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# Global versus Local: The Case of Pathé

Marina Dahlquist

According to a film exhibitor writing in the newspaper *Vårt land* in 1908, films shown in Sweden were all made abroad. He further claims that the French films by Pathé and Gaumont were technically superior to films from other countries, but when it came to acting, the American films, especially Edison's, excelled.<sup>1</sup> This observation comes at a time when local exhibitors found it interesting to venture into film-making. Such forays were not only potentially profitable, but tied into discourses on tourism, national culture, regionalism and the local.

From 1905 on, as permanent-site film theatres began to be established in Sweden, Pathé was an equally important supplier of titles for Swedish screens as in many other countries, including the US. As elsewhere this was due to Pathé's extensive production system with a regular pattern of release. The first initiatives to develop domestic production in Sweden came from film exhibitors who started to shoot films featuring local events and more or less prominent individuals. Amongst these are films produced in cities such as Karlstad and Kristianstad, where local material was inserted into programmes consisting mainly of French, English and American releases.

## Local films for local people

In 1908, local film production was a quite large phenomenon, and film production in Sweden was slowly propelled by such efforts which received highly enthusiastic reviews, particularly in Stockholm, since most other cities had only very limited newspaper publication. During 1909, Sweden's only trade publication, *Nordisk Filmtidning*, repeatedly put the case for domestic film production. Local films became part of an effort to organise film production on a national basis showing local issues, actors and local scenes.

The production of local films turned into a

common phenomenon all over the country. Film production started out with scenic and topical events, for example, Anders Skogh, a former type-writer agent, advertised the film, *Göteborgsbilder med kälkåkning i slottsbacken* (*Sled riding in Gothenburg*), in the spring of 1904. Skogh's photographers later shot films of local interest in larger towns such as Borås and Gävle, where the films were shown in his film theatre chain, Olympia. Local actualities, therefore, were well established.<sup>2</sup>

In December 1905, Karlstad's first moving picture theatre Biografen (later called Biograf-Teatern), opened in a purpose-built structure. The man behind this initiative was Bror Ferdinand Andersson who had worked in the past as a soda manufacturer and in the glass and china trade.<sup>3</sup> In the spring of 1906, Swedish scenes were offered, often tourist subjects or news events shown with locally-produced films. B.F. Andersson produced a number of such films until his death in March 1908 when his wife and daughter took over the business and continued producing films. Recurrent themes included local events such as *Barnens dag i Karlstad* (*Children's Day in Karlstad*) in 1907 and 1908,<sup>4</sup> in addition to films that showcased the city's commercial life and local entertainment by means of sights and sports events such as the skating competitions of 1905–06, cross-country skiing and ice-dancing.<sup>5</sup> During a sailing regatta in 1906, B.F. Andersson is clearly visible in one of these films waving his hat.<sup>6</sup> In fact, Andersson appeared in several films such as the film of Chil-

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dren's Day in 1907.<sup>7</sup> One important incentive for producing these local films was emphasised in an advertisement: 'New! Images from Karlstad. Beautiful and outstanding images in which everybody can recognise friends and acquaintances.'<sup>8</sup> Occasionally even the exact dates of the local production were mentioned in an advertisement to stress the contemporaneity of the films.<sup>9</sup>

Andersson's programmes consisted of locally produced films together with at least a couple of titles with an explicit Swedish interest such as *Bland lappar* (*Among the Sami people*),<sup>10</sup> a depiction of Malmö's fire department,<sup>11</sup> and the 1906 exhibition in Norrköping.<sup>12</sup> This tendency is less prominent after 1906.<sup>13</sup> Apart from his own production, B.F. Andersson depended almost exclusively on Pathé films for his programmes.

Swedish Biograph's trajectory as a national production company had its background in a first wave of local films shot and exhibited in Kristianstad. Soon the company started to shoot films in the cities where they opened new exhibition outlets. Later, local film initiatives became a way for a film company like Pathé Frères' Swedish subsidiary to obtain a foothold in the Swedish market.

Even though local films are often said to be produced for local people only and not put into distribution, borderline cases were common in Sweden. Several films started out as locally advertised events to be shown only at one theatre, but were later awarded national distribution, and in some cases reached as far as Norway and the US.<sup>14</sup> As Jan Olsson has pointed out, domestic production of fiction films was almost completely absent in Sweden before 1909 with the exception of a limited output of dance films and sound synchronizations. In the late 1900s, Swedish Biograph (Aktiebolaget Svenska Biografteatern) began an expansive programme of development, hiring Charles Magnusson as general manager of the company.<sup>15</sup> The company started its business in the small southern town of Kristianstad in 1905. The company grew steadily and soon included a chain of cinemas in smaller cities in the south of Sweden.<sup>16</sup> Swedish Biograph distributed films from the major international companies, but soon established a production unit. Initially production focused on topicals and scenics, but in 1909 also began to include fiction films featuring local talent and sound synchronizations presenting nationally renowned performers.<sup>17</sup>

As mentioned earlier, Swedish Biograph pro-

duced local films in the towns where they owned film theatres. Pelle Snickars estimates that Swedish Biograph's photographer, Robert Olsson, assisted by Ernst Dittmer, made around thirty city films in 1907 and 1908. The films were shown in the respective towns in which the films were made, showing the audience their particular milieu before being screened elsewhere. In this latter context, the films were presented as domestic scenic views or as actualities. In some cases, the films were shown in the opening programme for a new theatre as in Malmö in April 1908.<sup>18</sup>

From February 1907 onwards, advertisements appeared in the local newspaper, *Kristianstads Läns Tidning*, for local film productions. The opportunity for audiences to see themselves as well as their family and friends is often highlighted.<sup>19</sup> Even in an advertisement for a film showing the King's visit to Kristianstad, attention was drawn to the fact that the film showed inhabitants of the city and its surroundings.<sup>20</sup> Apart from the royal visit, local issues were screened such as sports events, public celebrations, parades, school children and processions of demonstrators.<sup>21</sup> In addition, the advertisements presented topics from other parts of the country: sports events, state visits and images from the north of Sweden where winter sceneries and the Sami people were popular subjects.<sup>22</sup> Swedish Biograph also produced a series of films under the title of *Svenska bilder* (*Swedish Views*) depicting domestic issues bearing on Swedish nature, industries and trade. The company soon outgrew its small-town production facilities and moved its headquarters to Stockholm in 1911.

