



The first theatrical re-release of the original German version

Marlene Dietrich & Emil Jannings

in

The Blue Angel

Directed by Josef von Sternberg

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PRESSBOOK

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I N T E R N A T I O N A L

The Blue Angel

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The Blue Angel

Production Notes

Directed by Josef von Sternberg

Produced by Erich Pommer

Based on the novel *Professor Unrath* by Heinrich Mann

Adapted by Carl Zuckmayer and Karl Vollmöller

Screenplay and lyrics by Robert Liebmann

Original music by Frederich Hollander

Cinematography by Günther Rittau and Hans Schneeberger

Art Direction by Otto Hunte and Emil Hasler

Editing by Sam Winston

Sound by Fritz Thiery and Richard Rillo

Music performed by the Weintraubs-Syncopators

“Ich bin die fesche Lola” (“*I am the Naughty Lola*”)

“Kinder, heut’ Abend, such’ ich mich was aus” (“*A Regular Man*”)

“Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuß auf Liebe eingestellt” (“*Falling in Love Again*”)

“Nimm dich in Acht vor blonden Frauen” (“*Watch out for Blondes*”)

(Music by Frederich Hollande, Lyrics by Robert Liebmann)

A Ufa Studios Production

Licensed from Transit Films on behalf of the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Stiftung

Germany • 1930 • 106 minutes • Black and White • 1.33:1

Cast

Prof. Immanuel Rath	Emil Jannings
Lola Lola	Marlene Dietrich
Kiepert, the Magician	Kurt Gerron
Guste, his wife	Rosa Valetti
Mazzeppa, the strong man	Hans Albers
The clown	Reinhold Bernt
The headmaster	Eduard von Winterstein
The caretaker	Hans Roth
Angst (Rath’s pupil)	Rolf Müller
Lohmann (Rath’s pupil)	Rolant Varno
Ertzum (Rath’s pupil)	Karl Balhaus
Goldstaub (Rath’s pupil)	Robert Klein-Lörk
The innkeeper	Karl Huszar-Puffy
The Captain	Wilhelm Diegelmann
The policeman	Gerhard Bienert
Rath’s maid	Ilse Fürstenberg

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I N T E R N A T I O N A L

The Blue Angel

Synopsis

It is 1925. Professor Immanuel Rath, the strict, pudgy, old-fashioned English teacher of the local *gymnasium* (boarding school) lives alone, with a caged bird by his side and a maid who begrudgingly works for him. Although an upstanding citizen in his small German port town, the old professor is seldomly listened to in his classroom. Boys will be boys, and every morning they are rowdy as ever. When confiscating a postcard passed around by his students of a cabaret singer named “Lola Lola,” he discovers that the boys have been frequenting the nightclub called “The Blue Angel” to see this dancer perform.

That evening, Professor Rath decides to visit the club to scold the performer for debasing the morals of his boys, but his visit is actually less for his widely announced moral disgust than his own desire and romantic curiosity. Lola Lola is the star of The Blue Angel. Not only is she the most beautiful, but also the most wry and flirtatious of all the performers. Every man in the club is smitten by her presence. Knowing her prowess, Lola Lola croons, “Every man’s in love with me.” As Professor Rath enters the club and catches a glimpse of Lola donned in stockings and garters, the saucy starlet prophetically sings, “Guys, tonight I’m going to pick someone/I’m fed up with the young ones.” Tiptoeing around, Rath ends up in her dressing room. After the brief whimper “You are corrupting my students,” he surrenders to Lola’s power and falls for her charms.

The next night, the Professor returns to The Blue Angel. Kiepert, the magician, offers Rath a box seat in and a bottle of champagne to see the performance. When Lola sings to Rath, *Herr Professor* falls in love. In the morning, Rath wakes up in Lola’s bed and runs off to the school in a rush. The students, knowing that their teacher and the local cabaret singer spent the night together, draw grotesque cartoons of the two on the blackboard. As he walks in his classroom, Rath is horrified to find these caricatures awaiting him. Already having lost the little respect they had for their teacher, the students scream his brutal nickname: “Professor *Unrath!*” (Professor Garbage.) Drawn to the classroom by the noise, the headmaster of the school learns of Rath’s behavior and dismisses him.

Rath then returns to The Blue Angel and proposes to Lola Lola, and Lola accepts. They soon are married, and at their wedding party, Rath is so smitten by Lola, that he is made to cock-a-doodle-doo like a rooster for his love in front of all the dinner guests. This is the beginning of the downfall for the professor, as he will give up everything to be with Lola Lola and travels with the rest of the troupe.

It is 1929, four years later and Rath is now a clown for the troupe. A shell of the man he once was, he is even more a servant for his egotistical wife. The group has an opportunity to return to The Blue Angel, and Kiepert decides to double bill Rath with Lola. As expected, the whole town comes out to see their Professor perform. The sadistic Lola convinces Kiepert to have Rath go up on stage and cock-a-doodle-doo, and after being humiliated in front of his old pupils and his neighbors, he lets out a desperate cockcrow at the top of his lungs as he is driven to madness from this evil woman. He rushes off the stage, and attempts to strangle Lola.

