

# HOLLYWOOD TODAY

## FLASH PREVIEW OF "Juke Girl"

Warner Brothers' new melodrama stars Ann Sheridan and Ronald Reagan, with Richard Whorf, George Tobias and Alan Hale.



With Richard Whorf and Alan Hale, itinerant fruit pickers, Ronald Reagan seeks work on a Florida farm.



Reagan first meets Ann in a juke joint, later finds work with George Tobias, a Greek farmer.



Tobias sells his crop in Atlanta, outwitting his local enemies, and returns home to celebrate.



When he is killed that night, Reagan is accused of murder and Ann is arrested in Atlanta.



Back in Florida, Ann and Reagan are saved from a mob by a confession obtained by Whorf from the real killers.

## ON THE SETS WITH REED JOHNSON

Mr. Burgess Meredith, as a feature of his starring role in Paramount's "The Black Curtain," very probably establishes an all-time record for husbands who come home late for dinner. This bid for the record is based on the fact that Mr. Meredith checks in something over three years late for the dinner in question, but still surprised and a bit hurt to find that the little wife has not only not kept his food on the stove but has even moved to a new address.

And what do you think his excuse is, fellows? Well, it seems everything just went black all of a sudden, and the next thing he knew it was three years later. This, of course, is an excellent excuse if you can get away with it, but in its entirety is not recommended for general circulation, since Mr. Meredith presently finds himself accused of a murder committed while he thought he was somebody else.

He was just waking to an awareness of his real identity during a recent reportorial visit, and the method of snapping him out of it is also not to be recommended, for this is accomplished somewhat painfully by having a loose building block conk him on the head. Mr. Meredith is getting good money for this kind of treatment, however, so he picked himself up manfully from the sidewalk of a set designed to represent a street on New York's East Side and was coming out of it pretty well when a policeman stepped up, handed him his hat, and asked his name. That was all right, too, at first, but then he noticed that the initials in the hat did not fit the name he gave.

"That's not my hat," he said.

"Sure it is," said the cop, giving him the fishy eye.

Well, when a policeman tells you a hat is your hat you will take it and go quietly if blessed with common sense, and this is precisely what Mr. Meredith did. Quietly, but uneasily, I should add, because this is just the beginning of the picture and both he and the audience must wait till the bitter end before he learns just what he was up to during those three years and more when the little woman was waiting for him to come home to dinner.

But then, of course, if you're trying to alibi yourself out of a three-year absence you can expect to have a tough time getting your story over, even if it's a good one.

An 8 by 10 photograph from any recent Flash Preview is available to readers of Hollywood Today who write in sending twenty-five cents to cover service costs.

## Fashion Scene

By MARGARET MCKAY

Barbara Stanwyck is Hollywood's best tailored femme and no one looks more at home in a suit than Mrs. Bob Taylor. She is the outdoor type of girl and frills do not flatter her, so wisely she concentrates on suits, but insists upon perfection in them. Her newest is a utilitarian for wartime wear as well as distinctive, and during these days when so many of us are putting on suits for our various defense works, it's worth a description. Of soft gray flannel, plaided in hot chocolate brown, it has huge mechanics' pockets stitched in compartments to hold a flashlight, first-aid kit, etc. The 24-inch length jacket has a blouse back, and with this outfit she wears side button monk moccasins that are a new contribution to comfort in footwear. Barbara is wearing the monk moccasins with all of her suits during the day now, and often wears a padre brim hat to carry out the theme.

Many of her suits have saddle stitching and are in pastel shades such as turquoise, powder pink, oyster white and canary yellow. All have the very wide shoulders that do so much to slim down our hips—not that Barbara's lissome figure needs it, however.

Best Dressed Girl of the Week: Janet Blair, Columbia's rising young star, who formerly sang with Hal Kemp's band, vacationing in Phoenix, Arizona, at the Arizona Biltmore, took with her for her trip one of the new sun and swim suits with bloomer bottoms. "Bloomer" is not a very descriptive word, however, for the effect is more of the harem-tuck, and Janet's suit was especially lovely in white silk jersey with draped bra top. The harem-tucked suits will be a winner this season around the swimming pools, if I may venture a prophecy.