Other examples of local film production can be found in several other cities in Sweden such as Helsingborg, Kristinehamn, Kalmar and Trelleborg.<sup>23</sup> In the latter city hundreds of inhabitants were not only depicted on screen, but prominent citizens as well as eccentric characters were also shown in a local comic titled *Korvhandlarens äventyr* (*The Adventure of the Hot Dog Vendor*) in 1910.<sup>24</sup>

Stockholm did not emerge as an important film distribution and production centre in Sweden until around 1910–11. Earlier on, other locations were more important: the companies of Friberg in Karlshamn, Svenska filmkompagniet in Jönköping, Bergkvist in Linköping and Lundberg in Malmö. Much of this early business structure fell apart shortly after the national censorship board was established in December 1911.

Local film production and distribution in Sweden displayed a wide variation of practice in matters of production and programming. Film exhibitors produced local films not only in the context of a local screen for local people, but also fostered an effort to mount national film production that focused on local issues, actors, scenes and views. The relationship between programming and the production of local films became closely intertwined in the development of the Swedish film industry. Not only did Swedish Biograph start out with the production of local films but so too did Viking film, based in Linköping. They produced scenics and topical films when they started to produce features in 1912. A somewhat different case is demonstrated by the efforts of the world leading company Pathé which hoped that through the production of local films the company would acquire an aura of Swedishness in the national context.

### Pathé on the Swedish scene

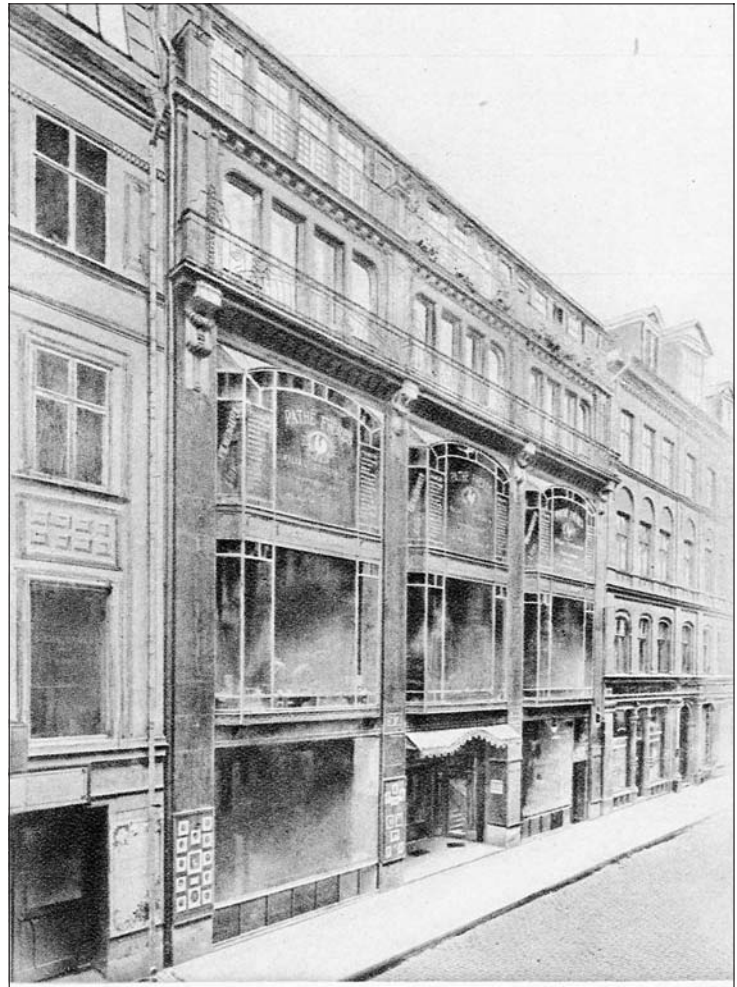
From 1904, internationalization emerged as Pathé's main objective in a process designed to gain access and control of the global film market. Market expansion became increasingly important when earnings declined in 1909–10 after years of higher revenues which peaked in 1906–07.