After this last act of passion, Rath crawls away from The Blue Angel and ends up in the familiarity of his old classroom. And while Lola Lola croons in her trademark top hat straddling her chair back at the club, the old professor is left to die while clenching his old desk.

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Timeline

- August 1929 Von Sternberg arrives in Berlin. He meets Emil Jannings, Erich Pommer, and Karl Vollmöller to direct next Jannings “vehicle” and first German sound film. Turns down *Rasputin* and “threatens” to return to Hollywood, but decides to stay in Berlin for more ideas. One week later, Jannings brings him the 1905 Heinrich Mann novel *Professor Unrath* as a possible adaptation. (“In conveying the substance of Mann’s story to me Jannings was superb, his eyes sparkled, and I began to analyze the ingredients that were to form the basis for *The Blue Angel*.” —Sternberg)
- Sept-Oct 1929 Mann gives von Sternberg permission to adapt half of his novel. UFA decides on Robert Liebmann as head writer for the project.* After seeing *Fräulein* Dietrich at a theatre, decides to give her a screen test and picks her as Lola Lola. Subsequently chooses Friedrich Höllander as music composer. (Dietrich brought him along to play piano for her screen test.)
- Nov-Dec 1929 Film shoot at UFA. Von Sternberg shot two versions: each scene in German then in English. The English version† is inferior. Its wooden, primitive language undermines the intended power of the film which shines in its original language.
- January 1930 Editing of film.
- February 1930 Final cut of film is completed. Dietrich is offered a one-picture deal by the Berlin representative at Paramount for \$1,250 a week.
- March 31, 1930 Film premieres at the Gloria Palast in Berlin to rave reviews. Running time: 106 minutes.
- Summer 1930 In Hollywood, von Sternberg shoots Dietrich in their next collaboration for Paramount, *Morocco*.
- Fall 1930 Paramount renews Dietrich’s contract and doubles her weekly salary to \$2,500.
- November 24, 1930 *Morocco* premieres at Grauman’s Chinese Theater in Los Angeles.
- December 5, 1930 Distributed by Paramount, English version of *The Blue Angel* premieres at the Rialto in New York to strong reviews. Running time: 99 minutes.

(continued)

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Timeline (*continued*)

- 1947 Release of German language version of film cut to 90 minutes. The film was edited to show off Dietrich and to reduce emphasis on Jannings. The cuts are as follows:
- First seven shots of film are removed. Film starts with Rath's maid bringing him breakfast: shots removed are rooftops, narrow cluttered street, *and* glassed in Lola Lola poster.
 - Rath's discovery of his dead pet bird is removed (important symbolic foreshadowing).
 - Rath crawling out of the club is replaced by miscellaneous audience shots from early in the film.
 - Ends with Lola singing "Falling in Love Again" in top hat rather than Rath clutching his desk; his passing comes before her song.
 - Backwards tracking shot in classroom at end of film mirroring the earlier shot after he loses his job is removed.
- July 13, 2001 First official re-release of original German version from original negative material, 71 years after it premiered in Germany. Full 106 minutes.

Notes:

*Von Sternberg states in the introduction to the published screenplay, "Many others mentioned [in the credits of the film] are non-contributors. Among those who are mentioned are Karl Vollmöller and Carl Zuckmayer. Both men were called in to lend their name to a manuscript because it was feared that Germany could not afford the authoring of a German work by a non-German. As a matter of fact, Vollmöller has denied any authorship, while Zuckmayer in his writings persist that he contributed. He is a brilliant author but his contributions in *The Blue Angel* are not worth mentioning."

† English version is about 95 minutes and changes many key scenes in film. Not only is the dialogue different, but it is shot differently. Inclusion of close-ups that do not appear in German version.

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Marlene as Lola as Icon

Few single films in the history of cinema can attest to have established a screen actor or actress to the level of “icon.” As an icon, the shine of the silver screen raises the star to beyond a twinkle into another realm. Simply, the actor becomes the character and the character becomes the actor. Examples of iconography in the cinema are Charlie Chaplin’s lovable tramp, Bogart’s Rick Blaine in *Casablanca*, and Billy Wilder’s collaborations with Marilyn, notably her haltered dress flying up in *The Seven Year Itch*.

All these films made actors as icons for different generations, and, more broadly, made them the personification of “Hollywood,” the town, the place, and the machine where dreams are made.

Josef von Sternberg’s *The Blue Angel* is one of those films. Marlene Dietrich’s performance as saucy nightclub singer Lola Lola made her not only a huge international star, cemented her relationship with the Viennese director and got her a contract at Paramount, but also, for the international movie-going public, made her the personification of sex. Marlene is Lola Lola and Lola Lola is Marlene. Josef von Strenberg himself said the character of Lola Lola and the film itself was less about the character than about Dietrich:

“I did not endow her with a personality that was not her own... I gave her nothing that she did not already have. What I did was dramatize her attributes and make them visible for all to see.”