Around Town: Some interesting and striking color combinations being used by Hollywood's fashionables: Burgundy and rose—Constance Bennett's rose wool suit and hat looking like a delicious strawberry frappe with burgundy bag, gloves and shoes. Peacock blue and champagne—Irene Dunne's peacock blue slipper satin evening gown with champagne lace trim and champagne satin sandals. Gold and tangerine—Lana Turner's idea in color for her wardrobe. Evening gown of gold with golden snood trimmed in tangerine flowers. Evening bag of tangerine. Most arresting colors on a blonde.

## Record Review

By WAX MAN

Wait until you get a careful of Shep Fields' new music. This was discarded the familiar "rippling rhythm" and breaks out with a combination featuring 10 saxophones and no brass—and sold it. Initiating the experiment on Victor, Shep has waxed his theme, "The Fire Dance." It's swell!

Another perfect combination has recently teamed. The subject of the above sentence is in the marital vein and the predicate concerns record making. Lily Pons and Andre Kostelanetz have just waxed Home Sweet Home and Song of India and Columbia brings it out.

Funny story about the last-minute change in lyrics at the recording of How About You by Tommy Dorsey. Originally, words said, "And Franklin Roosevelt's looks give me a thrill." But Tommy liked the name of Lana Turner in that spot. The wax will tell the story of what happened and you can form your own conclusions.

Plenty of scrambling around the backstage of a Newark theatre last week. Benny Goodman's 18 men were due on stage for their stint, when it was discovered half had the grey suits and the other half had the blue on. A slight delay while the uniforms became uniform.

Nice record has been chalked up by Barry Wood. During the past year, his patriotic recordings have eclipsed the 500,000 mark in sales for Victor. Arms for the Love of America and Any Bonds Today top the list. As a reward the government has requested Wood to star in a short movie subject singing the patriotic repertoire by Irving Berlin. Eddie Duchin has even changed his theme song from Chopin's Nocturne to Any Bonds Today?

Victor, which also waxes under the Bluebird label, is adding another series under the name of Standard Records. The new subsidiary will specialize in foreign music and orchestras.



Mary Beth Hughes is working currently with Ida Lupino and Jean Gabin in 20th Century-Fox's "Moonlight."

## ATTENTION MOVIE FANS

In response to continued requests for an autographed photograph of Mickey Rooney we are again making these pictures available, this week only, to all readers of Hollywood Today sending in five cents for mailing and handling. Write to Hollywood Today, Crossroads of the World, Hollywood, California—AND YOU MUST MENTION THIS NEWSPAPER.

## JOE FISHER'S Reviews of Previews

For almost two years Preston Sturges has made history on the Paramount lot. Known as a brilliant playwright, the author of "Strictly Dishonorable" yearned for new fields to conquer and given the chance he first wrote, produced, and directed "The Great McGinty," a political satire which, without the use



Joel McCrea and Veronica Lake in "Sullivan's Travels."

of big box-office names, scored a terrific hit and gave a fine actor, Brian Donlevy, his best break. This was followed in rapid succession by "Christmas in July" with Dick Powell, and "The Lady Eve" with Barbara Stanwyck, each picture in turn registering in such a way that Hollywood finally became conscious of the "Sturges" touch and this quiet spoken young man reached a point where he could literally write his own ticket. Mr. Sturges' specialty is poking fun at things. And his latest opus, "SULLIVAN'S TRAVELS," his right out at his own special field, Hollywood. Starring Joel McCrea and Paramount's latest discovery, Veronica Lake, he pulls no punches with this well-written travesty of a Hollywood director (McCrea), famed for his screwball comedies, who desires to get away from it all and bring to an expectant world the great American tragedy; or how the other half lives.

