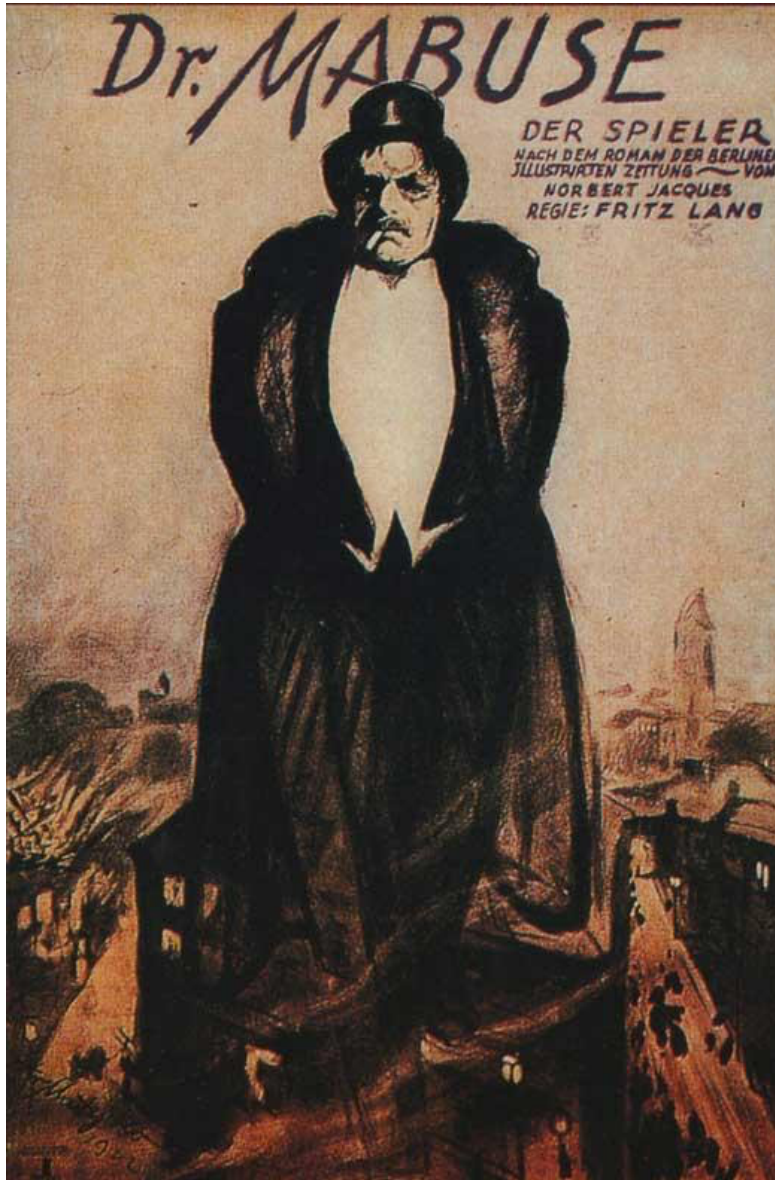


## HISTORICAL ESSAYS, REFLECTIONS AND REVIEWS



“...*Dr. Mabuse [der Spieler]* was a sensational film and a success. But the reason for its success was not its sensationalism, which to some extent remained modestly in the background. It was successful for its utilization of film as an image of its time, or more accurately, in the appraisal of the film as a document of its time. And that, in my opinion touches on another, more important factor of the film.

Naïve sensational films, such as the American Wild West films, show us contemporary people in a fairy tale like primitivism of sensibility. The film as a document of its time (a genre for which *Mabuse* was only an earthbound forerunner) shows contemporary man—or rather, must show him—with a kind of excess I attempted to show in *Die Niebelungen*. Not a man from 1924; rather *the* man from 1924. For man, represented as a concept, must be larger than life in his sensibility and actions, even if he is small and shabby. He requires a pedestal of stylization, just as bygone centuries do. We do not erect monuments on flat asphalt.

To make them striking, we elevate them over the heads of passersby. Hence, for people who both make and watch films, film assumes two aspects: on the one hand, films are judged against they most like to watch, and here one can draw very clear conclusions for the individual and the crowd alike; on the other hand, there is film itself, which is an image of its time, emerging from our time. I do not just mean contemporary Europe. I mean all cultured nation where people live and make films.”

Fritz Lang, “Kitsch—Sensation—Culture and Film” First published in Edgar Beyfuss and Alex Kossowsky, eds., *Das Kulturfilmbuch* (Berlin: Carl P. Chryselius’scher Verlag, 1924), 28-31. Translated by Alex H. Bush.



***Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler, I. Teil***

***Der Film (Berlin) vol. 7, no. 18, 30 Apr 1922, p. 52.***

The first part of this eagerly anticipated film is characterized by very attentive acting and outstanding performances. In addition, there are excellent technical qualities that elevate this crime film far above its peers. You have to remember that it is basically a detective film, for which the all-dominating power of the criminal and not the authority of the state used against him sets the tone. The film is based on the novel of the same name by Norbert Jacques, which caused a stir in the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* at the time. The adaptation for the film was done by Thea von Harbou, and the direction was in the hands of Fritz Lang, whose name has been among the first in his field since *A Tired Death* [*Destiny*].

