Cinderella Wasn't Rich

But Paramount's Version of 'Dream Girl' Tries to Make Her an Heiress

By Jay Carmody

It is folly, no doubt, to bring up the subject once more, but the movie version of "Dream Girl" is something the professional reviewers cannot allow to pass unnoticed.

The gelatinous thing represents another of the screen's profligate investments in a stage hit which departs so violently from the original one wonders why it was purchased at all.

It is not that "Dream Girl" in its new form is unspeakably unworthy. In terms of recent screen comedies, the truth is that it is better than most. What is retained of Elmer Rice's original idea is good enough to provide some amusement even to those who saw the farce-fantasy when it was being played on Broadway by Betty Field and Haila Stoddard. The point is that it could have been so much better if it had remained closer to the first version of Georgina Allerton's strange life and stranger dreams.

Purchase Price Majestic.

Paramount's purchase of Rice's play, with a check that ran to six delicious figures for the playwright, can have been inspired by only one thing. It was seen one night, probably opening night, by John Byram, Paramount's New York man. Like every one else, he was rocked with mirth at the antics of Miss Field as the first Georgina. Like no one else, he had enough money to write a check for the property, to which he purchased full rights and not merely the apparently fragmentary ones which turn up in the screen version with Betty Hutton.

What Byram saw and bought for a shocking amount of money was a comedy that ran for two years because it was understood and held in enormous affection by masses of human beings.

There it was, an uproariously funny thing about an Everygirl who relieved the monotony of a shabby, routine existence by dreaming the most fantastic of dreams. These gorgeous fantasies, in which she became any fascinating woman of fiction or history upon which she set her mind, were forced upon her by the very grubbiness of her real life. The need to escape provided her with the means to escape.

Affection Won by Georgina.

Everybody could see this and although they did not bother themselves to think much about it, it accounted for their warm affection for Georgina, and, in turn, for her popularity, and later purchase of the screen rights to her by Paramount.

The latest Georgina is quite unlike the first one. This is not merely because Miss Hutton's vigorous style differs from the more subtle ones of Miss Field and Miss Stoddard. There is that difference, to be sure, but the truly basic one is in the rewriting of Rice's character by Arthur Sheekman and, apparently, John Meehan.

Their seeming intent was to make Georgina a poor little rich girl. They have set her in an obviously aristocratic home, surrounded her with an immediate family intellectually as well as financially able to give her a diverting life, instead of a dull one. In doing so, they have robbed her dreaming of its motive.

When Miss Hutton's Georgina dreams, she manages merely to look stupid, a girl incapable of recognizing and realizing the opportunities for excitement lying all over her family's regal premises. She deserves, and gets, small audience sympathy or understanding, much less its affection.

Thus, the very essence of Georgina's character is changed and profoundly not for the better.

Professional critics who are directing their dudgeon at Paramount for this misdemeanor have nothing against heiresses, a type by which Hollywood is obsessed. On the contrary, they are as quick to see the merits of poor little rich girls as any producer-director in Hollywood.

Cinderella Hadn't a Dime.

Nevertheless, they do hold out for recognition of other girls as having dramatic values of their own. They want it admitted on the screen that Cinderella did not have a dime; that if she had she could not have been Cinderella. This is the substance of their protest against the Hollywood "Dream Girl" who is not half the dramatically wistful figure her predecessor was on Broadway, and around the country.

On the matter of Georgina's wistfulness, which in nowise diminished the hilarity of her as a spectacle, the use of Miss Hutton in the role poses the question: Could she, under any circumstances, give a convincing representation of a girl being even slightly defeated by life?

The fact is that Miss Hutton is hardly the Georgina type in this respect. She is an irrepressible sort, the girl who represents a constant hazard to anything that might intrude upon her happiness. What she gets out of the screen's "Dream Girl" is not what her predecessors found of touching softness.

This, plus what happened to the story in the process of adaptation is what diminishes a comedy that was good enough for everybody in its original form, and would be better than the one now being offered on the screen.

Oh, well, it is something that every one can keep on fighting with Hollywood about—and losing.

A WONDROUS MUSICAL RETURNS—It is, of course, "Oklahoma!" the fabulous Theater Guild show, which recently ended a record Broadway run and which comes back to the National Theater tomorrow night for a stay of three weeks. Above are (left) Owen Martin and Edith Gresham taunting Florenz Ames with firearms and Carolyn Tanner and Wilton Clary, the Laurey and Curly of the present "Oklahoma!" company.

