Fritz Lang’s production of METROPOLIS is undoubtedly the best-known of all German silent films. METROPOLIS does more than merely represent in a uniquely artistic, and uniquely popular way, German film culture of the Weimar Republic. It harbors one of the first thoroughly formulated fantasies regarding urban life in the 20th century as well.

Without Fritz Lang’s METROPOLIS even the American, urban fantasies of the eighties and nineties, recalling like Ridley Scott’s BLADE RUNNER, would be unthinkable. Then like now, the designs for METROPOLIS are considered provocative inventions from a lab researching modernity in film and architecture.

Yet the fate of this film reflects the problem German cinema has had for decades: the obvious disunity between artistic ambition and economic success.

Conceived as a mega-project of the worldwide competing German film industry, METROPOLIS failed at the box offices, and against the wishes of its writers, the film was altered to the point of being unrecognizable by the production company. To reduce it to normal length for movie theatre showings, it was reassembled, falsified, and thousand meters of film were cut.

There exists an enduring myth around this film which, even today, with each showing, has a profound effect on thousands of viewers around the world. For decades now, generations of film historians have searched for the scenes removed from the film – a quarter of the original version seems irretrievably lost. Through the most recent researching activities, initiated by the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung, we now know that of the three original film negatives only one negative (if in fragments) has survived, as well as the first copies of the lost original negatives, in existence in various foreign archives.

As a result of this research, the film has once again become the object of a reconstruction attempt. It was possible to reconstruct a part of the original sequencing of scenes. For the first time, it is now possible to view METROPOLIS with a photographic quality which comes extremely close to the visual impression made by the premiere copy of 1927. This version brings to a successful close the efforts of various film archives (especially those of the State Film Archive of the GDR, and Munich Filmmuseum) to reconstruct and preserve this monumental film.
**TEAM**

*Silent Film, 118 minutes, Black-and-white, With the original 1920s score by Gottfried Huppertz*

**Director:** Fritz Lang

**Screenplay:** Thea von Harbou, Fritz Lang (not mentioned)

Based on the 1926 novel of the same name by Thea von Harbou

**Cinematographers:** Karl Freund, Günther Rittau

**Schüfftan-Process Cinematography:** Helmar Lerski

**Visual Special Effects:** Günther Rittau, H. O. Schulze (Assistenz)

**Painted Visual Effects:** Erich Kettelhut

**Technical Advisor:** Erich Kettelhut

**Special Shots:** Konstantin Tschetwerikoff (= Konstantin Irmen-Tschet)

**Combined Technical Processes:** Eugen Schüfftan, Ernst Kunstmann

**Constructions/Models:** Otto Hunte, Erich Kettelhut, Karl Vollbrecht

**Sculptures and Robot Design:** Walter Schultze-Mittendorf

**Costume Design:** Aenne Willkomm

**Makeup:** Otto Genath

**Still Photography:** Horst von Harbou

**Production:** Universum-Film AG (Ufa), Berlin

**Producer:** Erich Pommer

**Shooting Period:** May 22nd, 1925 to October 30th, 1926

**Actors:** Brigitte Helm (Maria/Android), Alfred Abel (Johann ‘Joh’ Fredersen), Gustav Fröhlich (Freder, Joh Fredersen’s son), Rudolf Klein-Rogge (Rotwang, The Inventor), Fritz Rasp (Der Schmale), Theodor Loos (Josaphat), Erwin Biswanger (Georgy, No. 1181), Heinrich George (Grot, The Heart-Machine Guard), Olaf Storm (Jan), Hans Leo Reich (Marinus), Heinrich Grotto (Master of Ceremonies), Margarete Lanner (Lady in the Car), Max Diete, Walter Kühle, Arthur Reinhardt, Erwin Vater (Workers), Georg John (The worker who causes the Molochmachine to explode), Grete Berger, Oly Böhmeim, Ellen Frey, Lisa Gray, Rose Lichtenstein and Helene Weigel (Women of the Eternal Garden), Fritz Alberd (The Creative Man), Rolf von Troth (A Son in the Eternal Garden)

**Studio:** Ufa-Atelier, Neubabelsberg; Filmwerke Staaken (Zeppelinhalle); Berlin Rehberge; Ufa-Haus on the Potsdamer Platz

**Censorship:** November 13th, 1926; B.14171, youth prohibition

**Distributor:** Ufa-Filmverleih GmbH, Berlin

**World Premiere:** January 10th, 1927, in Berlin (Ufa-Palast on the Zoo)

**Original musical score:** Gottfried Huppertz

**Format:** 35 mm; 1:1.33; s/w; silent

**Original length:** 4189 m
Cut Version (1927):

Censorship: August 5th, 1927; B.16285, youth prohibition

World Premiere: August 25th, 1927, Stuttgart (Ufa-Palast), München (Sendlinger Tor-Lichtspiele)

Length: 3241 meters

The Federal Archive/ Film Archive, Berlin, in collaboration with
Filmmuseum im Stadtmuseum München and the
Cinemathek-association partners:
Deutsches Filminstitut (DIF)
Filmmuseum Berlin – Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin
Deutsches Filmmuseum, Frankfurt am Main
Filmmuseum der Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf
Museum of Modern Art, New York

Contributors both
Production of the
restored version:
Cinémathèque française, Paris/
Fondazione Cineteca Italiana, Mailand/ George Eastman House,
Rochester/ Gosfilmofond, Moskau/ The Museum of Modern
Art, New York/ National Film and Television Archive, London/
Screensound Australia, Canberra

Edition:
Martin Koerber
on behalf of the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung,
based on the version of the Filmmuseum München and the film
preserved passages at the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv

Technical Realisation:
Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin/ Koblenz

Digitalization:
Alpha & Omega, München
centrimage, Paris

Film titles:
Trickatelier Wilk

World distribution:
Transit Film GmbH, München

Length: 3341 meters (= 118’30” at 25 b/sec.)
The film passages considered lost, according to the latest findings, are italicized. Printed normally and presented in summarized form here are the film's preserved passages:

**Prelude.** Metropolis, a large city somewhere in the future, adheres spatially and socially to a caste system: at the top is Joh Fredersen, the ruler of this highly industrialized city under his command; at the bottom are workers without names, addressed by numbers instead; and between these two, a class of technocrats employed to keep the machinery running smoothly. In the »Eternal Gardens« the sons of ruling-class members enjoy themselves day and night. One of these carefree souls is Freder, Joh Fredersen's son.

Maria, a young girl from the »Lower City«, brings a group of workers' children to the »Eternal Gardens«. Her saying »Look, these are your brothers« deeply touches Freder. Fascinated by Maria, Freder searches for her after she is made to leave the »Eternal Gardens«.