The aim of this film must have been to show the compelling genius of the criminal Dr. Mabuse that ran like a red thread through the plot, presenting his irresistibility as well as his superiority as almost self-evident qualities and talents. As with any work of art, a certain finishing touches were therefore necessary with regard to the overall effect. As is well known, film, unlike stage acting, has only visual impressions at its disposal. The audience's excitement takes place purely through the eye, and it should never be forgotten that any stretching always carries with it the danger of falling out of tempo. On stage, the word creates, in film, the image creates. The effect of the picture arises not only from its content, but also from its movement. The present film

also takes this requirement into account, although in places it could use some cuts. Cuts, to understand it correctly, not as shortenings of existing processes, but many processes could have been preserved as a whole, but enlivened a little. That's what was meant by tempo above.

The film's unconditional success with the public is not so much due to the peculiarity of the criminal figure, but rather to its form. Some aspects even seem implausible. But the fabulously concentrated performances of Rudolf Klein-Rogge as Dr. Mabuse and Bernhard Goetzke as the public prosecutor and Aud Egede Nissen in connection with the already mentioned advantages of a technical and photographic nature – excellent night studio pictures of streets! – are the ones who lead the movie to success in the first place. The other roles, played by Paul Richter, Gertrude Welcker, Lydia Potechina, von Schlettow and Alfred Abel, are also very well cast.





**H.W. [Hans Wollenberg]**

**Dr. Mabuse, II. Teil**

***Lichtbild-Bühne* (Berlin) vol. 15, no. 22, 27 May 1922, p. 35.**

An unusual thing became a fact here: the film ends in a more literary, psychological, and subtle way than the novel. Here: seaplane—acrobatics; external cinematic shock effect. There, in Thea von Harbou's screenplay: the mental and spiritual collapse of a superhuman, supercriminal, superhypnotist. A logical and internally justified ending in a minor key — at the same time the strongest, most convincing scene played by the leading actor Klein-Rogge, who, despite all his skills at disguise, lacks the demonic quality that would elevate the film villain to the status of a darkly brilliant “player with people.” Only twice does Mabuse exude a demonic, uncanny effect (when he unexpectedly confronts his pursuer in his own room and then when, in the guise of the mass hypnotist Weltmann, he wields the instrument of a mass audience); in both scenes, Lang's outstanding directing technique plays a major role in this choice of effect. There can be no better compliment one can pay to the direction and photography (Carl Hoffmann) than to say that the second part is absolutely on par with the brilliant first part. In one respect, it even



surpasses it: in the acting. And Alfred Abel definitely wins the race here, whose great scenes (supported, of course, by incredible directing and filming techniques) are among the best performances in film. The Aud Egede Nissen death scene is also masterful; Goetzke has very strong parts. Forster-Larrinaga, Schlettow, John, and Huszar deliver masterpieces. What Hunte and Stahl-Urach have achieved in terms of set design in the studio deserves the highest admiration.

A word about the overall impression of this Mabuse film, which, despite its apparent division into two parts, forms an organic whole. The lasting impression left on the Ufa-Palast on both premiere nights proved that something great and powerful has been created here through great skill, virtuoso technique, and artistic sensitivity. Director Fritz Lang and all those who worked with him have proven that a film based entirely on criminal motives can become a work of substance through the way the material is handled; here, too, it is true that it is the tone (*Ton*) that makes the music.



## **Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler**

**F–n., Film-Kurier, Nr. 96, 28.4.1922**

The secret of the resounding success achieved last night by this first part of “Dr. Mabuse” seems to me to lie primarily in the fact that it is a typical contemporary film. Historical films often have a lot going for them in terms of visuals, with their magnificent costumes, but they usually lack the immediate appeal of films set in the present day. Here, on the other hand, the audience recognizes itself in its environment and — is delighted.

According to the program summary, Dr. Mabuse is the epitome of a brilliant criminal, perhaps even more than that: he is the embodiment of our contemporary zeitgeist, born out of the post-war period. He is definitely a genius, and not the only one in this work. Even more true to life is the owner of a nightclub, who began his brilliant career as a seller of jumping jacks, safely survived the war behind barred windows, and is now a big shot. Life in our big-city nightclubs is also aptly portrayed, with dancers, hidden gambling clubs, cocaine dens, etc. One of these fashionable nightclubs is designed with somewhat contrived sophistication; in the event of an “incident,” a retractable ceiling transforms the gambling operation into a harmless dance hall in a matter of seconds. Above it all hovers Dr. Mabuse in his many guises; he is a jack of all trades, with connections everywhere. He controls the stock market as well as the nighttime gambling dens, and when things go wrong and the police show up, he always knows how to make himself scarce at just the right moment. In short, he really fulfills all the conditions that one must reasonably expect of such a genius. According to the program summary, Dr. Mabuse is the epitome of a brilliant criminal, perhaps even more than that. When he is called the “Great Gambler,” it does not mean that he gambles with dirty money and is merely the hero of gambling clubs. Rather, he gambles with people's destinies and, in doing so, unconsciously treats himself most cruelly.

The technical execution of the film can also be described as ingenious. The buildings designed by Stahl-Urach and Otto Hunte are unique and modern in every single scene. Innovative ideas are combined very successfully here, which is a welcome sign of the flourishing state of our film set design. Added to this is the photography with its virtuoso treatment of light and shadow. A few night scenes shot in the studio received special applause, as did some other tricks, such as Dr. Mabuse's head growing larger and larger as he stares at the audience with an eerily blank gaze.

