

T H E F I L M S O F  
M E D Y L A M A R  
BY CHRISTOPHER YOUNG



# HEDY LAMARR- YOU STEPPED OUT OF A DREAM

During the 1930s and 1940s, Hollywood was truly the great dream factory. From the sound stages and production lots of its Studios, the directors, movie Stars, and technicians who labored on this gigantic production line sent forth a series of packaged dreams that seemed end-less. In those years of Depression and war, they were products we needed badly.

And on this talented production line, not one of those packagers of dreams was more beautiful or exciting than Hedy Lamarr. Hers was the beauty and excitement that once made a Paris audience gasp „Ecstasy!“ and so named her most famous movie.

But after a galaxy of headaches and heartaches caused by six ill-starred marriages, the loss of a fortune, and a well-publicized arrest on a shoplifting charge, Hedy Lamarr still believes that her beauty brought on most of her troubles.

„Everywhere I find men who pay homage to my beauty and show no interest in me,“ she complained once.

One foolish young man even killed himself when she refused to marry him, and her first husband was so jealous of her that he locked her up in his palace.

When she arrived in the United States, Ed Sullivan wrote in his column that she was the most beautiful woman of the Century. Few could dispute that assertion. When you looked at the raven hair and sensuous mouth, the upturned nose and tranquil dark eyes, you were trans-fixed by what you saw.

„The most beautiful girl in all Europe,“ Max Reinhardt, the great director and impresario, called her.

„She is conceded by most artists to be the outstanding beauty of the decade, and she is also one of the most vivacious and interesting,“ said famed cover photographer Paul Hesse of the Hedy Lamarr he knew at the height of her Hollywood popularity. „She is stimulating, witty, breezy, and altogether fascinating.“

In Ziegfeld Girl, Tony Martin sang „You Stepped



Hedwig Eva Maria Kiesler at eighteen months

Out of a Dream“ to her. It seems an apt description of the Viennese beauty who graced thirty European and American movies between 1930 and 1957.

She was born Hedwig Eva Maria Kiesler on November 9, 1914 in Vienna, Austria. Her parents were Emil and Gertrud Kiesler. Her father was the well-to-do manager of the Kreditanstalt Bankverein, one of the leading banks in Vienna, who had come from Lemberg in the West Ukraine. Frau Kiesler was the former Gertrud Lichtwitz, born in Budapest and fifteen years younger than her husband. She had had aspirations of becoming a concert pianist but gave up the idea when her daughter was born. From that time on, all of her attention was focused on her daughter.

An only child, Hedy was the darling of her parents, who gave her everything that would make her happy. Her education was started when she was four. Private tutors taught her various subjects. She learned to speak several languages, including Hungarian, Italian, and English, and was given ballet and piano lessons.

The Kieselers lived in a luxurious house on the Peter Jordan Strasse in Vienna's fashionable 19th district. There they were often hosts to the most prominent and influential families in Europe, including businessmen, politicians, and royalty.

Whenever her parents went on business trips to London or Paris or Rome, they often took along Hedy and her faithful „Nanny,“ Nicolette. Later on, when barely in her teens, she was sent to a finishing school in Switzerland to learn the social graces.

During this time, she went on an Alpine hiking trip with classmates and met Ritter Franz von Hochestetten, son of a distinguished German family. A romance blossomed, and they became engaged. Hedy delayed the marriage, however, for she was becoming interested in a career in the theater. With her parent's permission, she enrolled in Max Reinhardt's dramatic school in Berlin. Reinhardt was so impressed with the young beauty that he immediately put her under his personal tutelage.

Young Ritter pleaded with her to marry him. When she refused and broke their engagement, the sensitive young man killed himself.

While studying in Berlin, she met Count Blücher von Wahlstatt, a descendant of the famous Prussian officer who had fought gallantly against Napoleon. Another engagement was announced, but her interest in the theater was stronger than her interest in Blücher, and the two went their separate ways.

Hedy began to get homesick, so she decided to leave Berlin and return to Vienna. There she continued her acting studies and took classes in art and design. (Later, she was to drive Hollywood designers mad by redesigning the clothes they had created for her.)

Hedy always had been a movie fan and read every screen magazine she could find. One morning in 1930, while walking to her classes, she decided to sneak into the Sascha film studio and watch what was going on.

