

KINO
ON
VIDEO

T H E
ERICH VON STROHEIM
C O L L E C T I O N

Queen Kelly

FOOLISH WIVES

**Blind
Husbands**

THE GREAT GABBO

THE MAN YOU LOVED TO HATE

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PRESSBOOK



T H E
ERICH VON STROHEIM
C O L L E C T I O N

Kino on Video is proud to release on VHS and for the first time on DVD, THE ERICH VON STROHEIM COLLECTION. Mastered from 35MM archival material with cooperation from The Museum of Modern Art and The Library of Congress, this brand new collection brings together meticulously mastered editions of three out of the six surviving features from the artist considered along with Chaplin and Griffith as the greatest director of American silent films.

THE ERICH VON STROHEIM COLLECTION consists of three DVDs and 5 VHS tapes. The first DVD of the series brings the restored masterpiece QUEEN KELLY (1928) starring Gloria Swanson, while a second DVD comes with a double-feature of Stroheim's epic FOOLISH WIVES and the biographical documentary THE MAN YOU LOVED TO HATE. Wrapping up the series, Kino on Video produced another double bill of the groundbreaking marriage melodrama BLIND HUSBANDS and James Cruze's ventriloquist musical THE GREAT GABBO (starring Stroheim). This series will prebook on May 13th, 2003 with a SRP of \$ 29.95 on DVD and \$24.95 on VHS. All these titles street on June 10, 2003.

In addition to the three von Stroheim directed features, and two co-features, this series compiles over 7 hours of supplemental features, including rare outtake footage, extensive audio commentary by Biographer Richard Koszarski, a rare videotaped introduction by Gloria Swanson (star of Stroheim's QUEEN KELLY) as well as audio clips of Valerie von Stroheim and Paul Kohner.

Actor, director and producer Erich von Stroheim is arguably, Hollywood's most revered and overachieving legend. Frequently referred as "the man you love to hate", Mr. Stroheim migrated to America from Vienna (Austria) several years before World War I and entered the film business in 1914 as an adviser on military costume. Eventually working with director D. W. Griffith and helming a total of twelve feature films, Stroheim stepped up to the podium of master filmmakers as much for his film masterpieces GREED (1924) and QUEEN KELLY (1928) as for his controversial go-getter attitude and the brave handling of controversial subject matters in his films.



THE GREAT GABBO

Cast

Erich von Stroheim.....The Great Gabbo
 Betty Compson.....Mary
 Donald Douglas.....Frank
 Marjorie Kane.....Babe (as Marjorie 'Babe' Kane)
 Harry Ross.....Performer
 George Grandee.....Otto (voice)

Crew

Director..... James Cruze
 Writer.....Ben Hecht (also story "The Rival Dummy") and Hugh Herbert
 Producer.....Jonathan Cordis, James Cruze and Henry D. Meyer
 Original Music by.....Charley Chase (as King Zang)
 Additional Music.....Lynn Cowan, Howard Jackson, Donald McNamee
 Additional Music.....Paul Titsworth and King
 Art Director.....Robert E. Lee
 Costume Designer.....André-ani
 Production Manager.....Vernon Keays
 Choreographer.....Maurice L. Kusell

THE GREAT GABBO

U.S. • 1929 • 96 minutes • B&W

Directed by James Cruze

With Erich von Stroheim, Betty Compson

Screenplay by Hugh Herbert

Newly restored by the Library of Congress

UPC# 7 38329 04523 4 SRP \$24.95 (VHS)

UPC # 7 38329 02462 8 SRP \$29.95 (DVD with BLIND HUSBANDS)



Queen Kelly

CREW

Director and Writer.....Erich von Stroheim
Producers...Erich von Stroheim, Joseph P. Kennedy, Gloria Swanson
Composer.....Aldolph Tandler
Cinematographer.....Paul Ivano and Gordon Pollock
Editor.....Viola Lawrence
Art Director.....Harold Miles
Costume Designer.....Max Rée