Against the advice of his studio executives McCrea, with the help of his valet-butler, dresses as a tramp and launches himself on a series of adventures which eventually wind him up as a convicted murderer in a chain gang. How he meets the girl and works himself out of the troubles that an unkind fate has brought down on him makes for an amusing picture as your reviewer has looked upon for a long, long time. The "Sturges" touch is in evidence at all times: clever dialogue, direction that holds every thread of the story in one hand, plus exceptional performances by a hand-picked cast, all add up to a film that should make box-office history. Joel McCrea has never had a better role; Miss Lake, putting aside the glamour build-up and being simply herself, displays an acting ability hitherto entirely unsuspected. "SULLIVAN'S TRAVELS" is fine, clean comedy, all delivered with a punch that will make the picture one you'll remember pleasantly for a long time.

Monogram previewed "MR. WISE GUY," with Leo Gorcey, Bobby Jordan, Huntz Hall, and Gabriel Dell, all of whom you will remember as the original Dead End Kids, now called the East Side Kids. The boys themselves provide all the bright spots in this lively story of a plot to trap a murderer and free the falsely convicted older brother of one of the kids, with Billy Gilbert outstanding among the grown-up members of the cast. They really work hard to put the story over, and as a result the picture is one you're sure to enjoy.

Your review seldom mentions cartoons or short subjects, but it's about time he did call your attention to George Pal's "Puppetoons" which Paramount has been releasing this past year. Pal's latest, "JASPER AND THE WATERMELONS," is one of the most delightful fantasies ever screened. It's the story of a little colored boy and his adventures in a mythical watermelon land to which he is led by an enticing scarecrow, after his mother has enjoined him not to touch the melons. Pal secures his effects by the use of plastic puppets, each bit of action requiring a separate figure, instead of, as in usual animation, a separate drawing. The result is entirely different from anything you have ever seen. Remember the name: "Puppetoons." And remember, too, one of these cartoons is a welcome addition to any movie bill.

## MEET THE STARS

WITH VIC BOESEN

Sitting across the table from Leif Erickson, six feet, four inches of chest and muscle displacing 217 pounds and his head pivoting on the turret of an enormous sweater, one reflects that no matter how bad one's personal fortunes, they would yet decline to a marked extent if Erickson should, for example, take a sudden violent dislike to you and indicate same in a physical attack.

He was telling with virile vigor of his latest trip to Hollywood, where in recent months he has brightened such pictures as "Nothing But the Truth" and "H. M. Pulham, Esq." He had been in Hollywood before, under contract to Paramount, and had gone to New York when things hadn't gone quite to his liking. New York gathered him in and showed him the usual honor that comes to the prophet away from home. It gave him important roles on the stage, in plays like "Golden Boy" and "Margin for Error," among others; and put him to work on the radio.

There was so much work that he found little time for anything else. He decided to kick over the traces and take a trip . . . a long trip. California was about as far away as a man could go on dry land; so California was it. He had always wanted a motorcycle. He bought one, donned an extra pair of pants and shirts over those he was wearing, packed a towel, an electric razor and a tube of antiseptic onto the luggage rack, and set out.

He told the boys that he was going to Hollywood . . . going to work for Paramount. He puttered leisurely down the Atlantic coast to Florida, and then up into the back country of Kentucky. The people there had no idea he was a Broadway actor and probably wouldn't have believed it anyway, for he gave his razor an easy time of it and his clothes clearly showed the marks of the road; but the hill folk found the stranger real clever. He could sing and he told a good story. (They should have known that he used to be soloist for Ted Fio Rito's band, and he did eight months with Olsen and Jensen.)

In New Mexico one evening at twilight, just as he had purred across a little bridge in a bend of the road, he ran broadside into a steer crossing the road with a herd. He banged up a knee but kept going, and at a point farther along he stopped to telephone his uncle in Los Angeles. It was then a Saturday evening. "Where have you been?" roared the uncle. "Where are you now?" "Why, what's it to?" said Erickson. "Nobody's expecting me." "No!" shouted the uncle. "Paramount's been looking all over for you! You go to work there Monday!"

