

THE GRAND GUIGNOL DRAMAS

FRED PAUL, GREAT BRITAIN, 1921

Illustrated presentation by Paul Marygold from a script by Michael Eaton

Screening: Thursday 19th April, 3:30pm



Order of Screening:

- 1) A Game for Two
- 2) The Gentle Doctor
- 3) The Last Appeal
- 4) The Jest

bre melodrama of a judge passing sentence on his own son for a crime of passion. *The Jest's* plot revolves around a jilted husband who waits half a lifetime for his love to return, and in *A Game For Two*, a woman attempts to steal evidence from a barrister – evidence that, if presented in court, will condemn her lover to death. *The Gentle Doctor* is surely the most sordid of the short dramas—a tale of nihilism, adultery and revenge, it is remarkable that the film escaped the watchful eyes of the British Board of Film Censors.

The one-reel, self-contained dramas that comprise this programme are part of a twenty eight-part series, directed by Fred Paul, entitled Grand Guignol. Released weekly, beginning March 1921—October 1921, the series took its name from Le Théâtre du Grand-Guignol, a Parisian theatre famed for its melodramatic horror productions. Fred Paul attempted to transfer the atmospheric horror of the Grand-Guignol to the cinema screens of Britain with, judging by the trade reviews, considerable success. Kinetograph Weekly pointed out the 'really creepy' opening images of each reel, in which 'a green monster head with yellow eyes half-hypnotises the spectator', and praised the production values and pacing of the plots. *The Last Appeal* was judged to be the most effective of the dramas, a wonderfully maca-

Fred Paul was an excellent self-publicist and, in a column he provided for the March 24th 1921 edition of Kinetograph Weekly, he outlines the reasoning behind the production of the Grand Guignol films.



Director Fred Paul,

PROGRAMME DETAILS

A Game for two

Enid Sass - *The Girl*

Charles Tilson-Chown - *The Man*

The Jest

Leo Carelli - *Dan*

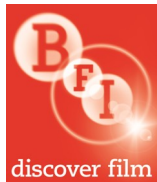
Margaret Dennistown - *Mary*

George Turner - *Cast member*

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The 15th British Silent Film Festival



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Concentrated Production, by Fred Paul

"We are but puppets in the hands of Fate" is the text on which I have founded the Grand Guignol photoplays.

It has been customary for picture-theatre patrons to have foisted upon them stories which however dramatic in theme and conception, invariably ended with the disciples of virtue triumphant and slowly fading out in each other's arms, while vice slunk away or met a mess retribution at the all avenging hands of some swindled accomplice discarded mistress.

The idea has ruled the screen too long.

In the Grand Guignol features I attempt to show life as it really is, its sordidness and cruelty: the diabolical humour of the destiny we call fate which plays with us as it will, raises us to high places or drags us to the gutter allows one man to rob the widows and orphans of their all and makes a criminal of the starving wretch who in his misery has stolen a mouthful of bread.

It is a true saying that one half of the world does not know how the other half lives. I aim to show you how the corpulent city man who occupies the big house down the road and drives up in his car each evening may really be the disease-infected palsied beggar, who crouching against a wall has drawn good coin from your pocket time after time; how many have had the cup of success ruthlessly snatched from the lips on the instant when they thought they were about to take a deep draught of the wine of prosperity; how many have learned the meaning of Dead Sea fruit, or found out, too late, that the fairest flowers hide the deadliest poison. For that also is life.

I aim to tell my stories in thousand feet of solid action. Like the thirty-minute music-hall sketch once beloved by many who are now our keenest kinema patrons.

I am basing my hopes for success largely on that of the one-act thriller in France, where for many years the Grand Guignol has been one of the biggest attractions of the show world, and on the more recent success of the same fare which forms the menu at the Little Theatre here. I have called in many of the foremost writers of strong, short stories to provide me with material, and I believe the Trade regards the result as successful as well as an interesting experiment.

PROGRAMME DETAILS

The Gentle Doctor

Olive Elton - Anne

Fred Paul - The Doctor

The Last Appeal

*Jack Raymond - John
Martin*

Jeanne di Ramo - Lillian

*Henry Doughty - The
Judge*

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The original reviews may be abridged

Programme notes by Alex Rock, Programme Design and Layout by Molly Cotterill and Emma Jezard