

Happy Birthday Sergei Eisenstein!



I don't know if anyone noticed that Google paid homage to Russian film director Sergei Eisenstein yesterday. It would have been his 120th birthday.

I studied Eisenstein's work when I was in college – particularly his masterpiece silent film “Battleship Potemkin.” His primary contribution to the film world was his development of the film montage – editing disparate clips in a way to evoke emotion and add to a story in a brief period of time,

The role of a film editor is often largely overlooked by the general public but there are few other contributors that have as great an impact on the final product. The editor, more than anyone else is tasked with capturing the heart of a film and delivering it to an eager audience. If he does his job well, no one notices him... they're too involved in the story he pieced together.

Eisenstein's work today may seem dated or even antiquated. But there is no mistaking that it was revolutionary in its time. The Odessa Steps sequence in Battleship Potemkin (filmed in 1925) is still studied in film classes today. It was even successfully copied in many other films decades later

including: Brian DePalma's The Untouchables; Terry Gilliam's Brazil; George Lucas's Star Wars III; and Francis Ford Coppola's The Godfather.

As someone who edits video, I can appreciate how a film is enhanced and improved through the work of someone who takes raw footage and converts it to a finished product. It takes skill to shoot video. It takes a different skill to shape the video shot into a final product that will engage an audience.

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