

WHY GIRLS MARRY

There's a trend to May-December marriages among the famous and not-so-famous;

A NEW AND SURPRISING trend is evident in America, long noted for its youth worship: more and more young women are spurning suitors their own age and marrying men old enough to be their fathers—even grandfathers in some cases.

Even more astonishing, most of these May-December matings have proved to be exceptionally happy, providing a fulfillment for both husband and wife that is often lacking in many of the so-called "normal" marriages.

Though statistics are incomplete, sociologists and marriage-license-bureau officials say that today more age-youth weddings are taking place than ever before in U.S. history—and are increasing significantly with each passing year.



Bing Crosby, at 54, and wife Kathy admire son Harry Lillis, now two.

With the life expectancy of the average American male now up to 67 (it was only 53 in 1920), many mature men are experiencing a "second youth" through late-flowing romances with women in their early prime. The list includes such world-famous figures as Bing Crosby, 56, Andre Kostelanetz, 60, Charlie Chaplin, 71, T. S. Eliot, 72, Sir Thomas Beecham, 81, Pablo Casals, 85, and Bertrand Russell, 88.

Love, of course, has never known any season. History is full of examples of men in the winter of their lives becoming enamored of girls in their springtime.

Today sociologists indicate there are five basic, though little-noted, reasons for the recent increase in age-youth marriages.



Charlie Chaplin wed Oona O'Neill in 1943, he at the age of 54, she at 18.

First and foremost is the rising life expectancy of men, coupled with the fact that today's middle-aged and older Romeos are more physically fit than ever before. They're younger than they used to be by every yardstick except the calendar.

Second, older men are far more interested in physical love than generally believed. A recent study at Duke University's medical school of 250 volunteers from 60 to 93 years old indicates that if individuals are reasonably healthy, they can be romantically active beyond the age of 90.

Third, many men of achievement outgrow the wives of their school days and are able to attract younger and more stimulating women. If a wife fails to keep up mentally and spiritually with an exceptional husband, she may find that she has lost him to a fresher and more vital companion.

A fourth reason for recent age-youth unions is the preponderance of women over men, especially in cities. According to the 1960 census, there are only 91 males to every 100 females in urban areas. Moreover, there are now three million more females than males of marriageable age.

Last but far from least, older men frequently have stronger personalities than their juniors, as well as a more mellow approach to life. A new study by Dr. Ken-

neth L. Bloom reveals that older persons tend to be far more positive in their attitudes and to feel more optimistic about themselves.

Male movie stars—who must stay fit to stay famous—have been remarkably successful in their marriages to girls who may be younger than their own children. Three years ago, Bing Crosby, at 53, started a new life when he married lovely Kathryn Grant, 30 years his junior and a year younger than his eldest son, Gary. During his second courtship, the Old Groaner not only crooned to his fiancée but took her dancing regularly. Today they have a two-year-old son, Harry Lillis, Jr., and (after five sons for Bing) a year-old daughter, Mary Frances.

Charlie Chaplin's 17-year marriage to Oona O'Neill, daughter of the late Eugene O'Neill, America's great dramatist, has been spectacularly successful despite a



Sophia Loren, wed to film producer Carlo Ponti, is 20 years younger.

stormy beginning and widespread predictions that "it wouldn't last."

Back in 1943, Chaplin, at 54, wooed and won the radiantly attractive, raven-haired Oona, then a dewy-eyed 18. A budding actress at 16, Oona tried for a part in a Chaplin film. She didn't get it, but she did get a proposal of marriage which she gladly accepted despite her father's bitter disapproval of her union with a man 36 years her



Famous cellist Pablo Casals, 85, is attended by his 24-year-old wife.

senior and thrice divorced. Today the Chaplins have seven children ranging from Michael, 15, to year-old Annette—and say they plan to have four more.

Now 35, Oona says she fell in love with the world-famous comedian when she was 12 and decided to become his bride. "You don't marry a man because of, or despite, his age," Oona says. "You marry him for the essence of himself—which is a timeless quality. I never think of Charlie's age—at least not 364 days of the year. He still flirts with me as romantically as before we were married. Because we share so many phases of our life—work, children, friends, ideas, travel—there doesn't seem to be any difference in our ages—except that I guess Charlie has made me a good deal more mature, and I help keep him young."



Actor Charles Coburn, 84, and wife Winnifred, 42, were wed a year ago.

