

GEORGE EASTMAN HOUSE

THE NITRATE PICTURE SHOW +

DRYDEN  
THEATRE

MAY 1-3  
2015



In memory of  
James Card  
1915–2000

“The nitrate originals  
should be used when  
they’re negatives to get  
the best possible prints;  
the original positives  
should be looked at  
as long as they can be  
put through projectors.  
Otherwise you’re not  
talking about films, you’re  
talking about facsimiles.”



## The Nitrate Picture Show

Dryden Theatre

May 1–3, 2015

Preview Screening

April 30

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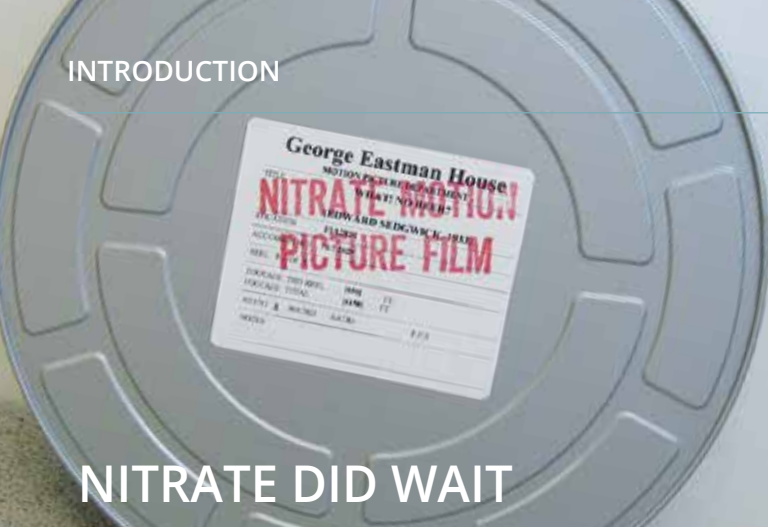
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## INTRODUCTION



# NITRATE DID WAIT

In the year 2000, the International Federation of Film Archives held a special program at the British Film Institute. It was called “The Last Nitrate Picture Show.” David Francis, former head of BFI’s National Film and Television Archive, was its godfather. His successor, Clyde Jeavons, was the chief curator of the series. A book was published for the occasion, titled *This Film Is Dangerous*, edited by Roger Smither. Fifteen years later, nitrate film hasn’t gone away. Its valedictory appearance at the National Film Theatre in London turned out to be a “see you soon” rather than a farewell. Francis, Jeavons, and Smither are also doing fine. They are the guardian angels of the festival you are about to attend.

More than being dangerous, nitrate film was an endangered species from the beginning of its tormented, beautiful life. Because it is chemically unstable, archives and museums have tried to transfer its images onto other carriers; hence the catchphrase “nitrate won’t wait,” adopted in the 1970s as the mantra of preservation activists. In some countries, nitrate film must be destroyed after duplication. Projecting it is forbidden everywhere except at a handful of specialized venues. The Dryden Theatre at George Eastman House is one of them.

In quantitative terms, nitrate prints are a legion—well over a million reels worldwide. Because of their fragile condition, most of them can be used only for the purposes of preservation. Some prints, however, still possess most of their original radiance and can be projected on a big screen. You are about to witness their resurrection in a unique event where cinema will speak on its own terms.

Nitrate film projection is a curatorial discipline in itself; as such, its performance is a synthesis of art and science. The Nitrate Picture Show is also a celebration of all of the individuals and organizations in charge of this mission. Its motto is a variation of our predecessors’ call to action: nitrate *can* wait. It did. Here it is.

—Paolo Cherchi Usai

PREVIEW—THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 8 PM



## A STAR IS BORN

William A. Wellman, US 1937

Print source: George Eastman House

Running time: 111 minutes

In person: William Wellman Jr.

### About the print

Struck in 1946, almost ten years after the original release, this print is probably a re-release copy for theaters (at one point, the reels had been doubled up into 2,000-foot rolls for projection). A dye-transfer print with the original variable density sound track, it is part of the donation made to George Eastman House in 1999 by Daniel Selznick, son of David O. Selznick. Few splices and minimal scratches at the heads and tails. Shrinkage rate: 1.0%.

### About the film

"You can chalk this up as a production that will have the town talking, and a natural for the word-of-mouth advertising. It is the sort of film that is bound to create plenty of discussion. A lot of it controversial. But that is nothing to be alarmed about. . . . The film has all sorts of appeal with a real Hollywood studio story, great cast, beautiful directorial touches, and a writing job on the script that is a delight for human touches, clever dialogue and witty lines that are in the best Dorothy Parker tradition. . . . Direction, Excellent. Photography, Grand."

—*The Film Daily*, April 23, 1937

"'A Star is Born' is a good picture and the first color job that gets close to what screen color must eventually come to: it keeps the thing in its place, underlining the mood and situation of the story rather than dimming everything else out in an iridescent razzle-dazzle. The boarding house is drab and the sanitarium is severe and quiet and when it comes to the splendors of Hollywood money the sets have a rich but subdued luster. . . . And if the outdoors looks a little parky, that is not a fault but Beverly Hills."

—Otis Ferguson, *The New Republic*, May 19, 1937





## Films about Nitrate

### THIS FILM IS DANGEROUS

Ronald Haines, UK 1948

Print source (35mm, acetate): George Eastman House

Running time: 19 minutes

#### About the print

This copy was acquired from the Imperial War Museum, London, in 2001.

#### About the film

“A Royal Navy instructional film on the dangers of nitrate film fire, consisting mainly of demonstrations, in each of which a reel of film is ignited and the resulting fire is attacked with a different kind of fire-fighting equipment.”

—Roger Smither (ed.), *This Film Is Dangerous: A Celebration of Nitrate Film* (Brussels: FIAF, 2002), 646

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### CAPTAIN CELLULOID VS. THE FILM PIRATES

Louis McMahon, US 1969

Print source (16mm, acetate): New York University

William K. Everson Collection at George Eastman House

Running time: 56 minutes

Live piano accompaniment: Philip C. Carli

#### About the print

This was William K. Everson’s personal 16mm print and part of the collection he donated to NYU, deposited at Eastman House in 1998.