The company's strategy was two-pronged. On the one hand, Pathé tailored its production to local markets by opening branches in a number of capitals commencing with Moscow, New York and Brussels.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, the company's international importance and global concern were recurrently promoted, perhaps most directly so in the marketing of the company's newsreels, which were advertised to 'cover the whole world'.<sup>26</sup>

A 'profitable trade' in film had not come about by accident. Audiences had been studied, preferences had been mapped in a process where local taste and predilections were perceived as a pre-requisite for international success.<sup>27</sup> Charles Pathé described decentralization and the company's presence in many markets as a 'considerable evolution' in an interview in 1914:

Each and every country is striving to produce at home subjects which are better adapted to the special mentality and taste of their motion picture patrons.<sup>28</sup>

To attain this goal, Charles Pathé explained, the company had almost completely ceased the production of films. He compared himself to a pub-



Les Établissements Pathé Frères de Stockholm.

lisher handling books on a royalty basis, a system he considered very satisfying.<sup>29</sup> Instead, the company had affiliated itself with studios producing films in a national context. Adapting to local taste, therefore, either led Pathé to the model of affiliation with studios scattered across many markets or, alternatively, helped the company develop production with international potential. The decentralization of the company through establishing branches world-wide was a recurrent topic in the minutes of the board in Paris, especially during 1910. Pathé's old organisational structure was replaced with the new formation of branches operating as incorporated entities.<sup>30</sup>

In 1910, Pathé opened a branch in Stockholm which was responsible for business in Sweden and Norway.<sup>31</sup> The Stockholm branch was headed by

**Fig. 1.** Head office, Pathé Frères, Drottninggatan 47, Stockholm. [Courtesy: Patrimoine Pathé.]

Siegmund Popert who in 1904 had acted as Pathé's general manager in the US. Subsequently the company established branches in Malmö in 1912,<sup>32</sup> and in Göteborg (Gothenburg) in 1914.<sup>33</sup> With headquarters in Stockholm, distribution branches flourished in Kristiania (present-day Oslo), Malmö, Göteborg, Örebro, Karlskrona and Karlstad according to a folder produced by Pathé in Paris.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, the ledgers in Paris do not account for any activities in Sweden outside Stockholm, and few account books have survived. How did the world's leading film company adapt to working in a small market like Sweden with its local tastes and local standards?<sup>35</sup> This essay provides some tentative answers.

Between 1905 and 1910, Numa Peterson, a pharmaceutical and photographic company based in Stockholm,<sup>36</sup> had been Pathé's Swedish sales agent, and perhaps the most important agent in Sweden before 1910. Initially, Peterson had been affiliated with the Lumière brothers. Thus, even before Pathé established its own branch in Stockholm, the company had a considerable number of films in circulation although little reference was made to Swedish culture except for some films of an ethnographic concern made in Sweden in 1907–08. In 1909–10, before opening their Swedish branch, Pathé released between nine and fourteen new films per month.<sup>37</sup> Pathé was thus well represented in the Swedish market even if the company did not dominate the market, since domestic film production was insignificant before 1911–12.

Before establishing their Swedish branch in September 1910, Pathé Frères made at least one trip to Sweden resulting in a number of films being shot in 1907 and 1908. The ethnographic films exploited the exoticism of the north and the landscape of Sweden in a film such as *En Suède* (February 1908) which featured a large waterfall. Pathé's *En Suède* raised considerable attention in France, and numerous shots from the film were printed in the illustrated paper, *L'Illustration*.<sup>38</sup> The cold climate also drew interest. In *Exploitations de la glace en Suède* (August 1907), ice exported to France amongst other countries was shown, and winter sports were the topic of *Sports en Suède* (September 1907). The tour included the north of Sweden to depict Sami people in *Chez les Lapons* (November 1908).<sup>39</sup> Pathé made a film about the mines in Kiruna, *Les Mines de fer de Kiruna* (November 1908) and Stockholm was featured in *Visite à Stockholm* (April 1908). These films enjoyed international release. In February 1908, *Dan-*

*ses Suèdoises* was released, a film about Swedish folk dances which was screened in several cinemas in Stockholm in 1908.

Pathé's display of the exotic north was not that different from films produced in Sweden for a domestic audience since there was a well-established cinematic interest in the northern provinces of Sweden, possibly as a result of promotional campaigns by Svenska turistföreningen (The Swedish Tourist Agency). Robert Olsson, for example, shot *Lappbilderna* (*Views of Samis*) for Svensk Kinematograf in 1906 depicting the Sami people; Skogh produced *Norrlandsbilder* (*Views of Norrland*) in the same year, and Swedish Biograph shot *Bestigning af Åreskutan* (*Ascending the Mountains at Åre*) which depicted the ascent of a well-known mountain in the north of the country.<sup>40</sup>

### Stockholm as a locale

By 1908 there were numerous cinemas in keen competition in Stockholm. According to the daily newspaper, *Dagens Nyheter*, a piano was no longer of sufficient interest to entice an increasingly jaded public to a cinema. Exhibitors tried to outdo each other by offering extra attractions such as magicians, narrators using regional dialects and so on.<sup>41</sup> Orientaliska teatern, for example, employed the famous operetta singer Anna Norrie to perform between films.<sup>42</sup> The main attraction, however, was the heavily-promoted local film. Local production in Stockholm flourished through the display of conspicuous settings and local celebrities. A number of film exhibitors – some of the more important cinemas included Orientaliska teatern, Brunkebergsteatern, Nya-London and Apolloteatern – regularly advertised in-house productions.

Locally-produced films were popular and received enthusiastic reviews. *Stockholms Dagblad* was, however, unimpressed with the series, *Svea lifgardes stridsövningar* (*Military Drills of the Svea Regiment*), produced by Brunkebergsteatern in 1908 showing military exercises in a snow-covered landscape. According to its critic, locally-produced material, unlike foreign films, was uninteresting.<sup>43</sup> Exhibitors covered other local events the same year: Nya London advertised *Skidtäflingar vid Fiskartorpet* (*Ski competition at Fiskartorpet*),<sup>44</sup> *En söndagstur på spårvagn* (*A Sunday tram-ride*),<sup>45</sup> as well as the British royal couple's visit in 1908,<sup>46</sup> all shot by the theatre's cameraman.