But, *The Blue Angel* (*Der Blaue Engel*—the German version) is in a different class than the aforementioned films. Although not an American film nor in English, it made Dietrich a star internationally, including in the United States.

A German production, made at the renowned UFA studios in Babelsberg, *The Blue Angel* is in a class of its own. Marlene’s Lola is unforgettable, less for her soul than for her contemptuous libidinous being. Despicable and sadistic, less intentionally than inevitably, Lola Lola author’s a man’s demise. As Pauline Kael put it, “her smoldering voice and sadistic indifference suggest sex without romance, love or sentiment.” Not a very ‘noble’ icon indeed.

But now, for the first time in 40 years, the classic film which made Marlene an icon, is finally being released to a whole new generation of moviegoers in the full-length original version with new 35 mm prints and newly translated subtitles.

Of interest also will be Marlene Dietrich’s original screen test for for *The Blue Angel* made possible by the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Stiftung.

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An excerpt from the original *Variety* review

C. Hooper Trask, Berlin, April 12, 1930

Erich Pommer's idea of engaging Sternberg to direct Jannings' first starring vehicle for the UFA proved an astute calculation. It will unquestionably do splendidly in the whole of Europe and should also appeal strongly in the States. On top of the drawing power of Jannings comes the discovery of a new magnet, Marlene Dietrich who should be as much to the American taste as to that of the Continent. To date the picture has been breaking all records at the Gloria Palast even those lately made by "Love Waltz."

At the beginning, the scenario sticks pretty closely to the novel "Professor Unrath" by Heinrich Mann, on which it is founded. ...

In the novel, he and the girl remain in the town and she takes on several influential citizens. At the end the two are running a well paying gambling house patronized by all the good burghers. ... Sternberg evidently thought this a trifle too strong and chose a more conventional twist.

Sternberg has in this picture done what is probably his best work since "Underworld." He caught the atmosphere of the sailors' dive with utmost precision. Kurt Gerron and Rosa Valetti as a hard-boiled conjuror and old comedienne are perfect in their role of rather sardonic comic relief. Marlene Dietrich as Lola has a slow rhythmmed sensuality which gets over without being in anyway crude or offensive.

Foregone that Jannings would be able to get inside the school teacher, but Sternberg deserves credit for keeping him simple and not allowing him to overact—a great danger for this player whose face is perhaps the most expressive on the screen.

Sound on the whole satisfactory. Especially the music. Dialog not always natural in quality and in the dramatic passages has a tendency to become distorted. There seems little doubt that this is ascribed to the Klangfilm loudspeaker equipment which is not even able to reproduce first rate American product satisfactory.

Only fault is a certain ponderousness of tempo which tends to tire. The story is not one with strong dramatic impulse and seldom grips with suspense or moves you emotionally. It is the exceptional playing of Jannings and Dietrich, and the sensitive direction of Sternberg which will put it across for money.

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An excerpt from the original *New York Times* review (of the English speaking version)
The Screen by Mordaunt Hall, December 2, 1930

“Mr. Jannings and Miss Dietrich”

In a film tragedy titled “The Blue Angel,” which was directed by Josef von Sternberg in Berlin for Ufa, that talented German screen player Emil Jannings, who left Hollywood because of the vocalizing of pictures, makes his first appearance in a talking production. Marlene Dietrich, the attractive Teutonic actress who is to be seen at the Rivoli in Mr. Sternberg’s “Morocco,” shares honors with Mr. Jannings in this foreign work.

The plot of “The Blue Angel” recalls that of “The Way of All Flesh,” Mr. Janning’s first American silent film, but in this current chronicle, instead of being a bank employee Mr. Jannings impersonates a professor of English literature in a German boys’ high school. The story is cleverly told in most of the sequences, while penultimate scenes would be all the better if they were curtailed or modified, as the actual ending quite impressive.

The fall from grace of an elderly man is a favorite theme with Mr. Jannings, one that has served him in most of his films since the making of “The Last Laugh.” As the characters here are different, however, the interest is rekindled and the broken English of the persons involved is accounted for with a certain crafty logic.

As an actor who speaks his lines, Mr. Jannings is perhaps even better than he was in his mute productions, for the speech to a great extent governs his actions and it stays him from his penchant for unnaturally slow movements. There are times here when no words pass the lips of the characters for uncomfortable seconds, but the final analysis is that it is a decidedly interesting picture with exceptionally fine performances contributed by Mr. Jannings and Miss Dietrich, the latter being much more the actress than she is in “Morocco.” ...

Not only is Mr. Jannings’s and Miss Dietrich’s acting excellent, but they are supported by an unusually competent cast.

Having quite a good story, Mr. von Sternberg’s direction is infinitely superior to that of “Morocco,” and the settings for this film are very effective.

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Josef von Sternberg on Marlene Dietrich

from his autobiography, *Fun in a Chinese Laundry*, MacMillan, New York, 1965.
and the introduction to the published *Blue Angel* screenplay, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1968.

