



Denmark - Culture - Cinema

Carl Th. Dreyer, 1889-1968, Danish film director. Dreyer was an uncompromising, perfectionist loner in Danish cinema, and he is counted as one of the most important creative geniuses in cinema. He started as a feature film director in 1919 for Nordisk Film Kompagni with the dramatic family saga *Præsidenten* (The President), which was followed by *Blade af Satans Bog* (1920, Pages from Satan's Book). This film was too sombre for Nordisk Film, and Dreyer was forced to produce his next five films in turn in Sweden, Germany and for other Danish film companies. *Du skal ære din Hustru* (Thou shalt Honour Thy Wife) from 1925 ensured him an appointment with a French film company, and for them he made his famous *La passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (1928, The Passion of Joan of Arc), one of the finest artistic achievements from the silent film era. This film confirmed Dreyer's international reputation, but the company fell into financial difficulties, and he was only able to make his next film, *Vampyr* (Vampire) thanks to a wealthy patron. In 1934 Dreyer returned to Denmark to a time marked by adversity and abandoned projects. Only in 1943 did he come to produce his next feature film, *Vredens Dag* (Day of Wrath), a tragic love story played against the background of the persecution of witches in the 17th century. In the years following the Second World War, Dreyer contributed to the official Danish production of short films with, for instance, *De naaede Færgen* (1948, They Caught the Ferry), but again a long time elapsed before he was able to make his next feature film, *Ordet* (1955, The Word), a brilliant film version of Kaj Munk's play, which assured Dreyer of even greater international recognition. His last film was *Gertrud* (1964), which was seen as very controversial after its première, but which has since been considered as one of the great works of modern cinema.



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