

doc films

WEDNESDAY • 8 PM

THURSDAY • 8 PM

FRIDAY • 7 & 9 PM*

SATURDAY • 7 & 9 PM*

6/20 Westfront 1918 95m

G.W. Pabst, 1930 • G.W. Pabst's *Westfront 1918* may have set the template for all succeeding war films. Pabst's camera follows a group of German infantrymen as they live out their lives in the European trenches. One infantryman, Karl, briefly returns home only to discover the impoverishing effect the war has had on his family before he is immediately sent back to the front lines. An astonishing departure for director Pabst (*Pandora's Box*, *Diary of a Lost Girl*), this astounding early German sound film depicts the horrors and futility of the Great War, and holds absolutely nothing back. *In German; subtitled.* [6mm]

6/21 The Blue Bird 81m

Maurice Tourneur, 1918 • A year before *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, Tourneur shot his own film with flat, painted sets, though the films are otherwise quite different. *The Blue Bird* is a delightful children's fantasy taken from a poem by Maeterlinck. It concerns two children, Mytyl and Tytyl, who search for the elusive Blue Bird of Happiness with the help of the fairy Berylene (Lillian Cook). They visit the spectacular Palace of the Night and Palace of Luxuries, the Cathedral of Happiness, and of the Azure Palace, only to learn that the Blue Bird of Happiness is found first in one's own home and heart. [6mm]

6/21 The Brothers Karamazov 93m

Erich Engels & Fyodor Ostap, 1931 • This remarkable German film, based on Dostoyevsky's epic novel, is seldom screened in this country and is currently unavailable in any format. Nevertheless, Engels' and Ostap's film deserves to be better known, particularly for its astonishing marriage of image and music (the film was shot only two years after the introduction of sound cinema). With breathtaking stylistic touches, most notably an impressive uninterrupted tracking shot, and a beautiful score (Bernard Herrmann, among others, have cited its influence), *The Brothers Karamazov* is surely not to be missed. *In German; subtitled.* [6mm]

6/28 Corn's-A-Poppin' 60m

Robert Woodburn, c. 1956 • What could be better than a Poverty Row hillbilly musical hatched sometime in the 1950s by an outfit called Commonwealth Amusement Co.? This audacious film celebrates romance, capitalism, and country music by chronicling the shifting fortunes of the Pinwhistle Popcorn Company and its proprietor Thaddeus Pinwhistle. Performers Hobie Shepp and His Cowtown Wranglers and hog-calling champion Lillian Gravelguard serenade us with numbers like "On Our Way to Mars" while being showered with poppin' corn. Then-destitute television scenarist Robert Altman collaborated on the script. [5mm]

7/5 Anatahan 92m

Josef von Sternberg, 1954 • Some great directors, like Vidor or Wyler, finish their careers holding the reins of embarrassing historical superproductions. Others, like von Sternberg, end them in a Kyoto studio where cardboard, paper mache and damn fine photography are supposed to represent a sensuous Pacific island. Only the waves were real, reported Sternberg with a sense of regret that one element had eluded his control. Sternberg's own aesthetic isolation parallels the intellectual depravation of the film's characters, a band of Japanese soldiers stranded on the island of Anatahan and convinced the war hasn't yet ended. [6mm]

7/12 I'm All Right Jack 105m

John Boulting, 1959 • This brilliant British comedy takes on the subject of class struggle and industrial relations in postwar England. Fresh out of Oxford, a Bertie Wooster-ish upper class twit takes a job at his uncle's factory, where his bumbling soon sparks a bitter controversy between the corrupt management and the featherbedding union. Boulting's acid satire spares no one; the superb performers here include Dennis Price (*Kind Hearts and Coronets*) as the sleazy uncle, Terry Thomas as the befuddled personnel manager, Margaret Rutherford as a pretentious grand dame, and Peter Sellers as a dedicated Stalinist union official. [6mm]