“Marlene Dietrich is no ordinary woman; her ability to enrapture our jury of peers is remarkable.”

“All the other members of the cast had been chosen. An able staff was at my beck and call. Missing was Lola, so named by me and inspired by Wedekind’s *Lulu*. In planning the work I had decided on an elephantine cast of supporting players, in order to have its collective bulk reduce the visible fat of my leading man, who was adding to his bulges day by day on the assumption that he had to fortify his body for the strenuous task ahead. Berlin was bursting at the seams with actresses padded with rolling fat, but none seemed to have rolled it where it might have been viewed favorably.”

“In my book which deals with the problem of directing I mention that the figure looked for was designed by Felicien Rops, a Belgian artist (1833-1897). She was not to be found among the numerous charmers that were paraded in front of me. And I don’t mind telling you that many of the women were extremely appealing. But they lacked *das Ewig-Weibliche*. Then on an idle evening I visited a play which contained two actors already chosen, and I noticed a woman on the stage whose face promised everything. This was Marlene Dietrich. I am credited with her discovery. This is not so. I am not an archeologist who finds some buried bones with a pelvis that indicated a female. I am a teacher who took a beautiful woman, instructed her, presented her carefully, edited her charms, disguised her imperfections and led her to crystallize a pictorial aphrodisiac. She was a perfect medium, who with intelligence absorbed my direction, and despite her own misgivings responded to my conception of a female archetype.”

“Actually I found out later that she had not only been ineffective in three films but in nine, and had been in musicals, not only in the chorus of hits such as Broadway but had been featured by many talented men. Apparently everyone in Berlin had ‘discovered’ her long before I came along.”

“It being not unusual to ascribe pictorial value to a good-looking woman, I chose the best I could find, keeping in mind that the public might view my cinematic experiments with disfavor unless I gave it something to drool over. It had not been easy to locate an actress on whom I could place such a burden, as the attributes I required needed other elements than sheer outward beauty. Mere beauty in a woman can be as dull as the dullest film, and that is the very quintessence of dullness.”

“Her constant praise is rated as one of her admirable virtues—by others, not by me. She has never ceased to proclaim that I taught her everything. Among the many things I did not teach her was to be garrulous about me.”

“Her behavior on my stage was a marvel to behold. Her attention was riveted on me. No property master could have been more alert. She behaved as if she were there as my servant, first to notice that I was looking about for pencil, first to rush for a chair when I wanted to sit down.

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Not the slightest resistance was offered to my domination of her performance. Rarely did I have to take a scene with her more than once. Perhaps I failed to praise her and was, as is my nature, a trifle too critical, but she along with others saw each day's work in the projection room, though it is possible that in seeing segments few persons can appraise the ultimate effect."

"However, the creation of a new film star, an incidental by-product of *The Blue Angel*, was not slow. No one, certainly not the 'incidental by-product' herself, was aware that so swift and dramatic a transformation from a comparative nonentity to an international celebrity had been accomplished. Even the Ufa officials, after seeing the completed film, were not aware of it, for they did not exercise an option on the future services of *Frau* Dietrich, an option that had been carefully included in her contract. This was an obvious blunder, for the retention of a prominent player on a company's roster is more than a necessity for its existence."

"Never before had I met so beautiful a woman who had been so thoroughly discounted and undervalued."

Josef von Sternberg on Kurt Gerron and Karl Huszar-Puffy

"None of the actors in that room dreamed what the future had in store for them. For example, Huszar-Puffy, attempting to reach Hollywood during the invasion of Russia by Hitler, was taken off a boat near Vladivostok, interned by the Russians, and, after being shunted from Siberia to Moscow, finally died of starvation in the concentration camp Kokusek near Karaganda in Kazakhstan. Another in the gathering, Kurt Gerron, was killed by the Nazis, after being forced to direct a film for them to show how well the Jews were treated. (The first was related to me by a woman who escaped from Kokusek; the Gerron tragedy was told to me by Paul Rotha in Hamburg.)"

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Josef von Sternberg on Emil Jannings

from his autobiography, *Fun in a Chinese Laundry*, MacMillan, New York, 1965.
and the introduction to the published *Blue Angel* screenplay, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1968.

“Charles Dickens’ Mr. Tapperit said, ‘There are strings in the human heart that had better not be wibrated.’ Jannings ‘wibrated’ them all.”

“He gave a fine performance-no one could have done as well-and as this film recedes into time his notable contribution becomes even greater, for when *The Blue Angel* was first shown he could not compete with the unexpected emergence of Marlene Dietrich as a stellar performer. Though this phase of film making does not concern me, as nothing in front of my camera is either important or unimportant, Jannings was never clever enough to realize that with all his skill he could not match what had been done with a receptive female, and he knew long before anyone else, long before I did, that though his name would be printed in larger letters than all the other players, this would mean nothing to the final arbiter, the audience.”

“...for he has left a solid record of his work that few can equal and which speaks for itself and is easily believed, whereas the picture of him recorded here is not easy to believe. Even I, whenever I see *The Blue Angel*, behold only that which is on the screen.”