Director Georg Jacoby, who was filming the company's first sound picture, *Geld auf der Strasse*,



Hedy at seven

An Alpine vacation snapshot when she was 11 years old





The nine year old city "slicker"



saw her. Impressed with Hedy's good looks and enthusiasm for films, he offered her a bit part, as a customer in a nightclub. To keep her on at the studio, Jacoby also gave her a job as script girl for the rest of the filming.

Jacoby's next film was *Sturm im Wasserglas*, based on a play by Bruno Frank, which had been popular in Germany the year before. Hedy had made herself well known and well liked around the studio, so it was no surprise when she got a part in the new film. The role, that of a secretary in a newspaper office, was a minor one, but she made the most of it.

Through her studies and theatrical associates, she obtained a few stage roles at the Theater in der Josefstadt and at the Raimund-Theater. It wasn't long before she began getting larger roles in such plays as *The Weaker Sex* and *Private Lives*. The good reviews she was getting brought her to the attention of film director Karl Boese, who offered her the leading female role opposite Heinz Rühmann in *Wir Brauchen Kein Geld* (1931). The film received only fair notices, but Hedy's personal reviews were outstanding.

Everything seemed to be happening to her all at once. No sooner had she finished *Wir Brauchen Kein Geld* than Alexis Granowsky, the renowned Russian director, asked her to appear in *Die Koffer des Herrn O.F.*, a comedy he was about to film in Germany. He gave her the romantic lead opposite Harald Paulsen and signed Peter Lorre and Alfred Abel for the other starring roles. The amusing comedy premiered at the Mozart Saal in Berlin on January 17, 1932, before a very appreciative audience.

Then came *Ecstasy*, the film that caused a sensation all over Europe. Originally titled *Symphonie der Liebe*, it was called a masterpiece when it premiered in Prague. In the beginning, Hedy had doubts about doing the film. She would have to appear nude in two scenes and worried about the reaction of her parents. But she was ambitious and reasoned that if the picture was well received, her career would be assured.

Nudity is so common in movies today that it is hard to understand how so much fuss could be made over so little. Director Gustav Machaty seemed to have placed the camera a good half mile away for her famous nude swim and run through the woods.

But, in 1933, people were shocked at the thought of cameras witnessing anything so personal.



Left: Looking sultry and wicked when she was a student in Berlin

Below left: Vamp . . . Femme Fatale . . . La Prima Bella Donna . . . (Vienna, 1931)

Below: At the time of her engagement to Count Blucher von Wahlstatt



Perhaps even more shocking than the nudity were the facial expressions the camera recorded of her while in the throes of sexual pleasure with her lover.

Aribert Mog, playing a young engineer, was reported so madly in love with her that many wondered where acting stopped and reality began.

When the picture opened in Paris, the French audiences and critics alike exclaimed, „Ecstasy!“ The producers were so pleased that they decided to retitlle the picture.

Ecstasy was entered in the International Exhibition of Cinematographic Art, which, in 1934, was still called the Cinematographic Biennial of Venice. By that time, Hedy had married, and her embarrassed husband objected so vigorously to showing Ecstasy that the angry judges awarded first prize for best foreign film to Robert Flaherty's *Man of Aran*.

The delegates did take an interest in Ecstasy, however, but not because of the scandalous publicity. The Cup of the City of Venice was awarded to director Gustav Machaty „for the great efficacy achieved with the simplest narrative art as well as to the understanding and spontaneous interpretation of nature.“

Ecstasy was denounced by Pope Pius XI and banned in Germany by the Hitler regime. Several attempts to release the picture in the United States also failed.

Exhibitor Samuel Cummins finally received permission to show the film in New York after agreeing to cut out everything that a censorship committee found morally objectionable. So finally, in 1940, a bad print, scissored to appease a handful of prudés, opened to ice-cold reviews.

In recent years, since the end of censorship, Ecstasy has been restored in its entirety and shown to more sophisticated audiences, who are impressed with its symbolic art. Film historian Parker Tyler calls Ecstasy „unique“ and „an impressionistic poem.“ Of Hedy, he says she was a „vision of lyric enchantment.“

More famous than ever, Hedy returned to the Viennese stage in *Sissi*, a play based on the life of Elizabeth of Austria. It was while she was appearing in that play that Friedrich Alexander Mandl presented his card and came back stage for a visit. She was quite flattered, of course, for Herr Mandl was the owner of Hirtenberger Patronen-Fabrik Industries. Fritz, as he was called, was one of the four munition kings of the world. The others were Sir Basil Zaharoff, the international dealer in arms, Schneider-Creuzot, his French colleague, and Alfred Krupp, the master of the German cannon works in Essen.