7/18 Salt for Svanetia 55m

Mikheil Kalatozishvili, 1929 • Mikheil Kalatozishvili's (director of *The Cranes Are Flying* and *I Am Cuba*) *Salt for Svanetia* anticipates Luis Bunuel's *Las Hurdes* (showing 6/23) in its depiction of poverty and hard labor. A work of Soviet propaganda, this silent documentary examines the hardships suffered by the villagers of a remote Georgian village. With Kalatozishvili's typical flare for camera movement, mise-en-scene, and editing, *Salt for Svanetia* remains one of the most unheralded gems of the late Soviet silent cinema and a precursor to *I Am Cuba*, further cementing Kalatozishvili's place among the great Russian filmmakers. [6mm]

7/25 Films by Harry Smith 65m

Early Abstractions #1-5, 7, 10 • 1939-1957 • 23m
Late Superimpositions #14 • 1964 • 31m
Mirrror Animation • 1979 • 11m

Pioneering artist, mystic, bohemian, anthropologist and ethnomusicologist Harry Smith (who assembled the 1952 *Anthology of American Folk Music*) was also a major avant-garde filmmaker. Among the ambitions of this program of collage animations and hand-painted films is "the history of the geologic period reduced to orgasm length." [6mm]

8/1 Zamboanga 65m

Eduardo de Castro, 1938 • Presumed lost for more than sixty years, this ur-text of the Filipino film industry turned up in a Finnish archive in 2004 and was subsequently preserved by the Library of Congress. Considered by American producer George F. Harris as an exotic romance à la *Tabu*, *Zamboanga* was shot in the Philippines over the course of nine months and then scored and edited in Hollywood. This colonialist curio concerns a gang of hedonistic natives led by Hajji-Razul, who kidnaps Minda, a rival chief's granddaughter. Her lover Danao rallies his fellow pearl-divers to Minda's aid after witnessing a prophetic eclipse. [6mm]

8/8 Film Before Film 83m

Werner Nekes, 1986 • Subtitled 'What really happened between the images?' Nekes' pioneering documentary attempts to recover the aesthetic power of the cinema's obvious and not-so-obvious predecessors: 'shadow plays, peep shows, flip books, flicks, magic lanterns, lithopanes, panoramic scrolls, colorful forms of early animation, and numerous other historical artifacts.' Nekes demonstrates all of these 'toys,' offers an overview of their (often pornographic) historical trajectory, and gives each a place in the prehistory of the cinema. These special effects, writes J. Hoberman, 'retain the power to evoke a childlike wonder.' [6mm]

8/15 Films by Christopher MacLaine 61m

Christopher MacLaine came out of the Beat community of San Francisco in the '50s and made a memorable contribution to experimental cinema with these four short films. *The End* is a 35 minute, semi-narrative which tells the story of five people, each seen on the last day of their existence. Cold war anxiety, paranoia and plenty of dark humor pervade this short, allowing the viewer to fill in his or her own ideas with the cleverly edited mixture of found footage and filmed images provided. *Beat, Scotch Hop and The Man Who Invented Gold* are also featured on the program. [6mm]

8/22 Gertrud 116m

Carl Th. Dreyer, 1964 • The last film of the greatest filmmaker who ever lived was mocked at first; alongside the *nouvelle vague*, Dreyer's *Gertrud* looked positively reactionary what with its extreme long takes and theatrical mise-en-scène. What the hipsters missed in this searing story of a middle-aged woman (the sublime Nina Penz Rode) who refuses compromise and rejects the imperfect advances of multiple lovers was that the static rigour of Dreyer's technique was inexorably wrapped up in the film's emotional depth: a single, devastating camera pan seems capable of unbalancing the whole universe. *In Danish; subtitled.* [6mm]

