

of the Season—



Alice Fay Wins Fight For Fame

Gains Dramatic Roles Despite Being Typed

It's practically a union rule that a comedian should want to play Hamlet and a chorus girl want to play dramatic leads. Some do even more than merely want vainly; some actually make the leap. There's Alice Fay, for instance, soon to appear in the spectacular "In Old Chicago" in a very dramatic role as the living proof that fairy tales and motion picture plots sometimes do come true.

Of course, Alice—she's Mrs. Tony Martin now—sings and dances in "In Old Chicago"; even in the interests of making dreams come true, Hollywood producers wouldn't hide her light, to say nothing of her lovely legs under a bushel of period clothing.

Choose Fay for Luck.

Miss Fay decided to be a dramatic actress way back when she was a fourteen-year-old kid in Bill Newsome's old dancing school in New York. In those days, she was Alice Leppert, daughter of one of "New York's Pinest." The name "Fay" she took for luck—Frank Fay was rolling 'em in the aisles at the Palace—when she got her first chorus job with a Chester Hale unit after a year of dance schooling.

The first active step Miss Fay took to come out of the chorus was to take singing lessons. Singing lessons, good ones, cost money and Alice was lucky to get a job in the floor show at Broadway's Hollywood restaurant which paid her a little more than vandyville had. Later she switched to the Palais D'Or where she came under the astute eye of George White, who, as usual, was busy casting for an edition of his Scandals.

Did Her Work Well.

The Scandals closed and Alice was out of a job. Then she received a summons from the Vallee organization for an audition. She went up and made the test. That really started it. She became a featured singer with the Connecticut Yankees, and when that outfit was hailed to Hollywood for a film version of the Scandals, Alice trotted along to sing a solo number.

She sang the number and was given the lead in the show. That is what's technically known as "sky-rocketing to fame" or perhaps "taking Hollywood by storm."

Miss Fay is a young woman with determination though. She took each singing and dancing role that came her way with good grace. And since she was a cut above the mere specialty class that always meant she had some lines at least to speak. Into these she put everything she had. Perhaps her first turn toward the path of straight drama occurred in "King of Burlesque."

From there to "In Old Chicago" was only a short distance, but several steps like "On the Avenue," "Wake Up and Live" and "You Can't Have Everything" intervened.



Beautiful Myrna Loy will play in two Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer productions this season. First, "Double Wedding," with William Powell, then "The Four Marys," with Franchot Tone.

Comedians Serious on the Job, "Danger-Love at Work" Reveals

What happens when a lot of comedians get together on a movie lot? Well, that all depends on the anything can happen and usually does. On the other hand, on the set of "Danger-Love at Work," where Jack Haley, Edward Everett Horton and Mary Boland, comedians all, were in action, there wasn't a hot foot given and not a jar of cold cream turned out to be spiced with lamp black.

Not, according to Director Otto L. Preminger, was there any of that scrambling for the center of the camera's focus, which one might expect from three comedians. Miss Boland explains the forbearance thus: "That stuff really went out with silent pictures. And it was mostly small-timers who went in for it any way. It would be a silly stunt these days to upstage another actor, because as soon as he turned away from the microphone the sequence would be spoiled for sound. Then it would just be a matter of doing the scene right the next time."

New Parts for All.

Mr. Horton, on the other hand, thinks that the script itself had something to do with it. "It really offered new parts for all of us. Gave me, for instance, a chance to get away from the absent-minded 'double take,' which was getting to be a sort of undesired trade-mark of mine. Of course, this time I play a nutty—I always do—but it's a decisive, brisk nutty. And Miss Boland, who usually plays domineering parts, this time is as vague but pervasive as an ectoplasm. That sort of shift keeps a comic busy minding his own business."

Haley's feeling in the matter is

No one in all Hollywood is busier these days than vivacious Olivia de Havilland. Having finished her role in the Warner Brothers' historical drama, "The Great Garrick," in which she plays opposite Brian Aherne, she will be featured in "It's Love I'm After," and "Gold Is Where You Find It."



Republic pictures will make a musical, "Merrillan Merry-Go-Round," this season, and Ann Dvorak will appear with Phil Reagan and Leo Carillo.

MOLNAR FILM A 'LAUGH VOLCANO'

From a Ferenc Molnar play Director Richard Thorpe has stripped everything that might make for pompous amusement, and the result is "Double Wedding," an M-G-M production which brings Myrna Loy and William Powell back to the screen this fall.

Motion Picture Daily calls it a

Robinson Reveals Gang Role Threats

Little Caesar Proud of His Part In Film Crusade Against Mobsters

By Edward G. Robinson.

I'm a tough guy. The movies have made me so. I can dish it out. And I can take it, too. But I confess to a slight nostalgic sadness at the thought of "The Last Gangster." That's the title of my present Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture. With its completion a cycle ends. A cycle with which I have been prominently identified. For you see, I was the "first gangster"

in a little number called "The Racket," which made dramatic history. And marked a new era in the American scene.

Not, mind you, that I regret a departure from gangster characterizations. There are plenty of colorful personalities to be created, or recreated, upon the screen. But I sorrow at the ending of an era marked by courage and heroism. The heroism of the machine-gun men? I should say not! Nor do I refer too much to the courage of the fellows on the side of the Law. What I mean is the bravery displayed by the motion picture industry in arousing public sentiment against the criminal control of the nation through pictures like "Little Caesar."

