

Fonda Makes Big Success of 'Underacting'

By WILLIAM GLOVER
NEW YORK (AP) — The longest streak of dramatic success currently on view in the theater belongs to lanky Henry Fonda, a man who hates to let his fans know he's acting.

During seven years, on Broadway and on tour, Omaha's thespian son has been kept pleasantly busy with boxoffice successes: "Mr. Roberts," "Point of No Return" and now "The Caine Mutiny Court Martial" which he brings to ringing climax in an emotion-packed final five minutes.

Fonda is not an actor given much to being interviewed, but after agreeing to this one he sprawled out comfortably in work clothes (he'd been polishing furniture in his "new" old house on a side street off one of Manhattan's busy avenues) to chat of this and that.

"This" was mostly about how people are eternally calling his work "underacting"; "that" was mostly whether he'll return to the movies where he was a longtime boxoffice beau.

Most of Broadway's critics—and all the seat holders since—came away from "Caine" at the Plymouth marvelling at Fonda's "underplaying" as the Navy lieutenant who reluctantly defends a man for mutiny. The comment is an old fret, says Fonda, adding:

"I don't understand honestly what people mean when they say I underplay roles. What I try to do is to be so real in a part that the audience doesn't know I'm acting. If they knew that, I'd consider myself a failure."

Not Criticizing
Then he breaks into that famous Fonda grin:

"But I really don't care what they mean, even if I don't understand it, because I know they are not criticizing."

When he gets explaining himself, the words "controlled" and "economy" of acting recur, so probably Hank and his audience are separated only by terminology.

But skills, call them what you will, are not enough, Fonda confides, to get him through the final "Caine" scene. It's a sort of supreme test—Fonda calls it the toughest scene he's ever played—for it has to follow the play's shattering climax, wherein a man's personality is utterly destroyed before the spectators' eyes.

Fonda's assignment at this point is to pile on a spirit-stirring second layer.

"Yell 'Bravo'"

"Techniques are not enough then," says Fonda. "I have to become emotionally involved. I know I'm able to do it most of the time. I can feel it and so can the audience. It's the difference between them saying 'well Fonda was good, all right' and the performances when they cheer and yell 'bravo' for the whole company."

It sticks in Fonda's memory that one of his rare "satisfying" moments in movies was lost forever when a perfect take was lost by someone opening a dark room door just as the film was being processed, spoiling the reel. He was unable to recapture that electric perfection in the retakes, and he's still sorry.

Which brings up that matter of movies versus living theater.

"Having a live audience has nothing to do with it," says Fonda, at the same time conceding he prefers the stage. "I can get just as much personal satisfaction in an empty house or before 20 people if I feel it's a good performance."

Still Improving
"But what is important is that in a play you can still be building a scene, improving it after three years. In the movies, there's never a chance to improve after that first morning, when the scene is shot and put in the can forever."

Nevertheless, Fonda will probably make more movies and would go for "an exciting part with an exciting director" at any time.

He's sticking to legit for the present, however.

He will be in "Caine" only until June 1—"They knew it" when I took the part—but he's leaving to start work on another show for Broadway next season.

What it's about he wouldn't say, but the trade press reports it will be a musical by Rodgers and Hammerstein, based on a John Steinbeck script.

Began in 1925

The man with the triumphant success story on Broadway says that his long journey in sock and buskin accidentally began in 1925, when at 21 "I was pushed on the stage" back in Omaha.

Fresh out of college and looking for work, Fonda unexpectedly was involved in a bustling community theater project—"I was so shy that I'd been cast and weeks had gone by before I tried to say you can't do this to me."

By then it was too late, and stage enchantment did the rest.

"Three years later, I'd heard you could get money for this. So I came to New York with \$100 in my pocket. The folks back home thought I was so daring."

"But it had nothing to do with guts. I didn't know what I was getting into. I don't know yet what I'd have done if I had known."

If he hadn't, a lot of theater fans would have been disappointed—and there would be no such success run on Broadway today.

Tug-of-War Over Site of Air Force Academy Starts

By EDWIN B. HAAKINSON
WASHINGTON (AP) — One of the fiercest political scrambles in years is underway over the permanent location of the proposed new Air Force academy.

Already approved by the House and expected to clear the Senate this session, the academy will be to the Air Force what West Point is to the Army and Annapolis to the Navy.

Most backers agree that Congress first must authorize the academy and then vote some money for it before the site can be selected.

Some say privately that the bitter tug-of-war between most of the states and even many locations within states could stymie the project.

However, Chairman Saltonstall (R-Mass) of the Senate Armed Services Committee now considering the authorization bill, said:

"Right now there is a lot of pulling and hauling. Once the authorization is through and a site selected I expect all of that to die down."

"I think the Air Academy probably must go to the Middle West, Far West or Southwest."

Under existing legislation, Secretary of the Air Force Talbott must make the decision, after he has named a commission of two

Chessman New President of Press Group Store Sued For \$32,788

EUGENE (AP) — Robert Chessman, whose father was the 15th president of the Oregon Press Conference, became the 35th president of the organization here Saturday.

His election came on the closing day of the annual conference of newspapermen on the University of Oregon campus. Chessman, like his father, the late Merle R. Chessman, is publisher of the Astorian Budget at Astoria.

Verne McKinney of the Hillsboro Argus was named to continue as trustee of the Eric W. Allen Memorial Fund.

The editors passed a resolution commending Gov. Paul Patterson for his recent declaration assuring the press that there would be full access to public information.

At a morning session Giles French, editor of the Sherman County Journal, spoke on experiences in column-writing. At a closing dinner, Dr. Roy C. McCall, head of the speech department at the University, spoke on "It's All a Matter of How You Say It."

AGED HOLLY TREE
WEST CAPE MAY, N. J. (AP) — A 350-year-old holly tree, loaded with bright red berries and shiny green leaves, still stands beside a street in West Cape May. The huge holly tree — said to be New Jersey's oldest — measures over seven feet around the trunk.

Milk Industry Raise Opposed

The board of directors of the Oregon Milk Producers Committee, meeting in Salem Saturday, adopted a resolution against pay increases for employees in the milk industry in the 1954 contracts for employees in the milk industry, Arthur P. Ireland, committee president, announced.

Reports presented at the meeting showed that dairymen cannot absorb additional costs without an increased return, he said.

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