

Singin' in the (European) Rain

The modern musical is one of America's singular mid-century contributions to the arts, with classics from *Show Boat* to *West Side Story* to *A Chorus Line* setting the standard to which the rest of the world aspires. That dominance extended to the movies, where *The Sound of Music*, *Cabaret*, and the MGM musical (from *Singin' in the Rain* on down) dominated the box office from London to Tokyo. In fact, when director Carol Reed decided to tackle *Oliver!* (1968), he realized there hadn't been a decent British movie musical since *Evergreen* in the thirties. But the well-earned hubris of Hollywood's singers and dancers has blinded us to the many gems that *can* be found in Europe. The Museum of Modern Art corrects our vision with **"From the Archives: European Musicals"** from May 19 to May 30, an eclectic, wide-ranging look at song-and-dancers from Great Britain, Czechoslovakia, Sweden, France, and Germany. These movies have been overlooked for so long that a few of the more obscure works—such as three charming musical satires from the Czech comedy team of Jan Werich and Jiri Voskovec—aren't even available in subtitled prints. (English synopses of the plot are provided.) Highlights include *Oliver!*, which is coming back to Broadway in a new British production; the sexy, vivacious Josephine Baker in *Zouzou*; the Beatles' groundbreaking *A Hard Day's Night*, which demonstrated for the first time how all-encompassing a pop group's impact could be (and that a movie musical needn't be square); and *Evergreen* (pictured), which gave the over-the-top choreography of Busby Berkeley a run for its money. Call 708-9480 or see "Museums, Societies, Etc." for more information. MICHAEL GILTZ