“So far as anyone could observe the outward relationship I had with Jannings, it appeared to be based on a deep friendship, mutual admiration, and trust that nothing could shatter. We were Damon and Pythias.”

“Jannings was impossible to handle... He was a magnificently bulky man who had the many characters he had portrayed firmly embedded in his person, and had a powerful array of demons ever-present in his makeup. Fat and ungainly, with a complete memory for his own tricks, shifty like a pellet of quicksilver, agile in his repertoire of misbehavior, he was the perfect actor. His forte was to portray the zenith of personal misfortune; his limpid eyes brimming with misery, he could picture debasement in the most abject terms. To be humiliated was for him ecstasy. Shrewdly aware of his own pranks, powerful as he was as a box-office figure, he would always choose the most formidable directors to restrain and guide him. Aside from his objections to my choice of Dietrich, he opposed me every step of the way. This cannot be seen in the film, even I cannot see it. He gives a competent performance and there is no trace of any obstruction and the untold blocks he laid down to his interpretation and that of the others. As *The Blue Angel* recedes into time, he becomes more and more effective. And that he ended his days as senator of culture for the Nazis (to me he boasted that his mother was a Jewess) will be forgotten long before the perishable celluloid crumbles into ashes.”

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Marlene Dietrich

Born on Dec. 27, 1901 in Berlin, Marlene's Dietrich's youth was shrouded in mystery due to conflicting statements to press after she arrived in the United States from Germany in 1930.

Although being brought up in a conservative upper-middle class home, young Maria Magdalene always had a penchant for the arts. In her teens she took up the violin, but a wrist injury prevented her from continuing the instrument, so she changed her focus to acting. In 1921 she joined a touring musical review and then the following year she joined Max Reinhardt's drama school on her second try.

Starting with bit parts on stage and in films, her only important role was in a film called *Tragödie der Liebel/Tragedy of Love* (1923). For this role she was picked by Rudolf Sieber, a young Czech production assistant which became her husband the subsequent year. In 1925 they had a daughter, Maria, which eventually became an actress herself as Mara Riva. Slowly, Dietrich's roles became more substantial and grew in importance. By the end of the decade she was very popular in her country. Some German magazines went so far as to compare her to Garbo.

In Germany to direct the next Emil Jannings film and the country's first talkie, von Sternberg had been in search of an actress who could exude the sexuality Lola Lola, the lead of *The Blue Angel*, the script he was working on. After seeing Dietrich perform on stage, he immediately decided on the *fräulein*. Von Sternberg would always deny that he discovered Dietrich, but their working relationship was so mutually productive, that he would refer to it as a Svengali-Trilby rapport. Lola became Marlene Dietrich's signature role and from that point audiences and media alike likened the actress with the cold vixen she so deftly played.

Based on her performance in *The Blue Angel*, and prior to the German premiere of the film (a full eight months before the U.S. release) Dietrich signed a contract with Paramount and left for Hollywood in April of 1930. Von Sternberg's subsequent collaboration with Dietrich was *Morocco* which was shot that summer and released prior to *The Blue Angel* in the United States. Paramount billed her as their answer to MGM's Garbo, and this was mainly due to their rich collaboration. Both director and actress, separately and together, were mysterious figures in the cinema of the 1930's, von Sternberg being a recluse and Dietrich always giving the press differing stories of her life. The two worked on five more films together for Paramount and their collaboration continued until 1935: *The Devil is a Woman* being their last film together. Although all their films were highly lyrical and exotic, they didn't bring the returns that Paramount felt was necessary and her contract ended after that film. Dietrich then continued to work with other studios, although her roles never differed from that of her quintessential character in *The Blue Angel*.

In 1937, while in England to film *Knight Without Armor*, Dietrich was approached by Nazi officers with offers to return to German films. It is often said that von Ribbentrop, ambassador to England, visited with a personal and very generous offer from Hitler himself. She turned it down and as a result her films were banned in Germany. Thus, in 1939, Dietrich became an American citizen and worked on U.S. bond drives entertaining Allied soldiers and working on anti-Nazi pro-

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paganda (specifically in the *March of Time* newsreels). Oddly enough, Emil Jannings, her co-star in *The Blue Angel*, went the opposite route: the actor starred in Nazi propaganda films, and was presented a medal from Goebbels himself. Dietrich herself was awarded the Medal of Freedom for “meeting a gruelling schedule of performances under battle conditions . . . despite risk to her life,” and for similar reasons was also named Chevalier of the French Legion of Honor.

In 1948, Dietrich became “the world’s most glamorous grandmother” when her daughter gave birth to a son. Although not spending any time with her estranged husband Rudolf Sieber, her devotion to Maria was deep and she spent much time with her. In the 50s, Dietrich came to a new “stage” in her career. She spent less time in front of the cameras and more leaning against a piano which she had done many times before (as seen in her *Blue Angel* screen test.) Although her last roles were notable, as in *Touch of Evil* (1958) and *Judgment at Nuremberg* (1961), she still shifted her career to a highly successful cabaret performer touring concert halls in London, Paris, Moscow, Las Vegas, and New York. After breaking a leg in 1979 she became a total recluse, rarely leaving her Paris apartment for much of the 80s and passing away on May 6, 1992. A fitting end to such a glamorous star, Marlene Dietrich lived the last years of her life as mysteriously as she claimed to have lived her early years.