Freder ends up in the »Lower City« machine rooms. He witnesses a machine explosion which claims the lives of several workers. Freder has his a vision: the machine is a fire-breathing Moloch.

Freder in his father's office: He tells of the deplorable conditions in the machine room and understands, for the first time, with what degree of cold rationality Metropolis is being governed. Grot - the supervisor of the heart machine, which produces the needed energy for Metropolis - appears; he shows Fredersen plans indicating various secret activities in the Lower City. Furious now, Fredersen fires Josaphat, the employee who should have given him this information ages ago. Freder feels to blame for Josaphat being fired and offers to hire him himself. Fredersen has »Der Schmale« follow his son.

Freder returns to the Lower City. Worker No. 11811, known as Georgy, collapses on the job, and Freder wants to save at least this one worker from his sad fate. He changes clothes with him and takes over at Georgy's machine. He tells Georgy to go to Josaphat's apartment and to wait for him there. On the way there, Georgy succumbs to the temptations of the »Upper City«. He finds money in the pockets of Freder's clothing and does not go to Josaphat's apartment, but to the Yoshiwara, where the members of Metropolis's upper crust abandon themselves to their unbridled pleasures. Der Schmale, who has been observing Freder's car, records Georgy's movements in the assumption that Georgy is Freder.

Meanwhile, Joh Fredersen goes to the inventor Rotwang. In Rotwang's house he discovers a monument dedicated to Hel, the woman who is the fateful link between Rotwang and Fredersen. Hel was loved by Rotwang, but married Fredersen and died giving birth to her and Fredersen's son Freder. Rotwang is unable to get over the loss of Hel, and rails against Fredersen in front of the monument. Triumphantly, he presents his last invention, a machine woman, who is to replace his lost Hel. He still needs 24 hours of work until the
machine woman will be indistinguishable from his dead beloved: »The woman is mine, Joh Fredersen! You have Hel's son!« Fredersen explains the reason for his visit: He wants Rotwang to help him decipher the plans found on the workers killed in the accident.

While Fredersen is at Rotwang's house, his son suffers the torments of a worker's life in Metropolis. Freder has a second vision - the clock in his father's office, dictating the pace of the workers' ten-hour-long workday, appears on the machine's surface. At the changing of their shifts, workers take Freder into the catacombs, in the depths of the Lower City, where secret meetings are held.

Rotwang deciphers the plans brought to him by Fredersen as being a guide through the catacombs. They both go down below; they observe a gathering of workers listening reverently to Maria. She tells them of the Tower of Babel, destroyed by the slaves who erected it because no common language could be found between them and their rulers. Maria prophesies that soon a mediator will appear and make the lives of the workers bearable. Rotwang notices Freder among the workers, and hides this fact from Fredersen. Freder falls in love with Maria. He feels that he must take on the task of the mediator in Metropolis. Maria recognizes him as the awaited mediator. They plan to meet the next day at the cathedral.

Fredersen commissions Rotwang to give the machine woman not the appearance of Hel but the looks of Maria, thus enabling Fredersen to mislead the workers. Rotwang at first refuses, but changes his mind and agrees.
when he realizes that this way he can harm Fredersen even more than by recreating Hel. Now, with the help of the machine woman, he can drive a wedge between Fredersen and his son. Rotwang pursues Maria in the catacombs and abducts her to his house in order to give the machine woman her appearance.

Interlude. The next day, Freder enters the cathedral of Metropolis. He listens to the sermon of a monk who announces that the apocalypse is drawing near and will announce itself in the form of a sinful woman. At the same time, Rotwang programs the machine woman in his laboratory: »You shall destroy Joh Fredersen – him and his city and his son.« Freder wanders through the cathedral and finds a group of figures representing »The Death and the Seven Deadly Sins«.

Georgy, bleary-eyed, comes out of the Yoshiwara, where he has spent all of Freder's money. As he gets into Freder's car, Der Schmale arrests him. He interrogates Georgy and finds out that Freder and Georgy have arranged to meet at Josaphat's apartment. Not having found Maria at the cathedral, Freder finally goes to Josaphat's place. He plans to meet Georgy there so that the latter can take him to the »Lower City« and put him in touch with the workers. As Freder waits for him, Georgy is allowed to go free by Der Schmale on condition that he returns to his machine and erases the events of the past day from his memory. Der Schmale goes to Josaphat's apartment to find Freder. By the time he arrives there, however, Freder has already left. He has dropped Georgy's cap, which Der Schmale finds and rightly regards as evidence of the subversive arrangements between Freder and Josaphat. He offers Josaphat money to leave Metropolis and thus quickly put an end to the whole affair before it comes out that he lost track of Freder for a whole day. Josaphat refuses, and there is a scuffle in which Der Schmale knocks Josaphat down. Der Schmale locks the defenseless Josaphat into his apartment.

Maria is overpowered by Rotwang. Freder hears Maria's cries for help and tries in vain to help her. Rotwang brings Maria into his laboratory and transfers her appearance to the machine woman. Now there are two Marias: The real Maria is held prisoner by Rotwang; the false Maria serves Fredersen and causes discord among the workers and thus at the same time promoting Rotwang's plan to destroy Metropolis. After the successfully completed operation, Rotwang tells Freder that Maria is with Fredersen. In a letter, Rotwang invites Fredersen to the presentation of the false Maria; a dance performance before the »top hundred« of Metropolis will demonstrate whether people recognize that she is a machine.

In his office, Fredersen gives the false Maria instructions on what she should tell the workers. Freder arrives and finds them in an intimate pose together. Thinking his beloved has betrayed him, he swoons with horror and faints. The unconscious Freder is put to bed. Meanwhile, at Rotwang's house, the false Maria performs a dance in the nude; she mesmerizes the men of Metropolis.

Der Schmale keeps watch over the fever-ridden Freder, in his sickroom. In a vision Freder sees Der Schmale transformed into the
monk who preached about the apocalypse in the cathedral and warned that the appearance of the whore of Babylon would precede the city’s downfall. Jan and Marinus, sons of Metropolis ruling-class citizens, are entranced by the false Maria’s dance and willing to commit »all seven deadly sins« for her sake.

Freder fantasizes with eyes wide open: The cathedral statues representing »Death and the Seven Deadly Sins« begin to move and come toward him. Death’s scythe sweeps through the sickroom.

Furioso. Josaphat escapes from his apartment and hides in Metropolis. He manages to make contact with Freder. Meanwhile Der Schmale tells Fredersen about the increasingly violent unrest in the »Lower City«: »The only thing that still keeps the workers in check is that they are still waiting for the »mediator« they were promised ...« Josaphat informs Freder, who has recovered from his illness, of the events that have taken place while he was ill: Jan and Marinus have fought a duel over the false Maria in which Jan met his death. Since then, the »Eternal Gardens« have become deserted; the sons of the wealthy have all wandered off to Yoshiwara where the false Maria turns heads. As the sons fight for her favors, more and more of them are killed. Josaphat tells Freder that »this woman, at whose feet all sins accrue« is also called Maria. As Josaphat is speaking, the sirens of Metropolis announce the change of shifts, which at the same time is the secret signal for the workers to gather in
the catacombs around Maria. Freder decides to go down into the catacombs again.

