

Celebrating 100 Years of Hollywood!

Under the auspices of the Presidential Bilateral Commission, the U.S. Consulate in St. Petersburg together with its Russian partner NGO “Tour de Film” and the city’s premiere repertory movie theater “Rodina” will launch the first of two film festivals designed to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first Hollywood film. As a living symbol of Russian-American cultural cooperation, this year-long festival – “Silent Film + Live Music” – will feature classic American films from the silent era with live musical accompaniment by St. Petersburg’s top contemporary musicians.

D.W. Griffith – the Father of Film – shot the first film in Hollywood in 1910 when he brought his Biograph Company crew out to California from a wintry New York City in search of better light. Griffith’s 1916 masterpiece *Intolerance: Love’s Struggle Through the Ages* will take center spotlight at the festival when it is shown on August 27, Russia’s *Den’ Kino* (Film Day). In 2007, the American Film Institute (AFI) ranked *Intolerance* number 49 on its list of the 100 greatest films of all time. During the first year of voting in 1989, *Intolerance* was selected for preservation “for all time” in the U.S. National Film Registry by the Library of Congress as being “culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant.”

The “Silent Film + Live Music” festival will kick off on Saturday, February 13, by showing the groundbreaking film *Flesh and the Devil* (1927) starring the amazing Greta Garbo, “Hollywood’s Sphinx” and AFI’s fifth greatest female star of all time. Musical accompaniment will be provided by Vladimir Volkov, one of St. Petersburg top stand-up bass players.

The next silent film stars to be featured in the festival are “America’s Sweetheart” Mary Pickford in *My Best Girl* (1927) in March and Lillian Gish in *Broken Blossoms* (1919) in April – both actresses first discovered by D.W. Griffith. Next up are early male heart-throbs “Latin Lover” Rudolph Valentino in his final film *The Son of the Sheik* (1926) in May and Douglas Fairbanks – the first “King of Hollywood” to his wife Mary Pickford’s Queen – in *The Black Pirate* (1926) in June. Hollywood’s “First Cowboy” – William S. Hart – will star in *Tumbleweeds* (1925) in July.

Each film will be introduced by a speaker who will provide context for modern audiences while explaining the great impact which immigrants – especially those from the former Russian Empire – had on Hollywood. After peaking with D.W. Griffith’s *Intolerance* (1916) in August, the festival will prepare for the shorter autumn days by switching into a lighter mode with films starring Hollywood’s greatest comedians: Buster Keaton (September), Harold Lloyd (October), and Charlie Chaplin (November).

The U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission was announced on July 6, 2009 by the President of the United States Barack Obama and the President of the Russian Federation Dmitri Medvedev, as a way to improve communication and cooperation between the governments of Russia and the United States. The Commission strives to increase the number of cultural exchanges, such as this film series, to increase mutual understanding between Russians and Americans.

For complete information on film showings, musicians, and tickets, please visit: www.rodinakino.ru