All Out for Her Career

Nothing Else Matters Much Except Her Work, Says Ava Gardner

By Sheilah Graham

HOLLYWOOD.

Meet the hottest-coolest gal in Hollywood—Ava Gardner. She's the hottest bet for spectacular stardom. Her looks match her future. And her cool calculation makes success certain.

The first real talk I had with Ava was two years ago. I'd seen her around before that at Metro, where she was under contract, but dismissed her as of no interest with the words "she's the girl Mickey Rooney married" or "she's the girl Artie Shaw married."

When I talked with Ava two years ago she was getting her first break in pictures—as the gangster's girl in "The Killers." The late Mark Hellinger gave her the break. "I'm now married to my career," said Ava then, although she still was married at that time to Mr. Shaw. "Nothing else matters very much except my work," she concluded.

She wasn't kidding me and she wasn't kidding herself. Shortly afterward she "lost" Artie via a divorce. And since then, although she's had some interesting looking dates with Howard Duff, Prince Palahvi of Persia, Peter Lawford, etc., everything she has done has been with the idea, "Is this good for my career?"

AVA GARDNER.

Every One Wants Her.

Today Ava is a star in her own right. She's Venus in "One Touch of Venus," Robert Taylor's co-star in "The Bribe," and coming up is the co-starring role with Gregory Peck in "Great Sinner."

Every major studio in town wants to borrow her—but Metro finally has realized there's gold in Gardner, and are keeping her at home. They actually realized what they had in Ava after she worked in "The Hucksters" with Clark Gable and Deborah Kerr, because after that they jumped her loan-out price per picture to $75,000.

I was on the set last week—I and every one else on the lot (most of the others were men) to see Ava do her night-club number in "The Bribe." Ava wore a black chiffon wisp over her top, nothing on her midriff, the rest being filmy draperies. They finally had to ring a bell to get the boys back to their respective sets!

It was even more congested over at Universal-International when she wore her Venus flimsiness. Her bust line is bigger, her waistline is thinner, ditto her hips than the original Venus, and I think she is taller. But it adds up to one of the best female figures in Hollywood.

Educated by Shaw.

"Most people think I married Mickey Rooney to help my career," Ava tells me when some of the peeping Toms have left her dressing room. "In the first place, I didn't meet Mickey until after I had been signed by Metro five years ago. We were introduced in the commissary and actually my marriage with Mickey hurt by career. No one would take me seriously. Besides I wasn't too ambitious for a career then. I wanted to be a good wife. The same thing happened when I married Artie Shaw.

Ava owes her political and literary education to Mr. Shaw. He gave her the cultural works—big fat books on history, poetry and economics, and Ava was smart enough to read them.

"When I divorced Mickey," continues Ava, "I got quite a small settlement. Some people think I took him for a ride—I didn't. Maybe that's why we're still friends."

At the moment money is the least of Ava's desires. She's smart enough to know that it comes automatically in Hollywood when the paying customers stamp you as a star. "I'm still working on the same contract that I signed here seven years ago," she says. Her salary now is about $400 a week. It could very easily jump to $4,000 by this time next year. That's the way it happens in Hollywood.

I remember talking to Fred MacMurray when he was earning $200 a week. The next week, aided by a sit-down strike of three days, Fred's salary jumped to $2,000. Now he's one of the richest men in Hollywood.

Ava was born in Smithfield, N. C., on December 24, 1924. Her father is a tobacco farmer. Her family has not yet followed her to Hollywood and probably won't. In between her marriages, Ava has lived in small apartments. But a few months ago she quit the apartment and rented in the building owned by Red Skelton for something bigger and more private. "I want to build my own home one of these days," she told me.

Ava is a bit on the delicate side. She catches cold easily. Prior to working in "One Touch of Venus" she was in bed for weeks with a virus infection. As Venus, the drafts on the sound stages found her weak, exposed spots. One of these days, when she has time, she'll have a minor operation on her back.

"And," says Ava, "I'll also have to have a real rest. I've had practically no time off in two years."

(Released by North American Newspaper Alliance.)

Today's Schedules

AMBASSADOR—"Dream Girl": 1:25, 3:30, 5:30, 7:35 and 9:45 p.m.