Mandl had been married to Hella Strauss, a well-known Viennese actress. The marriage lasted two years. Shortly thereafter, a romance with German ac-



On the Vienna stage as Elizabeth of Austria in *SISSI* when she was nineteen

tress Eva May (the daughter of film star Mia May) caused a stir in social circles. Miss May killed herself over the affair, which she had described as hopeless. It seemed that Fritz had a yearning for young actresses!

Soon he was escorting Hedy around Vienna in his chauffeured limousine. There was a round of social functions that included the opera, the ballet, and dinner parties. When Mandl asked Herr Kiesler for the hand of his daughter, her father was delighted.

Hedy became Madam Mandl on August 10, 1933. The elaborate wedding took place in the Karlskirche, a magnificent baroque church and the most important building of its kind in Vienna. The church is only a short distance from the Belvedere Palace, in whose gardens Hedy had spent many girlhood hours wandering and daydreaming about the future. Those dreams seemed all to be coming true on that summer day in 1933.

Secure in her new life, she was not very concerned about politics; she left that to her husband. When Austrian Chancellor Dollfuss was murdered by the Nazis, she could not imagine the dark days that lay just ahead for Vienna and its people. She was too busy presiding over parties, which included some of the world's most famous people.

The Mandl guest list often included such names as Prince Gustav of Denmark, Prince Nicholas of Greece, Benito Mussolini, Madame Schiaparelli, Hungarian playwright Oedoen von Horvath, and writer Franz Werfel and his wife, who was the widow of composer Gustav Mahler.

Some early publicity relates that Hedy had entertained Adolf Hitler and that he had kissed her hand. As intriguing as it sounds, it never happened. She not only did not entertain the gentleman, she never even met him. Hardly, since she was married to Mandl, a Jew.

Hedy's life at that time can only be described as luxurious. She wanted for nothing—furs, jewels, limousines, a ten-room apartment in Vienna, and a mansion in Salzburg, where, it has been said, she ate from a solid-gold dinner service.

Mandl gave her everything. But he was a very jealous and possessive man who liked to wield power and who kept her a virtual prisoner.

The notoriety caused by Ecstasy infuriated him so much that he tried to buy up every existing print of the film and have it destroyed. After spending a small fortune, he discovered that the more prints he bought, the more turned up. His attempt to dispose of all existing prints was unsuccessful.

Hedy began to resent Mandl. While he was away on business trips, she would defy the servants, who were told to guard over her, slip out of the house, and rendezvous with an Austrian count, Ferdinand von Starhemberg. Using a key he had given her, she would slip into the royal palace. In November of 1936, Hedy and Count Ferdinand got on the Vienna-Budapest train together.

Mandl, who had been the chief armorer of Mussolini's expedition against Ethiopia, was in Rome selling munitions to the Spanish rebels. Notified by his spies of what was going on, he boarded a plane and flew to intercept the couple. He brought Hedy back to Vienna and had her guarded even more closely.

When the young count's brother, Prince Ernst Rudiger von Starhemberg, learned of Ferdinand's involvement with the married actress, the prince demanded that Ferdinand never see her again. The prince, moreover, was vice-chancellor of Austria. Between Mandl and the prince, Hedy knew what she was up against and realized that the affair was over. With the key now useless, she threw it into the Danube Canal.

By 1937, Hedy was becoming restless and tired of being locked away from the world. Hitler's power was growing, and she was finally becoming aware of what was happening in Europe.

Many German-Austrian film notables had already fled their homeland, or were about to flee, because they were Jews or because of the suppression of their artistic freedom. Among those who emigrated to America were actors Conrad Veidt, Peter Lorre, Marlene Dietrich, Paul Henreid, Szöke (S. Z.) Sakall, Helene Thimig (Mrs. Max Reinhardt), Walter Slezak, Franz (Francis) Lederer, Felix Bressart, Albert Bassermann, Curt Bois, Mia May, and Marta Eggerth. Many of the finest directors also left: Fritz Lang, Henry Koster, Billy Wilder, Otto Preminger, Anatole Litvak, Wilhelm Dieterle, and Max Reinhardt.