8/23 The Blue Light 75m

Leni Riefenstahl, 1931 • The recent publication of two major biographies of the infamous Riefenstahl presents an occasion to revisit this, the first film she directed. Very much in the German mountain tradition, it's a fairy tale film about a beautiful village outcast (Riefenstahl) with mysterious powers. The film's admirers emphasize its stunning visuals, sublime score, and exhilarating atmosphere; detractors say it's slow, pretentious and steeped in creepy Nazi ideology. So what is it - vile fascist propaganda? An enchanting work of art? An unintentionally hilarious hunk of kitsch? Come find out! *In German; subtitled.* [6mm]

FRIDAY • 7 & 9 PM*

*Shows begin at 7 and 9 PM unless noted otherwise next to the title

6/22 The Testament of Dr. Mabuse 122m
7:00 & 9:30

Fritz Lang, 1933 • The second installation in Fritz Lang's three-part chronicle of the nefarious circumstances surrounding the titular lunatic, *Das Testament des Mr. Mabuse* is an expressionistic detective story bridging the end of Weimer-era revolution and the beginning of Nazi-era repression, from the horrific setting of which Lang himself escaped. The last film produced by Lang before his rich, over-20 year-long stint in Hollywood, this proto-noir is a masterful vision of human frailty and the disintegration of the desire for freedom. *In German; subtitled.* [6mm]

6/29 Wild Strawberries 91m

Ingmar Bergman, 1957 • One of the better examples of the art-house style that dominated repertory theater programming for decades, *Wild Strawberries* instantiates Bergman's major themes: memory, mortality, emotional fracture and interpersonal cruelty. Aging medicine professor Isak Borg (Victor Sjöström) drives to Lund to receive an honorary doctorate. During his travels he is assaulted by memories, hallucinations and nightmares that lead him to reexamine his cold existence and reunite with his estranged family. *Wild Strawberries* teaches us the emotional price of spiritual rebirth. *In Swedish; subtitled.* [5mm]

7/6 Pas sur la bouche • 7:00 & 9:30 115m

Alain Resnais, 2003 • *Pas sur la bouche* isn't so much a return to form (whatever that might mean) as a reaffirmation for modern audiences of his immense talent. Sabine Azema stars as Gilberte, a woman thrown into crisis when her previous husband, American businessman Eric Thomson (Lambert Wilson), returns to France to negotiate a deal with Gilberte's current husband Georges. Wait, did I mention this was a musical sex-farce? *Pas sur la bouche* is as light as a feather, as breezy and delightful as any French confection, with magisterial long takes and fantastic songs. *In French; subtitled.* [5mm]

7/13 Reign of Terror 89m

Anthony Mann, 1949 • Doc proudly presents an archival 35mm print of one of the overlooked glories of American genre filmmaking. Anthony Mann's period piece *Reign of Terror*. Mann and ace cinematographer John Alton seize upon the paranoia of the French Revolution, drown the story in shadows, and yield a conspiratorial film noir. *Reign of Terror* follows emissary Charles D'Aubigny (Robert Cummings) on his quest to find the enemies list contained in Robespierre's misplaced Black Book. Assisted by sexy ex-lover Madelon (Arlene Dahl), D'Aubigny finds himself caught in double-crosses, disguises, and intrigue. [5mm]

7/20 The Devil is a Woman 83m

Josef von Sternberg, 1935 • The final collaboration between Josef von Sternberg and Marlene Dietrich, this film, set against the backdrop of the 19th century Spanish revolution, tells the classic tale of a man's obsession with an amoral femme fatale. Mesmerizing sumptuously beautiful, and deeply felt, it represents the pinnacle of von Sternberg's art. Originally released in 1935, it was out of circulation until 1959 at the request of the Spanish government, which objected to its portrayal of Spanish officials. The novel upon which this film was based was also used as the source for Bunuel's *That Obscure Object of Desire*. [6mm]

