

VOICE OF GARBO IS HEARD HERE AT LAST

Talking Version of Eugene O'Neill's 'Anna Christie' Gives Marie Dressler a Big, Sincere Hit.

BY WALTER D. HICKMAN

THE cloud of doubt surrounding the riddle of whether Greta Garbo could talk has been removed for all time. While talking for the first time in "Anna Christie," I realized that in the future this woman might be the leading dramatic player on the talking screen.

She brings to the role of Anna that so-called Pauline Lord whisky voice which aided Miss Lord in making Anna one of the most discussed creatures on the stage some years ago. Of course everything was done to raise the doubt in the minds of people regarding whether Greta Garbo could talk and act at the same time.

But even through this program of publicity, the public knew that there was some truth regarding this doubt. We have had many of our old silent favorites tossed on the ash pile when they tried to talk. The fact is that very little is actually known about the private life of Miss Garbo, as she lives as much in seclusion and mystery as Maude Adams did when she was the leader on the American stage. I arrived at this conclusion after hearing and seeing Miss Garbo in "Anna Christie": That her talents are growing, that she can be a sincere dramatic artist always in character and that she does not cramp the style of those assisted her. She got very close to the heart and soul of this Eugene O'Neill character. She showed us the drab part of Anna, and suggested in a fine way the hope that she could overthrow the curse of "ole devil sea," as well as men in her life, and begin all over again with Matt. She gives no shallow performance, but a very convincing Anna. I have seen three Anna Christies—Pauline Lord, Blanche Sweet and Miss Garbo. Of course Miss Lord is the greater artist, but Garbo has given the talking screen an Anna Christie that will live for years to come. We will not have to worry about the talking voice of this woman, and I believe that she will grow into one of the commanding dramatic personalities of the talking screen.

So much depends upon Anna's entrance into the ladies side of an old water front saloon. She is aided by this time by Marie Dressler, playing Marthy, a water front rat. Here is one of the most restrained and honest performances that Marie Dressler has ever given in the screen. Marthy is an ugly old souse, but she has at times the awkward gestures of a "lady." Their run drinking bout in the first scenes of Miss Garbo is done with such telling effect that the picture from the start is a success.

Miss Dressler has been seen generally in comedy roles, but she can play an honest-to-goodness in the flesh character with a twisted soul. Her Marthy is easily the best of the three that I have seen.

Miss Garbo is splendid in her scenes with Matt at Coney Island and rises to great dramatic heights when she tells Matt (played by Charles Eckford) and her father Charlie (played by George F. Marion, who created the role with Pauline Lord) just what sort of a woman she really is.

Mario gives a marvelous performance of the captain of the coal barge. The photography is excellent and so is the direction. Ranks right along with George Arliss in "Disraeli" as one of the best pictures ever made.

Be sure and see it at the Palace this week.

PAUL SPOR ARRIVES AT THE INDIANA THEATER

The question being asked me now is—Is Paul Spor as good as Charlie Davis.

Paul Spor is a wise enough man to know that it is a hard job for any man to follow in the footsteps of a master of ceremonies who has been on the job as long as Charlie Davis.

And he wisely does his work in his own way.

Meaning that a t

Paul Spor is being

Paul Spor. He is

wisely giving the

Charlie Davis or-

chestra a lot of

time to play and

sing. Their "Lime

House Blues" num-

ber is well Gary Cooper

done. Spor dances about while di-

recting, but in no way hogs the

stage.

I will thank him for bringing

Kendall Capps, a dancer, to the

Indiana because here is a man with

one of the finest pairs of dancing

feet I have ever seen. He has

actually made a tap dance routine

seen entirely new. A wonderful ac-

complishment. He stops the show.

Other theaters today offer: "The

Big Party" at the Lyric; "Girls of

the Follies" at the Mutual; George

Fares at the Colonial, and "Street

of Chance," at the Ohio.

THOUGHTS ABOUT "VAGABOND KING" AS SOUND PICTURE

No doubt you all know that "The Vagabond King" was first a stage production, adapted from the novel, "If I Were King," by Justin Huntly McCarthy. As stage show it attained much success, and will long be remembered by those who saw it behind the footlights. Now as a talkie of the screen, it is perhaps as equally successful, but for different reasons.

Perhaps the only thing the stage and screen versions have in common that helped to make each a success is the musical score, composed by Rudolph Friml. Whereas a stage

Dennis King operetta there were many moments of thrilling suspense and dramatic interest, the talking film seems to be lacking in all this. Production seems to be its main issue, and is. According to reports, fifty-five different sets were used, and a chorus of 500 voices. Because of this great expenditure in production, "The Vagabond King" is the most beautifully filmed and all color talking picture so far in the history of Vitaphone. Especially beautiful are the scenes within and outside the cathedral. Its structural grandeur, the strains of the pipe organ with the voice of the choir intermingled, have a way of striking awe into the heart. Also beauty is given full rein in the garden sets, and again in the spectacular march to the gallows.

The cast is big, and the principals well chosen as to quality of singing voices, and excellent acting. The Dennis King, as Francois Villon, is seen on the screen for the first time, having heretofore, given his talents to the stage. Having played the same role across the footlights with great success, he here also gives a fine performance, aided by a pleasing singing voice, that no doubt will make him one of the leading romantic figures of filmland.

In support of him Jeanette MacDonald, as Katherine, already popular with those who saw her in "The Love Parade" again triumphs with her steady soprano voice, that reaches the high notes with apparent ease.

O. P. Heggie, as King Louis XI, gives a convincing characterization, of this selfish old man, cruel at heart, and full of eccentric whims.

THE INDIANAPOLIS TIMES

CRIMINALS GET LITTLE LOOT AS WEEK-END PAY

Three Gas Station Holdups Net Pair \$60; Bandits Stick Up Motorman.

Others who contribute good performances are Lillian Roth as Huguette, Villon's girl of the streets, and Warner Oland, as Thibault, the Grand Marshal of France.

The story familiar to most of us takes place in the fifteenth century when Paris faces disaster from the duke of Burgundy. The poor lived by stealing from the rich, and from these wretched people rose Villon with the statement that he could do a better job as king than Louis. Captured by Louis he is given a chance to prove his words, but afterward is to meet his death by the gallows. In the palace he meets Katherine, loves her, and wins her heart. Later he leads his own people of the streets against the Burgundians, and victorious, saves his neck, because of his great popularity with the mob, even though Katherine is the only one who volunteers to die in his place.

The music, which makes this operetta rate high, is best in the two songs, "The Song of the Vagabonds" and "Only a Rose." Both express the feelings desired, and are rendered well in this production.

As I said before, just why the thrills and dramatic situations of the stage version were neglected on the screen is hard to say, unless it was the fault of the director. Perhaps the most dramatic and touching scene is when Huguette dies in Villon's arms, after receiving a dagger thrust intended for him.

There are two reasons why "The Vagabond King" is worth seeing as a talkie. First, because of the excellent singing and second because of the sheer beauty of scenery and color.

A short with Charles Ruggles in "The Family Next Door" completes the bill.

Now at the Circle. (By Connell Turnpen.)

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