



THE WIND

MGM 1928

Directed by Victor Seastrom

Cast

Letty Lillian Gish
Lige Lars Hanson
Roddy Montagu Love
Cora Dorothy Cumming
Beverly Edward Earle
Sourdough William Orlamond



Screenplay Frances Marion
Titles John Colton
Camera John Arnold
Wardrobe André-Ani
Assistant Director Harold S. Bucquet
Editor Conrad A. Nervig
Set Designers Cedric Gibbons
and Edward Withers

Duration : 78 minutes
Projection speed: variable
Aperture: Movietone

Score by Carl Davis (37 players)



LIVE CINEMA

THE WIND

Letty, a city girl, is orphaned and moves to Texas to live with her cousin Beverly. Naïve and fragile, Letty is unprepared for the tough life she will find. On the train, she meets Wirt Roddy, a smooth-talking, business man. He offers his help if ever she is in trouble. Beverly's farm is not the happy homestead Letty imagined. His wife, Cora, overworked and worn, hates Letty for her sweet femininity and, what is worse, the children and Beverly love her. Cora insists that she fend for herself and choose between two potential husbands. Letty refuses, thinking she can count on Wirt Roddy. She throws herself at his mercy but finds that marriage was not part of his plans. Desperate, she accepts Lige but makes it clear that there will be no love in their union. A simple man, Lige honours her wishes. News of a hurricane means all the men leave to round up the cattle. Letty is left to face the storm alone...

As Letty, Lillian Gish, the greatest actress of the silent screen, gives here her most extraordinary performance, her frail body almost breaking in the wind and her eyes expressing her inner turmoil. As Lige, Lars Hanson transforms his matinée idol looks. Unkempt and unshaven, he dons an air of coarseness, but his dignity and understanding grow throughout the film. Letty and Lige's wedding night is a masterpiece of tension.

Director, Victor Seastrom, took a simple story and fashioned it into perhaps the most expressive psychological drama of the silent era. A native of Sweden, Seastrom, was no stranger to wide open spaces. His Swedish films were dramas in which the forces of nature complement the human story. Under his direction, the wind becomes a paranormal force against which our characters are helpless. The most feared wind, the Norther, is a lethal combination of omnipotence and malevolence. It blasts through whatever barriers are erected against it. The ranchers are imprisoned – their lives spent repairing the wind's destruction and preparing for its next onslaught. There is no place for comfort or happiness. Coming from a more temperate life, Letty is neither physically nor mentally suited to the constant onslaught. The crisis of her existence is the climax of the film. In an hallucinogenic sequence, she confronts her fear of nature and of human nature.

Carl Davis' score for string orchestra and percussion only, is a *tour de force*. Emphasising Letty's physical and mental state, Davis builds a soundscape which matches Seastrom's powerful imagery.