

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL 1954

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Vice-Chancellor of
Sydney University

JUNE 11-14
UNIVERSITY
OF SYDNEY



WELCOME TO THE FIRST SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL! . . .

There have been film festivals in Sydney before, run by one film society or another, but this is something more ambitious—a Festival open to all, organised by a committee representative of a wide range of different bodies devoted to "the Tenth Muse." Its scope is indicated by its distinguished patrons, representing the State Government, the City of Sydney, and the University.

It is the purpose of a film festival to bring together in a common experience those whose interest in the cinema goes beyond mere entertainment (not that entertainment is forgotten!). Such an occasion is a reminder and a witness that both in content and form the film can be an art worthy of serious study and criticism. With this in mind, we have collected for you films which we believe to have some special distinction, to be out of the common run.

The best recent Australian documentaries will be screened. So will a programme of prize-winning Australian amateur productions from all the States.

The Committee is deeply grateful to the University of Sydney for its hospitality, and to the Teachers' College for the loan of its Hall. Without these and the co-operation of the Sydney University Film Society, of the Women's Union (Manning House) and of the Men's Union, this pioneering enterprise would not have been possible.

And this is pioneering. None of us is fool-hardy enough to feel sure that no mistakes have been made or that the unxepected may not upset the best-laid plans. What we are confident of is that, given goodwill and co-operation, troubles will be overcome.

This is only the first Sydney Film Festival. We hope, with your help and profiting by our experience, not only to make it an annual event, but to make it better each year. . . .

A. K. STOUT, Chairman of the Festival Committee.

Sous les Toits de Paris (Rene Clair)





Passion of Joan of Arc (Carl Dreyer)



JOUR DE FETE

Jour De Fete (Jacques Tati)

Called by Sadoul "the finest French comic film since the war," Jour De Fete is a very funny story of a French village postman, and in particular of his attempts to "mechanise" himself after seeing an American documentary on modern postal methods. Against the background of French village life, Tati creates a character who unites the best traditions of the pre-war comedies and, to a lesser extent, those of the Chaplin slapsticks.

In Harbour (Department of Interior, Australia)

A short study of the people who work and earn a living on Sydney's harbour (fishermen, maritime services) and of the small craft that are part of the harbour, never leaving it.

Ray of Hope (Department of Interior, Australia)

Made for use in an anti-T.B. campaign.

On Closer Inspection (Joan and Peter Foldes)

The Foldes' second film is as personal as Animated Genesis — perhaps more so, for it is a record of the inhabitants of the Foldes' own garden, the birds, flowers, snails, domestic animals. The garden is presented in colour throughout the round of the seasons.

BACK OF BEYOND

The Back of Beyond (John Heyer for Shell)

The Sydney Film Festival is privileged to be able to present in public in Sydney for the first time The Back of Beyond, a 65-minute documentary of the people of the Birdsville Track, 300 miles of gibber plains, desert, and dry river channels down which the cattle mobs are sometimes brought from Queensland into South Australia, Along this whole route, only five families live, "a physical and mental isolation probably without parallel," says Heyer.

The film aims to give an idea of the heat, dust, dryness and flatness of this fly-infested forbidding region and of the courage and good-heartedness of the inhabitants. To make a story of this tribute to "a true and unique Australian spirit,"

School's Out (H. M. Scales)

This short film was made in an attempt to explore what children do with their spare time after school, and is thus to some extent a complement to the same producer's **Pony Club**, which dealt with the leisure activities of children in country areas of Australia.

Rabbit's Stew (Eric Porter)

First of a series of theatrical cartoons made for release in America by the Sydney animation studio of Eric Porter, in Technicolor. The story is a conventional one involving chases, explosions and so on. Australian characters and settings are used but these are not so distinctive as to risk puzzling the U.S. audiences. The animation is excellent, and the launching of a series of films in this difficult and expensive field is a step forward in Australian filmmaking.