OLDER MEN

By JACK HARRISON POLLACK

the reasons tell what today's men look for in women—and what women expect of their men

Many older movie husbands have helped skyrocket their young brides to the peak of film fame. Sophia Loren, Italy's No. 1 film queen, was discovered and boosted to international fame by Italian movie producer Carlo Ponti, her senior by 20 years. They were married in September, 1957, and have maintained an unusually successful partnership, both professionally and domestically.

Though spring-winter marriages in the movie world have been the most publicized, there have been many remarkable examples of such successful unions among outstand-



Groucho Marx celebrates with his young bride after wedding in 1954.

ing men in the world of music, literature, philosophy, the arts, and in the sciences.

Pablo Casals, 85, considered the world's greatest cellist, is 61 years older than his third wife, Martita Montonez, a protégé he married in 1957. "Happiness is sharing a life with a kindred spirit," says 24-year-old Martita. "That's why I've probably never been conscious of the difference in our ages."

Sir Thomas Beecham, 81, is another musical Peter Pan. This spirited, white-goated conductor of London's Royal Philharmonic Orchestra is 53 years the senior of his third wife, the former Shirley Hudson, whom he married last year. After striking a harmonious note with her in July, 1959, when he was 80 and she was 27, Sir



Sir Thomas Beecham, at 80, married a former secretary who was only 27.

Thomas decided he would visit her parents.

"I told them that I wanted to talk about a matter that seemed incongruous, preposterous, and even monstrous," he recalls. "They were so dazed by my oratorical fireworks that they finally let Shirley decide. And that's how we got married."

T. S. Eliot, 72, one of the greatest living poets, is 39 years older than his present wife. Eliot's first wife died in 1947. Three years ago, when he was 69, he married his 30-year-old secretary, the former Esme Valerie Fletcher, a pretty, plump woman from Yorkshire, England. Friends say marriage has made the poet more genial and relaxed.

Countless other May-December marriages are flourishing. Orchestra conductor Andre Kostelanetz, 60, ex-husband of singer Lily Pons, recently married a 32-year-old girl. Writer Alexander King, 62, has had a delightfully happy marriage with his fourth wife, Margie Lou, 25, during the past three years. The former owner of the Brooklyn Dodgers, Larry McPhail, 71, who has adult children from his first marriage, has had a good marital batting average the past 14 years with his former secretary who has borne him two more children. Movie producer Otto Preminger, 54, recently became the father of twins. His third wife, former fashion model Hope Bryce, is 26.

The interesting question is: why

do so many of these partnerships work out so well? What qualities do older husbands have which attract young wives and keep them happy?

The "father image" undoubtedly drives many young women into older men's arms. According to Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, every girl's first love is her father. If she fails to outgrow this father "fixation," an older man becomes the substitute, particularly when he treats her like a little girl.

Psychiatrist Erich Fromm has another explanation: the immaturity of the American male or his late maturing.

During the last two decades, psychiatrists, sociologists, and educators have written millions of words on how and why it takes so long for American men to grow up—if ever. Philip Wylie blames it all on "Momism" or those well-known apron strings with which so many sons hold onto their mothers long after they've reached manhood.

Small wonder a woman novelist once said, "No American man is interesting until he's 40." The 40-plus man is usually far more sure of his values—including the type of



Conductor Andre Kostelanetz, 60, honeymooned with wife Sara, 32.

wife he wants. Very likely, he has been married before and, whether divorced or widowed, has profited from his experience. Unless he is severely neurotic, he no longer is



British philosopher Bertrand Russell is 28 years older than wife Edith.

a victim of Momism—and doesn't make the mistake of comparing every girl with his mother.

Still another important asset is the older man's greater capacity for appreciating a woman. Years ago psychologist William James said, "The craving to be appreciated is the deepest principle in human nature." Recently, a wise young woman added, "Young men just need you to make a fuss over them. But older men like to make a fuss over you."

Naturally, not every older husband keeps his younger wife. Conductor Leopold Stokowski, 78, after 10 years of marriage wound up in a bitter divorce and custody battle with his third wife, heiress Gloria Vanderbilt, 36. Playwright Elmer Rice, 68, had three children by his second wife, actress Betty Field, 39, but she left him and later married a younger man.

Of course, being married to an older man isn't all soft lights and sweet music. Some young wives complain that their older husbands treat them like china dolls, fail to give them enough independence, tire too quickly, are less adaptable, or always want to stay home.

This, however, seems to be a minority report. Most young women who have chosen older mates seem to feel that marriage is a man's job, not a boy's—and that a man is not really a man until he has been aged a bit.