Fredersen dictates to Der Schmale that it is his express order that workers should on no account be stopped whatever they decide to do. He again sets off to meet Rotwang. The real Maria is still imprisoned in Rotwang’s house. Rotwang explains to her that the false Maria only seems to follow Fredersen’s orders while she incites the workers to rebel. »But I tricked Joh Fredersen! His creature does not obey his will – but mine alone.«

The false Maria urges the workers to destroy the machines. Freder and Josaphat join the group. Freder realizes that the agitator cannot be the real Maria. The false Maria identifies Freder before the workers as Joh Fredersen’s son; she orders him murdered. Georgy shields Freder with his own body and is killed. When the workers, agitated by the false Maria, rush off to destroy the machines, Freder and Josaphat manage to escape.

Fredersen has listened unobserved to what Rotwang reveals to Maria, and knocks down Rotwang. While the two are fighting, Maria is able to free herself and to escape into the city. Enraged workers reach the gates of the machine rooms. Grot, who guards the heart machine, is made aware by warning signals of what is going on, and locks the hall where the heart machine is located to protect it. He tries to reach Fredersen in order to make a report. The crowd rages outside the gates demanding to be let in. Fredersen orders him to open the gate and to let things take their course. Grot reluctantly obeys, but blocks the workers’ way and tries to calm them. No one listens to him. The false Maria detonates the heart machine and escapes to the upper regions – the Upper City.

The real Maria finds her way to the deserted Lower City again. The first signs of water leakage point to the dangerous state of the machine rooms. Maria gathers the workers’ children and flees with them. After the heart machine explodes, the Upper City is effected by a power failure. Josaphat and Freder find Maria and the children. Freder is now convinced that he has found the real Maria again. As they climb up through the air shafts, they come to a dead end – a locked grille; only in the last minute do they manage to save themselves and the children from the rising flood.
Grot explains to the victory-dancing, elated workers the extent of the catastrophe in the machine rooms. The workers’ mood suddenly changes. Meanwhile, in Yoshiwara, the false Maria spur her guests on to a witch’s sabbath: »Let’s watch the world go to hell!« A dancing crowd pours from the Yoshiwara into the city. Rotwang, who has survived Fredersen’s blows, regains consciousness and drags himself to Hel’s monument. With the words, »Now I’ll come and bring you back home, my Hel!« he sets out to recapture his machine woman.

In front of the »Club of the Sons«, Maria is confronted by the angry crowd. She flees from the menacing workers back into the city. The procession of workers and the Yoshiwara procession collide. The workers find the false Maria, seize her, and erect a stake, meant for her, in front of the cathedral. Freder searches the city looking for »his« Maria. She hides in a niche of the cathedral’s portal, where Rotwang discovers her and takes her for the false Maria, his machine woman, Hel. Maria flees from Rotwang, first to the bell tower, and finally to the church roof.

Burning at the stake, the false Maria is transformed into the android again. Now Freder and the workers, too, realize that they have been tricked, and that the real Maria is in grave danger. Freder fights with Rotwang on the roof of the church; he frees Maria. Fredersen appears on the square before the cathedral where the assembled workers threaten him. Josaphat tells the workers their children are in safety. Rotwang falls to his death from the church roof. Grateful and remorseful, the workers gather before the cathedral’s portal. Maria and Freder – the prophet of reconciliation and the mediator – declare an alliance between the rulers and the ruled, and place Fredersen’s hand in Grot’s: »The mediator between brain and hands must be the heart.«
THE MASTER BUILDER OF METROPOLIS

by Otto Hunte

Of all the production designers, I was the only one fortunate enough to work exclusively on mammoth productions: »Indian Tomb«, »Mistress of the World«, »Dr. Mabuse«, and »The Nibelungen«. Looking over Thea von Harbou's screenplay for the first time, I immediately knew this project would exceed all the others that I had participated in so far. The challenges to be solved here never existed before. For »Indian Tomb« I could refer to previous examples; for the milieu of »The Nibelungen« I could do research in museums. But for the architectural style of the futuristic city of Metropolis, a solution could only be found in the imagination. A »modern« style, able to serve as a guide, doesn't exist this period. Today's period lacks a true style of its own to begin with: in the area of architecture, it merely wrestles with new means of expression.

The preparations for METROPOLIS took up as much time as was needed to complete both parts of »The Nibelungen«. The work only increased, the more I involved myself with the technical details. Fortunately, thanks to today's technical advancements, architects have access to a process, likewise a great help, which was unimaginable until now: the Schüfftan Process. I took full advantage of this process in the making of METROPOLIS.

What cost the most time and work was setting up the congested, main thoroughfare in METROPOLIS, and the new »Tower of Babel« that rises up at the end of it – a structure meant to be 500 meters tall, which by no means could be really built. I had to use a miniature model and simulate the heavy traffic on the street using special effects. It would be too tedious to explain everything in detail here, but one can easily imagine the amount of painstaking work involved in bringing airplanes, trains, cars, and people into this shot. And after almost six weeks of work, the results flash by the eyes of the viewers in a matter of two times six seconds. One scene in which a particular effect was out of the question from the start was the flood scene, in which the cement and concrete curbs of the street are torn apart and destroyed. The needed quantity of water had to be stored and elevated in order to have the proper amount of pressure during the shot. For that reason, four reservoirs with 1,600 cubic meter capacities were built, and, in addition to these, various smaller basins for special takes. Playing it safe, I ordered a large hosing unit built, in the event the blast of water was too weak to break through the concrete curbs. During the take, when an enormous 8-meter-tall column of water rose into the air, we all thought we were seeing the effects of the hosing unit, which never had to be used.

The explosion which destroys the elevators of the workers' city looked far more dangerous than it really was, since the elevators were released through an arresting device and plunged into the depths in such a way that the impression of an explosion, simulated through pyrotechnics, first occurred on the point of impact.

These are only a few details from the work done on METROPOLIS, work which, on a technical and artistic level, explores new terrain, and without one or the other level would be unthinkable. That the difficulties mentioned here, in my few examples, were overcome is proof of the endless possibilities and developmental abilities of film.
SPECIAL EFFECTS IN THE FILM METROPOLIS

by Günther Rittau

By far, the cameraman’s most interesting job was designing the light-effects for the scene in which the android is brought to life in the laboratory of the inventor, Rotwang. In the film, this occurs during a transfer of electric currents which pass between the android and Maria’s human form. Electric currents of this kind usually remain invisible. Here, however, to emphasize this fantastic-secretive process, these had to be visible to the eye. Making this shot work called for weeks of preparatory experiments in the laboratory, and making equally-long calculations connected with the shooting. The photographic chemistry was anything but unimportant, and while preparing this shot the strangest of technical aids were used.