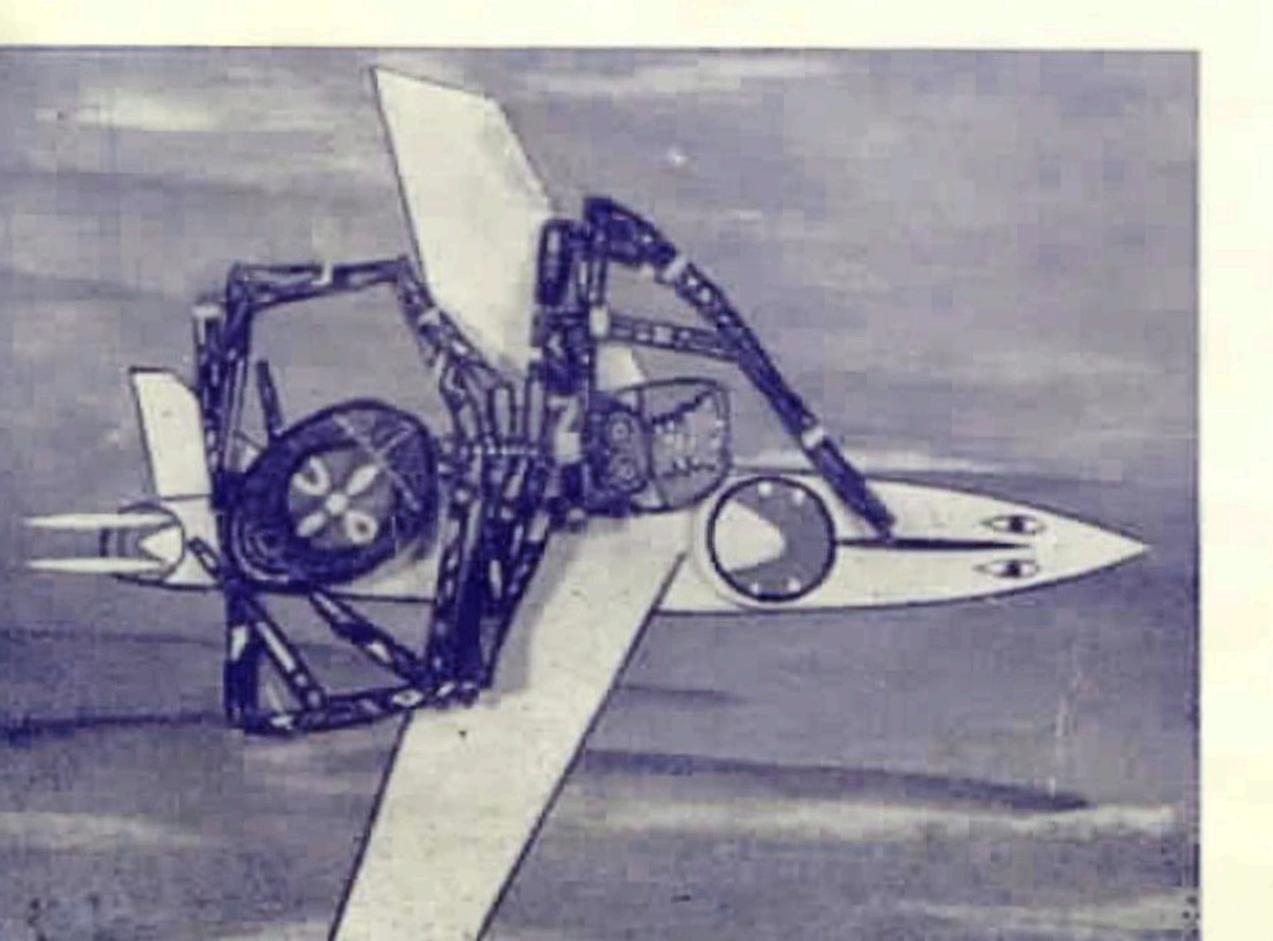
Animated Genesis (Joan and Peter Foldes)

An allegory of the creation of the world and man's enslavement by the machine, motivated by Greed, personified as an enormous and menacing spider. The spider is eventually overthrown by the intervention of Goodness, but not before atomic warfare has occurred.

Animated Genesis is an artist's conception of the beginning of life and of man's eventual emergence through evil into sunshine. A film of ideas sincerely believed and sincerely translated by the artists.

Animated Genesis is the work of the two young British painters, Joan and Peter Foldes, who, seeking a new development in painting, found it in the medium of the animated film. With no previous experience of film work, the two artists retired to a small cottage in Sussex and experimented with a

Animated Genesis (Joan and Peter Foldes)



newly acquired 16-mm. camera and supplies of Kodachrome film. Knowing strongly what they wanted to express, the artists worked freely and instinctively, expressing themselves without hindrance from time, instructions, charts, and scripts.



PASSION OF JOAN OF ARC

The Passion of Joan of Arc (Carl Dreyer)

Few films before or since have provided a better example of the use of cinema as a graphic art. It is an extraordinarily satisfying use of the silent idiom and if there ever was any doubt that the silent film was a medium in itself then Joan of Arc must surely dissolve that doubt.