CAST

Gloria Swanson.....Patricia 'Kitty' Kelly (Queen Kelly)
Walter Byron.....Prince Wolfram von Hohenberg Falsenstein
Seena Owen.....Queen Regina V
Sylvia Ashton.....Kelly's Aunt
Wilson Bengtson.....Prince Wolfram's Valet
Sidney Bracey.....Prince Wolfram's Lackey
Rae Daggert.....Coughdrops
Florence Gibson.....Kelly's Aunt
Madge Hunt.....Mother Superior
Tully Marshall.....Jan Vryheid
Ann Morgan.....Maid Escorting Kelly to Altar
Madame Sul-Te-Wan.....Kali Sana, the Aunt's Cook
Lucille Van Lent.....Prince Wolfram's Maid
Wilhelm von Brincken.....Prince Wolfram's Adjutant
Gordon Westcott.....Lackey

QUEEN KELLY

U.S. • 1929 • 101 minutes
B&W • Music by Adolf Tandler •
Restored by Dennis Doros
Directed by Erich von Stroheim
With Gloria Swanson, Walter Byron
UPC# 7 38329 02452 9 SRP \$29.95 (DVD)
UPC# 7 38329 04483 1 SRP \$24.95 (VHS)

KINO ON VIDEO

FOOLISH WIVES

CREW

Director and Writer.....Erich von Stroheim
Original Composer.....Sigmund Romberg
Cinematographer.....William H. Daniels and Ben F. Reynolds
Editor.....Arthur Ripley
Art Director.....Richard Day and E.E. Sheeley
Lighting Effects Supervisor.....Harry Joe Brown

CAST

Rudolph Christians.....Andrew J. Hughes
Miss DuPont.....Mrs. Helen Hughes
Maude George.....'Princess' Olga Petschnikoff
Mae Busch.....'Princess' Vera Petschnikoff
Erich von Stroheim.....Count Sergius Karamzin
Dale Fuller.....Maruschka, a maid
Al Edmundsen.....Pavel Paulich
Cesare Gravina.....Cesare Ventucci
Malvina Polo.....Marietta (as Malvine Polo)
Louis K. Webb.....Dr. Judd
Mrs. Kent.....Dr. Judd's wife
C.J. Allen.....Prince Albert
Edward Reinach.....Secretary of State of Monaco

FOOLISH WIVES

U.S. • 1922 • 143 minutes
B&W • Restored by the AFI • Color Tinted
Written / Directed by Erich von Stroheim
With Erich von Stroheim, Maude George
Score by Sigmund Romberg
UPC# 7 38329 04483 1 SRP \$24.95 (VHS)
UPC # 7 38329 02472 7 SRP \$29.95 (DVD)



Blind Husbands

CREW

Director and writer.....Erich von Stroheim
Producer.....Erich von Stroheim
Cinematographer.....Ben F. Reynolds
Editor.....Eleanor Fried

CAST

Sam De Grasse.....Dr. Armstrong
Francelia Billington.....Mrs. Armstrong
Erich von Stroheim.....Lieutenant von Steuben
Gibson Gowland.....Silent Sepp (as T.H. Gibson Gowland)
Fay Holderness.....The 'Vamp' Waitress
Ruby Kendrick.....A Village Blossom
Valerie Germonprez.....The Newlywed
Jack Perrin.....The Newlywed
Richard Cummings.....The Village Physician
Louis Fitzroy.....The Village Priest
William De Vaull.....Man from 'Home'

BLIND HUSBANDS

U.S. • 1919 • 93 minutes • Color Tinted
Written & Directed by Erich von Stroheim
With Erich von Stroheim, Sam DeGrasse
Music- Donald Sosin from 1919 cue sheet
Print material by the MOMA
UPC# 7 38329 04503 6 SRP \$24.95 (VHS)
UPC # 7 38329 02462 8 SRP \$29.95 (DVD)

KINO ON VIDEO

THE MAN YOU LOVED TO HATE

CREW

Director.....Patrick Montgomery
Editor.....William Loeffler

CAST

Ed Binns.....Narrator (voice)

WITH

Paul Kohner
Marcel Dalio
Leonard Spigelgass
Samuel Marx
Valerie Von Stroheim
Paul Ivano
Harold Henderson
Grant Whytock
I.B. Kornblum
Thomas Quinn Curtiss
Denise Vernac
Erich von Stroheim (archive footage)

THE MAN YOU LOVED TO HATE

U.S. • 1979 • 78 minutes

Color / B&W

Directed by Patrick Montgomery

Written by Richard Koszarski

UPC# 7 38329 04503 6 SRP \$24.95 (VHS)