An in-depth description of the process would be too time consuming here, as well as counter productive. It should only be kept in mind that concealing, iridescence, soft soap, vignettes, and complicated technical constructions of one’s own design played a decisive role. For days on end, workers had to be versed in operating equipment which demanded an accuracy based on dealing with fractions of seconds. Individual film strips were exposed as often as 30 times, and people with a knowledge of photography know exactly what this means. With works of this nature, everything depends on meticulous calculations, highly precise working methods and equipment, and, most of all, on the nerves and patience of the cameraman. I can safely assume that shots like these were never shown before.

(...) Shots which use the Schüfftan process make up a special chapter in the area of special-effects. Had all the colossal constructions needed for METROPOLIS been built on the intended scale, the costs would have been astronomical and, most of all, precious time would have been lost. The Schüfftan process offered the only possibility for a practical solution, and this was used a great deal. With the help of partially-finished constructions and miniature Schüfftan models, not only were parts of the overwhelming street scenes shot, but the atmospheric cathedral scenes as well. With Schüfftan shots, the visual trademark is dictated entirely by how the camera is adjusted, and how lighting is used for model constructions. Unusually difficult were the visionary shots of the Moloch-machine, also produced with the help of the Schüfftan process. Other shots occurring within the course of movement, for which the Schüfftan process was not applied, were completed using model constructions. These included the shots of the trafficcongested main thoroughfare, the explosion in the enormous machine room, and the blanket of dust.

Whether shooting model constructions or building models; whether lighting a scene or setting adjustments for equipment, the utmost precision was necessary. To illustrate the difficulty involved in making such shots: it took nearly 8 days to make 40 meters of film capturing model-generated scenery, since every frame had to be shot individually, and 40 meters of film contains approximately 2,100 frames. In the actual film, this amounts to 10 seconds of footage.
For the film METROPOLIS, whose theme and design forge new paths, I was confronted with challenges of a totally new kind. It wasn’t enough to design the fashion of tomorrow already slumbering in today’s mind or, for that matter, slumbering in the day after tomorrow, certain to take shape in the minds of great fashion designers the next day. I had to create fashions of the year 2000 – a time that we think of as existing at a fantastic distance, and which, for that reason, can only take shape in one’s fantasy. (...)

The characters of individual protagonists, stylized to the point of symbols, had to be emphasized by their clothing. Certain costumes were meant to be expensive and pompous, but without suggesting the world of revues or the theatre... I tried to capture the heavy, earth-bound dullness of workers chained to their machines through the use of dark and heavy material, shoes with leaden soles, and the overall uniformity of their clothing. In contrast to the workers, there were the wealthy sons, whose carefree and light existence was easily recognizable through their sheer, silk suits of an effectively youthful cut.

What had to be worked out clearest were the different styles of dress worn by the leading actress, Brigitte Helm, whose double role represented two totally different challenges. The clothing of the «good» Maria had to be mildly radiant in tone, touched with subdued purposefulness, and suggestive of antique Madonna-images. In contrast to this, the same woman as the android had to be as garish and cold as possible. Cold and glittering stones were attached to the naked whiteness of the female body to heighten the idea of the machine-being’s lack of feeling. In the scenes in Yoshiwara, this conscious contrast to the previous character is established through the high-necked, black dress which slides along the contours of the body like a second skin, converting the young woman into the likes of a flesh-hungry seductress.

Who knows whether people in the year 2000 will wear such clothing? But, one day, they might see the film METROPOLIS from the year 1926, and be amazed by what does coincide with this fantasy.
THE MARIA OF THE UNDERWORLD, OF YOSHIWARA, AND I

by Brigitte Helm

What excited me most about the title role of Maria in METROPOLIS were the character's crass differences, because these also lie hidden in my own nature: the austere, pure and chaste Maria, who believes in doing good, and the Maria the obsessed siren. Whenever I'm told how well I portrayed these intertwining and contradicting elements, I find it flattering and take it as a compliment.

It was incredible work. Now that it's over, I have trouble remembering the disheartening and sadder moments – only the sunnier and uplifting moments stay with me. Sometimes it was like heaven, and other times like hell! The three weeks spent shooting the water sequence, when the underground city is flooded, were unbelievably hard on my health. Even now, I have to admit that I don't know how I got through it.

The night shots lasted three weeks, too, and even if they did lead to the greatest dramatic moments – even if we did follow Fritz Lang's directions as though in a trance, enthusiastic and enraptured at the same time – I can't forget the incredible strain that they put us under. The work wasn't easy, and the authenticity in the portrayal ended up testing our nerves now and then. For instance, it wasn't fun at all when Groth drags me by the hair, to have me burned at the stake. Once I even fainted: during the transformation scene: Maria, as the android, is clamped in a kind of wooden armament, and because the shot took so long, I didn't get enough air. But, like I said earlier, today I have to make an effort to remember the unpleasant things; they've just faded away. Now that I relate so much to the role of Maria, I can't imagine myself playing any other role. Only I can't imagine myself not working in films again. So I'm curious to see just what's going to happen.
... for being magnificent, it was drudgery and work.

After being hounded by all the behind-the-scenes reports printed in the newspapers, even for the first showing of this film we feel exhausted and apathetic on our way into the auditorium. We know how the director and actors slaved over this production; it's their hard work makes our bones ache. We know Brigitte Helm was rescued from retirement. We know how often the burning-at-the-stake scene was shot, how expensive the costumes for the standins were, and all about finishing the tin for the screenplay. Nor do we have any doubts now about the proportions of the Tower of Babel. The film studio of Neubabelsberg yanks us out of the land of fairytales and tells us that Santa Claus is just Dad in disguise, but knowing this, we also have to consider how much Dad sweats under his beard. All this adds up to attempted bribery. Since despite all the artistic observations, an awesome indifference is at large here, regarding the amount of work and effort that went into making the film. If during the screening we have the impression that what we see is not made of cardboard, it wouldn't matter if it really was. Or if the cardboard was difficult to buy and build with.