It wasn't an easy thing to do, as I close to the scene, can testify. From coast to coast the country was in the grip of sinister scoundrels whose more subtle influences extended politically through every branch of government, and whose outward symbol was terrorism by gun and bomb, knife and torture. The motion picture producers defied this unholy alliance and brought a frightened, sheep-like, apathetic public to a realization that banditry was seizing the reins of government. An aroused people insisted that its officers stamp out this plague of rats. I'm proud to have played a part in doing so.

Reveals Personal Threats.

There was, perhaps, more than met the eye in the difficulties encountered by the Warner Brothers and by Darryl Zanuck in lashing the public conscience through visual exposure of the mobsters. Aside from personal threats, there were mysterious influences striving to prevent the presentation of these pictures. Why, there are commu-

Hesitated at First.

I admit great hesitation in playing my first gangster role in "The Racket." It was against theatrical precedent to create a character devoid of audience sympathy. But I risked my career to dramatize for the public the menace that confronted it. I've never had reason to regret that decision. Although I'll confess to a few bad half-hours when word was brought to me that "the boys" wanted to see me!

There are, of course, two schools of thought regarding the purpose of motion pictures. The producers aren't professional crusaders, such films as "Bullets or Balls" notwithstanding. They are, primarily, purveyors of entertainment, of amusement, rather than educators or guardians of public conscience. And even as purveyors of entertainment they are peculiarly hedged in and circumscribed in their activities by organized minorities which have come to threaten the entire structure of the democracy.

Personally I hesitated in my youth regarding the selection of a career. I wished to be a preacher, a lawyer or an actor. Because I believe that these three callings provide the greater opportunities to show the people the light by which they will find their way. Finally, I decided that, of pulpit, bar and stage, the theater held the greatest potentialities for teaching. Having this viewpoint, I naturally believe in a more important mission for the movies than the provision of a romantic means of escape.

Until the arrival of the millennium there must always be evils to be corrected. In the very genesis of the theater one finds it used as a means of propaganda, and in the control of honest men, a medium for the betterment of mankind. There are plenty of public enemies today. And there will be tomorrow. And my emotions regarding the passing of an era with "The Last Gangster" reflect, after all, a hopeful view.

For I believe that, with precedent established, the screen will find a means of flouting villainy wherever found. And in hanging up my trusty "gun," I look forward to playing my role in the new crusade, whatever it may be, and whatever that role may be. For I can still dish it out. And take it, too!

"Snow White" Ready Xmas

Disney Uses Color In a Wider Range.

Three years in the making, the first full-length animated cartoon in cinema history, Walt Disney's much-heralded "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," is scheduled for release "somewhere around Christmas time," according to Disney's New York representatives.

The film, taken from the Grimm fairy tale, will be released by RKO Radio Pictures.

Radical changes in colored cartoon technique were made to fit the needs of the feature-length picture. For example, the bright, pure colors of the Silly Symphonies have been replaced by more subtle and subdued tones to avoid tiring the eyes. Also, color has been used in a much wider range and does triple duty in that it explains characters, points in the story and creates mood.

Voices Carefully Selected.

All the care of a radio network casting department was given to the selection of the voices for the cartoon characters, more than fifty radio stations being checked over a period of two years before the voice of "Snow White" was found. About 300,000 of the nearly 2,000,000 sketches made will finally be put together into the finished film. More than 250 people were employed on the million-dollar project.

With the fourth consecutive award for short subjects offered by the International Film Exhibition in Venice safely tucked away, Disney is sparing no pains to make "Snow White" his greatest production. Eight songs, several of which the studio expects to equal in popularity Disney's "Who's Afraid of the Big, Bad Wolf" and "The World Owing Me a Living," are in the picture.

Grotesque details of the original Grimm story have been eliminated. In the lurid fairy tale the wicked queen dances herself to a horrible death with red-hot iron shoes on her feet. Not so in the film. In the Disney feature the queen is chased over a cliff by the droll dwarfs, a death that is just as certain, but more merciful.

Unlike Mickey and other Disney characters, the animated players in "Snow White" are in their first and last picture. They will not be revived, Disney states emphatically, because, in his opinion, that would mean an anti-climax.

Languorous Ann Sothern has the leading role in RKO-Radio's drama, "There Goes the Groom," in which Burgess Meredith makes his film debut.

Stand-Ins Hardest Working Members of Movie Industry

A stand-in's life is not an easy one. Often considered as another of Hollywood's love and foibles of extravagance, the stand-in is one of the hardest working members of the movie industry. Instead of being securely entrenched in a sinecure, the stand-in, in his or her daily work, sheds quite a bit of perspiration.

It is the stand-in's duty to take the star's place under the lights before the actual shooting begins. If the actors themselves were forced to take their places while electricians were eliminating shadows, their working efficiency would be cut down and a greater expense would be incurred by the studio.

Recently a new record was set at the Walter Wanger studios in regard to the use of stand-ins. In the filming of "62nd Street," which is soon to be released throughout the country, nine stand-ins were on the set at all times.

There are nine principals in "62nd Street"—Ian Hunter, Pat Paterson, Kenny Baker, Maria Shelton, Leo Carrillo, Zasu Pitts, Sid Silvers, Jack White and Ella Logan—and each one had his or her stand-in. With nine principals and nine stand-ins on the set at once, the shooting

Simone Simon to Make U. S. Film Singing Debut.

Simone Simon, who co-stars with Walter Winchell and Ben Bernie in "Love and Hisses," new 20th Century-Fox musical comedy, will make her American debut as a singer in that picture. She will sing one of the five numbers just completed for the score by Mack Gordon and Harry Revel.