

THIS IS THE OUTWARD AND UPWARD STRAINING LIFE-FEELING . . . . .

THE INTOXICATED SOUL WILLS TO FLY ABOVE SPACE AND TIME. AN INEFFABLE LONGING TEMPTS HIM TO INDEFINABLE HORIZONS. MAN WOULD FREE HIMSELF OF THE EARTH, RISE INTO THE INFINITE, LEAVE THE BOUNDS OF THE EARTH, AND CIRCLE IN THE UNIVERSE OF SPACE AMONGST THE STARS. THAT WHICH THE GLOWING AND SOARING INWARDNESS OF ST. BERNARD SOUGHT AT THE BEGINNING, THAT WHICH GRÜNEWALD AND REMBRANDT CONCEIVED IN THEIR BACKGROUNDS, AND BEETHOVEN IN THE TRANS-EARTHLY TONES OF HIS LAST QUARTETS, COMES BACK NOW IN THE INTELLECTUAL INTOXICATION OF THE INVENTIONS THAT CROWD ONE UPON ANOTHER. HENCE THE FANTASTIC TRAFFIC THAT CROSSES THE CONTINENTS IN A FEW DAYS, THAT PUTS ITSELF ACROSS OCEANS IN FLOATING CITIES, THAT BORES THROUGH MOUNTAINS, RUSHES ABOUT IN SUBTERRANEAN LABYRINTHS, USES THE STEAM-ENGINE TILL ITS LAST POSSIBILITIES HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED, AND THEN PASSES ON TO THE GAS-ENGINE, AND FINALLY RAISES ITSELF ABOVE THE ROADS AND RAILWAYS AND FLIES IN THE AIR; HENCE IT IS THAT THE SPOKEN WORD IS SENT IN ONE MOMENT OVER ALL THE OCEANS; HENCE COMES THE AMBITION TO BREAK ALL RECORDS AND BEAT ALL DIMENSIONS, TO BUILD GIANT HALLS FOR GIANT MACHINES, VAST SHIPS AND BRIDGE-SPANS, BUILDINGS THAT DELIRIOUSLY SCRAPE THE CLOUDS, FABULOUS FORCES PRESSED TOGETHER TO A FOCUS TO OBEY THE HAND OF A CHILD, STAMPING AND QUIVERING AND DRONING WORKS OF STEEL AND GLASS IN WHICH TINY MAN MOVES AS UNLIMITED MONARCH AND, AT THE LAST, FEELS NATURE AS BENEATH HIM.

AND THESE MACHINES BECOME IN THEIR FORMS LESS AND EVER LESS HUMAN, MORE ACETIC, MYSTIC, ESOTERIC . . . . .



Oswald Spengler.

"DER UNTERGANG DES ABENDLANDES"

Creative Film Associates Presents  
"A Survey of German Cinema"  
Program 6  
September 24, 1947

METROPOLIS  
1926

Produced by Ufa. Directed by Fritz Lang. Scenario by Thea von Harbou. Photography by Karl Freund and Günther Rittau. Settings: Otte Hunte, Erich Kettelhut and Karl Vollbrecht. With Brigitte Helm as Maria; Gustav Frölich as Freder; Alfred Abel as John Fredersen; Rudolph Klein-Rogge as Rotwang; Theodor Loos as Joseph; Heinrich George as #7; Fritz Rasp as The Priest; Valeska Gert as the Robot.

The idea of METROPOLIS was conceived by Fritz Lang when he first saw the skyline of New York at twilight, coming into the harbor on his first visit to the United States in 1925.

In METROPOLIS Lang attempted to incorporate the panorama of new ideas and modern tendencies that were felt particularly in Germany: The new and fabulous rôle of the Machine in Western culture, with such typical products of the twentieth century as zeppelins, rocket-cars, and racing aeroplanes; the new motifs in architecture, with their panoply of parallelograms, geometrical designs, and use of steel and concrete; as well as modern painting, with its experimental cubism, expressionism, and surrealism.

The film METROPOLIS, at once of the past of legends and sorcerers and of the future of fantastic scientific marvels, remains a remarkable conception: In it we see summed up with almost frightening completeness the failings and greatness of the German soul.

A Note on the Scoring of METROPOLIS

Except for an instance, this film has been scored with the music of Anton Bruckner.

Differing from our usual aim in the previous films in this series, of presenting musical patterns of dramatic variation to characterize changes of mood, action and setting --- In this particular work, METROPOLIS, we desire to express through the music of Bruckner the spirit of the abstract.

We believe that the composer's art --- rejoicing in half-lit visions of a greater future --- contains the finest musical expression that exists for an enhancing of this film's intrinsic significance.

This music and this cinema are frequently filled with climactic utterances, deep agitations, slow evolvments, and intangible silences; however unusual it may seem, we find in it a sincerity, a profound faith, that banishes all considerations of artificialities, that strikes within us a warning: "Listen, here is something important!" And so, the music integrates itself with the theme --- an integration that only German culture uniquely achieves by the powerful alliance between each of its artistic fields -- It is music that forms --- from the hushed tremolo of its awakenings to its sublime conclusions --- a complex progression towards a positive, utopic state.

Robert Raphael.