This city of Metropolis is built on sand as infertile as the sands of the Mark Brandenburg in Neubabelsberg – on Thea von Harbou's screenplay. In this case (for a change) one pays less attention to good form and a faithful adaptation, and more attention to the action. Since here, no less is being dared than to have the great social question solved with the slight of a delicate, female hand. The smirking excess of differences between employers and workers leads to the construction of a futuristic city in which social classes exist on clearly laid out planes: at the top, close to the sun, live capitalists dressed in white satin, and underground, in the basement, workers. With hatred brewing on both planes, a struggle erupts. Houses are flooded in the workers' city. At the top, a few lights at least go out. The two classes lock horns - but then, rather suddenly, a kindhearted young man steps in to make the enemies shake hands. The bells, which ring in the future state, chime to the epigrammatic tune of: »The mediator between minds and hands must be the heart!« And the situation resolves itself differently than we thought it would until now, without a word wasted on national economy. But this is, after all, an old-hat of a situation, which the film exploits for its own purposes – not because it suggests a pulsating symbol of life, or even a life-charged reality, but because the adjective »heartfelt« can be expanded on, because the sun shines inside »heartfelt«. An original, woman writer might have the touch of King Midas: whatever she touches turns to gold; but let her near serious material for once, and her touch creates so much appalling kitsch that not even her good intentions can help.

The film's milieu casually refers to a playfully symbolic fusion of German and American film companies. On the one side, you have the height of engineering-minded Americanism, drawn more from futuristic, pulp-fiction for teenagers than from the annals of technical
schools: the smooth face of the earth unrecognizably disfigured by skyscrapers, neon signs with a genuinely apocalyptic brightness, defiant automobile-congested streets, and the iccold industrialist with his finger on a button. On the other side, you have Europe’s moth-ridden and homespun notion of the good emotional life. Hold these people of the future close to your heart and you could say: The world has remained the same, only the look of the houses seems a bit changed. Two lovers come closer with the usual difficulty. Invitations are embossed with ornate Gothic print, and the ideal young lady turns up wearing a Gretchen costume. Pious types cross themselves before the altar of a decidedly Gothic cathedral decorated with bizarre gargoyles, and whose walls need repairing. The witch is burned at the stake, and the »machine« appears as a hellish Moloch with a jagged, fiery throat and evil eyes. We see mundane genre scenes and ghoulish medieval imagery painted in machine oil. There’s not a ounce of the Neue Sachlichkeit style in sight. Nor does the sober and hygienic Technical style help to air out the soul. Fritz Lang, the snob, drew two years of inspiration from this artists salon of bourgeois fantasies.

Someone found the redeeming word of the times - in a novel also considered suitable to film. The teasing, childish pranks which leap from the program really are dangerous. Since they plant sentimentality in a region already overrun with weeds of sentimentality - a region in need of serious gardening should things go forward in the world. Let the Courths and petty painters continue adding hints of color to sexual spheres. Just keep their manicured fingers away from socialism!

Fritz Lang created a wealth of stunning images, and he also discovered the staggering talents of Brigitte Helm. So I can’t hold it against him when he doesn’t know how to cut individual scenes like the flood, the battle between the classes, or various spontaneous ideas objectively enough, and experiments with lighting and camera angles instead. This is, after all, precisely where the qualities lie. If the viewer really knows how to live, he can draw immense pleasure from these images when, after a dull day, he swallows the sugar-coated, pick-me-up pills inside their artistic packaging.

Das Stachelschwein, 1.2.1927, Nr.: 2 reprinted in: Rudolf Arnheim. Kritiken und Aufsätze zum Film published by Helmut H. Diederichs © 1977 Carl Hanser Verlag, München - Wien By kind permission
METROPOLIS is popular. It is impossible to imagine a retrospective of classic German silent films, science fiction films, or cinematic architecture (the series of possible topics could go on and on) without this film. Many have, at some point, seen something on the screen called METROPOLIS. But what could they have seen? Certainly not the film written in 1924 by Thea von Harbou and directed by Fritz Lang in 1925/26, because that ceased to exist in April 1927. What is being offered under the title METROPOLIS by various distributors and archives, what is for sale on videocassettes, or occasionally seen on TV are adaptations, sometimes more and sometimes less removed from Lang’s film.

The festive premiere of the film took place at the Ufa-Palast am Zoo in Berlin, on January 10, 1927. At the time, the length of the film was 4,189 meters: at a projection speed of 24 frames per second (we can only guess at this today), meaning the showing lasted 153 minutes. The film was accompanied by music for a large orchestra by Gottfried Huppertz; the orchestral score and the piano arrangement, because of the numerous cues they contain, are one of the best sources for those who want more accurate data about the form of the premiere version.

As early as December 1926, the American representative of Ufa, Frederick Wynne-Jones, brought METROPOLIS to the US and showed it to Paramount, intended to distribute the film in America. Apparently it was immediately decided to cut down the monumental film for the American market to »normal« feature length. The playwright Channing Pollock was commissioned to do this work. The changes he made in the film are drastic: The basic conflict between Freder and Rotwang - their rivalry over the dead Hel - was completely removed from the film, and with it the rationale for creating the machine woman, and finally the destruction of Metropolis. Also extirpated was the pursuit of Freder, Georgy, and Josaphat by Der Schmale, as well as a large part of the scenes that took place in the »Yoshiwara«. Further deletions involved the extended pursuit scenes at the end of the film. In order to restore the comprehensibility of the film as a whole after these deletions, it was necessary to make radical changes in the silent-film captions, and occasionally to change, in important ways, the editing of the surviving scenes. After all the changes were made, the American version was still approximately 3,100 meters long. Pollock summed it up this way: »As it stood when I began my job of structural editing, METROPOLIS had no restraint or logic. It was symbolism run amok, and the people who saw it could not tell what the picture was about. I gave it my own meaning«.

In Berlin, METROPOLIS was withdrawn after a few weeks. The reasons for doing this are still unclear. Perhaps here, too, it was felt that the excessive length of the film was an obstacle to its distribution in the rest of Germany.

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1 The actual projection speed for the premiere is unclear. Noted on the deleted piano accompaniment for the shortened version is a projection speed of 28 frames per second, perhaps implemented to increase the speed of the shortened version and subsequently reduce the running time. Roland Schacht reports of a running time lasting circa 140 minutes.

2 The original score and piano accompaniment belonging to Huppertz are kept in the archive of the Filmmuseum Berlin - Deutsche Kinemathek, in Berlin. Copies of the printed score for piano can be found in other archives and libraries, such as in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz, and in the Deutschen Filminstitut, in Frankfurt am Main.

3 An article by Randolph Bartleet, »German Film Revision Upheld as Needed Here,« which appeared March 13th, 1927, in the New York Times, justifies various accusations. Suggested was that the nearness of the name »Hel« to the English word »hell« was the prime reason to remove the character from the film. This is obviously hard to believe. Hel’s name only appears on her tombstone, and as a special effect, this would have been relatively easy to re-shoot with a different text for the American version.