UPC # 7 38329 02472 7 SRP \$29.95 (DVD with FOOLISH WIVES)

KINO ON VIDEO

**From THE RISE OF THE AMERICAN FILM
A Critical History / By Lewis Jacobs**

If Cecil B. DeMille dominated the movie in its post-war period, Erich von Stroheim was its most inspiring force. Von Stroheim emerges as one of the most important directors in American film history not only for what he accomplished himself but for his stimulation of other directors and for his artistic integrity. No director since D. W. Griffith has so fired the motion picture world. Praised, condemned, finally outlawed, he was the most discussed and respected director during those years when DeMille, at his peak, was the commercial model for the industry. While the rest of the moviemakers tried to simulate DeMille, von Stroheim was acknowledged as inimitable, a "genius." If the industry envied and valued DeMille, it was von Stroheim of whom they stood in awe. Von Stroheim was on another plane, not perhaps so dexterous a commercial technician as DeMille but more truly the artist. In this Viennese movie people saw a man with a creative passion, whose will could not be broken and whose integrity could not be compromised.

In 1929 von Stroheim was elected one of the best ten directors in the Film Daily annual poll; the following year his name did not even appear among those of the one hundred eighteen directors who received honorable mention. By 1928 his career in Hollywood was over. Yet von Stroheim continued to wield influence. If his presence had created excitement, his absence brought him adulation. His genius still permeated the movie world like an electric current, sharpening the artistic awareness of moviemakers and movie-goers alike. Today he is looked upon as a martyr to the great god Commerce: harassed by financiers, he fought persistently for the freedom to report and interpret and criticize life as he had experienced it in many towns and cities of the world. Generally regarded as the American film's first realist, von Stroheim was actually the culmination of a long line of realists that ran back to Porter. Working with extreme care to achieve the realism he wanted regardless of the box office, he was castigated as an extravagant spendthrift. Had he been more willing to compromise in his attention to details, his big expenditures would have been condoned and exploited in publicity.

Actually he made no more box-office failures than less worthy directors; no more money was lost on Ben Hur, for example, than on Greed. But Hollywood steered clear of von Stroheim because it was steering clear of reality and endorsing claptrap. His career, brilliant and spectacular, was climaxed in his excommunication by the very companies and individuals whom his film successes had given major stature.

KINO ON VIDEO

ERICH VON STROHEIM

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Von Stroheim is said to have been born in Vienna in 1885 and educated in a military academy. Before becoming an actor and general assistant in movies in the United States in 1914, he worked as army officer, newspaper man, magazine writer, section hand on a railroad, boatman, book agent, vaudeville trouper, and playwright. His contact with all walks of life was later to be revealed in his movies.

In 1914, when war films were popular, von Stroheim's Teutonic appearance and knowledge of Europe stood him in good stead. He worked with Griffith (Intolerance, Hearts of the World), Fairbanks (In-Again, Out-Again), Ince (For France, The Unbeliever, The Hun Within, Less Than the Dust). But when the war ended and war films were taboo, he found himself without work, and his Prussian army uniform began gathering dust. But the prospect of obscurity only spurred his self-confidence. One night he went to the home of Carl Laemmle, stated his case, and left with Laemmle's promise that Universal (the a minor company) would produce his first directorial effort. Von Stroheim's debut as director of Blind Husbands was heralded in a full-page advertisement in Photo-play.

"In all my years as a producer of the best photoplays that the art has created I have not known more delightful entertainment that is provided by this amazingly artistic drama, written and directed to the uttermost detail by Erich von Stroheim, who, furthermore, play's the leading part"

— Carl Laemmle, President

Thus began a directorial career that in less than ten years produced a remarkable roster of films; Blind Husbands (1919), The Devil's Passkey (1919), Foolish Wives (1922), Merry-Go-Round (1923), Greed (1923), The Merry Widow (1925), The Wedding March (1928), and Queen Kelly (1930). Whether or not von Stroheim's films are great works of art, as many think, is debatable, but they were at least so personal, so sincere, so serious in conception and execution, that they had monumental significance in their time. Greed, in particular, emerges as an outstanding achievement in American film tradition.



