

## ***Friday Film Fest Series***



### **Metropolis**

Introduction and summary by Joel Mynders

Our offering this month at the German Society's Film Program, part of our cultural outreach, is Fritz Lang's film "Metropolis". This film's position in the history of world cinema ranks with Chaplin's "Modern Times" and "Gone with the Wind".

Why should you see this classic film? The director presents a view of the world based upon the cataclysmic changes that the aftermath of World War I made upon

the European Mind. The old order of European life from 1815 to 1918 was broken and society was feeling its way toward the future. Lang's film takes place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, our present century. New patterns of societal organization like massive urbanization, socialism, unionization and landscapes that

dehumanized the individual are the elements that "Metropolis" presents. This was the most expensive film produced in Europe at UFA, the German film studios, in Potsdam.

At the time "Metropolis" was created, there was a struggle between Hollywood and Berlin for dominance in the new film industry. The Weimar Republic in Germany, after World War I, was a creative hotbed for the arts. The film cost six million marks in the 1920s to produce. The first "World Premier" of a film was done for "Metropolis". The film is a European's fantasy of New York, the first city of skyscrapers.

If you love film, join us for this classic and our discussions of Lang and Metropolis.

Summary: Movie Milestone and Masterpiece! – Joel Mynders

Metropolis is surely one of the greatest films ever made. Its scope, its reach, its magnitude and its message are truly incredible even by today's standards of film-making. Seen in context of its premier in 1927, Metropolis is a giant of filmdom and film history. Lots of people always ask what makes a movie great, and in particular, Metropolis. A great film is one that stirs the imagination, leaves the viewer with images that will last perhaps forever, forces contemplation of issues dealing with the very essence of life, and achieves a kind of immortality. Metropolis is a film that succeeds with each of these criteria. Metropolis is a film that hailed in a new era of making films with its futuristic settings, hallucinatory scenes, and its breadth of spirit and sheer scope, most clearly exhibited by its

cast of epic proportions. There are images that blind the viewer with genius such as the beginning scene of the changing of the workers or the creation of the robot Maria. Metropolis challenges its viewers to think about their relationship with society both as a whole and with each individual, as well as contemplate the rationale of divisions amongst peoples and groups. Lastly, Metropolis has stood the test of time. It is a landmark film and an igniter for the evolution of the science fiction/fantasy film genre. The story itself is simple, a Biblical allegory, about how people with a vision should share that vision in order to make it happen. The film is anything but simple. It is immense, and a rich legacy that director Fritz Lang has left us.