In terms of acting, Rudolf Klein-Rogge gave an outstanding performance in the title role: with his many consistently successful masks, he is truly unparalleled. But he was not just an empty mask; his facial expressions were also extremely expressive. The second brilliant performance was given by Aud Egede Nissen, who is given the grand stage she deserves for the first time here. She played the dancer Cara Carozza in a sophisticated manner, with the utmost

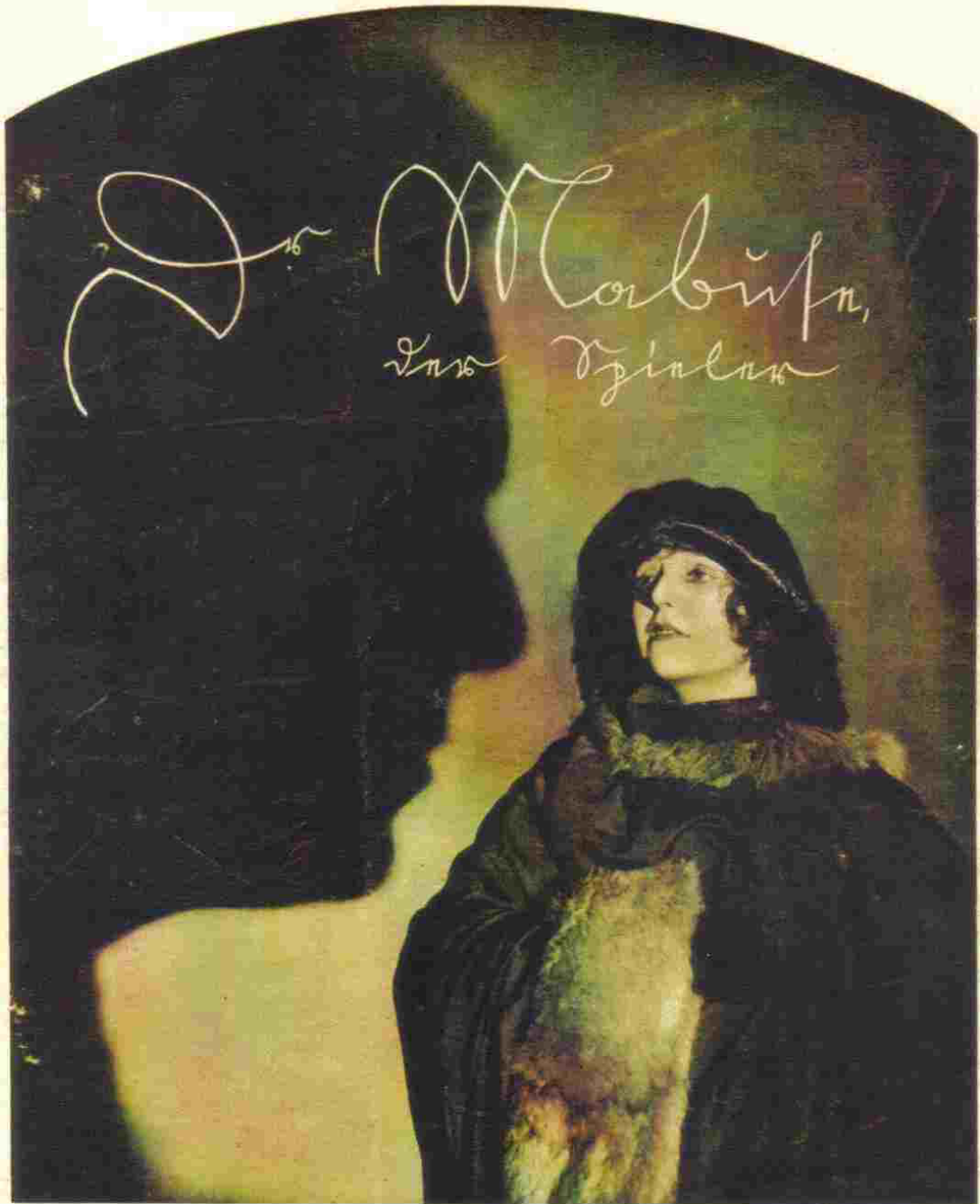
refinement and yet soulfully. Gertrud Welcker, on the other hand, did not get beyond her problematic batting of the eyelashes. Bernhard Goetzke gave an impressive performance as the public prosecutor, Paul Richter as a young, elegant, slightly tragic bon vivant, and Forster-Larrinaga as Mabuse's decadent, cocaine-addicted secretary. (...)



Nr. 82  
Jahrgang 1922

Illustrierter  
*Film-Kurier*

Einzelheft  
1.50 Mk.



*Rudolf Klein-Rogge als Dr. Mabuse und Aud Egede-Nissen als Cara Carozza*



**Eugen Tannenbaum**

**Dr Mabuse der Spieler**

**4.28.1922, B.Z. am Mittag**

Film is, at its best, a moving image of the present. As such it is sensation, adventure, concentrated zeitgeist all rolling at breakneck speed. It is a play (*Spiel*) and mirror of life. Based on this insight, director Fritz Lang has developed the new Uco film of the Decla bioscope, *Dr Mabuse, der Spieler*, with the assistance of Thea von Harbou, who with a confident touch has adapted the story of the novel by Norbert Jacques, which was first published in the "Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung" and then as an Ullstein book....

It is not the course of action that is decisive for the film's success – which in its rousing frenzy bursts the closed form of the drama – but the episode. It is not the events in their totality, but symbolic individual events as the most vivid expression of the time, held together by a purposeful artistic creative will, by rhythm and tempo, by style and mood. Concentration of dance and crime, of gambling mania and cocaine epidemic, of jazz band and raid. No essential symptom of the post-war years is missing. Stock exchange maneuvers, occult swindle, street trading and splurge, smuggling, hypnosis and counterfeiting, expressionism and murder and manslaughter.