ERICH VON STROHEIM

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All von Stroheim's films were melodramas of lust-lust for money (Greed, The Wedding March), or for youth, love, or debauchery (The Devil's Passkey, Blind Husbands, Foolish Wives, The Merry Widow, Merry-Go-Round). Executed with a hard, unrelenting honesty, they were by turns sordid, scathing, mocking, ironic. His characterizations and viewpoint brought to the screen an individuality, a maturity, and a meaning not to be found in the pictures of the DeMilles, the Inces, or the George Fitzmaurices. He was a compendium of varied talents in an industry in which only specialists were given an ear: he was the writer and the player, as well as the director, of many of his films. Von Stroheim's first three pictures, Blind Husbands, The Devil's Passkey, and Foolish Wives, were both timely and of high quality. They promulgated the post-war belief that women have a right to love after marriage and that, if husbands are indifferent, those husbands cannot blame their wives for seeking attention elsewhere. Common as the theme was, von Stroheim's treatment of it was far from common. The setting of Blind Husbands was high in the Alps (the original title for the film had been The Pinnacle), and its characters were an American surgeon indifferent to his pretty wife and a continental Austrian who appreciated the importance of love.

Unlike other triangle stories, this one was not in the pulp fashion; it was penetration and serious, and distinguished in its realistic detail and vivid characterizations.

The same realism and uncompromising characterization that distinguished Blind Husbands were evident in The Devil's Passkey and Foolish Wives. The sex relationship in both was handled bluntly, and the decadence of the European aristocrat was mercilessly portrayed. Of The Devil's Passkey one reviewer said, "The moral problem here is...not of the highest order nor the most desirable," while Foolish Wives, the biggest money maker of all, elicited "A review of a picture that is an insult to every American...continual innuendo as to American ideals; sly little thrusts at our tradition and sentiments." The characteristics of these three films were to reappear in all von Stroheim's later efforts.

KINO ON VIDEO

ERICH VON STROHEIM

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As von Stroheim worked he grew more certain of what he himself wanted to do. But in the midst of his fourth production for Universal, Merry-Go-Round, he was replaced by another director, Ruper Julian, of Beast of Berlin fame. The company was fearful that the cost of the undertaking as von Stroheim was proceeding would ruin them. Even more, they dreaded the extreme daring of the story as he had planned it.

Meanwhile the newly merged Metro-Goldwyn Company was seeking to establish itself in the motion picture industry. Realizing that von Stroheim's pictures had placed Universal among the major studios, Metro-Goldwyn now engaged him to do the same for them. The result was Greed, a complete box-office failure but one of the shining achievements in American film history. Without an iota of glamour, grim and unrelenting, Greed was hardly likely to please the prevailing post-war taste, especially at a time when Lubitsch's *The Marriage Circle* and DeMille's *The Ten Commandments* were competing for attention. It is singular that any studio should have allowed this ex-Austrian to direct such a highly realistic dramatization of American working-class life, a dramatization certainly out of tune with the times. Greed was, at any rate, the last of the films about the working man in that period: the culmination of the tradition that had borne Porter and Griffith.

As an achievement of motion picture art, Greed is unusually effective. How sincere von Stroheim was in this undertaking is indicated by its personal dedication, the first of its kind in the field of motion pictures-"To My Mother." Everything in Greed stemmed from his personality. Not so important in structure as *The Birth of a Nation* or *Intolerance*, this film nevertheless takes its place beside them because of its honesty and profundity. Before making Greed von Stoheim had written:

"It is possible to tell a great story in motion pictures in such a way that the spectator...will come to believe that what he is looking at is real...even so Dickens and DeMaupassant and zola and Frank Norris catch and reflect life in their novels...it is with that idea that I am producing Frank Norris's story McTeague."

— von Stroheim

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ERICH VON STROHEIM

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He carried out his intention. The sordid dramatic tale was executed with painful realism. Zasu Pitts, Gibson Gowland, and Jean Hersholt, none of them important or known stars at the time, enacted drab, unsympathetic roles. The film begins as an educational film on mining might begin. The realism and objectivity are at once so pronounced that the whole has the quality of a news-reel. In this respect alone Greed is a memorable achievement. As the story unfolds, the individuals and the outside world are continually placed in relation to each other so that the drama is intensified. When Mac embraces Trina at the depot, for example, a train roars by, suggesting all the suppressed procession seen through the window gives and ironic overtone to the ceremony. The marriage ceremony and feast in themselves are a masterpiece in the realistic re-creation of a cross-section of life at that time and in that social class.