#### About the film

“An affectionate pastiche of the cinema serial. . . . When the lost negative of the uncut version of *Greed* is found, the Association of Film Distributors donates it to the Film Museum in Rochester. En route, it is intercepted and copied by the Master Duper—a sinister master criminal whose aim is to have a dupe negative of every motion picture classic and ‘make a fortune selling prints to film societies and private collectors all over the world.’”

—Roger Smither (ed.), *This Film Is Dangerous*, 635



PROGRAM 1—FRIDAY, MAY 1, 8 PM

## CASABLANCA

Michael Curtiz, US 1942

Print source: The Museum of Modern Art

Running time: 101 minutes

### About the print

This print was acquired by the Museum of Modern Art from Warner Bros. in May 1947. It was step-printed from the original negatives after some sections were replaced with dupes. The original nitrate negative is no longer extant. Shrinkage rate: 0.70%.

### About the film

"Casablanca! A magic word, that. A word that will open theater doors wide and keep them open. For the movement of humanity into houses where this Warner film is played will be constant and heavy. Yes, Casablanca is a word that piques the interest and stirs the imagination."

—*The Film Daily*, November 27, 1942

"It goes heavy on the love theme. Although the title and Humphrey Bogart's name convey the impression of high adventure rather than romance, there's plenty of the latter for the femme trade. Adventure is there, too, but it's more as exciting background to the Bogart-Bergman heart department. Bogart, incidentally, as a tender lover (in addition to being a cold-as-ice nitery operator) is a novel characterization that, properly billed, might itself be good for some coin in the trough."

—*Variety*, December 2, 1942

"The Warners here have a picture that makes the spine tingle and the heart take a leap. For once more, as in recent Bogart pictures, they have turned the incisive trick of draping a tender love story within the folds of a tight topical theme. They have used Mr. Bogart's personality, so well established in other brilliant films, to inject a cold point of tough resistance to evil forces afoot in Europe today. And they have so combined sentiment, humor and pathos with taut melodrama and bristling intrigue that the result is a highly entertaining and even inspiring film."

—Bosley Crowther, *The New York Times*, November 27, 1942





ET MESTERSTYKKE AV TIEDEMANN

*A Masterpiece by Tiedemann*, Desider Gross, Norway 1937

Print source: Nasjonalbiblioteket, Oslo

Running time: 3 minutes

BLUE MASTER: EN HARMONI

*Blue Master: A Harmony*, Desider Gross, Norway 1938

Print source: Nasjonalbiblioteket, Oslo

Running time: 3 minutes

**About the prints**

These Gasparcolor prints were originally held by the Norwegian Film Institute and were moved to the National Library of Norway nitrate vaults in Mo i Rana in 2002. Ownership was subsequently transferred to the National Library in 2008. Produced for J.L. Tiedemanns Tobaksfabrik, *Et mesterstykke av Tiedemann* was approved by the censorship board on October 5, 1937, for screening in Norway; *Blue Master: en harmoni* was approved August 30, 1938. Shrinkage rate: 0.90% (*Et mesterstykke av Tiedemann*); 0.60% (*Blue Master: en harmoni*).

**About the films**

“Desider Gross in Prague was the major producer of Norwegian animated cinema commercials in the years 1934–1938. . . . There were several animators who made cinema commercials in Czechoslovakia before the war. The first half of the 1930s is considered the highlight of the Czech film avant-garde, a period that saw the production of several advanced and experimental animated commercials. . . . The [Tiedemann] company wanted to profile itself as a modern, art-oriented firm: smoking was to be associated with something exclusive, high-class and elegant.”

—Gunnar Strøm, “Desider Gross and Gasparcolor, European Producers: Norwegian Products and Animated Commercials from the 1930s,” *Animation Journal* (Spring 1998): 28–41

PROGRAM 2B—FRIDAY, MAY 1



## THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH

Alfred Hitchcock, UK 1934

Print source: George Eastman House

Running time: 75 minutes

### About the print

A reissue print from 1943 with a dual bilateral variable area sound track, it has the British Board of Film Censors logo and the General Film Logo distribution card. George Eastman House acquired the copy in 1999. As usual in vintage film material, this print shows some scratches on the heads and tails of each reel. It has very few splices throughout—proof that the copy was well maintained over the years. Shrinkage rate: 0.98%.

### About the film

“The British cinema, never notable for its command of filmic pace, goes in for a blistering style of story-telling in ‘The Man Who Knew Too Much.’ . . . Directed with a fascinating staccato violence by Alfred Hitchcock, it is the swiftest screen melodrama this column can recall. . . . ‘The Man Who Knew Too Much’ is distinctly Mr. Hitchcock’s picture. Although the photography and lighting are inferior according to Hollywood standards, the film is an interesting example of technical ingenuity as well as an absorbing melodrama.”

—A.S., *The New York Times*, March 23, 1935

“We might ordinarily assume that the direction (or production) of a picture is simply the making of the picture, out of things, events, people. Yet these matters are often spoken of with an air of technical distinctions too fine for the lay eye, the critic seeming to say, There is something going on here that doesn’t escape me; it is direction and happy I am to find it. . . . As a sort of case study along these lines, there is ‘The Man Who Knew Too Much,’ a recent British thriller that, if reports are to be believed, is directed to a point that would make a person gasp.”

—Otis Ferguson, *The New Republic*, May 1, 1935



Photofest

## SAMSON AND DELILAH

Cecil B. DeMille, US 1949

Print source: Library of Congress

Running time: 131 minutes

### About the print

This release print from the Library of Congress Copyright Collection has average to below-average dirt, scratches, and normal wear marks. It features overture music at the head of the first reel. The exit music footage had to be removed from the end of the last reel due to extreme deterioration. Some splices exist in each reel. Shrinkage rate: 0.70%.

### About the film

“Considering what it cost, the number of people who worked on, and in, it, and the grotesque advance ballyhoo it has received, Cecil B. DeMille’s ‘Samson and Delilah’ is the most conspicuously silly picture of recent years. Even so, it serves a purpose. Many of us have forgotten (and the youngest movie generation has never known) what Hollywood once meant by a super-colossal production. . . . But these monsters passed like the dinosaur, and for the same reason: their brains were too small for their bodies. . . . This throwback to the ice age is a reminder that evolution works also in Hollywood. Hedy Lamarr wields the shears, Victor Mature pulls down the temple, and George Sanders, as the governor of Gaza, is every inch an English public-school stinker.”