7/27 Ivan the Terrible • 7:00 ONLY 184m

Sergei Eisenstein, 1944-1946 • Few reacted favorably to Eisenstein's final film. Leftist intellectuals in the US, once so enamored of Eisenstein for his *Potemkin*, dismissed it as a betrayal of montage or as homosexual kitsch. Stalin loved the fascistic hagiography of Part I but realized with Part II that Eisenstein had fashioned a grand portrait of the Soviet police state. The film was withheld from release until the post-Stalin thaw of 1958. Viewed together both parts form an entrancing, architectonic monument of cinema. We will be showing Parts I and II as well as the remaining five minutes of the elusive Part III. *In Russian; subtitled.* [5mm]

8/3 Marnie • 7:00 & 9:30 131m

Alfred Hitchcock, 1964 • One of Hitchcock's most psychologically probing films, and surely his most Freudian, *Marnie* was unfairly maligned and ignored by critics and fans when it premiered in 1964. The story of a compulsive thief and pathological liar (Tippi Hedren, never better) blackmailed into marrying her boss (Sean Connery) proves fertile ground for Hitchcock's own thematic passions and cinematic obsessions, explored previously in masterpieces like *Vertigo* and *Psycho*. *Marnie* offers a wealth of cinematic riches, including Bernard Herrmann's masterful score and Hitchcock's searing, commanding direction. [5mm]

8/10 Maedchen in Uniform 87m

Leontine Sagan, 1931 • When her mother dies, the teenage Maudeline is sent to a boarding school run by a strict Prussian principle. While there, she falls in love with charismatic teacher Fraulein Von Bernberg, causing repercussions for everyone. Adapted from a highly successful stage play, *Maedchen in Uniform* is today known for its openly lesbian sympathies and its strong anti-fascist themes. Initially banned in the United States, Eleanor Roosevelt recognized its importance and ensured that the ban was lifted. While the Nazis tried to burn all surviving prints of the film, it luckily outlasted its hateful critics. *In German; subtitled.* [6mm]

8/17 Make Way for Tomorrow 91m

Leo McCarey, 1937 • When Leo McCarey accepted the best director Oscar for his *The Awful Truth* (1937) he said famously, "Thanks, but you gave it to me for the wrong picture." Decades later, we know this singular humanist masterpiece is clearly the right picture. A direct influence on Ozeki's *Tokyo Story*, McCarey's film follows two elderly parents (played memorably by Victor Moore and Beulah Bondi) forced to separate after they lose their mortgage. Their children prove unwilling hosts - passive aggressive, judgmental, and arrogant. The eternal antagonism between generations has rarely received such subtle treatment in art. [5mm]

8/24 5000 Fingers of Dr. T 89m

Roy Rowland, 1953 • Poor Bart hates to practice the piano, but his perfect 1950's mom (Mary Healy) insists, along with his cantankerous piano teacher, Dr. Terwilliger (Hans Conried), Bart nods off at the piano and there begins the strangest, creepiest, Dr. Seuss-penned onerous musical. Bart must do battle against the villainous Dr. T. to save his hyp-ma-tized mother and his surrogate plumber father, Mr. Zabladowski (Peter Lind Hayes) from de-atomization. Watch out for the thrilling climax... it's atomic! [5mm]

6/23 Mexican Bus Ride 74m/30m
with Las Hurdes • 7:00 & 9:15

Luis Bunuel, 1952 • A young man on his honeymoon takes a memorable bus ride to his hometown after he is called away to settle his dying mother's will. Bunuel said of this film, "nothing... nothing happens, nothing at all." Perhaps, nonetheless, this (relatively) little known film - with its delight in everyday absurdities, its matter-of-fact surrealism, and its emotional generosity - is one of his loveliest and most surprising works. Shown with the director's *Land without Bread* (1933), a brilliantly subversive mockumentary about a desperately poor region of Spain. *In Spanish; subtitled.* [6mm]

