjöström
THE WIND is one of the masterpieces of the silent cinema and certainly one of Gish's greatest performances. Throughout the film Sjöström emphasizes the impact of the elements, especially the wind, on his characters. Exteriors were shot in the blistering hot Mojave Desert and so penetrating is the atmosphere that one can almost feel the heat and the wind and taste the endless dust. Gish remembers the shooting of the film as being one of the worst experiences she ever went through. While THE WIND is now considered a classic, MGM did not give it much of a buildup and after its initial release, recut it, gave it a happy ending and attached a disc score which you will hear tonight. 35mm Original disc score.

SUNDAY, MAY 13

ONE ROMANTIC NIGHT
(THE SWAN) (1930)
Directed by Paul L. Stein
Speaking recently of the end of the silent film era, Lillian Gish said, "I don't think film should have married words. It separates the world. Film and music bring the world together again. They all understand it." But she gave in to the inevitable, and though her voice was pleasing to film audiences, her first talkie, One Romantic Night, based on Molnar's play, The Swan, was unsuccessful. 35mm.
HIS DOUBLE LIFE (1933)
Directed by Arthur Hopkins
A charming domestic comedy with Roland Young, His Double Life, based on a novel by Arnold Bennet, was Lillian Gish's last film appearance for ten years. She turned her creative energies to the stage, with great success. 35mm.

Ticket Information:

Tickets are \$3.50 for the public and \$2.50 for students. They are available at the door. For further information please call 825-9261 or 825-2581.

Parking Information:

Two dollar parking is available in Parking Lot 3 adjacent to Melnitz Hall near the intersection of Sunset Boulevard and Hilgard Avenue. Enter the campus at Hilgard and Wyton, and buy tokens at the parking information kiosk.

Partially funded by a grant from the California Arts Council

Partially funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts

Acknowledgements:

Mike Kaplan
American Film Institute
UCLA Film Archives
Audrey Kupferberg
Charles Hopkins
Museum of Modern Art
David Shepard
MGM
Em Gee Films

Live Organ Accompaniment
by Robert Israel

Brochure design by
Clay Doyle