—Robert Hatch, *The New Republic*, December 26, 1949

“It’s a fantastic picture for this era in its size, in its lavishness, in the corniness of its story-telling and in its old-fashioned technique. But it adds up to first-class entertainment. The smarties and the hinterlanders will view it from diametrically opposed standpoints, but whether laughing at it or with it neither the hepsters nor the squares will find any of its two hours and eight minutes unenjoyable. And as for the kids, Samson is the greatest invention since Superman.”

—*Variety*, October 26, 1949



PROGRAM 4— SATURDAY, MAY 2, 1 PM

## LES MAUDITS

*The Damned*, René Clément, France 1947

Print source: British Film Institute

Running time: 105 minutes

### About the print

Donated to the BFI by Films de France in 1957, this nitrate print is suspected to have been screened only one time since—a single projection during the 75th anniversary of the BFI National Archive in 2010. The copy has English subtitles. The BFI's nitrate film policy used to be to duplicate nitrate to safety film on a systematic basis. Today, however, a more passive conservation is implemented by storing nitrate copies at cold temperatures to extend their life, with a view toward copying them onto other formats in the future. Shrinkage rate: 0.60%

### About the film

"The Rialto's new thriller, a French film with English titles, is a taut, eerie adventure story about a group of Nazi officials and sympathizers bound for South America in a U-boat. . . . The pictorial scope never seems limited and there is a great variety of action in a melodrama whose outlines may be extravagant, but whose details are hauntingly realistic. . . . The atmosphere in the submarine is smoky with incipient resentment as the group sets forth on a special mission for the Fuehrer just before the war's end. . . . The sub's motion through the water, its curved, squat sides, its mechanical entrails and its Jonah-in-the-whale effect on the human spirit have been vividly recorded on film—no matter if the camera trembles slightly in a long dolly shot through the ship's interior, or if the lighting is sometimes gray."

—Otis L. Guernsey Jr., *The New York Herald Tribune*, April 26, 1948

"Director Clement . . . has kept the dialogue as brisk as the action, which has been photographed in a terse, almost documentary fashion. . . . Its small flaws notwithstanding, mark down 'The Damned' as a graphic and generally exciting entertainment, which also is a sober comment on the wages of political sin."

—A.W., *The New York Times*, April 26, 1948



## NOTHING SACRED

Photofest

William A. Wellman, US 1937

Print source: George Eastman House

Running time: 77 minutes

In person: William Wellman Jr.

### About the print

An original IB Technicolor print, struck at the time of the film's release, it is part of David O. Selznick's personal collection, donated to Eastman House in 1999. Marked as "studio print," the eight single reels show modest scratches on the heads and tails of each reel. By and large, the quality of the color imbibition process has remained intact. Shrinkage rate: 0.90%.

### About the film

"Ben Hecht has been squinting at 'The Front Page' again and, with one eye crinkled shut and the other sardonically glinting, he has written an impiously impish comedy about that recurrent journalistic marvel, the seven-day wonder. 'Nothing Sacred,' which is the title of the eminent professor's thesis, and which is now being read at the Music Hall, has given the Fourth Estate the once-over (not so lightly) and has left it applying collodion to its wounds. . . . Only a journalistic renegade, teetering on a critical perch, would dare grant it the distinction of being one of the merrier jests of the cinema year. Mr. Hecht, having served his apprenticeship in the toughest Chicago school, is in a position to bat a skeptical eyebrow over the antics of the wayward press. . . . Oh, yes, it's in Technicolor, which helps. But that isn't the dominant factor. Like Selznick's other modern color film, 'A Star Is Born,' the reds and blues are merely incidental. Come to think of it, there's not even a sunset."

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*, November 26, 1937

"In one respect, the show is experimental, for it lavishes technicolor [sic] on an outright comedy. In the few placid sequences, or when Manhattan is seen from the air, the color is effective, but I found it rather trying in the helter-skelter action, and it certainly doesn't become Miss Lombard."

—Howard Barnes, *The New York Herald Tribune*, November 26, 1937

PROGRAM 6—SATURDAY, MAY 2, 8 PM



## PORTRAIT OF JENNIE

William Dieterle, US 1948

Print source: George Eastman House

Running time: 86 minutes

### About the print

This print features a mix of variable area and variable density sound tracks, along with a variety of color processes in the final reel. A rare occurrence in the sound era, this release print utilizes tinting, toning, and a single shot of three-strip Technicolor to round out its narrative. All reels in the copy presented here are printed on 1948 Kodak stock, except for the last reel, struck on 1949 stock. Shrinkage rate: 0.83%.

### About the film

"Many women will accept its strange story in the name of romanticism, but realists (whether male or female) may scoff at the story idea. At any rate, while 'Portrait of Jennie' may be somewhat weird and depressing (or beautiful and romantic, depending on the spectator) there is no denying the fact that it has been well done in all departments. . . . Special credit must also go to Joseph August for his unusual assortment of eye-pleasing photographic angles; to Clarence Slifer for his splendid special effects, and Paul Eagler for his process and miniature photography which emerges in the impressive storm sequence at the end, for which a wide screen and added sound equipment were employed at the Hollywood preview."

—*Showmen's Trade Review*, January 1, 1949

"The portentous dialogue, the apocalyptic cloud masses, the disemboweled violins (music courtesy of Debussy) make it as brashly irritating as a bright young boy dazzling the world with his first paradox. . . . New York is a much better film background than you would suspect from the solemn photography in this picture, and the famous New England hurricane, during which the couple's timemobiles finally pass each other, looks like a storm in a washing machine."

—Robert Hatch, *The New Republic*, April 11, 1949





PROGRAM 7—SATURDAY, MAY 2, 10 PM

## BLACK NARCISSUS

Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, UK 1948

Print source: Academy Film Archive

Running time: 100 minutes

### About the print

Very likely to have been the property of J. Arthur Rank, this nitrate print has some splices in the early reels, and it exhibits some cinching that causes crackling and popping on the sound track. There is some oil on the print throughout, but the general condition is excellent. Shrinkage rate: 0.80%.