In this brazen frenzy of dehumanized humanity, there is no meaning, no logic—only play. But while the others indulge him at the bar table, Dr Mabuse plays with people and human fates. Everything else is only a means to an end for him. A brilliant criminal in countless masks and transformations. As a cool stock market fixer in the era of financial chaos, as a drunken sailor and owner of a counterfeit trade, as an elegant bon vivant in a gambling club and then a professorial old man. His will governs everyone and everything. His gaze is an order that no one can escape who enters his orbit. It is not about money and exploitation, but about making people the tools of his lust for rulership, of his conquering greed.

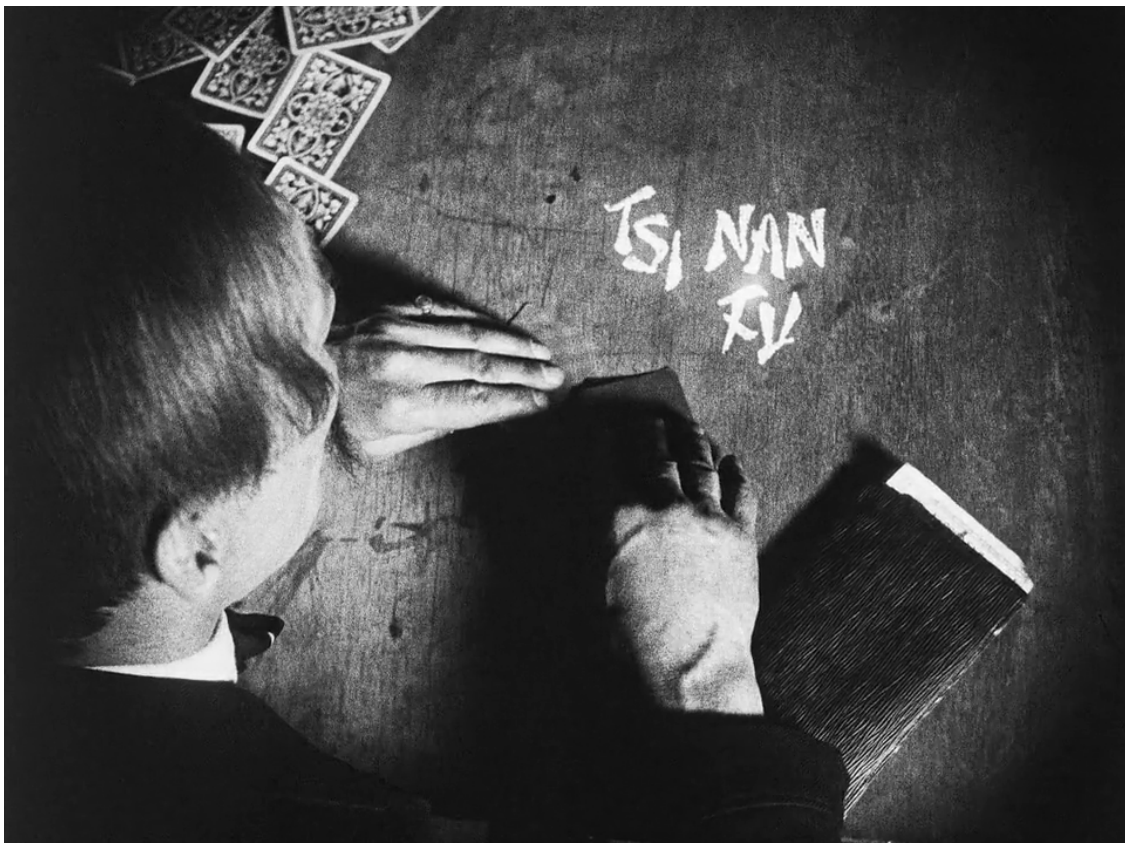
Dr. Mabuse is Rudolf Klein-Rogge. He has a hypnotic, mesmerizing eye for the role, paralyzing people and binding them to his will, and he knows how to make the numerous transformations required by his adventurous life believable.

It was a fortunate idea not to give the characters in this film individual traits, but to mark them out as typical representatives of a certain class of contemporary life: the weakling and cocaine addict Spoerri (Forster-Larrinaga), the insignificant millionaire's son Hull (Paul Richter), the compliant creatures Georg and Pesch (Hans A. v. Schlettow and Georg John) and all the other soldiers of fortune, whores and profiteers who are chased through this film, the pupil of the great gambler, the dancer Cara Carozza (Aud Egede-Nissen) and Gertrude Welcker as Countess Told, with heavy eyelids over tired eyes, with the casual gesture of a resigned nature,

melancholic, tender, her morbid husband Alfred Abel and the sober, correct public prosecutor von Wenk (Bernard Goetzke), who solely embodies the sense of justice.

But it is not only the people who are a typical expression of our day, but also their lifestyles and the environment in which they appear. Thus, the scenic nature of the film, the architecture, an astonishing achievement by the architects Stahl-Urach and Otto Hunte, takes on increased significance: the expressionist rooms that house Count Told's art collection, the bizarre furnishings of a mundane yet secret gaming club, the sober office of the public prosecutor, a dive bar and a luxury hotel.

The technology of the crank mechanism (Karl Hoffman's brilliant photography!) celebrates triumphs in this film. For the first time, the problem of illuminated nocturnal streets has found its solution. When the glowing eyes of speeding cars sparkle through the night, when the view through opera glasses of the vaudeville stage becomes increasingly clear, the nuances of light and shadow—that alone makes this cranked-up contemporary picture, the first part of which was received with great applause yesterday at the Ufa-Palast am Zoo, well worth seeing. Also astonishing is the way in which the intertitles are used as a vivid means of expression, how Dr. Mabuse's hypnotic gaze subjugates not only his victims, but also the audience, how mental processes are projected outwardly. All in all, a happy union of art and cinema, of culture and technology.