4 Channing Pollock Gives His Impressions of »METROPOLIS« in: Press release of Paramount Pictures for the film METROPOLIS. Copy exists in the Federal Archive - Film Archive (Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv): File on the Reconstruction of METROPOLIS.
version, after the removal of titles that tend to be communist in nature, would also be screened in Germany. At this point, it is not known whether Fritz Lang was involved in the adaptation of the second German version of his film. We do know that the film was submitted to the Berlin film censorship office on August 5, 1927, with cuts largely modeled on the American version and with silent-film captions changed as necessary, and was then, at a length of 3,241 meters, released for distribution. Only in this and similarly shortened versions that were exported by Ufa to other countries was it ever shown outside Berlin.

Over seventy years have passed since the premiere screening of METROPOLIS and the destruction of the original version that followed almost immediately. The famous film became an almost equally famous case, since film archives have been struggling to produce copies from the extant mutilated versions that are »better«, meaning more complete than the versions marketed by Ufa and Paramount. It is difficult to trace the history of these efforts, for the many versions still need to be precisely documented. It has been possible to deduce the changes made in the film as well as the attempts to reverse these changes only from the film material itself, by comparing the many different copies stored in archives. In addition, initiated by the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung, a new reconstruct attempt was undertaken. In archives all over the world – more easily accessible than before, and better cataloged nowadays – a search is again going on for evidence regarding the making and unmaking of the film, and the extant film material is being compared and edited. Inevitably these notes can therefore only report the status of research to date. I fear that some of the conjectures below will become superfluous when new documents are discovered, or will be reduced to absurdity by the work at the editing table. Here, too, it is not only impossible but also unnecessary to look at the hundreds of METROPOLIS copies that exist on this planet. My preferred method here is to concentrate on the source material from which all these copies were derived, in one way or another.

In its advertisements for METROPOLIS, the Ufa publicity department boasted that allegedly 620,000 meters of negative film and 1,300,000 meters of positive film had been used. Compared to a premiere screening length of 4,189 meters, this would mean a ratio of negative to film actually screened of approximately 148:1. If these data are accurate, one might deduce that from this more than ample material Ufa not only failed to extract the shots declared no good, but also, contrary to accepted film industry practice, copied more than double the amount of rushes – the only way to explain using such a huge amount of positive film. In other words, these figures are scarcely plausible, although they support legends about Fritz Lang characterizing him a sadistic circus trainer of his actors, and a heedless squanderer of material. People who were present when Lang was shooting unanimously report that he made his actors repeat scenes to the point of exhaustion. Since, in METROPOLIS, two inexperienced newcomers, Gustav Fröhlich and Brigitte Helm were cast in the leading parts, it seems credible that there were excessive rehearsals, and that much footage was exposed. Erich Kettelhut, a chronicler who tends to be very matter-of-fact and has a very critical attitude towards Lang, notes that Lang was not satisfied until »at least three of the many takes completely met his

1 Federal Archive, Article R 109 (Universum Film AG), 1026a: Notes on Board Meetings: No. 3 (7. April 1927), No. 4 (8. April 1927) and No. 17 (27. April 1927)

2 An important milestone essential to the completion of such a documentation is Enno Patalas’ transcript on the reconstruction of the film in Munich. Enno Patalas for the Munich Filmmuseum: METROPOLIS. The attempt to reconstruct the premiere version. In conjunction with his still unpublished transcript from 1998/1999, the author gained access to a new version of the film. For other important references to the film’s proliferation, we thank the conversations with Enno Patalas, Klaus Volkmer and Gerhard Ullman. Further references came from countless FIAF archives possessing METROPOLIS-related materials, as well as from the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung.

3 This undertaking occurred in conjunction with a work group sponsored by the Kinemathek-Cooperative, and included the participation of the German Film Archive. The Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung conferred upon the author all responsibility for the coordinating of research work and the development of the new version’s concept.
expectations, including his acting standards. This observation, which is mentioned quite casually in Kettelhut’s lengthy report about the making of METROPOLIS, proves Lang to be a conscientious professional who has something to deliver to his employer: three good takes of every shot.

According to current research, it is quite likely that from the outset the plan was to create three equivalent original negatives of METROPOLIS footage: one to be used to produce copies for the German market, one for the export department, and one to be delivered to Paramount, who would distribute the film in the US. Accordingly, the 620,000 meters of exposed negative would be distributed over three original negatives that would be created from them, which reduces the ratio of exposed negative to edited footage to a still exorbitant and unlikely 49:1. At the time, the parallel production of several negatives was a perfectly common practice. There were no good duplicate materials available yet, and only if one had several negatives was it possible to produce a large number of copies, or export negatives, from which, in turn, foreign distributors could make their copies. These original negatives, shot parallel, originated from several cameras that were placed side by side during shooting, or were a montage produced from a number of different takes of the same shot that were at best on the same artistic level but never totally identical, of course. When reconstructing films of which there are only incomplete extant copies, it is often a stroke of luck that this way films were, so to speak, produced several times over. On the other hand, multiple versions, a curse for variants such as performance, camera position, length and continuity, can create enormous problems when combining the material, and the restorer is also faced with an ethical dilemma: he is compiling a film that never existed in the form he has created, by reassembling it from a number of different versions.

What happened to the three original negatives of METROPOLIS? In March 1934, at the request of the Reichsfilmkammer, Ufa compiled a list of silent feature films still stored in their Tempelhof film archive. Among the 480 titles listed there is only one negative of METROPOLIS, listed as consisting of 2,589 meters of film (not counting silent-film captions) on nine reels. Even the length indicates that this cannot be the original negative of the original version of METROPOLIS, for, at 4,189 meters, that was considerably longer. At best, this negative corresponds to the second German version, which Ufa brought out in the summer of 1927; after the film had been cut, modeled more or less on Paramount’s adaptation, it measured 3,241 meters (including silent-film captions). What happened to this original negative subsequently has not been completely determined yet. In all likelihood, it was moved at the end of World War II, together with other material, so that after the war it reappeared in possession of Ufa, which was being reorganized in West Germany.

After the collapse of the postwar Ufa, it was transferred to the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung in Wiesbaden. In 1988 a remnant of five reels was recopied.

However, there does exist a dupe negative of the second German version, which served as a basis for most of the copies that are...
circulating in Western countries. In the summer of 1936, Iris Barry, the founder of the film archive of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), came to Berlin during the Olympic Games to purchase copies of German film classics for the museum's film collection. In addition to other films, she received a copy of METROPOLIS from Ufa. As a comparison with the five reels recopied in Wiesbaden shows, this copy was derived from the original negative stored by Ufa. The nitrate copy given to MoMA no longer exists, but there is a dupe negative made from it in 1937 in New York; this dupe could be restored once again in 1947, using film clips from the then still extant earlier copy after the dupe was damaged or had become partially unusable for other reasons. Since 1986, this dupe negative has been in possession of the Munich Film museum. As opposed to the 2,589 meter length (without silent-film captions) measured by Ufa in 1934, additional footage is now missing: The nine reels of dupe negative are only 2,532 meters long (including silent-film captions).