Two of Hedy's early film associates were to become victims of the Nazis. Lovely Renate Müller (Sturm im Wasserglas) became intimately involved with Hitler in a sordid sexual affair. Because she unwisely bragged about it, she was hounded by the Gestapo and forced to commit suicide. She jumped from a hotel window in Berlin. Kurt Gerron (Wir Brauchen Kein Geld) was forced to make Propaganda films for the government; and when his services were no longer needed, he was sent to Auschwitz and murdered.

Denied all opportunity to follow her career and with a marriage she could no longer endure, Hedy's one thought was to escape. „Whenever Mandl left Vienna,“ Hedy said, „I would be sent to our country estate to wait his return. I was constantly watched. I



A family gathering in Vienna. Seated: Hedy's maternal grandparents. Standing: Her uncle, mother Gertrud, father Emil, Hedy, and another uncle

feit chained.

„I could bear it no longer, and carefully, day by day, I planned my escape. I knew to ask for my freedom would be fatal. So I watched and waited my chance. It came. My husband suggested we visit Antibes, and with my plan worked out, I agreed. My husband was called away on urgent business, and I said to the friends left to watch over me, ‚Let’s go to St. Wolfgang. It’s much too warm here.‘ I was really longing for Salzburg and to see Max Reinhardt, but I knew better than to mention it, or I would arouse suspicion. So my friends agreed, and as Salzburg was only two hours’ drive from St. Wolfgang, I was happy.

„One day I suggested, quite casually, we drive over to Salzburg. I didn’t try then to contact Reinhardt but waited my chance. Two days later, it came. A countess, who had a castle just out of Salzburg, asked me to visit her. My husband won’t mind-she is a family friend, I insisted, and, at last, I was there as I had planned.

„The next night, we were invited to Reinhardt’s to dinner. After the other guests had gone, we sat before the log fire and talked. I told him I had to get away, to get back to work.“

„My dear,“ the great director said kindly, „you never will. It’s all talk.“

„But it wasn’t,“ Hedy said. „I did get away. I went back to Vienna more determined than ever. Nothing could stop me.“

She had no money of her own except a small amount saved from household expenses and a tiny sum she had managed to save to make ready for her flight. Her mother watched anxiously as she packed her luxurious clothes, fearing what Mandl would do if he caught her. All there was left to do was wait for the right opportunity.

And then, quietly, one night, while her husband was on a hunting trip in Hungary, with the aid of a faithful maid, she disguised herself as a servant, gathered up her luggage and all her jewels, and slipped out of the house. They sped to the Hauptbahnhof on the Mariahilfer Strasse, where she boarded the Trans-European-Express. She only began to feel a bit safer when the train crossed the Austrian border, the frontiers of Switzerland and France, until she finally arrived in Paris.

„It was torture to leave my mother behind,“ Hedy said. „I hurt my parents so deeply when I left our lovely home for the stage and screen. I saw my father’s heart almost break over the mistake I was persuaded to make in Ecstasy. And yet I had to go.“

It was during this hectic episode of her life that she received a wire from her mother telling of her father’s death. She had never loved anyone as much as her father. It was, of course, impossible for her to return to Vienna, so she had to remain far from home and alone in her grief.

Believing that Paris was not quite far enough away



Arriving in Los Angeles in 1937 to begin her American film career

**ACTORS AND SINGERS  
HERE ON NORMANDIE**

**Hedy Kiesler, Star of the Film  
'Ecstasy,' Among Arrivals  
—Signs Movie Contract**

The French liner Normandie brought among her passengers yesterday an unusually large complement of actors, actresses, singers and others of the entertainment world. Miss Hedy Kiesler, Viennese actress and star of the Czechoslovak film "Ecstasy" which was temporarily banned in the United States several years ago on indecency charges, was one.

Miss Kiesler, who will be known henceforth as Miss Hedy Lamarr, signed a contract during the voyage.

to be completely safe from Mandl, she continued on to London. It was there where she met an American talent agent, Bob Ritchie, who took her to see his boss Louis B. Mayer, head of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Mayer was on his famous European trip, which included attending the Paris premiere of *Camille* and looking for new faces for the movie Company. He had already signed a lovely London stage actress, Greer Garson. Ilona Massey, a Hungarian blonde; Della Lind, another pretty blonde; and the opera star, Miliza Korjus, were also hired. The last three did not meet with favor with American audiences and soon faded from view.