Actuality films about vacation activities also



flourished. Several films were shot at the Swedish summer resort of Mölle from 1909 onwards when the film, *Kusten vid Mölle* (*The Coast Line at Mölle*), produced by Frans Lundberg was followed by two short films produced by Apolloteatern in 1910. In 1911 Orientaliska teatern as well as Viking made films about Mölle. In 1912, Pathé's Swedish subsidiary, in an attempt to get into the production of local films, shot *Badliv i Mölle* (*Beach Life at Mölle*) which showed sophisticated beach life at Mölle. Both Lundberg and Messter also shot single-reel films in Mölle in 1912. The winter resort of Åre received similar attention as well as being the setting for two feature films produced by Viking in 1912.

Local films were frequently made that featured famous stage stars. A reason for the popularity of dance films might have been the simplicity of their production: predominantly shot with one camera set-up in one location. On 21 March 1908, Nya London-theatre advertised a film, *Amerikaminnen* (*Memories of America*), featuring Emma Meissner and Rosa Grünberg, operetta stars at Stockholm's Oscarsteatern (the key venue for operetta in Stockholm) in which Meissner and Grünberg performed a Boston waltz for which they composed the music.<sup>47</sup> The film received rave reviews after a screening to invited guests and the press with the stars present the day before the film's release. *Aftonbladet* wrote: 'An alert theatre owner has come up with the excellent idea to ask two of our most popular operetta divas to perform the most popular of all dances in front of the camera. The film is destined to be a success.'<sup>48</sup> As one critic wittily put it, the only critical opinion voiced in conjunction with the screening was formulated by the stars themselves, termed 'originals' by the critic.<sup>49</sup> The joke was, of course, triggered by the multiplicity of star presences: on-screen, at the screening and their star status as luminaries. The fact that the stars appeared at the same time in two locations in Stockholm – Oscars-teatern and at Nya-London – was the subject of much comment.<sup>50</sup> The only difference that was noted was the entrance fee: it was a lot cheaper at the film theatre. The photography was praised and one critic hoped that the film's success would make other exhibitors realise the advantage of being as local as possible in the selection of new titles.<sup>51</sup> Both the film and the new dance were well received; a pianist accompanied the exhibition of the film.

Nya London advertised *Amerikaminnen* as an exclusive screening. However, three weeks later, the

film was advertised by Katrineholms Biografteater on Sunday, 12 April 1908. The advertisement stressed that this popular film had, so far, only been shown at Nya-London in Stockholm. The film was also advertised at the Scala in Gävle, and one month later, at Helsingborgs Kinematografteater together with their own production, *Från Engelska kungaparets besök i Stockholm* (*From the Visit of the English Royal Couple to Stockholm*).<sup>52</sup> *Amerikaminnen* was shown some years later in the Norwegian capital of Kristiania where the dancers' names and nationality were advertised.<sup>53</sup> In an article published in 1923, Emma Meissner later recalled how she and Rosa Grünberg had been two of Sweden's first film directors. According to Meissner, she and Grünberg had contacted the management at Nya London, after their return from a tour of the US, with the proposal to make a dance film. The theatre owner had agreed. A film made in 1907, featuring Carl Barcklind and Emma Meissner dancing the waltz from *The Merry Widow*, which had been popular at the time, had inspired them to make *Amerikaminnen*.<sup>54</sup>

A second dance film featuring Meissner and Grünberg, *Skilda tiders danser* (*Historical Dances*), was subsequently produced. The film was advertised in October 1909 as having been made exclusively by and for Apolloteatern in Stockholm. This theatre, like Nya-London, was owned by a temperance movement, Templarordens Stockholmsdistrikt. This film showed several examples of traditional dances performed by two dancers. Apolloteatern advertised the film in the trade paper in December 1909 offering exclusive rights to other local exhibitors. Promotional stills and music sheets came with the film at no extra charge.<sup>55</sup> In this film, the dancers actually changed location, breaking up the theatrical space.<sup>56</sup> In *Stockholms Dagblad*, one writer hoped that the display of historical dances in the film would prove educational and make young people return to the gracious and artistic dances that were part of a good upbringing for people a couple of generations earlier.<sup>57</sup> The film received wide distribution in Sweden.<sup>58</sup> According to one local newspaper in Östersund, copies of *Skilda tiders danser* may also have been exported to the US.<sup>59</sup>

The management at Nya-London theatre (which later changed its name to Central-Biografen) and Apolloteatern continued to produce films involving famous people and topical events.<sup>60</sup> In the autumn of 1910, Apolloteatern screened two further dance films: *Ett rendezvous* (*A rendez-vous*) and

*Transatlantic*, starring Lisa Holm (from Oscars-teatern) together with Oscar Tropp, a soloist dancer from the opera. As the titles partly make clear, they were performing a two-step and transatlantic.<sup>61</sup> A.B. Svensk-Amerikanska Filmskompaniet acted as their distributor.<sup>62</sup> Even though the dances originated in America, the films were praised for being Swedish.

Apollo's production, together with films produced by other local exhibitors, represented a first step in creating a Swedish film industry, and was perceived as such at the time. According to the press, the Swedish films offered by some Swedish cinemas in 1910 answered a call that had long existed. One of the reasons for local production, one newspaper noted, was that a considerable sum of money would remain in the country; another reason was that export would advertise the country and attract more tourists.<sup>63</sup> This line of reasoning was part of a global discourse on the medium's potential for publicity, perhaps most adamantly advocated in Southern California.