The picture was "Nothing But the Truth."

And so, swears Erickson, is this story.



Elaine Moray is one of the major thrills in Universal's Alfred Hitchcock thriller, "Saboteur."

## ERSKINE JOHNSON'S HOLLYWOOD

EXCLUSIVELY YOURS: Jimmy Cagney lost three of his best pals to Uncle Sam recently. Charles Griffin, his secretary for 11 years; Bob O'Dell, his wardrobe man for nine years; and Mike Brown, his stand-in. The nine years, all enlisted in the navy. The enlistments took place, oddly enough, just after Cagney completed the patriotic "Grand Old Flag" number for "Yankee Doodle Dandy" . . . Smart money on Wall Street suddenly has become interested in Hollywood motion picture properties. The movies, according to Wall Street, are the safest wartime investment in the country.

Casting of William Powell and Hedy Lamarr as lovers in "Crossroads" should be interesting. Before his marriage, Hedy told a friend: "Of all the men in Hollywood, I'd most prefer to fall in love with William Powell."

Rudy Vallee's he-man buildup suffered a serious setback over the week-end. He was inadvertently listed on the official guest list of a swank Hollywood function as "Rudy Vallee and escort."

Ann Sheridan and George Brent recently visited her valley ranch for the first time since their marriage. As they entered the house, Ann said, "Haven't you forgotten something?" Then she grabbed Brent and carried HIM over the threshold.

If Clark Gable decides to retire temporarily from the screen, Metro will substitute Walter Pidgeon for Gable's role in "Somewhere I'll Find You" . . . Ginger Rogers has gone back to her Oregon ranch—and boy friend Jean Gabin has gone back to his bicycle . . . Barbara Stanwyck and Geraldine Fitzgerald, who ought to know, say there's nothing to those reports about their feud on the "Gay Sisters" set. It's still the gay sisters . . . Orson Welles practically drove himself into a nervous breakdown before leaving for South America. In four hectic days he completed his acting role in "Journey Into Fear," did a radio broadcast and made final cuts on "The Magnificent Ambersons." During the four days he had only 10 hours sleep.

Tops in multiple roles will be achieved by Joel McCrea in Paramount's "I Married a Witch." He plays an insurance salesman named Wooley and, for a montage sequence, the fellow's ancestors for five generations back. When McCrea accepted the role, Director Reno Clair wired him: "I'm happy to hear you have agreed to play the whole Wooley family!"

Boy meets girl scenes are growing violent. In Paramount's "Forest Rangers," Paulette Goddard is bucked off a horse and Gene Tierney and husband Oleg Cassini head east soon for a reconciliation with her family, which has never approved their marriage . . . Greer Garson, who has always portrayed serious roles on the screen, will sing and dance for her role in "Random Harvest" . . . Nice gesture by Chick and Johnny, the barbers at RKO. They're donating free haircuts for the duration for all RKO employes in the service.

Charlotte Winters (Mrs. Barton MacLane) is getting front office raves at Paramount for her work in "Mr. and Mrs. Cugat" . . . Richard Travis and Jimmy Cagney's sister, Jean, are an item.

With "Hellzapoppin'" replacing "Citizen Kane" at a local theatre, I'm wondering if you could call it from cane to corn.

Jill Esmond, former wife of Laurence Olivier, will play a role in Metro's remake of "Her Cardboard Lover" . . . Fay Carroll, the John Poppers model, is helping Blake Garner forget Ann Miller . . . Bing Crosby and Bob Hope will repeat their famous patteyca routine again for their new picture, "The Road to Morocco," but this time with disastrous results. Trying to rescue Dorothy Lamour, a princess, they get mixed up with a palace guard. They go into the patteyca routine but just as they're about to slug the guard, he grabs them and cracks their heads together. Regaining consciousness, Crosby turns to Hope and moans, "My, but that gag sure gets around!"

