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Why Film Renown Fades Quickly



Evidently this Japanese Spaniel, eating breakfast with Basil Rathbone during the actor's stay in England to make a picture with Ann Harding, does not agree with most film fans that this sterling English actor is a menace. He's the opposite too. Lower photo shows Basil Rathbone in the less pleasing half of a dual role he plays in *Love From a Stranger*

STUDYING THE HISTORY of the stage in any of its various periods always brings to light vast numbers whose bid for popular favor lasted a lifetime if they so chose. Many from inauspicious beginnings forged ahead with their star-doms gaining more and more effulgence through the ripeness of their experience. Analyze screen history in the same light and what does one find? This significant fact: Of those who were top-notch box office names on the silent screen at the time films found their voice, there are less than twenty-five who now rate stellar billing and salaries in the major brackets today.

Producers will lay the blame at the door of a fickle public and toss off the answer: "the public demands youth in its films." In a measure that may be true, but those score or more of persons who rated high in the days of silents and still rate stellar billing rather belie that glib answer.

Basil Rathbone, who has recently returned from making a picture in England, thinks he has the solution. In months to come he believes he will have proven his solution in a case that which there could be none closer—himself.

"I firmly believe the reason screen players do not hold the limelight longer than a few years is because they are typed," said Rathbone as he explained his role in *Love From a Stranger*, which he made opposite Ann Harding in England, and which will be his first in films in which he has played other than "a man you love to hate."

"The stage actor of experience nearly always gets the opportunity to try the whole gamut of emotions as exemplified in the theater—farce, comedy, strong drama and tragedy. He differs from the screen player, who, when he or she has scored heavily in one type of role, is kept continually doing that sort of thing until the public tires of seeing the self-same beauty and glamour of a woman celebrity, or the



handsome romantic man, who never gets 'mussed up' or typifies that other side of life to which all flesh is heir."

Rathbone asserts that just as folk tire easily of being confined to a mono diet to appease an appetite, so do they tire of film players who unfortunately get typed in their first successes and are not allowed to show other abilities, if any, by producers who have vast amounts of money tied up in them. He thinks if the screen player were given wider latitude in the parts played, each, with few exceptions, might prove assets to their producers twice or three times as long as history shows they have done.

He points to cases where players have not only retained but enhanced their following over a long period. How popular would William Powell be today were he still doing the Philo Vance type of detective yarns? It's a far cry from the days when Wallace Beery played Swedish servant girl parts. Numerous other examples might be pointed out, were it necessary. How different the Clark Gable of today from the woman-slapper of his early screen days.

Movieland Tours

(Continued from page sixty-six)

"Perhaps," says Rathbone, "producers may be pardoned to some degree for their reluctance to let players who entered the entertainment world only by way of the screen to try roles on which they would have to gamble on a long shot. With most stage actors coming to the screen it should be different, though it seldom is. The stage actor may have played everything from comedy to tragedy before his film debut, but he or she seldom gets much wider forms of film expression than those who never had anything but screen training."

When *Love From a Stranger*, current in London, reaches the American screens, it will bring a Basil Rathbone different from any the screen heretofore has known. For the first half of the film he will be a man the audiences like so well they will be silently insisting that Ann Harding accept him as her screen husband. He plays a pawn of the war—a likeable person quite the antithesis of individuals he has portrayed in his American films. In the latter half of the film there is a shocking surprise that best be left unexplained or the film might lose some of its lure. Suffice it to say that Ann Harding, usually the strong mental type, goes utterly to pieces when that surprise, written into the story by Frances Marion and directed by Rowland V. Lee, comes.

Naturally Rathbone is avidly watching to see what this picture will do in the way of convincing Hollywood producers that menaces are not his only forte. If it works out as he expects it will, it will be harder than ever to unsell Basil Rathbone on his contention that typing has done more to curtail the productive years of screen celebrities than any other one thing.

On Sunday, the day you arrive, you will have a free morning and will spend the afternoon touring Hollywood. A cocktail party at 5:30 has been arranged for at the home of Basil Rathbone. That night Movieland Tour guests will be treated to a full program at Grauman's Chinese Theatre.

HOLLYWOOD will take you through Paramount studio Monday morning. You will see pictures made on the home lot of Claudette Colbert, Carole Lombard, Fred MacMurray, Martha Raye, Bob Burns and Bing Crosby. Here Gary Cooper and Jean Arthur made *The Plainsman*. Here Jack Benny, Burns and Allen, Johnny Downs and Eleanore Whitney and hundreds of skilled performers make the pictures which thrill you.

You will see sound made. You will see how sets are constructed. To you will be revealed the secrets of various precautions taken by the studio to insure perfection in picture art. Then you will lunch with the stars in Paramount's commissary. That afternoon you will adjourn to the home of James Gleason for a second delightful cocktail party.

You will see a picture in its first preview on Monday night as special guests of Paramount studios. Final editing of the flicker will be importantly influenced by your reaction to the film in that first presentation.

Similar plans prevail for the second tour, with only these changes. On Sunday afternoon there will be a cocktail party at the home of Edward Everett Horton and on Monday afternoon another cocktail party at the Fay Wray home.

On Tuesday morning (both tours) a visit to famous Max Factor Make-up Studios has been arranged with souvenirs presented to each guest. On Tuesday night guests are invited to a night club supper dance at the Wilshire Bowl. This famous rendezvous of the stars fringes Hollywood and Beverly Hills and the fashionable Wilshire district. Film celebrities will be there on the reception committee.

After these pleasure-loaded hours in which you share the lives of the Hollywood stars you will have a pleasurable trip home via Las Vegas, Salt Lake City and Colorado Springs.

Bigger and grander in every way than the phenomenally successful tours of 1935 and 1936 will be the 1937 Movieland Tours, about which full information may be gained by writing for the free illustrated booklet containing complete information about the 1937 expedition.

Do not delay! To insure your place among the rapidly disappearing reservations, send in \$5 per person now to reserve a ticket on the excursion. Remember, wait and you are lost!

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