### About the film

“‘Black Narcissus’ is the only picture in several months to which I have returned eagerly. . . . And again I found it an exquisite cinematic jewel, an exotic bloom among the potted plants of Hollywood. . . . The production, designed by Alfred Junge, unfolds a series of Technicolor tapestries as rich, detailed and beautiful as any I have ever seen.”

—Philip K. Scheuer, *The Los Angeles Times*, September 19, 1947

“I don’t recall ever seeing such stunning screen photography. Technicolor has caught sunrise in India’s Himalaya Mountains with haunting fidelity. The incredible softness of India’s early morning sky fire used to drag this quondam soldier from his bunk betimes even in lesser mountains, and here it all is in Himalayan setting and heavenly glory.”

—Richard L. Coe, *The Washington Post*, March 6, 1948

“From start to finish, this British adaptation of Rumer Godden’s novel is sheer delight to the eye. Never has color been used with such artistry, such true tone, such bewitching delicacy. Scenes melt into each other, and the transition is ever graceful. The jaundiced sickly look which mars the flesh tones in American films is entirely absent, the hues of the interiors are never garish or crude.”

—Mae Tinee, *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 11, 1947

# FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

Thursday, April 30		
8 p.m.	PREVIEW SCREENING   <i>A Star Is Born</i>	(William A. Wellman, US 1937)
After screening		
Friday, May 1		
10 a.m.–8 p.m.		
12:30 p.m.		
1:30–4 p.m.		
2 p.m.		
3:30 p.m.		
5 p.m.	THE SAFETY NET   Films about Nitrate	
6 p.m.		
8 p.m.	PROGRAM 1   <i>Casablanca</i>	(Michael Curtiz, US 1942)
10:30 p.m.	PROGRAM 2A   <i>Et mesterstykke av Tiedemann</i> and <i>Blue M</i>	( <i>A Masterpiece by Tiedemann</i> , Desider Gross, Norway 1937) ( <i>Blue Masterpiece</i> , William A. Wellman, US 1937)
PROGRAM 2B   <i>The Man Who Knew Too Much</i>		
(Alfred Hitchcock, UK 1934)		
After screening		
Saturday, May 2		
9:30 a.m.	PROGRAM 3   <i>Samson and Delilah</i>	(Cecil B. DeMille, US 1949)
1 p.m.	PROGRAM 4   <i>Les maudits</i>	( <i>The Damned</i> , René Clément, France 1947)
3:15 p.m.	PROGRAM 5   <i>Nothing Sacred</i>	(William A. Wellman, US 1937)
5 p.m.		
8 p.m.	PROGRAM 6   <i>Portrait of Jennie</i>	(William Dieterle, US 1948)
10 p.m.	PROGRAM 7   <i>Black Narcissus</i>	(Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, UK 1948)
After screening		
Sunday, May 3		
10 a.m.	PROGRAM 8   <i>Leave Her to Heaven</i>	(John M. Stahl, US 1945)
2 p.m.	PROGRAM 9   Blind Date with Nitrate	
After screening		
Monday, May 4		
9–11:30 a.m.		

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PROGRAM 8— SUNDAY, MAY 3, 10 AM



Photofest

## LEAVE HER TO HEAVEN

John M. Stahl, US 1945

Print source: UCLA Film and Television Archive

Courtesy of Twentieth Century-Fox

Running time: 110 minutes

### About the print

This is a vintage release print on deposit with UCLA for Twentieth Century-Fox. Slight scratching and wear are visible. Shrinkage rate: 0.85%.

### About the film

"All those who derogate the word 'psychological' as applied to the modern movie of crime will find in 'Leave Her to Heaven,' at long last, a picture that sensationally and completely fills the bill. Gene Tierney, in fact, has a role to play that is veritably psychopathic in its violence, yet so solidly motivated that you view her as a thoroughly poisonous heroine. She is the hopeless victim of a selfishness so consuming that when it manifests itself in love, she sacrifices everything for possession, and for vengeance when she cannot possess."

—Edwin Schallert, *The Los Angeles Times*, December 29, 1945

"The film has some moments of mounting suspense, inasmuch as John Stahl has given it capable direction for the most part, and the color is lovely to look at, with magnificent outdoor shots and attractive interiors. In fact, the stunning sets are likely to distract your attention from the story, and it's almost too pretty for the subject matter."

—Mae Tinee, *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 31, 1945

"Christmas Day was an inauspicious moment to bring in a moody, morbid film which is all about a selfish, jealous and deceitful dame. Somehow, this hardly seems the season for indulging in that sort of thing. Yet such is the unpleasant topic which is pursued to exhausting length in Twentieth Century-Fox's 'Leave Her to Heaven.' . . . For it is plainly a piece of cheap fiction done up in Technicolor and expensive sets."

—Bosley Crowther, *The New York Times*, December 26, 1945

## Blind Date with Nitrate

Print source: George Eastman House

Running time: 95 minutes

### About the film

The frame enlargement reproduced above was taken from the nitrate print to be presented in this program. If you are able to identify its title from the image, you are more than welcome to spread the news ahead of the screening.

All of the other films featured in the official schedule of the Nitrate Picture Show were announced on the morning of the festival's opening day. We are now asking you, the audience, to take a further leap of faith and come to this show without knowing what the film is.

In the months preceding this weekend, our technicians and curators inspected all sorts of films, ranging from undisputed classics to relatively obscure items. Our pleasure in looking at them didn't derive much from the reputation of their creators, or from their stylistic achievements; we were, quite simply, in awe at how beautiful they looked after so many years. We would like to share some of this joy with you, regardless of the film's critical pedigree.

The second reason for inviting you to a blind date with nitrate is the element of surprise. Each of us, at least once in our lives, has gone to the movies without knowing anything about the title we would see. This condition of blissful ignorance was, to some extent, part of the game. Not infrequently, the will to embrace the unknown is rewarded with a revelation, whether of a major work or an undiscovered gem. The sense of wonder achieved through this humble gesture has given these films a special place in our itinerary as moviegoers. It is a precious gift that deserves to be honored.

This mystery film is no more and no less important than the others in this festival. Don't expect a previously lost masterwork—nor, for that matter, a mere curiosity item for hardcore cinephiles. It is cinema, embodied in a nitrate print.