## **Vorwärts, Berlin Filmschau 30.4.1922**

Film as a time archive. This is, after all, something new. The reflections of an epoch are immortalized in celluloid, preserved in the moving image for posterity, where they are conveyed to the rhythm of our present with far greater immediacy than a book. This is the new Uco Decla Bioscop film that Thea von Harbou wrote based on the novel *Dr. Mabuse* by Norbert Jacques. He was seen in the Ufa Palast am Zoo. Dr. Mabuse, a richly romantic appearance, is intended as a figure uniquely derived from the disorientation of the our present time. As a human being who, in a desert of weaklings, of degenerate creatures and those who flutter without direction, dominates all people through the tremendous will to power. A gambler who plays with money, and with fate.

It could be something impressive in such a figure, – 'Dr. Mabuse, the Gambler', however, is not portrayed as an anti-social individualist, but as a mean, calculating criminal.

The means to power lies in nothing more than a hypnotic talent caricatured to the point of improbability, even impossibility. One does not believe his power victories and only recognizes his superiority over the film censors, to whom he has successfully explained away the venerable prejudice against all hypnosis in films. His actions in the context of a plot that is not exactly clearly rolled out and not exactly dramatically and logically conducted, soon set the pace of a not overly exciting detective story, in which a rather perplexed antagonist does not even allow a liberating smile at the witchcraft of the run-of-the-mill detective masters who triumph without resistance.

The appeal of the film therefore lies in another area: precisely in the organizational interweaving of typical contemporary phenomena into the events. The swindlers and prostitutes of the present, the raids and exploitation of gambling clubs, the whole gambling frenzy of the time, the Stock Exchange frenzy, the occult swindle, the nocturnal smuggling service, the mendacity of a degenerate society, all this is skillfully balanced and provides the foil to the untrue, but nevertheless contemporary figure of Dr. Mabuse.

The director Fritz Lang, who, often standing on shaky ground, has certainly done quality work. He created contemporary color with great dedication, strong powers of observation and precision. He also kept the actors in a variety of masks,. Always expressive, although somewhat tiring in the eternal spell of Dr. Mabuse, Mr, Klein-Rogge, his weak counterpart Bernhard Goetzke and the women's roles, Aud Ergede Nissen and the beautiful, elegant-looking Gertrude Welcker....

A real joy and surprise is the photography of Karl Hoffman. He has finally brought the successful, astonishing night shot to film. Without a single picture having been tinted with color, he photographed purely for mood and still achieved the finest shading. Some ideas are of the greatest charm, such as the eyes of Dr. Mabuse rushing towards the viewer, the suggestively ever-growing writing, the view through an opera glass.... This film belongs to the photographer.



**Die Welt am Montag. 1. 5. 1922**

This Film [...] is a document of our times, an excellent image of fashionable life with its passion for gambling (*Spielleidenschaft*) and dancing, its hypernervousness and decadence, its expressionism and its occult currents. Thanks to Thea von Harbou's film adaptation of the [...] widely read novel; with superb success Fritz Lang led the game. With sharp outlines Rudolf Klein-Rogge brought Mabuse to life.



*Variety Magazine*, Dec. 31, 1921

**Dr. Mabuse der Spieler**

Dr Mabuse, the Gambler, from the novel by Norbert Jacques, is a good average popular thriller - dime novel stuff in a \$100,000 setting - but sufficiently well camouflaged to get by with a class audience.

*Dr Mabuse*, [\*the Gambler\*](#), from the novel by Norbert Jacques, is a good average popular thriller – dime novel stuff in a \$100,000 setting – but sufficiently well camouflaged to get by with a class audience.

The story builds itself about the character of Dr. Mabuse (Rudolf Klein-Rogge), the great gambler, the player with the souls of men and women. He runs an underground counterfeiting establishment, and with this money starts all his enterprises. In the first reel of the film he appears as a stock exchange speculator, stealing an important commercial treaty.

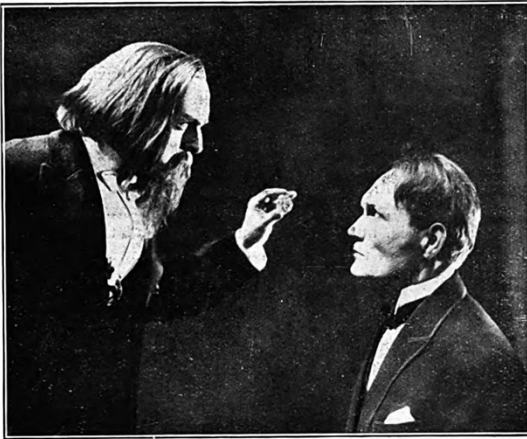
To get money out of a rich young man he sets Carozza (Aud Egede-Nissen), a dancer, on his trail; then hypnotizing him, he wins large sums of money from him at his club. Mabuse meets Countess Told (Gertrude Welcker) and desires her. He fixes the mark of cheating at cards on her husband, and in the ensuing excitement steals her away.

And so it goes on, a bit confusedly but generally with speed and life. The best moments are achieved by the conflict between Mabuse and the attorney, Von Wenk (Bernhard Goetzke), who is trying to uncover him. The first part [*Der Grosse Spieler*, 120 mins.] ends with the stealing of the countess and the second [*Inferno*, 122 mins.] with the finding of Mabuse, insane, in his own counterfeiting cellar, where he has been trapped by Von Wenk.

