



# HOLLYWOOD'S

# \$5,000,000

It is a sign of the times when a studio risks starring two film newcomers in its most expensive production.

# GAMBLE

by Peer J. Oppenheimer



On location in Germany, Lilo Pulver and John Gavin, two relative unknowns, run through scene from "A Time to Love and a Time to Die" under watchful eye of director Douglas Sirk.

**T**HE TIME to play it safe in Hollywood is a thing of the past. At least that seems to be the viewpoint of Universal-International executives who cast John Gavin and Lilo Pulver, two unknowns, in the lead roles of "A Time to Love and a Time to Die," the most expensive production in the company's history.

The \$5,000,000 World War II epic of a German soldier and his girl is based on the novel by Erich Maria Remarque, author of the last generation's World War I shocker, "All Quiet on the Western Front," also made into a successful film.

Of the two, Lilo Pulver is no novice to films, though she has never been seen by an American audience. She's an attractive Swiss of 28, with a freshness which should make her a favorite with U.S. movie-goers. As for acting—well, she convincingly played a 50-year-old mother in her first role.

She was all of 16 years old at the time!

Unlike many of her Hollywood contemporaries, Lilo is extremely well-read and more than once embarrassed her co-workers with her fluency in English, French, Italian, and German.

Lilo thinks nothing of this ability because most Swiss natives speak several languages. She also has inherited Swiss precision and methodicalness, and can't understand why anyone should be late. Once, when she wasn't sure how long it would take her to get to a party in Beverly Hills, she left her home an hour early, then circled the host's house for 30 minutes before ringing the doorbell at the precise moment she was expected. The hostess was still in the bathtub, unfortunately, and the host hadn't even come home from the studio!

Lilo is unmarried and has one main ambition: to own a chalet on Lake Geneva.

While the studio was at least assured one professional performance, John Gavin's brief appearances in three minor films posed a bigger problem—particularly since he didn't show the enthusiasm for acting found in most newcomers.

For John, acting is primarily a means of earning a lot of money. His lack of dedication, however, is overshadowed by his businesslike approach to movies. The explanation for this can be found in John's background.

A native of Los Angeles, he's the son of a wealthy industrialist. He attended some of the state's best—and most expensive—private schools and served in Naval Intelligence as an ensign and lieutenant, j.g. If he'd followed his early ambitions, he would have become a diplomat. But as far as Gavin was concerned, there wasn't enough money in it. He is married to the former Cicely Evans, daughter of a prominent Los Angeles physician.

John never considered acting as a profession until an agent saw him in a Los Angeles restaurant and offered to arrange a screen test for him. John laughed off the idea but mentioned it to a family friend, film producer Bryan Foy, at a party a few days after his discharge from the Navy. Foy recognized his potentialities and got in touch with agent Henry Willson, who arranged a test at U-I. John won a seven-year contract at a salary no young diplomat ever made.

Gavin's coolness toward his profession is especially noticeable where publicity is concerned. He considers it "a necessary evil." As he puts it, "If you have a garden and you want to make things grow, you have to use a certain amount of fertilizer."

John's personality—sharp, self-assured, conservative, and a little stiff—shows through in his acting. But he has other qualities to make up for it, particularly his looks. Next to Rock Hudson, he's probably the handsomest actor in Hollywood. And some think he's even better-looking than Rock!

No wonder his studio bosses are confident that one day he'll be the movies' biggest box-office attraction. In fact they're convinced that "A Time to Love and a Time to Die" is the first big step in that direction.