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| Berlin: Symphony of a City (1927) |
| Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt (1927) |
| *Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt* [*Berlin: Symphony of a City*] is a film directed by Walther Ruttmann and co-written by Carl Mayer and Karl Freund. Freund was also responsible for the cinematography. Together with *Manhatta* (Strand & Sheeler, 1921), *Rien que les heures* (Cavalcanti, 1926) and *Chelovek s kinoapparatom* [*Man with a Movie Camera*] (Vertov, 1929), the film is one of the best-known examples of a ‘city symphony’ — a film genre that is also often described as ‘city film’ or ‘city poem.’ Portraying the everyday life of a big city, mainly through visual impressions in an experimental and semi-documentary style, *Berlin* is marked by a script-free open narrative form. Although based on footage shot over a year, events of the film are arranged to simulate the passage of a single day. Unmistakably influenced by the rhythmic, expressive, associative, and metaphorical possibilities of Soviet montage, Ruttmann divided the film into five acts which can be compared to the ‘movements’ of a symphony — in this case, a score written by composer Edmund Meisel. Making the city itself and the urban masses the true protagonists of the film, Ruttmann presents the multicoloured and multifaceted metropolis as the locus of modernity — something that is perfectly exemplified by the leitmotif of moving trains and streetcars that connects the various parts of the film. |
| *Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt* [*Berlin: Symphony of a City*] is a film directed by Walther Ruttmann and co-written by Carl Mayer and Karl Freund. Freund was also responsible for the cinematography. Together with *Manhatta* (Strand & Sheeler, 1921), *Rien que les heures* (Cavalcanti, 1926) and *Chelovek s kinoapparatom* (*Man with a Movie Camera*, Vertov, 1929), the film is one of the best-known examples of a ‘city symphony’ — a film genre that is also often described as ‘city film’ or ‘city poem.’ Portraying the everyday life of a big city, mainly through visual impressions in an experimental and semi-documentary style, *Berlin* is marked by a script-free open narrative form. Although based on footage shot over a year, events of the film are arranged to simulate the passage of a single day. Unmistakably influenced by the rhythmic, expressive, associative, and metaphorical possibilities of Soviet montage, Ruttmann divided the film into five acts which can be compared to the ‘movements’ of a symphony — in this case, a score written by composer Edmund Meisel. Making the city itself and the urban masses the true protagonists of the film, Ruttmann presents the multicoloured and multifaceted metropolis as the locus of modernity — something that is perfectly exemplified by the leitmotif of moving trains and streetcars that connects the various parts of the film.  Link: https://archive.org/details/BerlinSymphonyofaGreatCity  Watch the film at the Internet Archive  File: berlin1.jpg  Film poster. From: http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object\_id=4992 |
| Further reading:  (Graf)  (Hillard)  (Weihsmann) |