6/30 On the Waterfront • 7:00 & 9:15 108m

Elia Kazan, 1954 • This seething social drama from the director of *A Streetcar Named Desire* stars Marlon Brando as Terry Malloy, an ex-prizefighter-turned-dockworker battling oppressive mob racketeering. Aided by an idealistic ingenue (Eva Marie Saint) and a cynical priest (Karl Malden), Terry must betray his own fallen brother to fight for unionization in this thinly veiled exposé inspired by actual events. Best of all, hear Brando utter perhaps the most famous lines of his illustrious career: "I could have had class. I could have been a contender. I could have been somebody." Winner of eight Oscars. [5mm]

7/7 Videodrome 89m

David Cronenberg, 1983 • A prescient exploration of shock TV and the reigning masterpiece of the age, *Videodrome* delivers the goods in all the ways Cronenberg aficionados should expect: sleazy producer James Woods stumbles upon a mysterious emission that piques his interest. He tries to acquire the torture program, but soon finds himself surrounded by crypto-fascists whose realize their vision of the 'New Flesh' through an arcane system of heinous beta cassettes thrust into the abdomens of clueless victims. Cronenberg's film proceeds with a perverse Surrealist logic where dream, fantasy, and reality merge. [5mm]

7/14 La Marseillaise • 7:00 & 9:30 130m

Jean Renoir, 1938 • Doc is proud to present a Bastille Day screening of Jean Renoir's rarely shown *La Marseillaise*. Covering the years 1789 to 1792, the film takes a neo-realist, class-based approach to French history. Renoir said, "I tried to tell the story of one of the greatest moments of history just as I would an event that was happening down the street... in the spirit of intimacy." Financed by trade unions, the film clearly has leftist sympathies, but it is also graced by Renoir's deeply felt humanism, as can be seen in its ironic yet sympathetic portrayal of Louis XVI. *In French; subtitled.* [6mm]

7/21 Beauty #2 66m

Andy Warhol, 1965 • "This is not just another pretty face but Beauty #2." So begins one of Warhol's earliest and finest "talkies." This one stars Factory Girl Edie Sedgwick, Gine Piserchio, and an offscreen Chuck Wein, who prods the underwear-clad on-screen couple to "get to know each other." This being Warhol, those expectations are teased and teased but ultimately frustrated. In the words of J. Hoberman, the film moves from "some monstrous Laurence Sterne digression in a de Sade novel" to "an erotic yet hysterical pajama party ambience." [6mm]

7/28 Sylvia Scarlett • FREE! 95m

George Cukor, 1935 • George Cukor, Katherine Hepburn, and Cary Grant collaborated on three films, but this film, unlike the other two, was a box office and critical failure that still has not caught on today. Hepburn stars as a young woman who disguises herself as a boy to flee to England with her father, latching on to a group of traveling players (led by Cary Grant at his Cockney best). Jonathan Rosenbaum has written that it's the film's ambiguous sexuality and constant genre transitions that make *Sylvia Scarlett* so subversive and interesting. [6mm]

8/4 How Green Was My Valley 119m
7:00 & 9:30

John Ford, 1941 • Today most young movie buffs remember *How Green Was My Valley* as a sappy Welsh melodrama that inconceivably stole the Best Picture Oscar from *Citizen Kane* in 1942. Yet *Valley* is the better film: a family history and a communal portrait of a Welsh mining community realized with uncommon grace and overwhelming physicality. Roddy McDowall plays Huw, the youngest Morgan son, through whose eyes we learn about the travails of love, labor, prejudice, and tradition. It is a precisely-constructed film that reaches incredible depths of melancholy. [5mm]

8/11 Mulholland Dr. • 7:00 & 9:45 145m

David Lynch, 2001 • Aspiring young actress Betty Elms (or is it Dianne Selwyn?) comes to Hollywood after winning a local jitterbug contest. There she becomes ensnared in a sinister plot with the mysterious and beautiful Rita. *Mulholland Dr.* is at once a scathing critique of Hollywood (the "dream factory," get it?) as well as a startling and disturbing meditation on paranoia, dreams, guilt, and death. An astonishing and