Proliferated from the Reichsfilmarchiv to the Staatsliches Filmarchiv of the GDR, and now to the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv was another original negative of the film that does not appear on the 1934 Ufa list. Possibly it was not back in Ufa's possession at the time, for the negative in question is Paramount's original negative, which had gone to America in 1926/27, where drastic changes to it had been made. It probably went back to Ufa after its license expired, or at any rate after 1936, and was then given by Ufa to the Reichsfilmarchiv. The material is 2,337 meters long (including American silent-film captions) on eight reels, and in its present form possibly corresponds to a second, even more shortened Paramount version. Also by way of the Staatsliches Filmarchiv of the GDR, a supplementary fragment of the original negative reached the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv; it, too, is part of the Paramount version, and contains the scenes removed in Paramount's second version, as well as fragments of shots that were not removed but shortened. The spectacular length of this additional material (1,952 meters on 10 reels), which was not returned to Berlin by Gosfilmofond in Moscow until 1971, unfortunately does not mean that the scenes of the German premiere version that were lost in all other versions are to be found here. Rather, the reason for the length of the material is that it also includes a large number of variants and outtakes for the Paramount film captions, as well as source material for various special effects scenes that need to be copied together in the finished film as double opticals.

To date, no trace has been found of the third original negative given to Ufa's export department. Still, copies of this negative, which were exported to various countries in 1927/28, have been preserved. At the National Film and Television Archive, in London, there is a nitrate copy of the 2,603 meter version that was distributed in Britain. This version contains scenes that are missing both in the MoMA German version and in the Paramount version, while, in turn, others have been shortened. The English captions occasionally diverge from the new texts written by Channing Pollock. Several years ago the George Eastman House in Rochester took over the nitrate copy previously stored in the National Film and Sound Archive in Canberra; the editing and texts of this version, which was distributed in Australia and comes from the
private collection of Harry Davidson, again slightly diverge from those of the English version. This copy is particularly interesting, since it has been tinted throughout. Other fragmentarily preserved nitrate copies of the export version, tinted in part in colors other than the Australian version, are located in the Fondazione Cineteca Italiana in Milan: 1,899 meters, 482 meters, and 190 meters long, each has lavish film captions whose meaning is quite different from the German captions.

As far as can be ascertained, all circulating copies of METROPOLIS – reconstructed or not – are derived from the above material, though in part by way of a large number of intermediary stages that make the photographic quality of many of the versions look more like a caricature than a reproduction of the original. The scenes removed from the film in 1927, first by Paramount and then by Ufa, have not been rediscovered to date, and considering the decades of hard archive-work done on this film, it is not very likely that they still exist somewhere. This means that a quarter of the film, the part containing the core of the story conceived by von Harbou and Lang, must be considered to be irretrievably lost. Regardless of this, archives have been showing their copies for decades, and when possible, working on producing better versions whose genesis can only be sketched out here very generally.

Probably the most widespread is the version of the Museum of Modern Art, which was created in 1937 by replacing the film captions of the second, German version, part of the material received from Ufa, with English language translations. These were naturally closer to the German version than the captions of the Paramount version, written by Channing Pollock, in which even the names of the characters had been changed: in the Pollock version, Joh Fredersen became John Masterman, his son Freder was given the name Eric, and Josaphat became Joseph. In the MoMA version, the protagonists again (or rather: still) have their original names. As early as 1938, the MoMA version was duplicated for the National Film Library in London, and from there it continued to spread throughout Europe, for example, to the collections of the Cinémathèque française, the Cinémathèque Suisse, and the Cinémathèque Royale in Brussels. The versions that have been distributed in West Germany since the sixties, set to various kinds of music, also go back to the London dupes negative.

In the sixties the Paramount version also reappeared. From Berlin, where the shortened Paramount negative of the Reichsfilmarchiv was copied by the GDR’s Staatliches Filmarchiv, and made available to the public, it went to various other archives and was screened there. Gosfilmofond, in Moscow, and the Ceskoslovensky Filmovy Archive, in Prague, jointly produced an improved Paramount version that at least attained a length of 2,816 meters, and was therefore more complete than the material known in Berlin, if still shorter than the version edited by Pollock in 1927.11 At the GDR’s Staatliches Filmarchiv, from 1969 through 1972, Eckart Jahnke succeeded in producing the so-called FIAF version from various materials made available by other archives12, an important step in the direction of a more complete version of METROPOLIS, though still not satisfactory: Thus many of the riddles hidden in the material could not be solved because the
The English film captions were left as they were found in the various copies used, and so names of characters frequently change within the film. Owing to the inadequacy of the sources, Jahnke arrived at several fatal, false conclusions in the course of his work. Thus, for example, he believed the comparatively laconic, film captions in the MoMA version were further removed from von Harbou’s style than the flowery texts that Pollock had inserted into the Paramount version. Today we know that the exact opposite would have been correct. After studying the materials that were available to him, Jahnke proposed that the FIAF version should be based on what he called the »London copy«, into which missing takes from other versions were to be inserted whenever possible. His report leaves unclear what was meant by that term, for he had received from London not only a dupe negative of the MoMA version but also one that had belonged to the English distributors. From existing notes about the »London copy« it becomes clear, however, that the copy referred to must have been the MoMA version. While it was true that the MoMA had offered the Staatliches Filmarchiv its 1937 dupe negative of the MoMA version but also one that had belonged to the English distributors, it becomes clear, however, that the copy referred to must have been the MoMA version. While it was true that the MoMA had offered the Staatliches Filmarchiv its 1937 dupe negative, no one had realized that this material would have been two generations better than that which had been obtained from London. As a result, the FIAF version – in addition to all its other flaws – was very unsatisfactory from a photographic point of view.

From today’s perspective, it is difficult to understand why no attempt was made to obtain a new version from the photographically excellent original negative of the Paramount version that was available in the archive: It could have been reedited modeled on the versions that were recognized to be correct. A letter from Fritz Lang is probably the reason that this was not done. »You were quite right to use the London version (i.e., the MoMA version, MK) as a basis for your reconstruction«, Lang wrote to the archive, in 1971, referring to the Paramount version as an example for »how thoughtlessly and dictatorially American distributors treated European films in the twenties«. The film director’s authority could apparently not be shaken even by the fact that, in his letter, Lang admits: »[It is] impossible for me to tell you something from memory that could help you in your work«, and then lays a false trail: »After Berlin was taken, all the copies of my film which were stored in a print lab were apparently confiscated by the Russians. Among these films was a complete copy of METROPOLIS as well. The performance lasted 2 hours and 4 minutes«. This performance length corresponds to that of the second German version (3,241 meters, though at 23 frames/second), in which all the »thoughtless and dictatorial« deletions of the American distributor had been carried out, and yet Lang calls this version »complete«. Was he really unable to remember that his film had originally been one hour and almost 1000 meters longer, or is this statement a hidden clue that – who knows why and under what pressures – the second version, too, was produced or inspected by Lang?

