



Alice Faye 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 Faye, 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 Faye for Luck.

Miss Faye 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 Finest." The name Faye she took for luck—Frank Faye 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 next active step Faye 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 vandeville 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.

Now it happens that it was that edition of the show that Rudy Vallee was with, and a friend of the maestro's, having heard Alice sing, offered to get her an audition before this orchestra leader. Alice hesitated. Her voice, she feared, was not yet ready.

Did Her Work Well.

The Scandals closed and Alice was out of a job. Then she received a summons from the Valley 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 haled to Hollywood for film version of the Scandals, Alice trotted along to sing a solo number.

She was the number and was given the lead in the show. That is what's technically known as "skyrocketing to fame" or perhaps "hitting Hollywood by storm."

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 nimpy—I always do—but it's a decisive, brisk nimpy. And Miss Boland, who usually plays domineering parts, this time is a vague but perceptive, good-natured plump. That sort of shift keeps a comic busy minding his own business."

Haley's feeling in the matter is

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 comedians. With the Ritz Brothers, 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.

Now, according to Director Otto L. Harbach, was there any of that scrapping 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 upset 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 getting the scene right the next time."

Rehearse Their Lines.

And so, one set at least, containing a collection of assorted comedians, was quite without that harum-scarum air that one associates with professional funny men. Director Prentiss says they spent most of their time learning their lines, or going over bits of business with each other.

"It's probably just as well," Prentiss went on, "for sophisticated comedy calls for such delicate and precise timing that there's no such thing as too much rehearsal."

MOLNAR FILM A 'LAUGH VOLCANO'

From Ferenc Molnar's 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

"laugh volcano," which adapts the taming of the shrew premise in a vague but revealing manner. Miss Loy is a young woman determined to have her way, not only with her own affairs, but with the affairs of the people around her. Mr. Powell is an auto-trailer Bohemian with no sense of responsibility, and no desire to win friends or influence people.

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 "52nd 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 "52nd Street"—Tyrone Power, Pat Paterson, Kenneth Baker, Myrna Loy, Leo Carrillo, Zasu Pitts, Burgess Meredith, 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 often came perilously close to confusion.

Director Harold Young has a habit of calling the stand-ins by the name of the star for whom they are working, with the result that there were sometimes eighteen people around under the lights. After a conference he agreed to add a "junior" after the name, and the situation was cleared.

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.

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 identified. For you see, I was the "first gangster" in a little number called "The Racket," which made dramatic his 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 courage of the Hopwood gang? The heroism of the machine-gunning murderers? 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 similar trends 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 did 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 rackets. 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 underworld. Aside from personal threats, there were mysterious influences striving to prevent the presentation of these pictures. Why, there are commun-

ties where "Scarface," for instance, has never yet been shown!

But the situation doesn't describe the composition of gang-linked politicians who feared the light of exposure on their venality and inefficiency. Despite the organized, professional, commercial reformers who satiated on such movements as prohibition. Despite agencies that saw their own little rackets failing before the vivid propaganda of pictures. And, eventually, the war was won. A major achievement of Hoover's administration was the flank attack on mobsters through the tax evasion laws. And this followed the screen's campaign.

Resisted 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 that word was brought to me that "the boy" 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 Ballots" 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 regretted in my youth receiving 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 outlet of escape.

Under the influence 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 fighting villainy wherever found. And in hanging up my trusty "gat" 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 techniques 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 the mood points in the story and creates mood.

Voice 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 200,000 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 picture.

With the fourth consecutive award for short subjects offered by the International Film Exhibitors 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 Owes Me a Living," are in the picture.

Grotesque Details Omitted.

Grotesque details of the original Grimm story have been eliminated. In the wild fairy tale the wicked queen dresses 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 troll 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.