PROGRAM 9—SUNDAY, MAY 3, 2 PM

## THE FALLEN IDOL

Carol Reed, UK 1948

Print source: George Eastman House

Running time: 95 minutes

### About the print

This print is part of the donation made to George Eastman House in 1999 by Daniel Selznick, son of David O. Selznick. It is complete, with very few splices and minimal scratches at the heads and tails of the reels. When this nitrate print arrived at the museum, it comprised six double reels. Due to our storage standards, it was returned to the original eleven 1,000-foot cans. Shrinkage: 0.75%.

### About the film

“‘The Fallen Idol’ comes as close to completely satisfying entertainment as we have had, or are likely to have, this season. This British thriller, produced and directed by Carol Reed from Graham Greene’s short story, ‘The Basement Room,’ is a work of elegant watchmaking. It has style and perfect taste; it is admirably cast and impeccably directed; it never falters until just at the end, and by then you have been more richly diverted than you had any reason to expect from a movie.”

—Robert Hatch, *The New Republic*, November 21, 1949

“For not only has he got excitement of a most sharp and urbane sort in this film, but he has also got in it one of the keenest revelations of a child that we have ever seen on the screen. . . . It shrewdly and wittily reveals not only the deep charm of the youngster but the disconcertion of the elders whom he gulls. It is freighted with sly and salient humors, very tender understandings of humankind and some truly blood-tingling surprises that Mr. Reed has directed in brilliant style. Everyone knows that his camera is one of the most fluent in use today. In this film, it is also one of the smartest in the revelation of personality.”

—Bosley Crowther, *The New York Times*, November 16, 1949



**WORKSHOP—FRIDAY, MAY 1, 1:30–4 PM**



## **How to Make Nitrate Film**

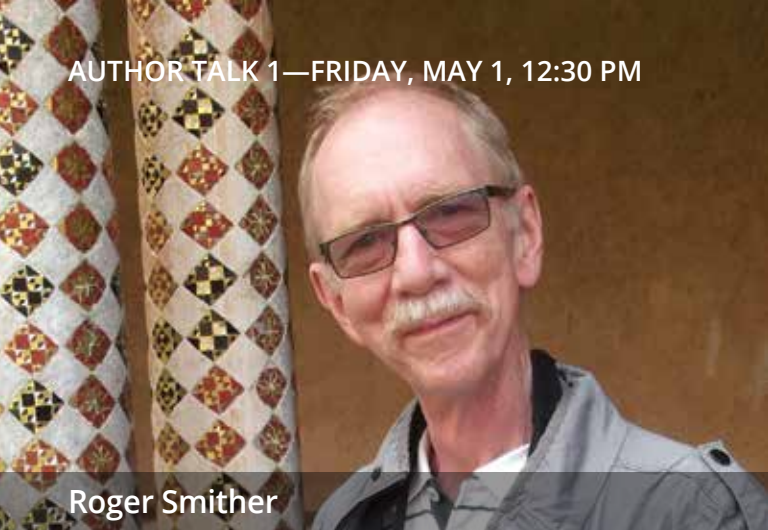
### **Presented by Mark Osterman and Nick Brandreth**

The means to make gelatin emulsions predates the first commercial cinematic film by more than a decade. Flexible supports to bear gelatin emulsions were also known as an alternative to the heavy glass plates for cameras before the introduction of movie film. When the two were combined with the invention of the necessary motion picture equipment in the 1890s, the movie industry was born.

George Eastman House Process Historian Mark Osterman and Historic Process Specialist Nick Brandreth will explain the basic techniques of nitrate film—making in a rare demonstration that includes casting a sample nitrocellulose film stock, emulsification of silver bromide gelatin emulsion, coating raw film stock, stripping coated stock to 35mm, and perforation.

Osterman and Brandreth conduct the museum's public workshops in historic photographic processes, including gelatin emulsion—making for both film and photographic papers. The casting of a flexible film stock, however, is demonstrated only on special occasions.

Nitrate film stock was originally made by casting the liquid cellulose nitrate solution onto a long glass table. When the solvents dried, the film base could then be coated with a gelatin emulsion under safe light. After the emulsion dried the coated film was stripped from the glass table. This technique of casting nitrate film stock on glass will be demonstrated on a smaller scale. All of the demonstrations will be conducted entirely in daylight so that workshop participants can view and document each step of the process.



Roger Smither

Roger Smither graduated in History from Cambridge University, and started his career as a film cataloguer at the Imperial War Museum, London, UK, soon afterwards. He worked in IWM's Film and Video Archive from 1990, and its Photograph Archive from 2002, until his retirement in 2010. Smither still works part time at IWM as a Research Associate. He has published many articles and papers about various aspects of film history, and has a long-standing research interest in a British film propaganda initiative of 1917–18.

Smither was a member of the Executive Committee of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF) from 1993 to 2003, serving as Secretary General 1995–2001, and Vice President 2001–2003. During this period he edited the *FIAF Code of Ethics*, published 1998, and it was largely in his FIAF capacity that he lobbied for the book celebrating nitrate film which he eventually ended up editing, with the help of Associate Editor Catherine A. Surowiec: the result is *This Film Is Dangerous*, published in 2002. *TFID* went on to win the Business, Techniques & Technology category in the 2003 Kraszna-Krausz Awards for books on the moving image.

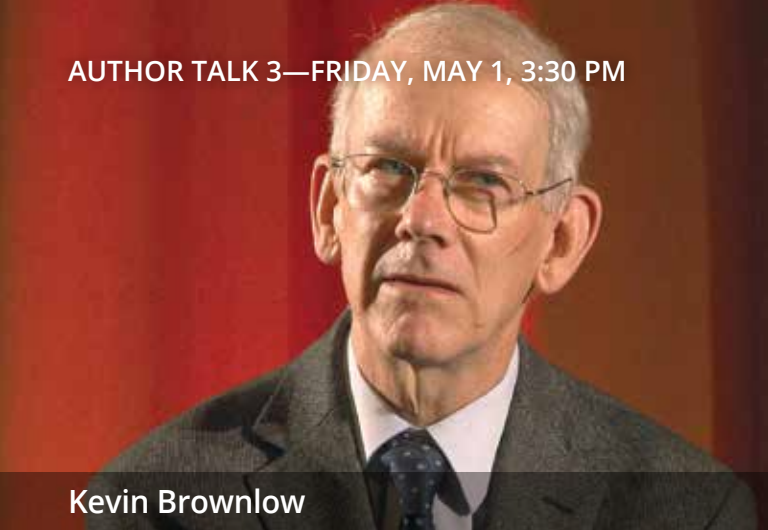


## David Bordwell

Film theorist and historian David Bordwell is Jacques Ledoux Professor Emeritus of Film Studies at the University of Wisconsin—Madison. One of the most authoritative and influential figures in film studies, he has written several books of film history and criticism, most recently *Poetics of Cinema* (Routledge, 2007) and the e-books *Planet Hong Kong* (first published by Harvard University Press in 2000), *Pandora's Digital Box: Films, Files, and the Future of Movies* (2012), and *Christopher Nolan: A Labyrinth of Linkages* (2013).