13 Jürgen Labenski (ZDF Broadcasting Network) mentioned that ZDF had access to Huppertz’s score since 1967 and, in the early seventies, put it at the disposal of the State Film Archive. However, in the files on the reconstruction, presently in the Federal Archive - Film Archive, no reference to this can be found; nor does Jahnke’s final report refer to this source. From this we can assume that the music – if at all – first arrived in the archive after the research was completed and was only used for adding the sound track.

14 Note from Elaine Burrows (NFTVA, London) to the author. All other information mentioned here pertaining to the version of the State Film Archive of the GDR are taken from Jahnke’s File on the Reconstruction, now in the Federal Archive - Film Archive.

15 Fritz Lang to Wolfgang Klaus (State Film Archive of the GDR), January 23rd, 1971, in the Federal Film Archive - Film Archive, File on the Reconstruction of METROPOLIS.
For years, the efforts of Enno Patalas to preserve and restore German film classics have enjoyed a great deal of international attention. It is to his work at the Munich Film museum that we owe the most far-reaching attempt at reconstructing METROPOLIS to date, since Patalas – unlike Jahnke in the GDR not so long ago – was able to use many sources that have been discovered in the meantime, and these provide more accurate information about the lost premiere version: the censorship office card, the screenplay, and the music. In 1986/1987, after years of preliminary work with inadequate film material and intensive international research, a working copy was edited in Munich, based on the 1937 nitrate dupe-negative, taken over from the Museum of Modern Art, and incorporating missing scenes from all other available versions. Added were newly photographed film captions, faithful to the text found on the censorship card. This version is 3,153 meters long, and therefore, still shorter than the second German version of 1927. However, the missing sections, in as far as they are necessary for understanding the remainder, have been supplemented using texts and occasional stills, and the editing of the premiere version has been restored as far as was possible. The copy was presented and is still being presented all over the world, often with the music of Gottfried Huppertz, newly arranged by Berndt Heller.
The new version of the reconstruction that we have now worked on since 1998 is conceived along the same lines as the Munich version, as far as editing sequence, placement of film captions, etc. are concerned. However, after in-depth comparisons of various materials, we decided to use wherever possible the extant original negative of the Paramount version. Supplementary shots will, if possible, be copied directly from extant first-generation nitrate copies. One reason for this is the photographic quality – superior to that of all previous versions – that can be expected with this process, which, for the first time in decades, will greatly emphasize the work of cameramen Karl Freund and Günther Rittau. Another reason is not technical but philological in nature: In the meantime, we assume that the original negative still extant in Ufa archives in the thirties was not a top-quality negative, and as a result extant copies of this negative, on which both the FIAF and the Munich versions were based, are of less value than had believed until now. A direct comparison with the Paramount material clearly shows that, in this negative, many scenes have been edited in – not from camera material, but from dupe negatives. The continuity is often less than successful, and the performance of the actors often inferior to that in the Paramount negative. All this leads us to believe that this original negative was probably not the negative of the German version (even a modified one), but a substitute version assembled after the original negative wore out. While the original negative had combined the best shots available, the substitute version was an assemblage of duplicates of the original negative, and other previously rejected shots.

On the other hand, we can safely assume that it was Lang who selected the shots contained in the original negative of the Paramount version, which left Berlin as early as 1926/27 and was shortened and reedited in America. It is more than unlikely that Ufa used inferior material for this version with which it planned to introduce its most expensive and important film to the international market. However, the new start also meant that, in attempting to reconstruct the film once more, the film had to be reedited from scratch. The difficulties associated with editing and assembling such varying and, to some extent, contradictory material, which we described initially, are unavoidable. And this time, too, it will not be possible to create the original version of METROPOLIS but »only« a synthetic version, consisting of the fragments passed down to us.

Also unique about the reworking of the film is the technical process chosen for the copy work. Instead of producing a dupe negative photographically, in a 2K-resolution the preserved nitrate-material was scanned and digitally manipulated in a computer. This allowed for more precision – when doing touch-up work on scratches, soiled regions, surface abrasions and torn areas, but also when dealing with any density flaws and mistakes in the picture editing – than would have been possible using conventional methods. In the end, this negative, exposed on film, had a decisive advantage over the other negative: there was no loss of quality in the process. Ideally this meant that the copy made from such a negative would look exactly like the positive, made in 1927, produced at that time from a brand-new negative.
We care about preserving German film culture. And it lies in our hands to see that a new generation can have a meaningful confrontation with film history. With classic films, as well as with films a success in time, but forgotten today and therefore due to be rediscovered. These are the words of Peter Franz, for years the man responsible for keeping the sensibility of the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung on course.

Among the central tasks of the foundation based in Wiesbaden is the handling of both the film archive and rights of an immense film legacy – a treasure of German film history. The foundation’s film- and legal holdings include materials from the UFA film studios, as well as from the Bavaria, Terra and Tobis film companies. Here one finds films with titles as prominent and classic as Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* and Josef von Sternberg’s *Blue Angel*. With great continuity, the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung has given its attention to all aspects of the archive work for these works, made enormous financial investments to help restore and reconstruct this endangered film legacy, and has also committed itself to the presentation of films on a national and international level. Over the years, the historic film retrospectives of the International Film Festival have become important showcases for Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung, because here the foundation presents its film treasures to the public. For the overall concept- and organizational work for retrospectives of the Berlinale, a longstanding and trusting partnerships exists between the foundation and Filmmuseum Berlin – Deutsche Kinemathek. Thanks to this cooperation, numerous restoration projects have been encouraged and supported during recent years. In Berlin, the premieres of new versions of old films, which never fail to draw attention worldwide, also have a great effect on their further evaluation through the Murnau-Stiftung. More often than not, after their showing at the Berlinale the same films are shown at other locations in Germany and abroad.

Supervising the film stock of the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung is handled by Transit Film GmbH, in Munich, a film company founded 1966, and on whose board of supervisors also sit delegates of the Federal government. Furthermore, Transit supervises film documentation of social, cultural and historical worth the property of the Federal Film Archive, material dating back in some cases to the year 1895.

Internationally active, Transit Film is represented at the most important trade fairs for television and film. Now available are videos, DVDs, calendars, post cards, and merchandising articles, which carry the label »Transit Classics«.

The film distribution of Transit Film brings a large number of German film classics to the screen and is represented at events worldwide. Especially successful at home and abroad is the combining of silent-film showings with live-music.
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