Filmography

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|---|--|---|
| <i>Im Schatten des Glücks</i> (1919) | <i>Dishonored</i> (1931) | <i>Martin Roumagnac</i> (1946) |
| <i>Der kleine Napoleon</i> (1922) | <i>Shanghai Express</i> (1932) | <i>Golden Earrings</i> (1947) |
| <i>Tragödie der Liebe</i> (1923) | <i>Blonde Venus</i> (1932) | <i>A Foreign Affair</i> (1948) |
| <i>Der Mensch am Wege</i> (1923) | <i>The Song of Songs</i> (1933) | <i>Jigsaw</i> (1949) (uncredited cameo) |
| <i>Der Sprung ins Leben</i> (1923) | <i>The Scarlet Empress</i> (1934) | <i>Stage Fright</i> (1950) |
| <i>Die freudlose Gasse</i> (1925) | <i>The Devil Is a Woman</i> (1935) | <i>No Highway</i> (1951) |
| (uncredited) | <i>The Fashion Side of</i> | <i>Rancho Notorious</i> (1952) |
| <i>Madame wünscht keine Kinder</i> | <i>Hollywood</i> (1935) | <i>Around the World in 80 Days</i> |
| (1926) (uncredited) | <i>Desire</i> (1936) | (1956) (cameo) |
| <i>Manon Lescaut</i> (1926) | <i>The Garden of Allah</i> (1936) | <i>Montecarlo</i> (1956) |
| <i>Kopf hoch Charly!</i> (1926) | <i>I Loved a Soldier</i> (1936) | <i>Witness for the Prosecution</i> (1957) |
| <i>Der Juxbaron</i> (1926) | <i>Knight Without Armour</i> (1937) | <i>It Only Happened Once</i> (1958) |
| <i>Eine Dubarry von heute</i> (1927) | <i>Angel</i> (1937) | <i>Touch of Evil</i> (1958) |
| <i>Café Elektrik</i> (1927) | <i>Destry Rides Again</i> (1939) | <i>Das kommt nicht wieder</i> (1958) |
| <i>Sein grösster Bluff</i> (1927) | <i>Seven Sinners</i> (1940) | <i>Judgment at Nuremberg</i> (1961) |
| <i>Prinzessin Olala</i> (1928) | <i>The Flame of New Orleans</i> (1941) | <i>Paris When it Sizzles</i> (1961) |
| <i>Ich küsse ihre Hand Madame</i> (1929) | <i>Manpower</i> (1941) | (cameo) |
| <i>Das Schiff der verlorenen</i> | <i>The Lady Is Willing</i> (1942) | <i>Black Fox</i> (1962) (documentary; |
| <i>Menschen</i> (1929) | <i>The Spoilers</i> (1942) | narrator) |
| <i>Die Frau nacht der man sich</i> (1929) | <i>Pittsburgh</i> (1942) | <i>Ordinary Fascism</i> (1965) |
| <i>Gefahren der Brautzeit</i> (1929) | <i>Show Business at War</i> (episode | <i>I Wish You Love</i> |
| <i>Der Blaue Engel</i> (<i>The Blue</i> | from <i>The March of Time</i>) (1943) | (<i>An Evening with Marlene</i> |
| <i>Angel</i>) (1930) | <i>Follow the Boys</i> (1944) | <i>Dietrich</i>) (1972) |
| <i>Morocco</i> (1930) | <i>Kismet</i> (1944) | <i>Just a Gigolo</i> (1979) |

KINO INTERNATIONAL

The Blue Angel

Emil Jannings

Although the first sentence of his 1928 autobiography read “I was born, in Brooklyn, America,” Jannings was born Theodor Friedrich Emil Jannenz in Rorschach, Switzerland on July 23, 1884. Raised in a middle class family in Germany by an American-born father and German-born mother, Jannings ran away from home when he was 16 to become a sailor but settled on acting after he returned home. By the age of 18 he was a professional actor and was invited to join Max Reinhardt’s theater in Berlin in 1906. He was already an important stage actor when he made his debut in front of the cameras in 1914.

It was not until five years later that Jannings established an international reputation as a leading screen actor with such historical roles as Louis XV, Henry VIII, Danton, and Peter the Great. Ernst Lubitsch, a friend of Jannings from his early days on the stage, directed a few of these productions. After historical adaptations came literary adaptations such as *Othello* (1922), *Quo Vadis?* (1924), *Tartuffe* and *Faust* (both 1926), which solidified his reputation as the most distinguished performer of the German screen.