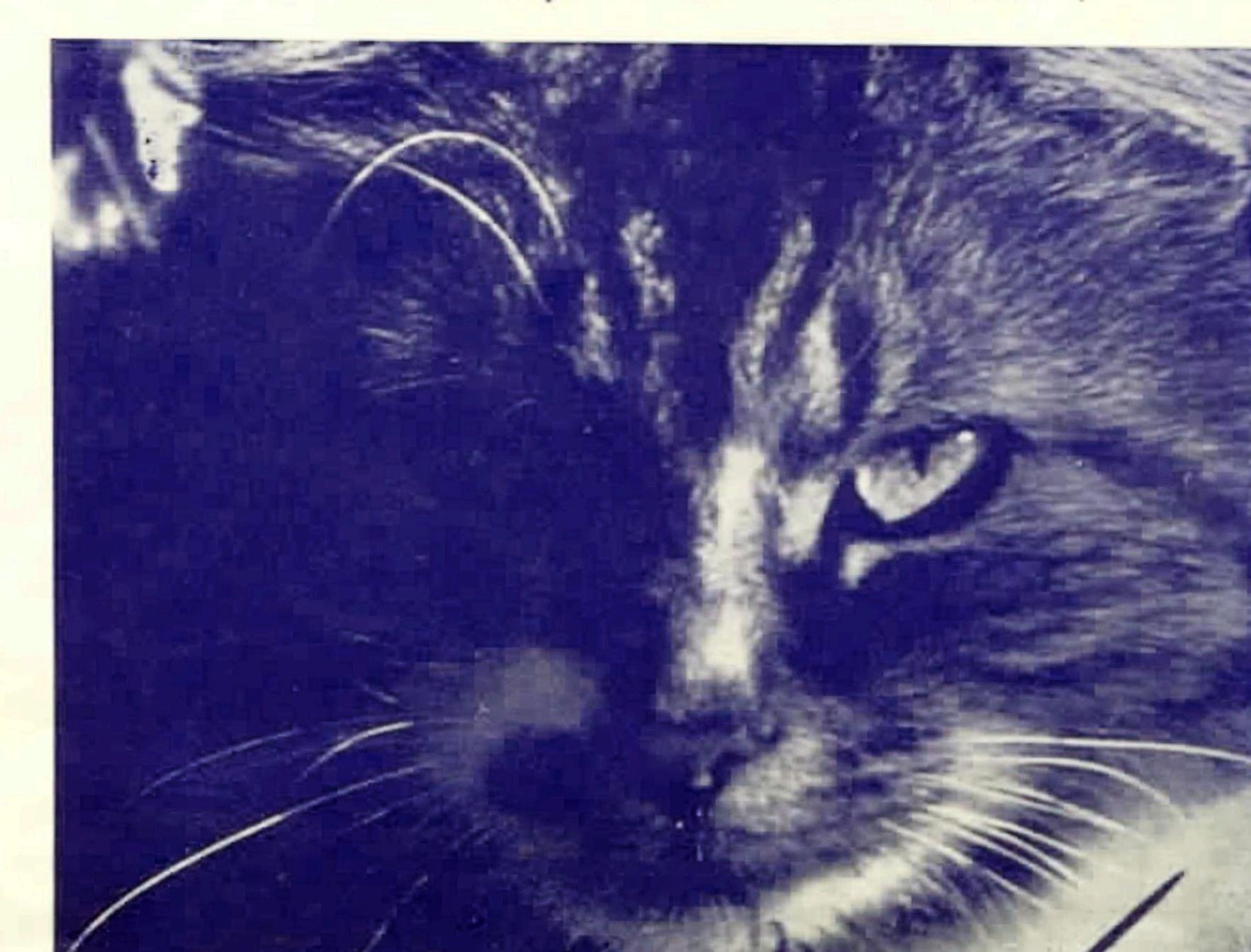
Carl Dreyer was born in Copenhagen in 1889. He has not made many films. He made Joan of Arc in France in 1927 and 1928 for the Societe Generale de Films and if he had made none other since, this film alone would have secured him a place among the great film-makers of the past 50 years. The role of Joan is played by Marie Falconetti, an Italian actress of outstanding ability. It is interesting to note that in the unit Dreyer got together in France for the production of this film was Hermann Warm, the German architect who built the sets for The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari.

In The Passion of Joan of Arc, Dreyer does not attempt to embrace the whole story of the famous French saint, nor does he concern himself with her whole trial, which actually took some one-and-a-half years. Instead he has concentrated on the major incidents of her trial and final destruction and created an extract which by its own unity and strength conveys an extraordinarily moving conception of the whole tragic event with the emphasis more on Joan's own spiritual struggle than on the national scene.

Thorvaldsen (Carl Dreyer and Preben Frank)

One of the most visually inventive films on art. By the combined movements of statue, camera, and background, a view of the entire work and then close-ups, the development of an idea from a drawing to a finished work, the film gives a curious kind of semi-existence to Thorvaldsen's somewhat frigid (by modern standards) sculptures.

On Closer Inspection (Joan and Peter Foldes)





Jour de Fete (Jacques Tati)

KINGDOM ON THE WATERS

Kingdom on the Waters (Istvan Homolky-Nagy)

Dr. Nagy is famous for his several colour films of nature, made in the last few years in Hungary. This long film records the cycles of life and the seasons in a lake, not along the mechanical and sentimental lines of the Disney True Life series, for example, but revealing all the brutality of nature. This and the other films he has made have been widely popular in Great Britain.



THE GENERAL

The General (Buster Keaton)

Here is a recall to the days of silent comedy in the best American tradition.

This is the little man again, but unlike Chaplin's tradition. One laughs with Chaplin but at Keaton. The comic spirit of Keaton is the incongruity of situation, the unconsciousness of the real situation.

This time we have Keaton as a disparaged train driver embroiled in the American Civil War. Apart from the usual ingredients of uncovering, accidentally, plots, thwarting the enemy and winning the girl in the end, we have some most delightful fooling and adventures with a railway train.

The Switchman (Canadian National Film Board)

An unusual documentary on two themes, the work of the man who cleans the points of the tramway of winter slush, and the place of the immigrant in Canadian society. Some excellent photography (the film is set during the night and there is much play of light on rails, snow and so on).