From 1909 onwards, the Swedish trade press had repeatedly argued for domestic film production preferably based on glorious events in the nations history.<sup>64</sup> The Swedish spirit would be reinforced in the process and Sweden would avoid 'throwing away money on smart and greedy foreigners who only consider economic matters'.<sup>65</sup> Axel Rydin, in *Nordisk Filmtidning*, argued that the scarcity of historical dramas was related to censorship; if film depicted Sweden's history most of the highlights would probably be censored.<sup>66</sup> He further claimed that international producers gave no consideration to the needs and preferences of the exhibitors in a market as small as Sweden. Too few quality films were imported and estimated that only about 30 per cent of imported titles was usable while 70 per cent did not reach an acceptable technical level or moral quality.<sup>67</sup> There was thus ample scope for Swedish initiatives in film production.

At times, advertisements and reviews were uninhibited in their praise of Swedish local views. An advertisement for the theatre Biorama in Malmö which showed the film series, *Sverige i levande bilder* (Sweden in animated pictures), claimed that 'no friend of our country or of our beautiful scenery ... should miss the opportunity to get to know our country [through the film]'.<sup>68</sup> About the same time, Anna Hofman-Uddgren's film, *Stockholmsfrestelser* (Stockholm's Temptations), was advertised in April 1911 as the first Swedish film of an hour's duration,

a debatable claim for a two reeler featuring popular actors from different theatres in the city.<sup>69</sup> One critic praised the excellent idea of including beautiful sights of Stockholm in the film which also depicted well-known men-about-town such as the writers, Emil Norlander and Otto Hellkvist.<sup>70</sup>

From December 1911, the film environment in Sweden was drastically reframed with the introduction of a national board of review. This was probably the main incentive for Pathé to start film production in Sweden in accord with local taste. Pathé thus began to produce fiction films in Sweden, initially in close alliance with Swedish Biograph, and Pathé even helped Swedish Biograph finance the construction of a new studio on Lidingö. *Två bröder* (Two Brothers, 1912), directed by Georg af Klercker with Siegmund Popert as producer, was their first local fiction venture, and Pathé Frères' Swedish branch was hence established as a producer of Swedish fiction films. The film was, however, banned by the board of censors, exacerbating one of the first major disputes in the board's history. This was not an isolated incident. Pathé Frères' Stockholm branch repeatedly faced censorship problems over the years. Popert submitted several unsuccessful appeals to the Government hoping to overturn the censors' decision to ban Pathé films. In fact, the Government did not reverse any of the decisions when Pathé or other companies appealed against the censors during the 1910s. The films produced by the Pathé branch in Stockholm, however, apart from *Två bröder*, were approved by the censors with much more regularity than the sensational dramas and serials the company imported from France and the US, and their films received positive reviews in the press.

In the spring of 1912, Charles Magnusson, the head of Swedish Biograph, Siegmund Popert and Victor Sjöström went to Paris to visit the Pathé studio, perhaps to discuss distribution of Swedish films in the international market. The Phoenix trademark was launched as a production label for films produced in Stockholm and marketed internationally by Pathé. There was no corporate alliance between the companies, however, only an agreement to co-produce films in Stockholm that would be distributed internationally by Pathé. Magnusson thereby secured worldwide distribution for the company's fledgling production, which was an important achievement.

In 1912, Paul Garbagni arrived in Stockholm (from Pathé in Paris) to direct a film at Swedish

Biograph's Lidingö studio. *I Livets Vår* (*The Spring-time of Life*), was based on August Blanche's novel, *Första älskarinnan*. Interestingly, Garbagni came to the Lidingö studio to supervise direction and share experience, but the participation of Garbagni is not mentioned in the advertisements for the film, nor the link with Pathé.<sup>71</sup> The film was a success and four copies were released in contrast with the customary two. The film received favourable reviews, and critics emphasised that well-known Swedish actors such as Victor Sjöström, Georg af Klercker and Anna Norrie performed in the film.<sup>72</sup> Some advertisements emphasised the fact that the story was set in Stockholm and its surroundings.<sup>73</sup> The film's Swedishness was thus a main factor in the marketing of the film.

The short-lived Phoenix label produced six films in 1913, all of which were approved by the censors.<sup>74</sup> The films were advertised in Sweden as being produced by Swedish Biograph and Pathé Frères' involvement was not even mentioned.<sup>75</sup> The Swedishness of these productions was also emphasised when it came to actors, scripts and settings: the Stockholm setting was stressed in *Med vapen i hand* (*With Weapon in Hand*) and *Vampyren* (*The Vampire*), and the magnificent Swedish scenery was praised in *När larmklockorna ljuder* (*When the Alarm Bell Rings*).<sup>76</sup> The appreciation of Swedish settings, often in or close to Stockholm, at times crackled: the review of *Vampyren* in *Aftonbladet* complained that Swedish calendars could be seen hanging on the walls of what was supposed to be an office in the US, and that the sign 'Private entrance' had been written in Swedish (*Privat-ingång*).<sup>77</sup>

In a letter dated March 1914 written in St. Petersburg, Magnusson disclosed his goal of producing films for the international market without an intermediary. During the period of cooperation with Pathé, he had tried to understand what made a given film popular in a given country, something which Pathé was apparently unwilling to disclose.<sup>78</sup> According to Bengt Idestam-Almqvist, Pathé films almost completely disappeared from the Swedish Biograph theatres at the time of the breach between the two companies. One significant change was the exclusion of the newsreel, *Pathé-Journal*, which earlier had been shown on a weekly basis. This newsreel was replaced with newsreels from Gaumont, Eclair and, eventually, Swedish Biograph's own newsreel which was inaugurated in 1914. According to Bengt Idestam-Almqvist, this change dates from autumn 1913.<sup>79</sup> When the ties with Swedish Biograph were

severed, Pathé concentrated on distribution and the production of a limited number of non-fiction films and a few animated films.