Bordwell has written—alone or in collaboration with others, notably his wife, Kristin Thompson—more than fifteen books, including *Narration in the Fiction Film* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema* (Princeton University Press, 1988), *Making Meaning* (Harvard University Press, 1989), and *On the History of Film Style* (Harvard University Press, 1997). *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (Routledge, 1985), co-authored with Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson, is one of the milestones of film historiography of the late 20th century. The textbooks *Film Art: An Introduction* (first published in 1979) and *Film History: An Introduction* (first published in 1994) are widely considered among the best English-language textbooks on cinema. Bordwell and Thompson write about cinema on their blog, *Observations on Film Art*, at [davidbordwell.net/blog](http://davidbordwell.net/blog).

Bordwell will be talking about the necessity of studying all films—not just the renowned classics—in order to gain a thorough understanding of films and their place within the vast history of the motion picture industry.



## Kevin Brownlow

Film historian, filmmaker, author, collector, and film editor Kevin Brownlow is a leading figure in film preservation. He is responsible for some of the most important film restoration projects on American and French films of the silent era. In addition to the many films he has saved from oblivion, and to the books he has published throughout his career, Brownlow is responsible for a number of interviews held in the 1960s and '70s with the pioneers of the art of film. In recognition of his work, on December 10, 2010, he received an Honorary Academy Award—the first ever bestowed to a specialist in film preservation.

As a film editor, Brownlow worked on Tony Richardson's *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (1968). He directed two films in collaboration with Andrew Mollo, *It Happened Here* (1964) and *Winstanley* (1975). Brownlow's first book on silent cinema, *The Parade's Gone By . . .* (Secker & Warburg, 1968), is now considered a classic in the field. In the following years, Brownlow began work on the restoration of Abel Gance's masterpiece *Napoléon* (1927), hitherto known only through mutilated versions.

In collaboration with David Gill, Brownlow produced a number of documentaries on the silent era, including *Hollywood* (1980) and *Cinema Europe: The Other Hollywood* (1995). After the death of David Gill in 1997, Brownlow continued his work in collaboration with Patrick Stanbury. Among the films they restored together are *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1921) and *The Iron Mask* (1929). Brownlow and Stanbury also produced a number of documentaries, including *Lon Chaney, A Thousand Faces* (2000) and *Cecil B. DeMille: American Epic* (2004).

He is currently completing a book on director-producer Sidney Franklin.



ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION—  
SATURDAY, MAY 2, 5 PM

## Film Conservation Revisited

- **Kevin Brownlow**, *Director*, Photoplay Productions
- **Paolo Cherchi Usai**, *Senior Curator*, Moving Image Department, George Eastman House
- **Tone Føreland**, *Film Archivist*, Digital Library Development, National Library of Norway
- **Meg Labrum**, *Acting General Manager of Collections*, National Film and Sound Archive of Australia
- **Katie Trainor**, *Film Collections Manager*, Department of Film, Museum of Modern Art

The subtitle of the Nitrate Picture Show—“Festival of Film Conservation”—was chosen for a simple reason: the fate of nitrate film was not decreed by chemistry or destiny. It was, by and large, an outcome of human neglect. Had nitrate prints been stored in ideal conditions of temperature and humidity from the moment of their creation, most of them probably could have been projected today. Their progressive obliteration in the ensuing decades was a likely, but not an inevitable, occurrence.

It is not too late to address the future of the survivors. Nitrate projection prints were made to be exhibited on a big screen, but we are not doing it because we are afraid they will further deteriorate. Legitimate as it is, this concern should not be used as a pretext to deny audiences the opportunity to see these films in their original incarnation.

If shown with the necessary precautions—highly specialized personnel and on well-maintained equipment—any 35mm print on nitrate, acetate, or polyester stock in good condition can be projected many times without compromising the integrity of the artifact.

The number of 35mm theaters has declined drastically within a few years. Fewer individuals know how to properly operate, maintain, and repair film projectors—if no action is taken, their knowledge may soon become extinct. George Eastman House believes that film conservation begins in a climate-controlled vault but is achieved in a projection booth, while an audience is watching. The panelists will exchange their views on the topic and discuss them with the festival audience.



## George Eastman House and its Collections

Founded in 1947, George Eastman House is one of the earliest international film archives and the world's oldest museum dedicated to photography. The museum holds unparalleled collections—encompassing several million objects—in the fields of photography, cinema, cameras and related technology, and photographically illustrated books, and it is a leader in film preservation and photograph conservation. Eastman House is located on the National Historic Landmark estate of entrepreneur and philanthropist George Eastman, the father of popular photography and motion picture film.

George Eastman House preserves and promotes the art of film in all its forms, from the mainstream to the avant-garde. Founded by the museum's first curator of motion pictures, James Card (1915–2000), the collection now comprises more than 28,000 titles spanning the entire history of international cinema, from the early experiments of Thomas Edison and the Lumière brothers to the present time. Eastman House also holds the world's largest collection of cinematic and photographic camera technology.

In addition to one of the finest collections of films from the silent era, the museum holds the largest corpus of original Technicolor negatives, including those of *Gone With the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz*; the personal collections of film directors such as Cecil B. DeMille, Norman Jewison, Martin Scorsese, Kathryn Bigelow, Ken Burns, and Spike Lee; and more than four million film stills, posters, and film-related documents.

In 1996, Eastman House founded the L. Jeffrey Selznick School of Film Preservation, which is regarded as the premier venue of professional training in film preservation, restoration, and archiving.





