

Jack the Ripper stalks the screen

Pandora's Box (Edmonton Film Society, Classic Series, Lecture Theatre, Monday, Nov. 17, 8 p.m.)

Pandora's Box is a silent film made in Germany in 1928. However, the version being shown Monday by Edmonton Film Society will have a music score and English titles. The film is a fusion of two stage-plays by Wedekind, the German dramatist, and concerns episodes in the life of Lulu, a showgirl who is the centre of attraction for a group of admirers. A beautiful girl, she is devoid of guile and malevolence as she is of morality. The film brings out the erotic power of this singular 'earthly being' endowed with animal beauty, but lacking all moral sense, and doing evil unconsciously.

On many occasions, the director, G.W. Pabst, films Lulu's features on a slant. Her face is so voluptuously animalistic that it seems almost deprived of individuality. In the scene with Jack the Ripper, his face, a smooth mirror-like disc slanting across the screen, is so shaded and toned down that the camera seems to be looking down at some lunar landscape (Is this still a human being - a woman - at all? Is it not rather the flower of some poisonous plant?)

In the final episode, in her London slum, she uses the reflector of the lamp as a mirror with which to apply her lipstick. Jack the Ripper gets the idea of using the bread-knife from seeing it glint in the light of this same lamp. His face stands out in half-light, a counterpoint to the smooth features of the beloved Lulu. For a brief moment the haunted man smiles

and the veil of despair seems to lift from his suddenly appeased features. It is such close-ups that determine the character of the film. The amorous career of Lulu is followed to its inevitable conclusion: prostitution and death.

The film is fortunate in having Louise Brooks portraying the main character. Her story is surely the strangest in film history. There are many instances of film stars who have

made a comeback after being off the screen for years. There have been stars who died at the height of their fame and at once became legend. But Louise Brooks is the only actress who has made a comeback without returning to work. After being forgotten for more than 20 years, she found herself a celebrity again on the strength of films she had never seen, with a prestige (as distinct from popularity) she never had when

the films were new.

It is doubtful if any movie fan in the late 1920's would have picked Louise Brooks as the one Hollywood personality who would surface half a century later as the object of a veritable cult. Certainly, Brooks herself wouldn't have. After two films in Germany, she returned to Hollywood to discover her career nearly over. She worked for a while as a salesgirl in a New York department store before a wealthy, anonymous admirer of

her screen image gave her a stipend that allowed her to comfortably retire. She lives today in New York State.

Among her present admirers is director Ken Russell, who a few years back seriously toyed with an idea of doing a film about her. This never materialized but it is surely no coincidence that Glenda Jackson in *Women in Love* wore her hair a la Brooks.

Ralph Horak

Natives and strangers

Residents of the Edmonton area will have a unique opportunity this autumn to encounter the way of life of Canada's least-known northern natives. An exhibition of authentic artifacts called "The Athapaskans: Strangers of the North" opened Thanksgiving weekend at the Provincial Museum of Alberta for a three-month showing, sponsored by Alberta Culture.

Implements and items from everyday life are seen together with ceremonial and artistic objects ancient and modern. Fur traders and others had sent representative pieces a century ago to the new Scottish Museum, so many items have never before been exhibited in Canada. Skin costumes, scale models of hunting and fishing traps, beadwork, spears and prehistoric points present a fascinating exhibit of interest to everyone.

The exhibition features materials from Indians who speak Athapaskan languages: Beaver, Sarsi, Chipewyan, Slave, Dogrib plus many other tribes from Hudson's Bay to Alaska. Emphasizing cultural change, the exhibit traces lifeways up to contemporary

transistorized supports for northern living. Athapaskan-linguistic groups live in differing habitats: forest, tundra, northern plain and mountains, and these variations are reflected within the materials displayed.

The Athapaskans and other exhibitions at the Provincial Museum can be seen daily. The museum is open Monday to Saturday from 9:00 to 5:00, Sundays and Holidays from 11:00 to 9:00, and admission is free of charge.

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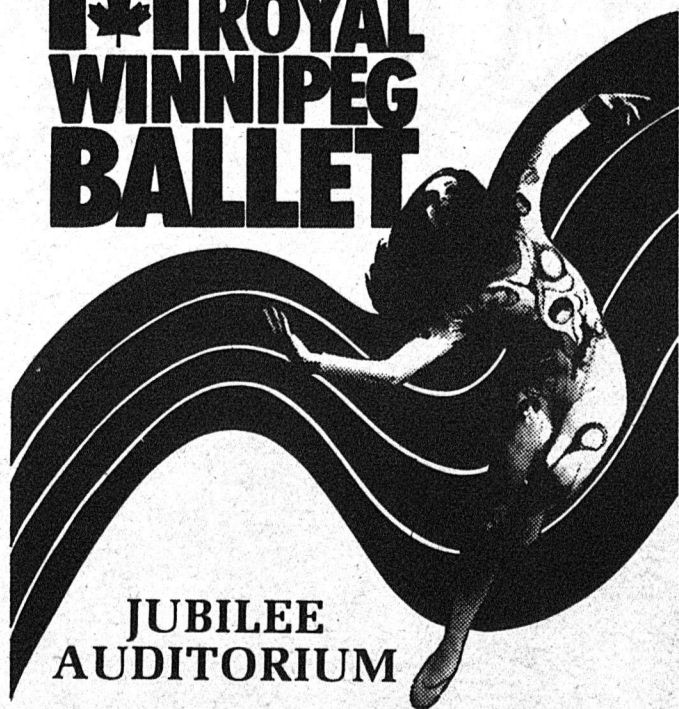
REMINDER: Mon. Nov. 17 is the last day for dropping courses this term.

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