An exceptional example of Pathé's strategy to produce local films, in the dialectics between internationalisation and local, was the production of the dance film, *Arlequins frieri* (*Harlequin's Proposal*), in 1915. The film was co-produced with Ivar Baarsen, the manager of the cinema, Vinterpalatset, in Stockholm. Baarsen had, since the summer of 1913, been stage manager of the cinema where he initiated a cycle of production in collaboration with Pathé's Swedish branch which, among other things, resulted in this film.<sup>80</sup> *Arlequins frieri* was advertised as a special event produced by Pathé especially for Vinterpalatset. The cast consisted of Oscar Tropp, his siblings, Sven and Anna, and Gustaf Rödin. This was one of many productions by Vinterpalatset that ended up in Pathé's newsreels, or was produced by Pathé like the heavily-advertised *Ett besök hos 'Hasse Z.'* på Utö (*Visiting 'Hasse Z.' on Utö*) of September 1915, about the comic paper editor, Hasse Zetterström, which received very positive reviews.<sup>81</sup> In the same advertisement, *One-step*, a film featuring Anna and Oscar Tropp was advertised as an intervention in the heated debate about the status of one-step as a ballroom dance. A month later, *Är dansen på förfall?* (*Has Dance Taken a Turn for the Worse?*), another film of the same subject, was screened at Brunkebergsteatern, presenting modern dances such as one-step and apache dance. In the audience for the pre-screening was the famous Swedish artist, Isaac Grünewald. He was highly critical of the film and the execution of the dance, and was therefore invited, by the production company, Victoria, to perform in a second film of the same title where he danced with his wife, Sigrid Hjertén, and two other couples. This latter film was only passed for adult audiences by the board of censors, and created a storm of debate in the press concerning the film's alleged erotic content which was perceived as typical of the uninhibited international lifestyle embedded in modernity. Another explicit attempt to exploit the local market occurs in advertisements for the Swedish Pathé film, *Patriks äfventyr* (*Patrick's Adventures*) of September 1915, where it was emphasised that the film was based on a Swedish original script and shot in well-known locations in Stockholm.<sup>82</sup> The film received mixed reviews, and was Pathé's last feature production in Sweden.<sup>83</sup>

Sweden never became one of Pathé's more



important markets. In February 1912, the Swedish branch was considered the third smallest out of fourteen Pathé branches; a year later four were smaller and the list was now headed by Germany, Russia and New York.<sup>84</sup> In May 1918, the film companies Victoria, Hasselbladfilm and Pathé's Swedish branch merged to form Skandia, and in December 1919, Swedish Biograph and Skandia merged to form Svensk Filmindustri. Pathé's Swedish branch was never really successful as a Swedish producer of Swedish films and was swallowed by the new local trust.

However, the company's impact on the film business in Sweden was considerable, both as an early supplier of films in the burgeoning nickelodeon era, and later as an active force in production and distribution. In March 1913, *Aftonbladet* wrote: 'In the moving picture business Pathé Frères is the international firm that, without doubt or comparison, is the largest and most widespread undertaking, one that has always been a forerunner in the field.'<sup>85</sup> The company's activities during the early 1910s were very significant for distribution, programming and exhibition in Sweden at a time when the Swedish film industry transformed from low-scale local produc-

tion to multi-reel feature films with an international market.

As with several of Pathé's branches, the branch in Sweden lasted only a few years, from 1910–18. The company's strategy of competing with upcoming Swedish and American production companies was unsuccessful, to some extent due to the outbreak of the First World War. Another reason for the company's failure might have been the difficulty of being perceived to be sufficiently local at a time when nationalistic feelings ran high. Even though Pathé had contributed to placing images of Sweden on international screens as early as 1907 (an aspect that was enthusiastically endorsed by *Svenska Dagbladet*), and even though some years later Pathé distributed Swedish Biograph's films internationally, Pathé never quite fitted into the Swedish context.<sup>86</sup> Their production of a number of film 'genres' in Sweden (from actualities, local films, features and industrials to animated films) never brought the company any significant success. As elsewhere, the film business had taken on new structures and strategies, and the years of Pathé's worldwide dominance were over.

## Notes

1. 'Sebastian', 'Hela världen på films. En titt bak biograf-teatramas kulisser', *Vårt land* 248, 1908.
2. Pelle Snickars, *Svensk film och visuell masskultur 1900* (Stockholm: Aura förlag, 2001), 157.
3. Advertisement in *Karlstads-Tidningen*, 23 December 1905, 'Dödsfall', *Nya Wermlandstidningen*, 10 March 1908.
4. *Karlstads-Tidningen*, 27 August 1907, 1 June 1908. Children's Day was an annual pageant on behalf of children, usually featuring a procession with floats.
5. *Karlstads-Tidningen*, 5 August 1906, 19 September 1906 and 3 December 1906; 28 September 1907; 30 March 1908 and 29 December 1908.
6. Inventory in Hans Beäff's private collection, Hässelby.
7. The film was included in a programme shown on 1 January 1908 for the benefit of an orphanage. See advertisement in *Karlstads-Tidningen*, 31 December 1907.
8. 'NYTT! Bilder från Karlstad. Vackra och vällyckade bilder där hvar och en igenkänner vänner och bekanta', *Karlstads-Tidningen*, 29 December 1908.
9. Advertisement for local films shot 24 and 25 March 1908. *Karlstads-Tidningen*, 30 March 1908.
10. *Karlstads-Tidningen*, 14 May 1906.
11. *Karlstads-Tidningen*, 28 May 1906, 1.
12. *Karlstads-Tidningen*, 8 October 1906, 1. For other examples, see *Karlstads-Tidningen*, 15 October 1906, 26 November 1907 and 17 December 1906.
13. During the autumn of 1906 another film theatre was established in Karlstad, the Kinematograf-Teatern, and in 1907 a third cinema, Haga-Biografen, opened. Like Biograf-Teatern, the newer film theatres showed Swedish films.
14. See advertisement for *Amerikaminnen* in *Aftenposten*, 29 December 1912, and review of *Skilda tidens danser* in *Östersundsposten*, 8 November 1909.
15. Jan Olsson, 'Exchange and Exhibition Practices: Notes on the Swedish Market in the Transitional Era', in John Fullerton and Jan Olsson (eds.), *Nordic Explorations: Film Before 1930* (Sydney: John Libbey, 1999), 140.
16. In 1908, Swedish Biograph operated film theatres in Boden, Köping, Åmål, Uddevalla, Filipstad, Vänersborg, Kristianstad, Kalmar, Malmö, Karlskrona,