The film is somewhat hurt by the casting of Klein-Rogge for the title role; he is physically too small and not a clever enough actor to make one forget this. Paul Richter as a millionaire and Goetzke as Von Wenk do very nicely. And the Carozza of Egede-Nissen and the countess of Welcker are fine pieces of film work.

The interiors of Stahl-Urach and Otto Hunte are sumptuous and tasteful, and Carl Hoffmann's photography generally adequate. The direction of Fritz Lang has moments – but Lang somewhat negates his good technical effects by twenty forty-word captions of a ludicrous unconciseness.

[Two-part pic was released in the US in 1927 in a single 63-min. version, with florid intertitles in poor English.]



SCENE FROM "DR. MABUSE."

### Doctor Mabuse.

Wonderful study of a master criminal that is packed with sensations from start to finish—a picture that is a terrific showman's attraction.

DECLA BIOSCOPE PRODUCTION.

(Released by Granger's).

Length, 14,000 ft., in two parts of 7,000 ft. each.

Release Date, Not Yet Fixed.

IT is doubtful if a more amazing film has ever been screened than the picture of "Doctor Mabuse," the Great Unknown, which Granger's showed to a vast audience on two successive days of this week. Not only is this picture a wonderful study of a master criminal, but the production is so extraordinary that one is held literally spellbound by its superb artistry. "Doctor Mabuse," as our readers probably know, is a German picture produced by the Decla Bioscope Company, and is 14,000 feet in length. It will, therefore, be released in two weekly parts of 7,000 feet each, and this is how it was presented to the trade on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The story of "Doctor Mabuse" is, in brief, a contest of wits between a master hypnotist criminal and a brilliant Chief of Police. Throughout fourteen reels of the most stupendous drama this great battle proceeds, leading up to the most thrilling and tremendous climax that can possibly be imagined. We



SCENE FROM "MIXED FACES."

# Review of Ne!

## All About This

have referred to "Doctor Mabuse" as an extraordinary film. It is doubtful if one can adequately do justice to the amount of excitement and sensation that one gets as this picture unfolds itself.

Here, there is no mere throwing sensations in to bolster up a weak story, for this picture has the merit of telling an extraordinary story that is perfectly wonderful, inasmuch as every episode always appears logical. Not only does every scene carry conviction, but with its cubist and futurist settings and wonderful lightings, the appeal of the film is tremendous. The backgrounds are full of odd formations, and the whole effect, coupled with the great acting ability of the whole of the cast, is something entirely out of the ordinary.

The story of "Dr. Mabuse," briefly, is as follows:

In his insatiable desire for adventure and sensation, the fearless Dr. Mabuse is forced to adopt numberless disguises to avoid detection, but through them all he is able to dominate his victims and compel them to carry out his schemes. George, his chauffeur; Spoerri, his valet; Cara Carozza, his decoy, are but clay in his hands. Against him is set de Witt, Chief of Police, who, because of many set-backs, is more than ever determined to effect the arch-crook's arrest. In the pursuit of his desire he gains entrance to a gambling hell frequented by Mabuse, and makes friends with the wealthy Edgar Hull. Mabuse learns this and resolves to do away with him, managing to effect this while de Witt is phoning for the police. Carozza, who has entrapped Hull, is herself arrested and imprisoned. She refuses to give Mabuse away, but is, nevertheless, poisoned by him in fear that she may betray him.

De Witt, still pursuing Mabuse, meets, and falls in love with, Countess Tolst, for whom Mabuse, meeting her at a spiritualist seance, conceives a great passion. He is invited to a card party at her husband's house, hypnotises her husband, forces him to cheat, and when the Count is exposed and the Countess faints, he profits by the confusion to carry her off to his waiting car and thence to his house, where a room has been prepared for her.

The Countess, true and faithful, resists all Mabuse's attempts to win her; and demands to be allowed to return to her husband. Count Tolst, unable to understand why he cheated, interprets his wife's absence as desertion for his dishonorable conduct. He consults de Witt, who asks if his guests were friends of long standing, the reply being that all were old friends with the exception of Dr. Mabuse, who was not playing. Count Tolst decides to consult a mental specialist, and approaches Dr. Mabuse. The doctor-crook, by suggestion, so convinces him that he cannot live any longer that finally Tolst dies by his own hand. With the husband dead, Mabuse is confident of his possession of the wife, but she still refuses to surrender herself, hoping for rescue at the hands of de Witt.

Mabuse then concentrates attention upon the destruction of de Witt, and disguised, suggests to the Chief of Police that a certain Sandor Weltmann, a hypnotist, is responsible for the death of Count Tolst. Mabuse finally persuades de Witt to attend one of Weltmann's experimental evenings. Weltmann (in reality Mabuse disguised) manages to obtain de Witt's services for an experiment. He informs the audience that he has written on a sheet of paper several things for de Witt to do. He has written that de Witt shall take a certain lady, who

# w Productions.

## Week's Pictures.

is also on the platform, back to her seat, leave the hall, enter a waiting motor car and drive at full speed into the Mellor stone quarry! He hypnotises de Witt, who, carrying out his instructions, leaves the hall and drives off in the waiting car.

De Witt's men, suspicious, follow their chief in another car, overtaking him in time to save him from certain death. He recovers, and realises that the Great Unknown is no other than Dr. Mabuse. He places a cordon round Mabuse's house, but endeavouring to force an entrance finds the house better defended than he anticipated. Going to the telephone, de Witt learns from Mabuse that the Countess is a prisoner in the house.

