



THE MUSICKER'S GAZETTE



No. 7

WALKING BOXES PRODUCTIONS

THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI

Considered by many to be a benchmark in the history of cinema, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* is an undisputed classic. Learn some interesting facts about the film on Page 3...

LIVE ACTORS WITH SILENT FILMS, A JAPANESE ART FORM?

Perhaps this will be the first time you've ever seen a silent film with live actors, but it was something that would have been less strange to those living in the silent film era. In Japan it became a revered art form. Learn more on Page 4...

WALKING BOXES PLAYERS

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari is Walking Boxes' latest production and features a new player joining the usual suspects. Cast reflections upon their favorite cinematic villains are on Page 2...

THANKS

In addition to all our great sponsors (please support them with your business,) Walking Boxes wishes to publically thank Steve Roth, Steve Osman, the Fort Snelling Staff, and all the performers in the show. We're keeping Spence Jr. in our thoughts. Special thanks to MaryAnn Kristyniak. This show is dedicated to the memory of Scott Hosier.

BUSY YEAR FOR WALKING BOXES

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari is just one of the four unique shows Walking Boxes has presented over the past year. *The Musicker's Lantern*, *Donovan's Brain*, and *The Flyhard Jenkin's Show* were *Caligari's* three predecessors. There are sure to be more new shows in the coming year. Walking Boxes has been invited back to the Sibley House to do a new radio drama next fall and Flyhard is anxious to host another of his "live-off-the-air" programs. To keep up with all the happenings at Walking Boxes Productions, log on to www.walkingboxes.com



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THE CAST OF CALIGARI

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| David Simanek..... | Francis |
| Jeffry Nordin..... | Dr. Caligari |
| Christine Nordin..... | Jane |
| | various others |
| John Knauss..... | Alan |
| | various others |
| Alex West..... | Head Clerk |
| | Murder Suspect |
| | various others |
| David Geister..... | Dr. Olsen |
| J Roth..... | Monty |
| | Cesare |
| | piano |
| Paul Cameron..... | theremin |
| | drums |
| | sound effects |

Original script and score by J Roth

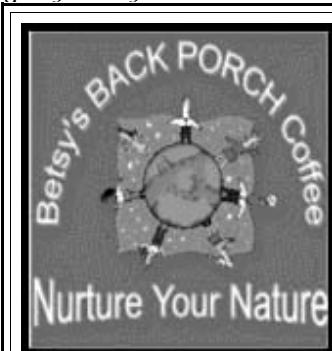
PERFECT VILLAINS

The character of Dr. Caligari as brought to life by Werner Krauss (and in our show, Jeff Nordin) is one of cinema's great villains. The Caligari Players were asked who some of their favorite cinematic villains are. Do their choices reveal anything about themselves?

Dave Simanek: Dr. Hannibal Lecter (played by Anthony Hopkins) in Silence of the Lambs, Snidely Whiplash (played by Hans Conried) in the original '60s version of Dudley Do-Right, and Jack Torrance (played by Jack Nicholson) in The Shining.

Alex West: Harry Lime (played by Orson Welles) in The Third Man, Frank (played by Henry Fonda) in Once Upon a Time in the West, Hans B (played by Peter Lorre) in M, Hank Quinlan (played by Orson Welles) in A Touch of Evil, the alien in Alien, and Darth Vader (voiced by James Earl Jones) in The Empire Strikes Back.

John Knauss: The Wicked Witch of the West (played by Margaret Hamilton) in The Wizard of Oz, Darth Vader, The Joker (played by Jack Nicholson) in Batman, Biff (played by Thomas F. Wilson) in Back to the Future, The Hawks team in The Mighty Ducks, and Captain Hook (played by Dustin Hoffman) in Hook.



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Dave Geister: Gollum (played by Andy Serkis) in Lord of the Rings, Norman Bates (played by Anthony Perkins) in Psycho, Jack Torrance in The Shining, and The Monster (played by Peter Boyle) in Young Frankenstein.

J Roth: Roy Batty (played by Rutger Hauer) in Blade Runner, Doyle Lonnegan (played by Robert Shaw) in The Sting, Salieri (played by F. Murray Abraham) in Amadeus, Spoor the Central Services fix-it man (played by Bob Hoskins) in Brazil, and HAL 9000 (played by Douglas Rain) in 2001: A Space Odyssey. The Wicked Witch of the West and Darth Vader also deserve mention.

Paul Cameron: Darth Vader in Star Wars, Clapet (played by Jean-Claude Dreyfus) in Delicatessen, Calibos (played by Neil McCarthy) in Clash of the Titans, Frank Booth (played by Dennis Hopper) in Blue Velvet, Alex (played by Malcolm McDowell) in Clockwork Orange, Tuco (played by Eli Wallach) in The Good the Bad and the Ugly, Keyser Soze in Usual Suspects, and the Wicked Witch of the West.

Chris Nordin: Prince John (played by Claude Rains) and the Sheriff of Nottingham (played by Melville Cooper) in the 1938 version of The Adventures of Robin Hood, Jonathan Brewster (played by Raymond Massey) in Arsenic and Old Lace, Sir Ravenhurst (played by Basil Rathbone) in The Court Jester, and Q (played by John de Lancie) in Star Trek. My favorite actors playing ' heavies ' would be: Basil Rathbone, Geoffrey Rush, James Cagney, and James Earl Jones.

Jeff Nordin: The actors James Mason and Christopher Lee in their various villainous manifestations are two of my favorites, and then there's Gollum from Lord of the Rings.