Romance of Transportation

(Canadian National Film Board)

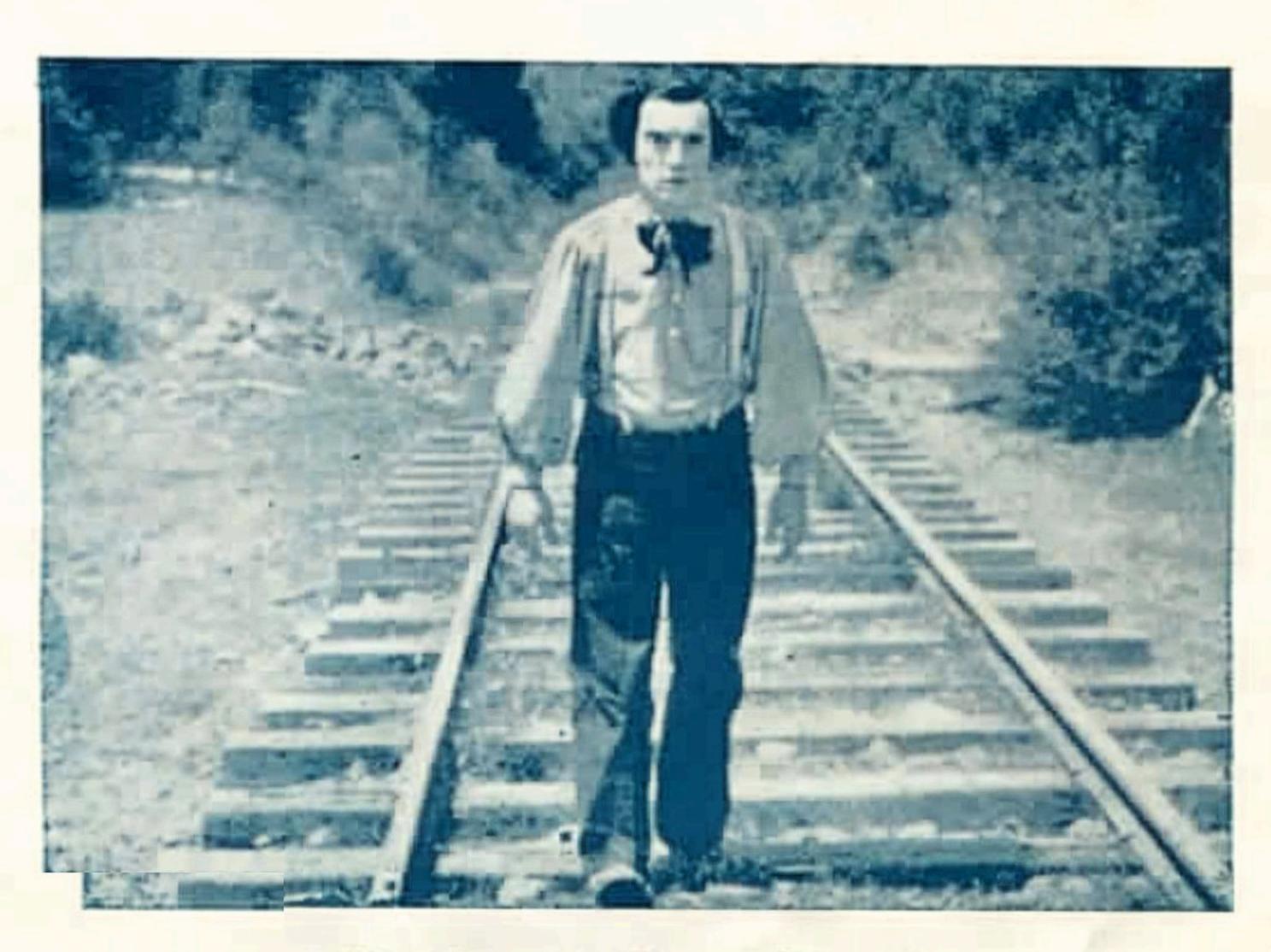
A breezy lecture on the place of improved transport techniques in the history of a developing country, given by the Film Board artists in U.P.A. styled cartoon with a clever shock ending.

Overlanders of Tomorrow (Doc. K. Sternberg)

Made for Associated TV, this is a record of the "airlift" of stud bulls into the Northern Territory, over 2,000 miles, for a parade and auction to station owners, who usually travel south to buy cattle. The rodeo and other social events are also recorded.

Colour Box (Len Lye)

The famous early experiment in the abstract use of colour and design, accompanying music. Made by Len Lye, in England, in 1936, it precedes the abstract films of Norman McLaren, which are well known in Australia.



The General (Buster Keaton)

GERMANY, YEAR ZERO

The Conquered Planet (Martin Toonder)

"Mars on a Tabletop": A representation of a journey into utter loneliness, using models and "synthetic" sound. A space-ship expedition reaches Mars with its stark landscape. Though no human figures are used, suspense and terror are achieved in this short Dutch science-fiction film.

Kermesse Fantastique (Joop Geesink)

Puppet film of a colourful fair. Most ambitious film yet made by Joop Geesink, who is carrying on puppet film tradition started by George Pal.

Germania Anno Zero (Germany Year Zero) (Roberto Rossellini)

The story of a small boy, Edmund, and his struggle for existence amidst the desolate ruins of Berlin. Edmund has to compete with those who are older and more experienced in the fight for survival. He lacks any firm standards and seeks a guide to conduct in the words and actions of others. Despite his pitiful efforts he becomes a plaything of chance operating through his environment and the other creatures that belong to it. He kills his father to relieve his family of a burden, and finds himself an outcast from all his companions. His last desperate effort to control his own life is to commit suicide.