A terrific fight ensues, and de Witt finally calls out the military. At length, with the aid of hand grenades, he blows open the door. He finds the Countess little the worse for her terrible experience. The entire gang is captured, and in a thrilling climax Dr. Mabuse is discovered insane in the company of blind men forging sheaves of paper marks.

In the whole 14,000 feet of this picture there is not a single dull moment. The producer, Fritz Lang, has had a remarkable scenario to work upon, and in consequence has given a photoplay that will undoubtedly be a terrific success with the public. The scenes in which "Doctor Mabuse" plays with his victims, in the first part as a gambler and more particularly in the latter episodes as a hypnotist, are masterpieces of screen art.

One great scene in the film, where Mabuse hypnotises the Chief of Police and sends him rushing madly in a motor car to destruction, only to be saved at the crucial moment by his friends, literally sweeps one off his feet. The tremendous ending to this production, where law and order triumph and Mabuse finishes in a corner's den, having lost his reason, is a fitting climax to a great picture. Nothing like it has ever been seen on the screen, and one is absolutely held spellbound by the extraordinary force of its portrayal and sensation piled upon sensation.

The acting in this picture is remarkable. Rudolf Klein-Rogge, who takes the principal part of Doctor Mabuse, gives a study of a master criminal that is fascinating in the extreme. His disguises and his acting in every scene in which he appears are masterly, and can be accounted as one of the finest performances on the screen. This talented actor never over-acts any scene, and whatever the disguise he wears, his make-up is perfect. He is supported by a fine cast, prominent amongst which is Bernhard Goetzke, who enacts the part of de Witt, the Chief of Police. This actor gives a dignified representation to his part and carries conviction throughout the entire picture. Again, we have a performance that is never overdone, and in the many great scenes where he is tracking down Mabuse, the tall figure of the Chief of Police is always fascinating by reason of the restraint with which he portrays this character.

Cara Carozza, the dancer, and the Countess Tolst, played respectively by Oud Egede Missen and Gertrude Welcker, are extremely well enacted, whilst Alfred Abel, as Count Tolst, in one scene in particular, reveals wonderful histrionic powers. The whole of the acting in the entire picture is something out of the ordinary, whilst the settings are utterly unique. The resources of the famous Decca Studio must have been taxed to the uttermost to give such settings as are seen in this picture, the whole effect of which, undoubtedly, adds enormously to its attractiveness.



SCENE FROM "SHADOWS."

Mr. F. Lang, the producer, has made of "Doctor Mabuse" one of the greatest showmen's pictures ever screened, and we venture to predict when it is shown to the public will stand out as one of the season's big successes. If ever there was a picture that lent itself to special exploitation, then it is "Doctor Mabuse," and Granger's, who are handling this production, should be exceedingly busy during the next few weeks.

### Shadows.

Lon Chaney's wonderful characterisation in a charming story that ought to make big money for exhibitors.

RELEASED BY WALTURDAW.

Length, 6,700 ft.

Release Date, Immediate.

THERE is a great temptation in reviewing this picture to dwell on the excellent presentation it received at the New Gallery on Wednesday last, when Charles Penley was responsible for the actual presentation, and Louis Levy for the excellent musical co-efficient, but just a word or two must suffice. The very best use was made of the resources of the orchestra and effects, while a very pleasing feature of the screening was the suffusing of the screen with a blue light from behind, which gave a beautiful softness to the picture.

Not that the film relied in any way upon these aids for its appeal. The story is an unusual one, and its handling calls for special praise. Throughout there are little touches that are



SCENE FROM "RIDIN' WILD."

# LIS TO THE VOICE

THE TRIUMPH OF THE

# "DR. M

**THE DAILY EXPRESS**—"Masterpiece of filmwork"

**THE DAILY NEWS**—"Sensation followed sensation with a wonderful cumulative effect."

**THE DAILY MAIL**—"Is a thriller of the best type, and in spite of its length is full of swift action"

**THE EVENING NEWS**—"The most remarkable film I have seen for some time."

**THE STAR**—"For sheer excitement this film would be hard to beat, but, in addition, the sets, the acting, the production, and the photography are all wonderful."

**THE PALL MALL GAZETTE**—"The film is a masterpiece."

**THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE**—"In length, in story interest, and in technical excellence 'Dr. Mabuse' is the biggest film Germany has sent us."

**THE TIMES**—" 'Dr. Mabuse' is a work of genius."

**THE DAILY HERALD**—"I have seen a wonderful study of a master criminal in 'Dr. Mabuse,' and what a thrilling story! Don't miss it."

**EVENING STANDARD**—"Here is a film that is essentially universal."

---

Controlled Throughout

# GRANGER'S EX



Is this—



Dr. Mabuse?

The House of Granger  
*Presents —*  
*The Film Sensation*  
**DR. MABUSE**  
THE GREAT UNKNOWN

*Ask the Manager of your favourite  
Cinema when he is showing this  
Great Attraction.*

Supplement to  
THE FILM RENTER & MOVING PICTURE NEWS.

Feb. 10, 1923.

Is This



Dr. Mabuse?

Supplement to  
THE FILM RENTER & MOVING PICTURE NEWS.

Feb. 24, 1923.

Is This



Dr. Mabuse?

Supplement to  
THE FILM RENTER & MOVING PICTURE NEWS.

Feb. 17, 1923.

Is This



Dr. Mabuse?



