

Cultivate Cinema Circle presents:  
**THE SCARLET EMPRESS [1934]**

Directed by Josef von Sternberg  
**DECEMBER 18TH, 2021 - 1:00PM**



Original Theatrical Poster

### SHORT CUTS

“Cossacks gallop furiously through this picture and Miss Marlene Dietrich is photographed in as many ways and from almost as many angles as a Warner Brothers chorus ensemble. Not much story and less history.”  
 - Ann Ross, *Maclean's* [1934]

“*The Scarlet Empress* had been unavailable for years...Ostensibly it is about the marriage of the young and innocent Sophia Frederica to the mad Grand Duke Peter of Russia, and the insurrection which resulted in her becoming the new Empress Catherine. Looking at it today, one is continually puzzled (and delighted) by Sternberg’s ambivalent attitudes towards the material. Surely nobody could have doubted that he was sending it up (‘those ideas are old-fashioned—this is the eighteenth century’ proclaims the ardent, black-wigged Count Alexei to the pouting

young Catherine). Yet Sternberg’s insolent wit was the last thing commented on at the time. Strange, too, how these comic anachronisms are made to alternate with set-pieces played solely for their dramatic or exotic appeal; all dialogue ceases and Sternberg constructs a sequence ‘painted with light’ which fully confirms his reputation as one of cinema’s great visual stylists.”  
 - John Gillett, *Sight & Sound* [1965]

“It is a relentless excursion into style,’ Josef von Sternberg said of his *The Scarlet Empress*. That’s putting it mildly. Here is a film so crammed with style, so surrounded by it and weighted down with it, that the actors peer out from the display like children in a toy store. The film tells the story of Catherine the Great as a bizarre visual extravaganza, combining twisted sexuality and bold bawdy humor as if Mel Brooks had collaborated with the Marquis de Sade ... As drama, *The Scarlet Empress* makes

no sense, nor does it attempt to. This is not a resource for history class. Its primary subject is von Sternberg’s erotic obsession with Dietrich, whom he objectified in a series of movies that made her face one of the immortal icons of the cinema. Whether she could act was beside the point for him; it would have been a distraction.”  
 - Roger Ebert, *Chicago Sun-Times* [2006]

### THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS:



## CAST & CREW

Director.....Josef von Sternberg  
Story.....Manuel Komroff  
Diary..... Catherine the Great

Princess Sophia Frederica /  
Catherine II.....Marlene Dietrich  
Count Alexei.....John Lodge  
Grand Duke Peter..... Sam Jaffe  
Empress Elizabeth Petrovna..... Louise Dresser  
Prince August..... C. Aubrey Smith  
Capt. Gregori Orloff..... Gavin Gordon  
Princess Johanna Elizabeth ..... Olive Tell  
Countess Elizabeth 'Lizzie'.. Ruthelma Stevens  
Archimandrite Simeon Todorsky /  
Arch-Bishop..... Davison Clark  
Chancellor Alexei Bestuchef .. Erville Alderson  
Count Lestok.....Philip Sleeman  
Marie Tshoglokov..... Marie Wells  
Ivan Shuvalov .. Hans Heinrich von Twardowski  
Lt. Dmitri ..... Gerald Fielding  
Sophia as a Child ..... Maria Riva

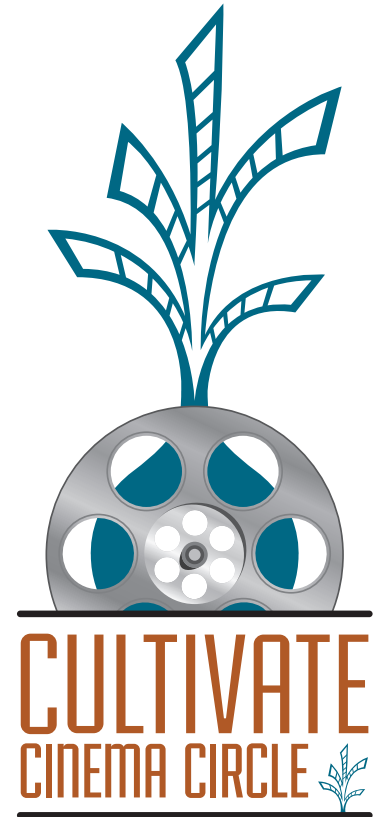
## DIRECTOR FILMOGRAPHY

- The Epic That Never Was (I, Claudius) (1965)
- Jet Pilot (1957)
- Macao (1952)
- Anatahan (1952)
- The Shanghai Gesture (1942)
- I Take This Woman (1940)
- Sergeant Madden (1939)
- I, Claudius (1937)
- The King Steps Out (1936)
- Crime and Punishment (1935)
- The Devil Is a Woman (1935)
- The Scarlet Empress (1934)
- Shanghai Express (1932)
- Blonde Venus (1932)
- Dishonored (1931)
- An American Tragedy (1931)
- Morocco (1930)
- The Blue Angel (1930)
- Thunderbolt (1929)
- The Case of Lena Smith (1929)
- The Dragnet (1928)

- The Docks of New York (1928)
- The Last Command (1928)
- Underworld (1927)
- A Woman of the Sea (1926)
- The Exquisite Sinner (1926)
- The Masked Bride (1925)
- Salvation Hunters (1925)



## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS:



## UPCOMING SCHEDULE:

### SWING TIME [1936]

Sat, January 8th, 2022 | 1:00pm

### YANKEE DOODLE DANDY [1942]

Sat, January 22nd, 2022 | 1:00pm

### A STAR IS BORN [1954]

Sat, February 5th, 2022 | 1:00pm

### HELLO, DOLLY! [1969]

Sat, February 19th, 2022 | 1:00pm

### CABARET [1972]

Sat, March 5th, 2022 | 1:00pm

Please support us on **PATREON** |  
@cultivatecinemacircle