Roberto Rossellini began his film career in Italy before the war making newsreels and short documentaries. In 1945 he made the first film in which he had charge of production, direction, scripting, and editing: Open City. It was followed in 1946 by the less popular Paisa. In 1947 he went to Berlin to make Germania Anno Zero.

His method was to choose his actors for the scene and to devise episodes to fit the scene. He worked without script, with one film writer to suggest episodes and treatments as the film proceeded, and another to devise the German dialogue.

Because he uses no script his stories are all episodic in form, and Paisa even became a series of unconnected stories. In Rossellini's hands this is a hit-and-miss method and gives films of uneven quality. The virtue of any of his films, then, must lie not in its total impression, but in the stature of some particular episode or episodes.

Overlanders of Tomorrow (D. K. Sternberg)



In Germania Anno Zero the part that gives greatness to the film is the final episode. The episodes that precede it give credulity and insight into the child's life so that when Edmund finds himself rejected of all men we accept and understand his position. In a towering sequence the boy wanders through the ruined streets of the city lapsing momentarily into the games of childhood that have been denied him and emerging in despair and exasperation as the futility of them and of all his actions is borne upon him by his savage and pitiless surroundings. In a trance of misery and desolation he slowly climbs to the top of a ruined building. All this the camera observes coldly and dispassionately. Then (with a camera movement withdrawing into extreme longshot) the boy jumps. A shabby tram trundles past and we leave with it.

WORLD WITHOUT END

World Without End (Basil Wright and Paul Rotha)

Here is documentary back in its old stride, portraying reality with poetic feeling, harnessing great technical skill in the service of humanity and achieving beauty in the process. It is a deeply stirring film. These two well-known documentary directors were asked by Unesco to demonstrate its work. Rotha went to Mexico to the Fundamental Education Centre, and showed how it sends out its students to the country round about. Wright showed the work of W.H.O., F.A.O., and U.N.I.C.E.F. in a huge rice-growing area of Siam.

Not only have these activities been shown: the film is also notable for beautifully, if irrelevantly, lyrical photography and for an exceptionally strong sound-track full of songs and music of these countries. The scenes of the curing of Siamese children of yaws are exceptionally powerful.

The Drawings of Leonardo da Vinci (Basil Wright)

Made in connection with the exhibition to mark the quincentenary of Leonardo's birth, this film of the drawings in the Windsor collection was shown at the Edinburgh Festival in 1953. It illustrates Leonardo's interest in all natural forms—of plants, animals or men—and his pre-occupation with the relations of different structures and their functions.

Continued overleaf

Back of Beyond (John Heyer for Shell)



SOUS LES TOITS DE PARIS

And Now Miguel

A welcome addition to the small number of first-class American documentaries, this film of the ways of the Spanish-American sheep-breeders of New Mexico is on an expansive scale, and is beautifully produced, with superb outdoor photography. A Flaherty-like story concerns a ten-year-old boy who takes his place in the family, but And Now Miguel lacks the crowded and vital sound of Louisiana Story: the music is elaborate and dignified but the narration given in the voice of the boy tends to monotony in a film of this length.

Spirit of Physical Education (Kingcroft Productions)

The mental approach by children and teachers to physical education is as important as its physical aspects. This short film made for the N.S.W. National Fitness Council demonstrates with a number of different sports, and is one of a series on physical education.

Sous Les Toits De Paris (Rene Clair)

Rene Clair's first sound film is a landmark in the history of the cinema, and as an entertainment still miraculously fresh and surviving today. The slight story, dealing with the loves and rivalries of a few Parisians on the lower fringes of society, tells of Pola hesitating between the love of Albert, a street singer, of Louis, a hawker, and of Fred, a small-time gangster. But it is the background and the atmosphere which count—the narrow populous streets of a Paris suburb, the little cafes, the attic bedrooms, the huddled roof-tops, the street singers. The style is not realistic, but based on poetry and sentiment.

Clair's gallery of minor characters—a stout concierge, an irritable clerk washing his feet in his dining room while the fat woman below warbles the street singer's ballad—is a rich one, and incidents like the knife fight in the alley at night at the end are brilliantly handled. Music and sound are imaginatively used, many scenes are played with mime, and there

is a minimum of dialogue.

GRASS

Grass (Schoedsack and Cooper)

In 1922, Robert Flaherty made Nanook of the North, the first film to use real life as a dramatic subject. Following this example, Cooper and Schoed-

sack made Grass three years later.

Grass is a vivid film record of the twice yearly migration of the Baktyaris, a tribe of nomadic herdsmen of North West Persia. Their migration is in search of new pastures for their flocks. Half a million men, women and children trek through a land totally without any civilised communications. Their path leads through jagged ravines, across roaring torrents and over a high, snow covered mountain range. Their final goal is won only at the expense of lost animals, possessions and the weak and the aged who die on the way.