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HISTORICAL NOTES ABOUT THE FILM

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari was made in 1919. That was the year that the infamous Treaty of Versailles was signed, officially ending World War I. The film didn't premier in New York until April of 1921. There it met with critical acclaim. To the intelligentsia, Caligari was seen as a great achievement in the growth of cinema. (Some might liken its impact to that which Star Wars had in 1977 upon its release; nothing like it had been seen before and it inspired the rise of its genre.) Caligari received quite a different reception in its Los Angeles debut. There the film was advertised as a European film, since anti-German feelings were still strong after the war. The film's nation of origin was soon discovered though and many Los Angeles newspapers determined the film to be a threat to the American film industry. They dismissed it as a waste of moviegoers' money in support of a country that had just wrecked the world with war. The Los Angeles Examiner (owned by William Randolph Hearst) called for a ban on all German movies. A mob of two thousand people, the core of which was formed by the Hollywood chapter of the American Legion, marched on Miller's Theatre in Los Angeles when Caligari premiered there. The film was quickly removed from the theater.

Those decrying the film because it was made by the "German enemy", need not have been so up-in-arms. The film was anything but a showing of German nationalistic pride. Screenwriters Carl Mayer and Hans Janowitz (the later, a war veteran reputedly tortured by a military psychologist) were angry that the common people of their country had been dragged into a horrific war by their leaders and wrote the script as such (Caligari, representing the leaders, Cesare as the "sleep-walking" populace.) In the writers' view, post-war Germany was being destroyed by authoritarianism and they intended their film to be a warning. This theme was lost to most though, even by many of its avid admirers, who instead marveled at the brilliantly-conceived sets.

Of the 525 films released in the year 1921, only fifty still exist today, one of those being The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari.



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EXPRESSIONISM GERMAN STYLE

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari is often referred to as one of the great German Expressionistic films (another famous one being Nosferatu.) But what exactly is meant by this term Expressionism?

Though difficult to describe, one might begin by saying Expressionism is centered upon the artist's vision rather than on the viewer's impression. Instead of creating an objective or realistic image, the idea is that the artist seeks to reflect an emotional or psychological state, or perhaps to provoke such a state through distortion and exaggeration of the image. It's less about what those viewing actually see and more about what they feel.

German Expressionism is filled with dark images, sharp contrasting figures, jagged geometry, and chiaroscuro. In Caligari, these artistic devices are thought to express the despair felt in Germany after the First World War. An interesting note about the expressionistic sets used in Caligari is that, because of the limited funds available to the filmmakers, they simply used flat cardboard cut-outs to simulate sets and cityscapes. Due more to post-war electricity use limitation than to artistic vision, shadows were painted onto many of the sets to avoid using extensive lighting.

It should also be noted that acting can be considered expressionistic. Werner Krauss (as Caligari) and Conrad Veidt (as Cesare) conform to the Expressionist conception by reducing their gestures to those almost exclusively linear (as opposed to sweeping or curving motions.) Thus their actions are largely congruent with the broken angles of the sets.

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LIVE ACTORS WITH SILENT FILMS

During the early decades of motion pictures, film exhibitors experimented with having entertainers sit next to the screen to provide commentary and dialog. These narrators would travel around with the film and usually give a lecture about the film and describe the incidents contained there in. In the West, these narrators were eventually replaced by title cards (and lack of interest), but in Japan (and Korea, Taiwan and Thailand to a lesser extent) the narrators became an integral part of the film-viewing experience. Many of the films first shown in Japan were from Europe and America, so a narrator was necessary to translate the title cards and make sense of the stories which were culturally opaque. These narrators were called benshi. A number of the most famous were heavy drinkers, woman chasers and notorious libertines. They often wore colorful clothes, commanded attention and were frequently billed in larger type than the film itself. Sometimes these benshi ventriloquized the characters in the movie, sometimes they just narrated the action, sometimes they recited poetry based upon the scenery. Often musical accompaniment would be present as well. The benshi became such an integral part of the film-watching process in Japan, that it was a good ten years or more after the rise of talkies in the West, that sound pictures rose in popularity in Japan. As late as 1942, 14% of the films exhibited in Japan were still silents.

Probably the greatest reason for the benshi's success in Japan is that the silver screen was viewed as an offshoot of the dramatic stage. Traditional Japanese theater is rarely without a mediating voice, from the chorus in a noh play, to the joruri narrator in a puppet doll drama, to the gidayu narrator in kabuki.

It is said, a great benshi performer never takes away from whatever the big screen offers, they enhance the viewing of the film and fill it with textures and layers of interpretation. Walking Boxes Productions hopes to hold this same kind of integrity with their presentation of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*.

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FOLEY ART

The art of adding sound effects to film began back in the late 1920s when "the talkies" were born. Microphones at that time were only strong enough to pick up the dialog of the actors. Filmmakers felt the final soundtrack was too sterile, so sound effects were added. It was Jack Foley who pioneered the art of sound effects for film. It was his idea to project the finished scenes of a film in a studio while simultaneously recording the corresponding sound effects. Jack felt that every actor had his or her own way of walking. He tried to capture the nuances of each actor's individual manner of walking as his own foot-steps were recorded in the studio. Some actors, hearing and seeing the difference between Jack's steps done for them and another sound man's efforts, began to demand that only Jack do their walk. Jack was the first to bring in produce and other oddities to create certain effects. For example, a blow to the head being reproduced by smacking a watermelon; or a set of keys and their rattle becoming the chain mail of marching Romans. Jack Foley was never once listed in a film's credits, but the art form which he helped to pioneer now bears his name.

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