## KEN MORGAN'S . . .

### HOLLYWOOD KEYHOLE

Bonita Granville is a very fortunate young lady. Most juvenile thespians who reach prominence while in swaddling clothes have to face an inevitable and unfortunate obscurity period while in the adolescent interim. Some are more lucky. Bonita is to our mind the most apt example of the latter group. She was a doll at her start in "Cavalcade" and she's still a doll at 19. And what is more important—she's just as attractive mentally as physically. Maybe it is the influence of the impending marital leap with Jackie Cooper, but more probably it is the decision of studio executives that she is ready for adult roles. Paramount Studios has handed Bonita the plum role of Brian Donlevy's sister in Dashiell Hammett's story, "The Glass Key." In the picture will also be Alan Ladd, a lad you will be seeing a lot in time to come. A preview scout told us today that his first picture, "This Gun for Hire," was shown the other night and when the audience discovered the nervous Alan in their midst they rose and gave the newcomer an ovation. We're proud to have been on his handwagon for a long time.

Years ago a pair of clerks in a vegetable market were fired for juggling tomatoes. So they became jugglers in vaudeville and teamed (unsuccessfully) for five years. The other day in a scene for "Rings on Her Fingers," one of the partners, Frank Orth, had to juggle tomatoes. On conclusion of the shot he received a wire: "You're fired—you couldn't even juggle peanuts! Signed Darryl Zanuck." It was from the other half of the act—W. C. Fields.

For years, wisecracks have advised newcomers to remain single until their career was on its upswing or else it never would start. Taint true! And this proves it. Marjorie Lord, a known-excellent stage performer, couldn't get a nibble in motion pictures. She had even been in hit plays which ran right under the talent scouts' noses on Hollywood Boulevard. As a matter of fact she just concluded in "Springtime for Henry" with Edward Everett Horton. So she married John Archer, an RKO actor. Yesterday she signed another deal—with Universal Studios.

THE GOOD RUMOR MAN: John Howard and Mary Brian have that gleam in their eyes . . . The publicized squabble between Abbott and Costello is NOT SO . . . When someone asked Victor Mature if a settlement had been reached with his wife, Martha, he answered, "No, we're still arguing over the custody of the first" . . . Jean Gabin goes to New York this week—but without Ginger Rogers . . . Poor director Al Rogell—now directing Damon Runyon's story, "Butch Minds the Baby," his charges are 60 kids between the ages of two and five. Irene Dunne's just been told by 216 Chinese flying cadets that she is China's favorite actress . . . For Joan Leslie's birthday gift, director Michael Curtiz (now megging "Yankee Doodle Dandy") told her that she could stop calling him Mr. Curtiz and make it just plain "Mike" . . . Franchot Tone is sick again—same old ailment which nearly cost his life a few months ago . . . Olivia de Havilland is seeing a lot of Victor Jory in New York . . . W. C. Fields says of Boris Morros' orange and red shirts, "First time I ever saw a sunset with buttons!" . . . Bob Hope's brother, George, writes funny jokes for Eddie Brackton . . . Paramount just plunked a load of dough in New York for the rights to the hit musical, "Let's Face It"—Bob Hope will play the Danny Kaye role . . . When someone asked Susanna Foster how old she was, she quipped, "Just old enough to hear the 'wolf call'" . . . Paramount is building with Jane Withers manager—she even has her own story for her first outside picture since leaving 20th-Fox . . . Colina Wright is a happy wife—new hubby Palmer Beaudette has been stationed at Fort McArthur at San Pedro . . . Olsen and Johnson are after diminutive comic Jerry Bergen to feature in "Sons of Fun" . . . Carmen Miranda is ill in the east—throat ailment . . . After making personal on a band-selling drive, Judy Canova was returning from the President's Birthday Ball, when airline officials booted her off the plane at Dallas to make room for a soldier—and she stayed (gladly) for two days before an empty, came through.