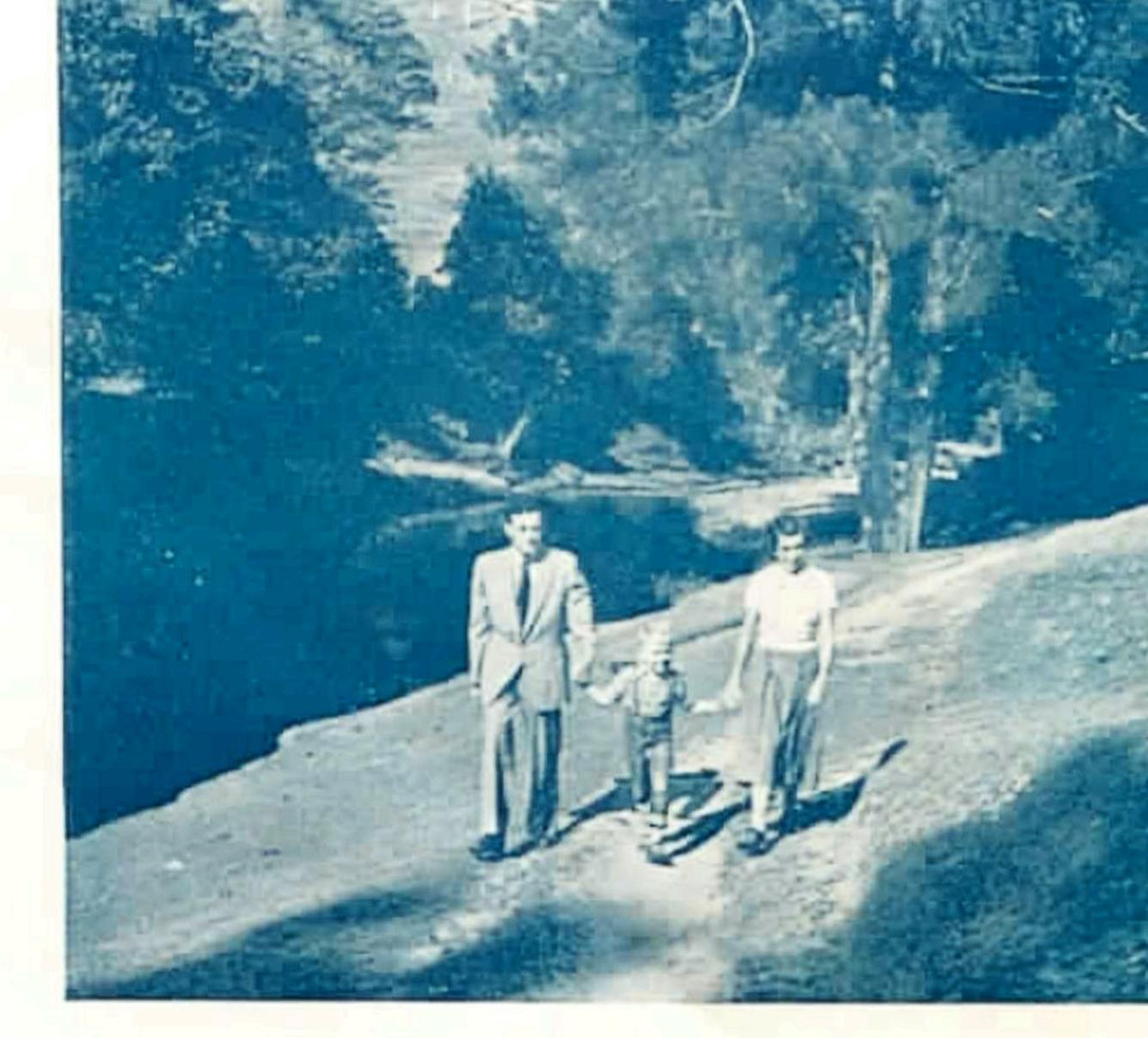
The film is a valuable photographic record, remarkable not only for the immense grandeur of its scenery but also for its historical record of a tribe whose habits must soon change with the advent of

civilisation.

The only slur on the film are the irritating and fatuous titles inserted by the producers to ensure its successful commercial release.

The Plow That Broke the Plains (Pare Lorentz)

A film of the misuse of natural resources and the resultant wastage of grazing land in the American Dust Bowl area. In 1936, Pare Lorentz, a well-known movie critic without previous technical experience,



The Old House (Keith Hall)

produced this film under New Deal sponsorship. The Plow was the first American documentary film to bring alive a national subject on a sponsored basis.

The tragedy of the Dust Bowl was captured with tremendous visual impact in Paul Strand's camerawork. The commentary is mannered, and the ending from the propagandist's viewpoint is bad because it has been tacked on as a finish to explain the message of the film.

Historically, The Plow must always rank as important. It pointed a way. Its subject was visually stimulating. It was the first important American film of fact to cover a topic of national importance.

WORLD WITHOUT END-cont.

Michael Ayrton's script presents the dual aspects of conflict and tranquility which appear in his work. Sir Laurence Olivier narrates, with Cecil Day Lewis making quotations from Leonardo's own writings.

Shoemaker and the Hatter (Halas and Batchelor)

A defence of free trade. The hatter and the shoemaker are neighbours. The hatter makes one hat to sell at a high price; he secures a ban on the importation of hats. The shoemaker believes in mass production, but finds that trade restrictions prevent him from paying with shoes for the machinery he has acquired from a neighbouring country. Action is taken to bring this state of affairs to an end, and general prosperity results.

The Steps of Age (Ben Maddow)

A very human and perceptive study of old people in a South Carolina town, described as one of the best films shown at Edinburgh in 1951. Maddow was scriptwriter of The Asphalt Jungle and Intruder in the Dust. The much-praised American feature documentary The Quiet One was also made by this group.