A powerfully built man with a giant screen presence, Jannings was the ideal tragic figure. After his performances in Murnau’s *The Last Laugh* (1924) and Dupont’s *Variety* (1925), he was considered as the world’s greatest film actor. This international fame led to a Paramount contract in 1927. In the first ever Academy Awards®, he won an Oscar® for his performances in the first two of his American films, *The Way of All Flesh* (1927) and *The Last Command* (1928) which was directed by von Sternberg. But when the first talkies began to appear, his thick German accent cut his American career short. He returned to Germany in 1929 and was directed by von Sternberg in Germany’s first sound film, *The Blue Angel*.

When Hitler and the Nazi party came to power in 1933, Jannings was recruited by Minister of Propaganda Josef Goebbels for Nazi propaganda films. Although not part of the proper National Socialist party, he was a supporter of Third Reich ideology and acted in many anti-British propaganda roles—the opposite of his *Blue Angel* co-star Marlene Dietrich, who refused to have anything to do with the Nazis. In 1938, Goebbels awarded him a medal and appointed him the head of Tobis, a large German production company and in 1941 he was named “Artist of the State.” His last film was *Wo ist Herr Belling?* but the film was never completed as production was stopped in January 1945 when illness and anguish over Nazi defeat drove Jannings into retirement. Blacklisted by the Allies, Jannings was never allowed to make another film. Five years later he died lonely and grief-stricken, much like the tragic character he played in *The Blue Angel*.

The Blue Angel

Emil Jannings filmography

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| <i>Arme Eva</i> (1914) | <i>Tartüff</i> (1926) |
| <i>Passionels Tagebuch</i> (1914) | <i>Faust</i> (1926) |
| <i>Nacht des Grauens</i> (1916) | <i>The Way of All Flesh</i> (1927) |
| <i>Lulu</i> (1917) | <i>The Last Command</i> (1928) |
| <i>Fuhrmann Henschel</i> (1918) | <i>The Street of Sin</i> (1928) |
| <i>Die Augen der Mumie Ma</i> (1918) | <i>The Patriot</i> (1928) |
| <i>Madame Dubarry</i> (1919) | <i>Sins of the Fathers</i> (1928) |
| <i>Kolhiesels Tochter</i> (1920) | <i>Betrayal</i> (1929) |
| <i>Anna Boleyn (Deception)</i> (1920) | <i>Fighting the White Slave Traffic</i> (1929) |
| <i>Die Bruder Karamasoff</i> (1920) | <i>Der blaue Engel (The Blue Angel)</i> (1930) |
| <i>Danton</i> (1921) | <i>Liebling der Gotter</i> |
| <i>Das Weib des Pharao</i> (1921) | <i>(Darling of the Gods)</i> (1930) |
| <i>Vendetta</i> (1921) | <i>Sturme der Leidenschaft</i> |
| <i>Die Grafyn von Paris</i> (1922) | <i>(Storms of Passion)</i> (1931) |
| <i>Othello</i> (1922) | <i>Der alte und der junge Konig</i> (1935) |
| <i>Peter der Grosse</i> (1922) | <i>Traumulus</i> (1936) |
| <i>Tragödie der Liebe</i> (1922) | <i>Der zerbrochene Krug</i> (1937) |
| <i>Alles fur Geld (Fortune's Fool)</i> (1923) | <i>Robert Koch</i> (1939) |
| <i>Quo Vadis?</i> (1924) | <i>Ohm Kruger</i> (1941) |
| <i>Nju</i> (1924) | <i>Die Entlassung</i> (1942) |
| <i>Das Waschfigurenkabinett (Waxworks)</i> (1924) | <i>Altes Herz wird wieder jung</i> (1943) |
| <i>Der letzte Mann (The Last Laugh)</i> (1924) | <i>Wo ist Herr Belling?</i> (1945) (unfinished) |
| <i>Variété</i> (1925) | |

KINO INTERNATIONAL

The Blue Angel

Josef von Sternberg

Born Josef Sternberg on May 29, 1894 in Vienna to a middle-class Jewish family (the aristocratic “von” was added to his name by a Hollywood producer who thought it would look better on a marquee), at the age of 7 Sternberg and his family emigrated to the U.S. where he grew up in Jamaica, Queens. After a brief return to Vienna to complete his schooling, at 17 he found a job as a film patcher for the World Film Company in Fort Lee, New Jersey. He joined the Army Signal Corps during WWI, made training films and he finally settled in Hollywood in 1924.

After directing scenes unfinished by other directors on a few films, von Sternberg got together with a young British stage actor, George K. Arthur, who wanted to invest \$5,000 to subsidize his own screen debut. Sternberg decided to shoot *The Salvation Hunters* (1925) for this occasion. The film was shot completely on location and on a tiny budget. This naturalistic depiction of the world of the waterfront derelicts was never before seen in American cinema and had Hollywood buzzing with interest as a first film was able to show a completely new and fresh visual style.