CAPITOL—"On an Island With You": 1:30, 4:15, 7:05 and 9:50 p.m. Stage shows: 3:35, 6:25 and 9:10 p.m.

COLUMBIA—"The Gallant Legion": 12:40, 2:35, 4:30: 6:30, 8:25 and 10:20 p.m.

DUPONT—"The Idiot"; 1:10, 2:55, 4:35, 6:15, 8 and 9:45 p.m.

HIPPODROME — "Kid Millions": 2:25, 5:50 and 8:55 p.m.

KEITH'S—"The Best Years of Our Lives": 12:45, 3:40, 6:40 and 9:35 p.m.

LITTLE—"Things to Come": 1, 4, 7:05 and 10:10 p.m.

METROPOLITAN — "Romance on the High Seas": 1:15, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40 and 9:45 p.m.

PALACE—"The Street With No Name:" 1:30, 3:30, 5:35, 7:35 and 9:35 p.m.

PIX—"Scandal in Paris": 1:50, 4:30, 7:10 and 9:50 p.m.

PLAYHOUSE — "Anna Karenina": 1:10, 3:20, 5:25, 7:35 and 9:45 p.m.

TRANS-LUX — News and shorts. Continuous from 1 p.m.

WARNER—"Dream Girl": 1:35, 3:35, 5:40, 7:45 and 9:50 p.m.

Coming Attractions

NATIONAL—"Oklahoma!" starts tomorrow night.

AMBASSADOR—"Emperor Waltz" with Bing Crosby, starting Thursday.

CAPITOL—"Ruthless" with Zachary Scott, starting Thursday.

DUPONT—"The Story of Tosca," with Imperio Argentina.

HIPPODROME—"Man of Evil," with James Mason, starting Saturday.

KEITH'S—"Return of the Badmen," with Randolph Scott, starting Wednesday.

LITTLE—"Song of My Heart," with Frank Sundstrom.

METROPOLITAN—"The Noose Hangs High," with Abbott and Costello, starting Thursday.

PALACE—"Easter Parade," with Fred Astaire and Judy Garland, starting Thursday.

PIX—"Moulin Rouge," a French film, starting Tuesday.

PLAYHOUSE—"The Pearl," with Pedro Armendariz.

WARNER—"Emperor Waltz," with Bing Crosby, starting Thursday.

It Is Founded on Sentiment and Loyalty

John Ford's Argosy Pictures, a Close-Knit Group of Players And Technicians, Pays Off Well, Too

By Harold Heffernan

HOLLYWOOD.

One of the unique picture-making outfits operating in this heartless, gold-hunting town of Hollywood is that controlled by the veteran producer-director, John Ford. It is founded, to a large extent, on sentiment, loyalty and affection. And, oddly enough, in a business where jealousy, deceit and double-dealing seem to thrive, those niceties have paid off handsomely for Ford.

John Ford has been making pictures—good ones and great ones—for 20 years or more, and during that time he has assembled a band of actors and technicians who always are standing by waiting for him to make his next start. They'd sacrifice any other job, even at greater pay, to join up with their old pal. And the feeling is mutual. Any one who ever has worked for Ford and delivered a satisfactory job is welcome, even urged, to come back for more.

The people Ford and his new Argosy company use constantly are a motley, well-fed crew of thespians and workers who have come to be known throughout the business as "the John Ford Stock Company."

Heading the Ford Durables is John Wayne. He has starred in Jack's last two pictures, "Fort Apache" and "The Three Godfathers," the latter now shooting. Wayne was playing football 20 years ago for the University of Southern California. Ford gave him a job as truck driver, prop boy and general roustabout.

"Any Time" Fonda.

One day, while filming a picture about submarines, Ford motioned for Wayne to jump into the ocean as substitute for a stunt man who suddenly had lost his nerve. Wayne did the leap and finally landed, 10 years later, as star of Ford's unforgetable "Stagecoach." You know the rest. Even though he is making his own independent films today, Wayne comes running any time Ford starts a feature.

Another outstanding member of the Ford first string is Henry Fonda, currently starring on Broadway in "Mr. Roberts." Fonda has appeared in seven Ford films and in two of the producer's last three. Despite his sensational stage success, Fonda is quoted as saying recently that he would leave the show "any time Jack wants me." This is compatible with Fonda's past practice of taking a Ford role without asking to see the script.