ATTENTION ...

SPECIAL NOTE: As seat reservation is not practicable for a volunteer organisation such as the Sydney Film Festival, and as the maximum number of seats available in any one of the four theatres is 500, members are advised to work out alternative dates for any films they particularly wish to see, and to arrive as early as they conveniently can for those sessions.

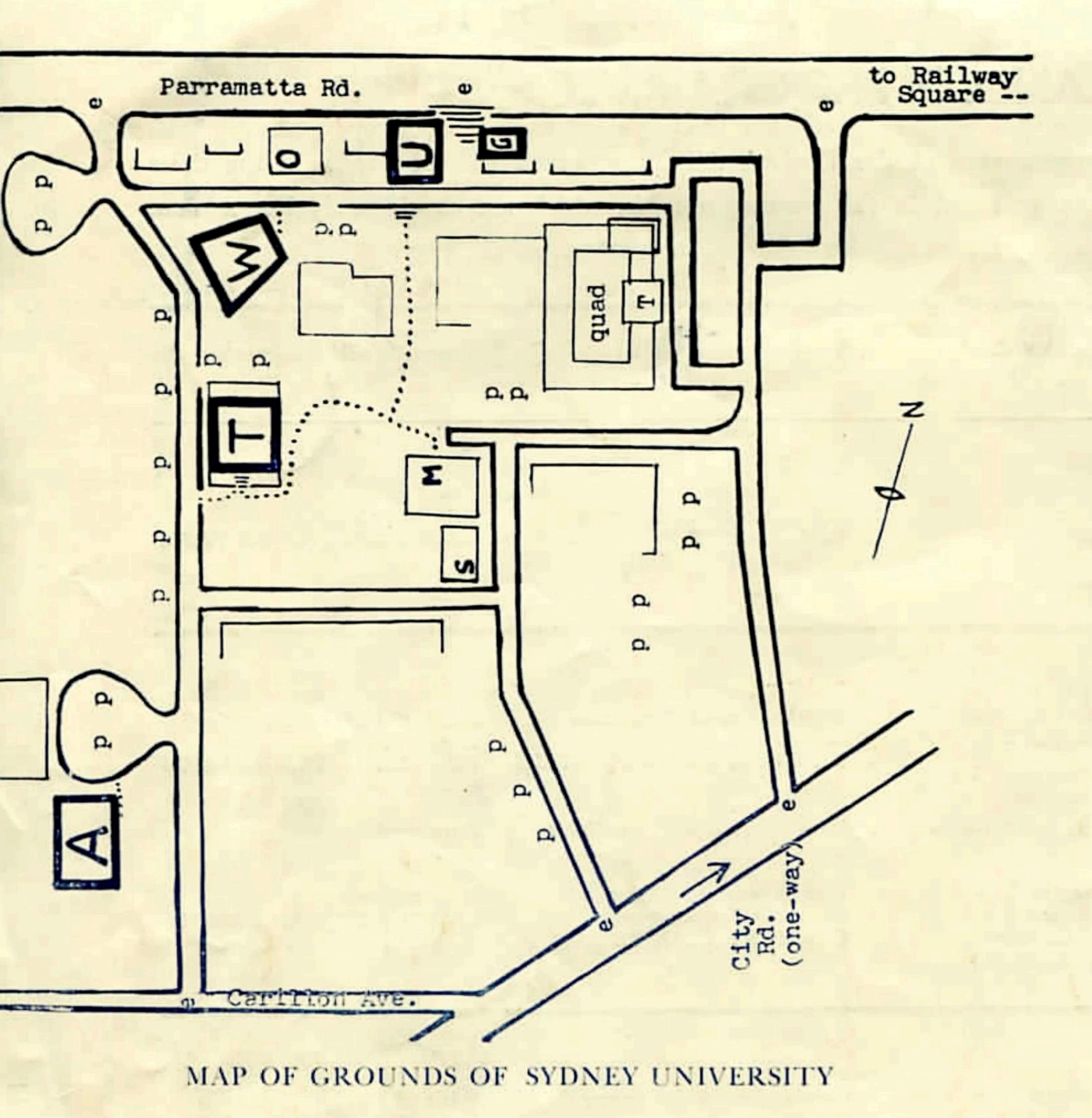
PLAN OF PROGRAMMES

The following are the basic programmes of the Festival. All films named will be shown at the times given; there may be additional shorts screened in the evening sessions, which are considerably longer than the daytime sessions. The distinguishing letters of the halls are as marked on the map.