The farewell of the family and friends, and Trina's overwhelming timidity on her wedding night, are most eloquent recordings of the mental attitudes of the pre-war period. Finally, the events of the world are made to intensify the personal situation in the sequence in which Mac murders Trina for money. The Christmas tinsel hanging in the house provides that sardonic irony for which von Stroheim was well known.

Now Paramount engaged von Stroheim, and he went to work on his memorable *The Wedding March*. After two years the film was finally cut (by von Sternberg?) and released in 1928. It was typical of his productions generally. Bold and realistic, the massing of its details created a unique, powerful effect, with strong, ironic undertones. Characteristic of the rendition is the sequence in which the aristocrat (von Stroheim) and the vulgar millionaire tradesman are groveling on the floor of a brothel. In their stupid, drunken orgy they sign a marriage contract to unite their children. The cynicism of von Stroheim is here uppermost.

The Wedding March can be regarded as von Stroheim's last directorial effort to date, for it was his last production to be distributed, although he was at work subsequently on other films. By this time the industry's fear of him had reached a peak.

KINO ON VIDEO

ERICH VON STROHEIM

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As he himself later remarked:

“They said I was crazy. Nasty and malicious stories were told about me. I could take no action; they knew I had no money. But I didn't want to anyway; it would mean putting myself on the same level as themselves.”

— von Stroheim

A marked man, von Stroheim went about among whispers such as "here is a man who spends money on films without regard for profits." Motion Picture Classic, at a time when von Stroheim was already classified as "the autocrat of directors," spoke of him as "demoted but not defeated."

A turnover among executives after the stock-market crash and the coming of the talkies put von Stroheim back temporarily in a director's seat. J. P. Kennedy, a baker, on coming to the industry in 1930, engaged him to make a musical film starring Gloria Swanson, who had just made her singing debut in the movie *The Trespasser*. Von Stroheim wrote, directed, and acted in the new film, *Queen Kelly*, but it was shelved. No one has since seen or heard of it; no explanation for its shelving has appeared in print.

So once more von Stroheim was without work. A few years later, Fox engaged him to direct *Walking Down Broadway*, but in the midst of work he was again called off. Perhaps the producer who had engaged him had himself been fired by the company. At any rate that was the last event in von Stroheim's directorial career in Hollywood. He has since returned to action in French films, winning fresh acclaim as a performer. "Perhaps," he says, "one day I will direct a picture again. In France or in England."

The troubled career of von Stroheim has left in its wake fabulous tales of his personality and his method of work, his strong will power, his steadfastness, his thoroughness.



ERICH VON STROHEIM

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To relate the various of his towering rages, the extravagant lengths to which he went in having the silk underwear of soldiers in *The Merry Widow* marked with the coat of arms of the mythical county, in paying \$10,000 to have special medals designed for an imaginary army, in installing in a prop hotel in *Foolish Wives* a complete electric bell system that was never to be seen- this is not to indicate the talent of the man. It only suggests his urgent sincerity, his intense desire to make the entire scene real and to impress his cast with the reality of what they were doing. The use of genuine props has never in itself resulted in a fine film.

But von Stroheim's insistence upon what might appear to be trifles was important to him. It was not that he wished to dazzle, nor even that he lacked imagination, but that he demanded that everything be provided for to the smallest detail so that he could proceed confidently. If he had all the details of a scene at hand, he felt free to eliminate and select. This was his virtue and his failing, his strength and his weakness; he lived by it and he fell because of it. The influence of Erich von Stroheim on American directors was not so apparent or so marked as the influence of Cecil B. DeMille, who as a showman was far more successful. There were, however, a few who appreciated von Stroheim's love of the medium and his integrity, and who were inspired by it to explore the possibilities of realistic film drama. Some of the early works of King Vidor, William K. Howard, Josef von Sternberg, and Karl Brown, bear the definite stamp of von Stroheim's influence.

From THE RISE OF THE AMERICAN FILM

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