

Document Citation

Title	The wind
Author(s)	Iris Barry
Source	<i>Museum of Modern Art (New York, N.Y.)</i>
Date	
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	The wind, Sjöström, Victor, 1928

Museum of Modern Art
Film Library
Series IV, Program 2

The Wind

1927-28

Produced by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Directed by Victor Seastrom. Scenario by Frances Marion, adapted from the novel by Dorothy Scarborough. Photography by John Arnold. Cast: Lillian Gish as Letty; Lars Hanson as Lige; Montagu Love as Roddy; Dorothy Cummings as Cora; Edward Earle as Beverly. Acquired through the courtesy of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Seastrom adapted himself more readily to conditions in Hollywood than did Stiller: he set to work shortly after his arrival on *Name the Man* (1923) followed by *He Who Gets Slapped* (1924), *Confessions of a Queen* (1924-25), *The Tower of Lies* (1925), and *The Scarlet Letter* (1926). None of them caught quite the sincerity of his Swedish work but almost all of them had real merit—*The Tower of Lies* in particular, for here Seastrom worked with material, a Selma Lagerlof story, which he wholly understood. In *The Wind* both the power and the limitations of his American direction are clearly visible. It cannot be said that his handling of Miss Gish is entirely effective: her restlessness becomes a mannerism, her acting seems a stylized relic of her years under Griffith and fails to build up a characterization for which she was, in type, so admirably cast. Lars Hanson, who had played with her before under Seastrom in *The Scarlet Letter*, creates by comparison a very solid and convincing Lige.

As for the direction in general there is a noticeably Swedish touch in the manner in which both the elements and inanimate objects are forced to play a dramatic part: every use is made, too, of the eye's ability to register detail as well as broad effect and of the film's own ability to speak volumes by small things. The scene in which the wife dismembers the beef carcass while the girl irons her unsuitable dress contains the maximum of suggestion: the life of the whole house with its complex emotional stresses is fully rendered. The spectator has the impression of having trodden the gritty boards in the shack to which Lige takes his bride, listened to the endless wind, and participated in the frustration and terror. The original story contained no happy ending: dramatically the close of the film is probably more correct. Some useful information as to the conditions under which *The Wind* was produced are found in Albert B. Paine's *Life and Lillian Gish*, New York, Macmillan 1932, pp. 237-241.

Iris Barry.

The next program in Series IV will be:

Anna Christie, with Garbo.

The music for this program was arranged by Theodore Huff.