After some dead-end projects at MGM [*The Masked Bride* (1925) and *The Exquisite Sinner* (1926)], his contract ended. Subsequently, Charlie Chaplin asked him to direct a vehicle for Edna Purviance, his protégée. Alternately titled *The Sea Gull* and *A Woman of the Sea* (1926), Sternberg completed the production to his own satisfaction, but Chaplin found the film too sophisticated for general audiences and it was never released. According to people who saw the film, it was one of the most beautiful films ever to have been made in Hollywood.

After an unlucky beginning, von Sternberg found success after signing on Paramount. Impressing producers by salvaging another director’s film, he was assigned to direct *Underworld* (1927), from a story by Ben Hecht. Hollywood’s first serious look at the world of the gangster, the film was in the inimitable Sternberg style: with the visual form and mise en scène expressing content and plot. His compositions were used to not only provide mood but to express the inner motivations for the characters. During his peak, the years between 1927-35, he was one of the undisputed masters of Hollywood.

In Germany to direct the next Emil Jannings film and the country’s first talkie, von Sternberg had been in search of an actress who could exude the sexuality Lola Lola, the lead of *The Blue Angel*, the script he was working on. After seeing Dietrich perform on stage, he immediately decided on the *fräulein*. Von Sternberg would always deny that he discovered Dietrich, but their working rapport was so mutually productive that he would refer to it as a Svengali-Trilby relationship. The six Dietrich films von Sternberg directed for Paramount on their return to Hollywood—*Morocco* (1930), *Dishonored* (1931), *Shanghai Express* (1932), *Blonde Venus* (1932), *The Scarlet Empress* (1934), and *The Devil Is a Woman* (1935)—constituted cumulatively the peak achievement of his career.

Von Sternberg was the most enigmatic of directors; reclusive, mysterious and stubborn he found quite a bit of people opposed to his ideas, despite his success up to 1935. Finding no support in Hollywood, in 1937 he went to England to make the most ambitious production ever, an adapta-

KINO INTERNATIONAL

The Blue Angel

tion of Robert Graves's *I Claudius*, with Charles Laughton as Claudius. Under the helm of Alexander Korda, the film was ill-fated as the lead actress suffered from an automobile accident subsequently halting production for good. In the late 60s, the BBC made a feature-length documentary about the *I Claudius* mystery, entitled "The Epic That Never Was." The many excerpts from the unfinished film which were shown suggested that not only might it have been von Sternberg's finest film, but one of the best films ever made. In 1976, *I Claudius* became a highly successful epic television mini series with Derek Jacobi as the lead.

Returning to the States in 1938, von Sternberg made two films for MGM. He had to be replaced by another director on the first *I Take this Woman* (1939) and the second, *Sergeant Madden* (1939), was less than impressive. The director briefly returned to form with his film *The Shanghai Gesture* (1941) but the most important achievement in the latter phase of his career was a 1953 Japanese production entitled *Ana-Ta-Han* (or *The Saga of Anatahan*). The film was a remarkable dramatization of a true WWII incident about Japanese marines who continued to man their positions for seven years on a Pacific island after the conclusion of the war because they refused to believe that Japan was defeated. In his last ever interview, von Sternberg said that this was the best film he ever made.

In the mid-50s, Sternberg went into semi-retirement in his modern Los Angeles mansion and traveled in the U.S. and abroad lecturing at festivals and universities. He passed away of a heart ailment in 1969 a few years after publishing his autobiography.

Filmography

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|---|---|
| <i>The Salvation Hunters</i> (1925) | <i>Dishonored</i> (1931) |
| <i>The Masked Bride</i> (1925) | <i>An American Tragedy</i> (1931) |
| (uncredited, completed by Christy Cabanne) | <i>Shanghai Express</i> (1932) |
| <i>The Exquisite Sinner</i> (1926) | <i>Blonde Venus</i> (1932) |
| (completed by Phil Rosen) | <i>The Scarlet Empress</i> (1934) |
| <i>A Woman of the Sea</i> or <i>The Sea Gull</i> (1926) | <i>The Devil Is a Woman</i> (1935) |
| (never released) | <i>Crime and Punishment</i> (1935) |
| <i>Children of Divorce</i> (1927) (uncredited) | <i>The King Steps Out</i> (1936) |
| <i>Underworld</i> (1927) | <i>I Claudius</i> (1937) (unfinished) |
| <i>Street of Sin</i> (1928) (uncredited) | <i>I Take this Woman</i> (1939) |
| <i>The Last Command</i> (1928) | <i>Sergeant Madden</i> (1939) |
| <i>The Dragnet</i> (1928) | <i>The Shanghai Gesture</i> (1941) |
| <i>The Docks of New York</i> (1928) | <i>The Town</i> (1944) (documentary short) |
| <i>The Case of Lena Smith</i> (1929) | <i>Macao</i> (1952) |
| <i>Thunderbolt</i> (1929) | <i>Anatahan</i> or <i>The Saga of Anatahan</i> (1954) |
| <i>Der Blaue Engel</i> (<i>The Blue Angel</i>) (1930) | <i>Jet Pilot</i> (1957) (shot in 1950, release delayed) |
| <i>Morocco</i> (1930) | |