- Karlshamn, Sölvesborg, Söderhamn, Västerås, Örebro, Nyköping, Köping, Visby, Gävle and Härnösand, Olsson, 'Exchange and Exhibition Practices', 148.
17. Ibid., 141.
18. Snickars, *Svensk film och visuell masskultur 1900*, 145–185.
19. See, for example, advertisements for Kristianstads Biografteater, *Kristianstads Läns Tidning*, 31 August 1908 and 14 September 1908.
20. Advertisement for Kristianstads Biografteater, *Kristianstads Läns Tidning*, 26 February 1907.
21. See, for example, advertisements in *Kristianstads Läns Tidning*: 26 February 1907, 10 May 1907, 30 August 1907, 21 October 1907, 13 December 1907. For the year 1908, see *Kristianstads Läns Tidning*, 10 February 1908, 28 and 31 August 1908, 3 and 14 September 1908, 30 November 1908, 14 December 1908, and in 1909, see *Kristianstads Läns Tidning*, 3 May 1909, 9 September 1909.
22. See, for example, advertisements in *Kristianstads Läns Tidning*, 13 and 28 December 1907, 22 May 1908, 14 August 1908, 3 September 1908, 16 and 22 October 1908, 6 November 1908, 31 December 1908.
23. For further discussion of the Swedish film market 1907–12, see Olsson, 'Exchange and Exhibition Practices'.
24. Advertisement for Scala, *Trelleborgs Allehanda*, 15 October 1910.
25. Rapport du conseil d'administration, 1907–1908, 16. Collection Pathé, Paris. In 1907, Pathé operated branches in Berlin, St. Petersburg, Vienna, Amsterdam and Barcelona among other cities, and additional ones were being developed. (Rapport du conseil d'administration, 1906–07, 9). In 1908, the domestic market in France yielded only 10 per cent of Pathé's income while 90 per cent of its production was sold abroad. Gradually, the production of films, overseen by foreign branches, was initiated catering to local taste and featuring local talent. One of many such examples is the opening of Pathé's American studio in Jersey City in 1910 at a time when the US was by far the most important foreign market for the company. Decentralized production emerged as the model which Pathé Frères pioneered.
26. *Moving Picture World*, 28 February 1914, 1058. See also 'Pathe Announces New Program', *Motion Picture News*, 16 January 1915, 27.
27. 'Exporting the American Film', *Motography*, 8 August 1911, 90.
28. W. Stephen Bush, 'Charles Pathe's Views', *Moving Picture World*, 24 January 1914, 390–391.
29. Ibid.
30. 'Pathé Séance du Conseil', 1910. Collection Pathé, Paris.
31. Initially the company was based at Drottninggatan 57, but later in 1914, it moved to Kungsgatan 7, where the company remained until 1918.
32. Pathé's Malmö concern was located at Gustav Adolf Torg 69, and around 1915, the company moved to Stadt Hamburgsgatan 6. The branch was first run by the engineer B.G. Brisman but later, from around 1916, by Stellan Lundgren.
33. Pathé's Göteborg branch run by Ragnar Elverson was located at Östra Hamngatan 24.
34. 'Les Etablissements Pathé Frères De Suède et Norvège', in *Pathé Frères Phonographe et cinématographe* (Paris, circa 1914). Collection Pathé, Paris.
35. For a discussion of Pathé's activities in the world market, see Michel Marie and Laurent Le Forestier (eds.), *La Firme Pathé Frères 1896–1914* (Paris: AFRHC, 2004), 331–427.
36. Numa Peterson's business was initially located at Hamngatan 32. Between 1909 and 1912, the company was based at Drottninggatan 47 and from 1 May 1912 at Drottninggatan 27.
37. According to *Nordisk Filmtidning*, 1909 – May 1910.
38. *L'illustration*, no. 3425, 17 October 1908.
39. Pathé later made another film about the Samis in the winter of 1915 when Oscar A. Olsson documented a family's migration as they followed reindeer from Kiruna (in northern Sweden) to Norway. The film was regarded as one of the first Swedish ethnographic films and was the first Swedish film shot in Lapland. Exoticism was, however, still the main attraction.
40. Snickars, *Svensk film och visuell masskultur 1900*, 158.
41. *Dagens Nyheter*, 2 December 1908.
42. 'Anna Norrie på biograf', *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*, 2 December 1908.
43. 'Toreador', 'Svenska bilder på Brunkebergsteatern', *Stockholms Dagblad*, 21 March 1908.
44. *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 8 February 1908.
45. *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 18 March 1908.
46. Advertisement for Nya London Biografen and Apoloteatern, *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 30 April 1908.
47. *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 21 March 1908.
48. 'X.X.', 'Divornas boston', *Aftonbladet*, 21 March 1908.
49. *Aftonbladet*, 21 March 1908.
50. See, for example, 'Ali', 'Emma Meissner och Rosa Grünberg dubbelgångerskor. Uppträda samtidigt på Kungs- och Bryggargatan', *Stockholms Tidningen*, 21 March 1908.
51. *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 21 March 1908.