One of the steadiest pluggers in the informal Ford firm is Ward Bond. Ward has been in 21 Ford pictures since prop boy Wayne got him his first job as an extra. Four years ago Bond was injured by an automobile, and for a period of several months physicians despaired of saving his leg. He immediately was taken off salary by his own studio.

Ford heard about it, demanded him for a role in "They Were Expendable," being made on the same lot, got him and started his salary checks rolling again. He worked with a cast on one leg up to his hip.

Complete Trust.

Playing one of the featured parts in Ford's current effort, "The Three Godfathers," is Mae Marsh, a charter member of the Ford Players. Says Jack of Miss Marsh and all others, for that matter, "Once a great actress, always a great actress—talent is ageless." Although she is under contract as a small-part player to 20th Century-Fox, Ford never forgets to borrow Miss Marsh—at a very nice boost in salary—every time he begins a new project.

Another prominent member of the select outfit is Ben Johnson, former stunt rider and rodeo performer. Ford liked his doubling for Wayne and Fonda in "Fort Apache" so well that he gave him the lead in "Mr. Joseph Young of Africa," another new one which Ford and his partner, Merian Cooper, have just begun. It is Johnson's first acting job. He has no agent and didn't even ask what his salary would be when Ford ordered him to start work.

"It takes something like 50 technicians—electrians, carpenters, set builders, etc.—to form the background for a film-making enterprise, and it is significant that few strange faces are found on the set when a new Ford film starts. No matter where they may be working,

(See HEFFERNAN, Page C-7.)

The Broadway Notebook

By Jack O'Brian

NEW YORK.

Groucho Marx and Norman Krasna have renamed their new comedy "April Fool.". . . It used to be "Time for Elizabeth," in case you wondered. Paul Lukas will be starred. . . Rodgers and Hammerstein have signed the Met's Ezio Pinza to star in their forthcoming musical, "Tales of the South Pacific," based on James A. Michener's Pulitzer prize-winning novel.

Jackie Cooper, of kiddie cowlick fame in films, is touring the strawhats in "John Loves Mary," playing a grown-up role of course. . . . Ken Parker, member of the skating ensemble in "Howdy, Mr. Ice," joyously announces that his mystery play about an ice skater, "Four Flights Up," will be done this summer in three different strawhat theaters. . . . Joshua Logan is back from Europe and already into preparations for a Chicago company of "Mister Roberts," after which he will stage the aforenoted "Tales of the South Pacific," which incidentally will have a large assortment of producers on its credit list. . . . Richard Dodgers and Oscar Hammerstein 2nd, will write the musical adaptation and will join in producing the venture with Logan and Leland Hayward.

Max Gordon announces his production of "Town House" will hole in at the National Theater (in New York) September 2. . . . Bea Lillie missed a brace of "Inside U. S. A." performances after straining her shoulder while painting. . . . Bea paints with her canvases lying flat on the floor, and the strange position caused what ballplayers call a "charley horse.". . . Theresa Breuer was discovered by 20th Century-Fox scouts at the Sawdust Trail, a Broadway sidestreet fun spot, and has been tested. . . . Talent scouts think she has a somewhat strange combination of looks — Theresa's supposed to be one part Jennifer Jones and the other, Beatrice Kay. . . . Add Joan Caulfield, John Payne and Jean Casto to the Citronella Circuit, appearing around the hayiofts in "The Voice of the Turtle." . . . Frank McHugh is doing the James Gleason comedy, "Izzat So?" in the summer spots, with his son, Peter, in support.

"Brigadoon" announces its last month will close at the Ziegfeld Theater July 31, after which the cast will have a summer respite before a two-year tour. . . . Its cast is practically intact since its delightful premiere. . . . It won the Critics' Circle Award two seasons ago. . . . Philadelphia gets it September 6. . . . The Hartmans, stars of "Angel in the Wings," have added a new dance to their comedy repertoire called "Honey Bear," in honor of the youngest of Gov. Earl Warren's daughters. . . . Grace Hartman's sister Hortense is Gov. Warren's secretary.

Russell Lewis and Howard Young are planning a production of Dickens' "Bleak House." . . . Thornton Wilder will do his own play, "The Skin of Our Teeth," July 19 at the Bucks County, Pa., Playhouse. . . . Mary Jane Walsh, highest paid understudy in Broadway history ($500 a week for the easiest job on Broadway, in light of Ethel Merman's famous indestructibility), has the Merman role while Ethel takes her youngsters on a six-week vacation.

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