The House of Granger  
*Presents*

# Dr. Mabuse

The Great Unknown





## THE GERMAN FILM

stage? *Destiny*, also, was finely created, using every contemporary resource of trick photography and illusionary setting. Unlike *Siegfried*, which was a straightforward narration of facts, *Destiny* was an interplaited theme of three stories, 'the three lights,' each connected symbolically to the main modern theme of the two lovers. The film was magnificently conceived and realised; played with unforgettable power by Bernard Goetzke as *Death*, the *Stranger*, Lil Dagover as the *Girl*, and Walther Janssen as the *Boy*. It was a production that has been forgotten and deserves revival.

Lang has made also two melodramatic thrillers of spies, gamblers, disguises, crooks, and police. *Doctor Mabuse, the Gambler*, was produced in 1922; *The Spy*, an improved version on the same lines, in 1927-28. In its original form, *Doctor Mabuse* was over seventeen thousand feet in length, and was issued both in Germany and in England in two parts. It was the first German film to reach this country (about the same time as Lubitsch's *Dubarry*, renamed *Passion*) and was regarded as remarkable in film technique by the American-influenced minds of British audiences. The story was of the usual *feuilleton* type, with murders, a Sidney Street defence of *Mabuse's* house against the police and the army, and fainting women, with a strong spell of hypnotism and psycho-analysis. The action, unlike Lang's other work, was rapid in pace, and startling in incident, and was therefore preferred by some critics to his slow-moving pageant films. In certain respects it was interesting also as linking the pre-war long shot and chase elements with the tentative methods of the newer school. Six years later, Lang repeated his success twofold in *The Spy*, a story, not unlike *Doctor Mabuse*, of an international crook, with secret papers, a railway smash, complex disguises, and another final street battle. It was all splendid entertainment, superbly done. It was quick moving, thrilling, and dynamic. Lang took again as his criminal genius the versatile Rudolf Klein-Rogge, who improved on his early *Mabuse* part. Technically, the production was amazingly efficient, notably in Wagner's brilliant camerawork. In minor incidental effect, Lang had pilfered from far and wide. An excellent scene on diagonal steel-girder staircases was taken from a Soviet film, but his 'plagiarism' was justified.

Of *Metropolis*, more wilful abuse has been written than praise, partly because the version shown in this country was unhappily edited, many sequences being deliberately removed. The English

# Film Festival: Lang's 'Doktor Mabuse'

## 1922 Classic Conveys 'Sense of Real Evil'

By NORA SAYRE

Greed tends to follow gratitude: once you've been given something very good, you immediately want more of it. Here are all thanks to the New York Film Festival for showing Fritz Lang's "Doktor Mabuse"—plus a request for a Lang festival at once.

Aside from "M," we've lately seen too little of his work, such as "Fury" (1936), "You Only Live Once" (1937), "Woman in the Window" (1944), "Scarlet Street" (1945) or "The Big Heat" (1953). We also need the sequel to "Mabuse," which the Third Reich banned. The day Goebbels offered Lang the position of head of the German film industry, the director fled the country.

In "Mabuse," which was made in 1922, Lang evoked a superman. Well before Hitler, he was looking back to the military power of the emperor and to the impact of Nietzsche. And in the persona of Mabuse, the master criminal and hypnotist, Lang conveyed "the sense of real evil" that Graham Greene later admired. Lang also stressed people's failure to recognize evil when they see it.

In the midst of melodrama, laced with expressionism and surrealism, ghosts, doppelgängers, and hallucinations, we can still believe in the human motives and responses that Lang projects. Thus Mabuse, obsessed by power, determined to control other people and ul-

timately society itself, is credible—even to the extent that we're appalled when a potential victim decides to be his patient. Mabuse makes others do things they normally wouldn't—from cheating to driving over a cliff—and the valid modern terror of being manipulated flickers across the screen as freshly as Watergate.

Despite his focus on the poor, Lang's two most vulnerable characters are a count and countess who are destroyed by Mabuse.

The countess begins as one of life's most bored observers, languidly waving one of the longest cigarette holders seen on screen, complaining that the world holds no surprises, no adventures. This listless outsider is eventually kidnapped by Mabuse, who hypnotizes her husband into suicide. She is nearly killed by bullets meant for Mabuse. It's a reflection on those who think they're not affected or involved by anything that goes on around them—also on people who don't realize the danger of playing with the emotions.

The count, who first appears as a fop with an orchid in his buttonhole, acquires the dignity of someone moving helplessly toward his own death, bewildered to find that the choices before him have diminished until none are left.

Lang told Peter Bogdanovich in an interview in 1965 that the main theme throughout his movies was the "fight against destiny, against fate," and this comes through in full force when Mabuse, trapped in an attic when the police close in,

## Study of a Superman Presaged Nazism

struggles frantically to escape. He digs desperately at a jammed trapdoor with a penknife, hurls himself against a huge locked portal, going mad while trying to prevent what's inevitable. We can't help a lurch of hindsight (imagining the last hours of several Fascist leaders). Only this happens to be foresight. And Lang's sense of bad magic has an eerie rationality still.

You can have a visual binge at "Doktor Mabuse." Kitsch and camp collide in the décor, and it's a privilege to follow Lang's choice of details, ranging from the documentary—a tired woman scratching her scalp with a knitting needle, policemen flying into a cul-de-sac to arrest a running figure, the desperation of failed gamblers—to the grotesque—Mabuse delicately milking a snake's fangs, blind men counting counterfeit money in an attic and Mabuse disguising himself as old or young, wealthy or destitute, a professor or a provocateur. Lang is also wonderful with drunks, from reeling souses to the tottery upright types. Meanwhile, at the festival showing, every scene was enhanced by the magnificent piano accompaniment of Arthur Kleiner.

Some have called "Doktor Mabuse" the hit of the festival, and, without belittling the best selections, it's pleasing to think that a rare classic got its due.

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