52. *Helsingborgs Dagblad*, 8 May 1908.
53. *Aftenposten*, 29 December 1912.
54. 'När två operettstjärnor startade filminspelning', *Biograf-Revyn* 9 (1923): 13–14.
55. *Nordisk biograftidning*, December 1909.
56. 'Divorna på biografduken', *Aftonbladet*, 21 October 1909.
57. 'n-s', 'Dansen förr och nu', *Stockholms Dagblad*, 21 October 1909.
58. See, for example, advertisement in *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, 2 November 1909 noting that Malmö Gamla Biograf had received exclusive rights for exhibiting the film in Malmö.
59. 'Jesper', 'Stockholm-krönika', *Östersundsposten*, 8 November 1909.
60. See, for instance, advertisement for Central-Biografen, *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 20 and 23 November 1908, *Dagens Nyheter*, 20 November 1908.
61. *Dagens Nyheter*, 28 October 1910.
62. *Stockholms Tidningen*, 29 October 1910.
63. 'Våra biografbilder. Svenska films på svenska biografer', *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*, 28 October 1910, 'El', 'Lite av varje – Two step på biograf', *Socialdemokraten*, 28 October 1910, and 'X', 'Koreografi på biograf', *Stockholms Dagblad*, 28 October 1910.
64. See, for instance, 'E. B-n', 'Fosterländska bilder', *Nordisk Filmtidning*, May 1910, 4–5.
65. Axel Rydin, 'Öppna svar. Till Seminarieadjunten. Fil. Kand. Fröken Marie Louise Gagner', *Nordisk Filmtidning*, December 1909, 8.
66. 'E.W.', 'Biografeländet', *Nordisk Filmtidning*, April 1910, 3. 'E.W.' was the nom de plume of Axel Rydin.
67. *Ibid.*, 7.
68. Advertisement for Biorama, *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, 9 May 1911.
69. 'Helge', 'Stockholmsfrestelser', *Dagen*, 27 April 1911. A quotation from the review is used in the advertisement for the film in *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 27 April 1911.
70. 'Helge', 'Stockholmsfrestelser', *Dagen*, 27 April 1911.
71. See, for example, the advertisement for Victoria-Teatern, *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, 16 December 1912 and *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 23 December 1912.
72. 'Våra biografer', *Arbetet*, 16 December 1912, 'Biografteatrarna', *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, 17 December 1912, 'Våra biografer', *Skånska Aftonbladet*, 17 December 1912, 'Våra biografteatrar. Victoria-Teatern', *Skånska Dagbladet*, 16 December 1912.
73. Advertisement in *Dagens Nyheter*, 23 December 1912, *Socialdemokraten*, 24 December 1912, *Svenska Dagbladet*, 24 December 1912. The Stockholm setting was also noted in an advertisement in *Aftenposten*, 11 January 1913: "Handlingen foregaar i Stockholm og utføres af kjendte svenske Skuespillere, hvoriblandt Fru Anna Norrie i Filmen forekommer blandt andet." The Danish newspaper, *Politiken*, 23 January 1913 noted that the actors came from Stockholm theatres.
74. Films produced by Phoenix in 1913 included: *Med vapen i hand* (Georg af Klercker), *Vampyren* (Mauritz Stiller), *När kärleken dödar* (Mauritz Stiller), *När larmklockorna ljuder* (Mauritz Stiller), *En skärgårdsromans* (Arthur Donaldson), *Lady Marions sommarflirt* (Victor Sjöström).
75. This is not the case, however, with the international market, see, for instance, advertisement for *Vampyren* (*Liebeswahn*) in Germany in *Das Lebende Bild*, 2, 30, 21 February 1913 where Phönix-Film and Pathé Frères are mentioned.
76. See, for instance, the advertisement for *Med vapen i hand* in *Svenska Dagbladet*, 27 January 1913, advertisement for *När kärleken dödar*, *Svenska Dagbladet*, 31 March 1913, and advertisement for *När larmklockorna ljuder*, *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, 17 April 1913 and *Svenska Dagbladet*, 28 April 1913.
77. 'William', 'Biografrenden', *Aftontidningen*, 18 February 1913.
78. Letter from Charles Magnusson to Listander, St. Petersburg, 14 March 1914. Swedish Biograph collection held by the library, Svenska Filminstitutet, Stockholm.
79. Bengt Idestam-Almquist, *Svensk film före Gösta Berling* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1974), 112–113.
80. In connection with *Arlequins frieri*, Pathé also produced a shorter dance film using the same scenery, *Modäna danser*, which was also released at Vinterpalatset, 11 October 1915.
81. *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 10 September 1915, 2, and 'På biografparkett', *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 14 September 1915, 5.
82. See, for instance, advertisement in *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 27 September 1915, 4.
83. See, for instance, 'På biografparkett', *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 29 September 1915, 6.
84. Livre des Inventaires no 4 1911–1915. Collection Pathé, Paris.
85. 'Pathé Frères är den världsfirma i biografbranschen som utan allt tvivel eller jämförelse är den största och mest vittutbredda och som städse varit föregångaren på området.' 'Pathé Frères', *Aftonbladet*, Biografnummer, 9 March 1913, 11.
86. *Svenska Dagbladet*, 26 August 1907.