

1. The silent era: *Gustav Machatý: Erotikon* (1929)

Screenplay: Gustav Machatý. Director of photography: Václav Vích. Art director: Julius von Borsody, Alexander Hackenschmied. Cast: Karel Schleichert (railway station guard), Ita Rina (Andrea), Olaf Fjord (George Sydney), Theodor Pištěk (Hilbert), Charlotte Susa (Gilda), Luigi Serventi (Jean). Running time: 85 min.

One rainy night a railway station guard offers shelter to an elegant traveler who has missed his train. When the guard is called away the traveler, George is left alone with his daughter Andrea. The young man of the world makes a big impression on Andrea...

„Erotikon is clearly one of the highlights of Czech cinema. Even its contemporaneous reviews recognized and commented upon its unique position in the realm of Czech film. Especially noticed were the direction and photographic virtuosity of a film that managed to transform the more or less mawkish story of a railway guard’s seduced daughter into a highly captivating work. The photography penetrated the inner world of the protagonists, their experiences, emotions and passions. However, the presentation of this silent film in cinemas was not without problems. Cinema screens all over the world then resounded with music, songs and speech, and all the Prague premiere cinemas had already installed sound apparatus.”

Assigned reading:

Hames, Peter. *The Czechoslovak New Wave*: “Culture and Society, The Czechoslovak Cinematic Tradition, p. 9-20”