## The Louis B. Mayer Conservation Center

George Eastman House maintains its collection of nitrate film at the Louis B. Mayer Conservation Center, located in Chili, New York, approximately 14 miles from the museum. This state-of-the-art facility consists of twelve vaults containing more than 26 million feet of film and an inspection room with four workstations for the care and inspection of film material.

Prior to the construction of the Louis B. Mayer Conservation Center, the nitrate collection was stored in the Henry A. Strong Archives at George Eastman House. Opened in 1952, these vaults were the first of their kind at a private museum and had the capacity to hold approximately 7 million feet of nitrate film. With the rapid acquisition of materials and arrangements with other archives, Eastman House had outgrown the Strong Archives by the mid-1970s and began to look for other solutions.

When funds were made available in 1995, Eastman House began construction of the Louis B. Mayer Conservation Center. Set on approximately four acres, the conservation building consists of a concrete block structure with metal rods and poured concrete. Adhering to the National Fire Protection Agency's strict rules, each vault was expanded to conserve more reels of film. Improved fireproof shelving units, fire sprinklers, and blowout doors were also installed. A temperature and humidity control system was added, maintaining a consistent conditions in the vaults during all seasons—something the Strong Archives lacked.

Shortly after the construction of the first six vaults in the winter of 1996, Eastman House decided to double the amount of storage space. Finished in 1999, the center included these twelve vaults, a newly remodeled inspection room with four workstations, and a renovated office with computer access to the museum network and to the HVAC controls in each of the vaults.



## The Dryden Theatre

The 500-seat Dryden Theatre is an exhibition space for the art of cinema as championed and interpreted by George Eastman House. It is one of the very few theaters in the world equipped for the projection of original nitrate film that also makes nitrate screenings part of its regular program.

Providing a proper venue to screen the museum's film collection was of paramount importance to Oscar N. Solbert, the museum's first director. He secured funding for the construction of the theater from George Dryden, widower of George Eastman's niece, Ellen, and ground was broken in April 1950.

The Dryden Theatre first welcomed the public on March 2, 1951, with special guest Lowell Thomas broadcasting coast-to-coast in a program that saluted George Eastman and the city of Rochester. The first feature film screening—Jean Renoir's *Nana* (1926)—was held on March 14, the official opening. Since its curtain was raised in 1951, the Dryden Theatre has supported the growth of the museum's moving image collection, provided a forum for discussion on the history of the medium, and screened more than 16,000 titles.

The evolution in projection technologies has brought substantial changes to the Dryden. The original Academy-ratio screen frame remains, but it now helps to support a 23-foot-wide screen that was added in the early seventies. A technical upgrade in 2007 saw the entire theater rewired, all of the sound equipment replaced, and new Kinoton FP38E dual changeover projectors installed in place of Kodak Model 25s.

Over the years, the theater's original color palette of gray, forest green, and dusty pink gave way to a muted seafoam green, and the original Heywood-Wakefield seats were re-upholstered and repaired several times. In 2000, the lobby was restored, and the hallway connecting the Dryden with the café was opened.

In 2013, the Dryden closed for two months to undergo major renovations. The theater reopened with a new color scheme, new carpet, LED ceiling and cove lighting, a hearing loop system, new seats with increased legroom, and a state-of-the-art digital projection system.



## The Projectors

A gift of the Century Projector Company, the Century Model C Projectors have been installed in the Dryden Theatre since it opened in 1951. These machines are “closed head” projectors, so-called because the entire film path from feed magazine to takeup magazine is enclosed. This makes them safer for running nitrate print film. Other safety features on the projectors include fire rollers or fire valves located between the body of the projector and the film magazines and a fire shutter. The fire rollers help prevent a fire from spreading to the roll of film in either magazine. The fire shutter cuts off the hot beam of light when the projector is either slowed down or stopped, helping to keep the film from catching on fire.

The projectors were originally set up with carbon arc lamp houses, replaced in 1979 with xenon light sources as carbons were being gradually phased out. The Century projectors’ sound reproducers have also been upgraded over the years to ensure the best possible sound from vintage sound tracks.



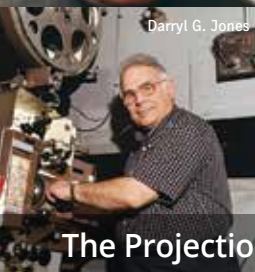
Jim Harte



Patrick Tiernan



Spencer Christiano



Darryl G. Jones



Steve Hryvniak



Ben Tucker

## The Projectionists

**Spencer Christiano**, projection specialist at Eastman House, is a graduate of the SUNY College at Brockport Department of Theatre (BS) and the MCC Visual Communication Technology: Photography-Television program (AAS). For nine years, he was chief projectionist at Rochester's Cinema Theatre, and for two years, technical manager of the MuCCC theater, where he is currently an artist-in-residence. He is very active in the performing arts community, and has written, directed, designed, and managed more than two hundred theatrical, dance, mixed media, and conceptual art productions.

**Jim Harte** is a 1979 graduate of New York University Tisch School of the Arts Department of Film and Television. He has worked in New York City and Rochester as a film editor, writer, director, and archivist. He joined the projectionist team at George Eastman House in 2013.

**Steve Hryvniak** landed at Eastman House in 2004 after 25 years as a motion picture (later, entertainment) imaging technician at Eastman Kodak Company, where he contributed to new motion picture products and projection room support.

**Darryl G. Jones** has worked as a part-time projectionist since 1968. In addition to serving as a relief projectionist and service engineer for Eastman House, he was employed by Eastman Kodak Company from 1974 to 2007 as a systems development technician on traditional photographic, video, and digital cameras. He is the past president of the Rochester International Film Festival and has been their projection chairperson since 1975. He is a life member of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTE).

**Patrick Tiernan** is a Rochester native and an avid film fan. He holds a degree in film studies from SUNY College at Brockport. He has been projecting film at Eastman House for four years.

**Ben Tucker** is assistant collection manager in the Moving Image Department at Eastman House. He is a graduate of the L. Jeffrey Selznick School of Film Preservation and has been employed by the museum since 2003.

# PLAN YOUR NITRATE WEEKEND

## AT GEORGE EASTMAN HOUSE

### The Dryden Theatre

- No food or drink allowed in the theater (including food containers).
- Theater will be cleared at meal breaks.
- Do not leave personal items unattended in the theater. Eastman House is not responsible for lost or missing items. Lost and Found is located at the Dryden box office.
- Emergency exits are located at the front and rear of the theater and at the back of balcony. Front exits are to be used only in an emergency.