Annexe (A)	Teachers' College (T)	Union Hall (U)	Wallace Theatre (W)
riday, 11th June			
Leonardo da Vinci Shoemaker and the Hatter Steps of Age WORLD WITHOUT END	In Harbour Ray of Hope On Closer Inspection IOUR DE FETE	Overlanders of Tomorrow Colour Box KINGDOM ON THE WATERS	And Now Miguel SOUS LES TOITS DE PARIS
aturday, 12th June 2.00 p.m.—			
Leonardo da Vinci Shoemaker and the Hatter WORLD WITHOUT END	On Closer Inspection JOUR DE FETE	Overlanders of Tomorrow Colour Box KINGDOM ON THE WATERS	Spirit of Physical Education Henry Moore SOUS LES TOITS DE PARIS
Scientific Programme	Discussion: Peter Foldes	Plow That Broke the Plains GRASS	Amateurs' Programme
The Switchman Romance of Transportation THE GENERAL	School's Out Rabbit's Stew Animated Genesis BACK OF BEYOND	The Conquered Planet Kermesse Fantastique GERMANY YEAR ZERO	Thorvaldsen PASSION OF JOAN OF ARC
Leonardo da Vinci	On Closer Inspection	Overlander of Townsen	Catala of Discretary Polyments
Shoemaker and the Hatter WORLD WITHOUT END	On Closer Inspection JOUR DE FETE	Overlanders of Tomorrow Colour Box KINGDOM ON THE WATERS	Spirit of Physical Education Henry Moore SOUS LES TOITS DE PARIS
.15 p.m.— Scientific Programme	Discussion: Peter Foldes	Plow That Broke the Plains GRASS	Amateurs' Programme
The Switchman Romance of Transportation THE GENERAL	School's Out Rabbit's Stew Animated Genesis BACK OF BEYOND	The Conquered Planet Kermesse Fantastique GERMANY YEAR ZERO	And Now Miguel SOUS LES TOITS DE PAR
Monday, 14th June			
2.00 p.m.—	In Harbour	Overlanders of Tomorrow	Thorvaldsen
Leonardo da Vinci	Ray of Hope	Colour Box KINGDOM ON THE WATERS	PASSION OF JOAN OF AR
Leonardo da Vinci Shoemaker and Hatter Steps of Age WORLD WITHOUT END	On Closer Inspection JOUR DE FETE		
Shoemaker and Hatter Steps of Age		The Conquered Planet	Thorvaldsen

Discussion: Mr. Peter Foldes will speak on the question of the artist (painter or sculptor for example) and the film: what advantages does the film offer to the artist as a means of expression? is the film a useful aid in the "appreciation" of the other arts?

Stills Exhibition: The selection from the Taussig Still Collection now held by the National Library, Canberra, will be on view in the Economics Building between 3.30 p.m. and 8.00 p.m. The exhibit has been carefully prepared and fully annotated by Mr. Taussig to illustrate two themes: sixty years of the best motion pictures, and secrets of the dream factories (on production techniques). A visit is recommended.



THEATRES-

A: Annexe

G: Geology Theatre

T: Teachers' College

U: Union Hall

W: Wallace Theatre

e: Entrance to grounds

p: Parking areas

O: Festival Office

M: Manning House

S: Stills exhibition

Session times are 2 to 3.45, 4.15 to 6, 8 to 10.30 p.m., but individual programmes vary slightly.

Trams to Abbotsford, Haberfield, Fivedock and Leichhardt pass all the Parramatta Road gates of the University.

Please do not park cars in the narrow streets of the University.

Hot meals and afternoon teas are available at Manning House, between 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., at very reasonable charges. The Women's Union Common Rooms will also be open for the convenience of Festival members.

The F. W. Taussig Still Collection will be on view in the Economics building daily between 3.30 and 8 p.m.

The Festival Office will be open for sale of tickets, enquiries, lost property matters, etc., at all times.

SCIENTIFIC FILMS

Introduced by DR. A. R. MICHAELIS

The Biography of the Motion Picture Camera (Roger Leenhardt)

It is appropriate to begin this festival of scientific films with a tribute to its pioneers: Marey's work on the analysis of movement, Muybridges battery of photographic cameras, Eastman's introduction of celluloid rollfilm and Edison's perforations. The combination of all these resulted in the first public projection by the Lumiere brothers in Paris in 1895.

Medical Aspects of Venom in Snakes

(Burroughs Wellcome)

Distinguished by logical approach to subject matter, by outstanding cinematography of snakes and by clear animation. The characteristics of various kinds of venom are fully explained and the necessary counter-measures are indicated.

Project 074 (Shell)

The subject of engine wear is today investigated by means of radioactive isotopes. Here a piston ring of a car engine is made radioactive at the nuclear fission pile of Britain's atomic energy station at Harwell. Mounted in a test engine, it begins to wear. The minute particles of radioactive iron washed down into the sump by the lubricating oil are continuously pumped through a counter which presents

an uninterrupted indication of the piston ring's wear. This is a great improvement on previous testing methods.

Enterprise (I.C.I.)

"Enterprise struck all who saw it as one of the most effective and delightful expositions of the free enterprise system ever filmed, and has demonstrated to a lot of us that the tongue-in-cheek is more believable than the foot-in-mouth." Business Screen. Its unconventional, often surrealistic, treatment of economic theory and practice—as exemplified by its sponsor—1.C.I.—its brief history of free enterprise from ancient Greece to present day, and its superb cinematographic quality, make this an outstanding film from many points of view.

Challenge: Science Against Cancer (Canadian National Film Board)

An imaginative, yet scientifically accurate film of many branches of biological and medical research; it deserved to win the first prize at the Documentary Film Competition in New York and at the International Film Festival in Venice. At present scientific research is pursued in many directions to find an explanation of the rapid and uncontrolled growth of cells, which is called cancer. But, the smallness of the cell and its intricate metabolism has posed many problems to which there is as yet no answer. Various methods of treatment are shown in the film, which makes the point that cancer research is one of the greatest adventures on which a scientist can embark.