

## GYPSY ANNA / FANTE ANNA

RASMUS BREISTEIN, NORWAY, 1920

Screening: Saturday 21st April, 1:30pm



Image courtesy of Nasjonalbiblioteket

An ineluctable candidate for inclusion in a Norwegian film canon is filmmaker (scriptwriter, director, producer) Rasmus Breistein. Breistein, responsible for directing 14 films between 1920 to 1952, worked within the inter-war “golden age” of Norwegian cinema; two of Breistein’s films – this afternoon’s programme choice, *Gypsy Anna* (1920), and his later work, *The Bridal Party in Hardanger* (1926), are both considered milestones of the Norwegian silent era.

While *The Bridal Party in Hardanger* was the subject of a comprehensive restoration project in the late 1990s, *Gypsy Anna* has scarcely been available for viewing, leading to the film’s critical neglect. Halldor Krogh, the multi-talented composer and music producer responsible for

the excellent score for the 2006 re-stored version of *The Bridal Party in Hardanger*, recognised the scandalous neglect of *Gypsy Anna*, and petitioned, successfully, for the undertaking of a similar restoration process for tonight’s film. The beautiful, tinted print we are screening this afternoon has been fully restored by the National Library of Norway, and we are delighted to welcome Halldor Krogh, who will be playing his new, symphonic music score with the film. The score has been recorded by the Norwegian Broadcasting Orchestra, and the film will be released on DVD and Blu-Ray this spring.

The film tells the story of Anna (Asta Nielsen) who, found as a baby in her dead mother’s arms, is taken in by the Storlein family and brought up on their farm, along with their son and Jon (Einar Tveito), their farmhand. The film is a tale of emigration, mirroring the life of the author of the original novel, Kristofer Janson. Janson – poet, author, clergyman – left Norway to become a Unitarian pastor in the Norwegian immigrant communities of America, but didn’t live to see the adaptation of *Gypsy Anna* on screen, dying in 1917. The picturesque images of the rural Norwegian landscape that permeate the film are typical of both Janson’s writing and Rasmus Breistein’s directorial style. *Gypsy Anna* – or *Fante-Anne* to give the film its native title – was Breistein’s first film as director, and the first Norwegian film to feature a cast of professional actresses and actors, including the significant stage star, Asta Nielsen, in the title role.

### CAST

Asta Nielsen ...

Anne 'Fante-Anne'

Einar Tveito ...

Jon Sandbakken, en husmann

Johanne Bruhn ...

Kona på gården

Lars Tvinde ...

Haldor, hennes sønn

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