**The Eastman House Café** Fri., 10 a.m.–8 p.m.; Sat., 8:30 a.m.–8 p.m.; Sun., 9 a.m.–6 p.m.

- Extra seating available in the Nitrate Picture Show Lounge, adjacent to the café.
- Lunch special for passholders: \$10, includes cold sandwich, choice of side, and choice of beverage.

**The Eastman House Store** Fri. & Sat., 10 a.m.–8 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m.–5 p.m.

- Free gift with purchases of \$50 or more for festival attendees.
- Books for signings available for purchase in the Palm House, located near the store.

**The Museum** Fri. & Sat. 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m.–5 p.m.

- Free admission for passholders May 1–3.
- Opening night welcome reception is in the Potter Peristyle, located in the museum near the Lipson Welcome Center.
- Book signings are in the Palm House.

## AROUND TOWN Establishment hours vary; please call to confirm.

### Post-Screening Gatherings

1. Skylark Lounge, 40 S. Union St., will host post-screening drinks and informal discussions. Show your festival pass to receive a discount.

### Restaurants

Show your festival pass to receive a 10% discount at these locations:

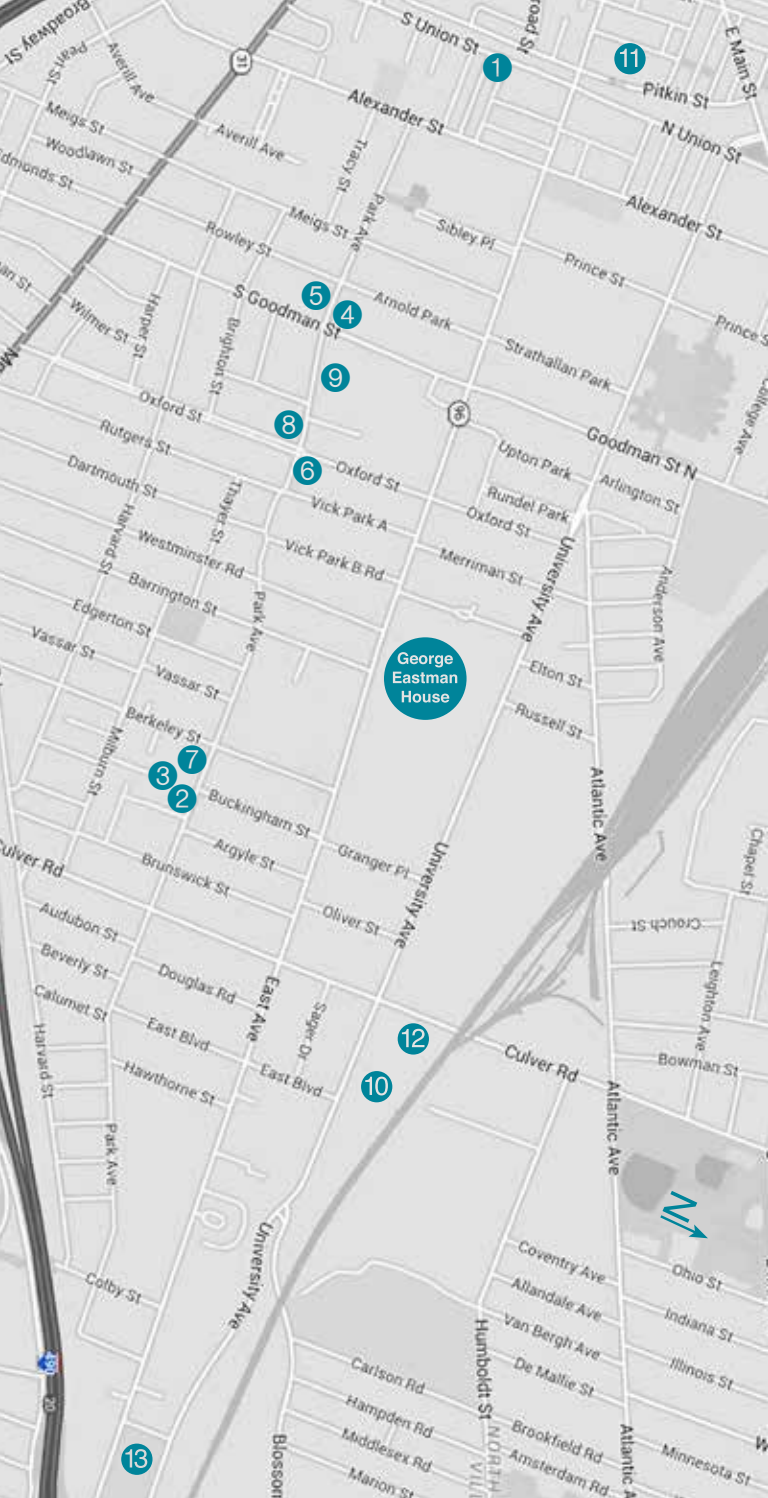
2. Abbott's Frozen Custard, 733 Park Ave., (585) 271-0430
3. Dragonfly Tavern, 725 Park Ave., (585) 563-6333 (no discount on alcohol)
4. Great Harvest Bread Co., 210 Park Ave., (585) 697-0400
5. Hogan's Hideaway, 197 Park Ave., (585) 442-4293
6. Magnolia's Deli & Cafe, 366 Park Ave., (585) 271-7380
7. Nathan's Soup & Salad, 691 Park Ave., (585) 461-3016
8. The Red Fern, 283 Oxford St., (585) 563-7633
9. Roam Cafe, 260 Park Ave., (585) 360-4165
10. Saha Med Grill, 1290 University Ave., (585) 266-5000

### Markets

11. Hart's Local Grocers, 10 Winthrop St., (585) 521-4278
12. Price-Rite, 1230 University Ave., (585) 242-1980
13. Wegmans, 1750 East Ave., (585) 244-7950

### Taxicabs

- Checker Cab, (585) 235-8888
- Airport Taxi Service, (585) 737-5272
- Park Avenue Taxi, (585) 851-1888



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**SAVE THE DATE** — The 2nd Nitrate Picture Show  
April 29–May 1, 2016