Hedy had met Mayer once before when they were both guests at Max Reinhardt's baronial estate in Salzburg. Hedy, then married to Fritz Mandl, was trying to forget her romp through *Ecstasy*. Mr. Mayer, who had one Standard for himself, set a different one for his stars. Although he found Hedy Kiesler Mandl to be exquisitely beautiful, he had seen *Ecstasy*, pronounced it as „dirty,“ and did not offer her any screen work. Hypocrite that he was, it was no secret around MGM that one of the great „lady“ stars was his mistress for years.

The second meeting between the Viennese beauty and the MGM magnate was no more amiable than the first. In a crude remark, he informed her that Americans would not be interested in looking at her „ass.“ Hedy, practically in tears, was about to flee his hotel suite when Mayer changed his mind and offered her a six-month contract at \$125 a week. Hedy regarded such a small amount as much an insult as his personal remarks, and turned it down.

In need of money, she was unwilling to part with any of her jewels. They might be a more needed asset later. She managed to get a job as governess to a child prodigy, Grisha Goluboff, who was about to sail for America.

Sailing aboard the Normandie, as a fellow passenger with her and the fourteen-year old Violinist, was none other than Mr. Mayer! Before docking in New York, Hedy put on her most elegant gown and glittering diamonds and arranged another meeting with Mayer. A man not easily swayed, he was finally overcome by her loveliness. She not only wangled a decent contract out of the MGM chief for herself but one for young Grisha as well.

She arrived in the United States for the first time on September 30, 1937. After a few days of publicity in New York set up by MGM, she traveled by train to California to continue her film career.

Metro set Hedy and Ilona Massey up in a house in

Hollywood. They were not only coached in acting and English but sent to all the film premieres and parties to make themselves better known in the film colony.

It was Mayer who changed Hedy's last name to Lamarr, in honor of the late silent-screen star Barbara LaMarr, whom he had admired. Everyone pronounced Hedy's name wrong (they said Heddy instead of Hay-dee), but she tried not to show how much it annoyed her.

At that time, Hedy, a staunch Catholic, appealed to the Holy Rota in Rome for an annulment of her marriage to Fritz Mandl. Her request was refused, and she went to Nevada and obtained a divorce.

Hedy ultimately made her American debut in *Algiers* (1938), a film that was a tremendous success and has become a minor classic.

But that occurred only after Metro had considered and discarded two scripts and a third production had shut down when Mayer quarreled with director Josef von Sternberg.

MGM had planned initially to debut Hedy in *Frou Frou*, Zoe Akins' revamp of an old Sarah Bernhardt success, already rejected by Luise Rainer. But this script was dropped, as was the studio's next project: a plan to star Hedy in *One Minute Alone*, from a screenplay by Dalton Trumbo. Gustav Machaty, the director of *Ecstasy*, would have been in charge.

Mayer, who wanted her American debut to be an important one, decided to guide it himself. He finally selected *Take This Woman*. He chose Spencer Tracy as her leading man, cast Walter Pidgeon, Fanny Brice, Lana Turner, and Jack Carson in supporting roles, and signed Josef von Sternberg to direct.

Mayer had been so impressed by von Sternberg's molding of Marlene Dietrich's career that he felt the director could do the same for Hedy. But Mayer, constantly on the scene supervising „my Hedy Lamarr picture,“ caused von Sternberg so much trouble that the famed director, who was temperamental to begin with, quit in a rage.

Hedy's American debut came about because she met Charles Boyer at a party. Boyer was so entranced by her beauty that he urged producer Walter Wanger to negotiate with Metro to let Hedy appear with him in *Algiers*. Mayer, who never did anything for anyone without personal gain, agreed to loan Hedy for the film if Boyer would do one for him.

Wanger got the better bargain, for *Algiers* turned out to be very successful. (The picture Boyer made for Metro was *Conquest*, a dismal picture in which he played Napoleon, and one of Garbo's least successful pictures.)

With the release of *Algiers*, Hedy Lamarr became a star virtually overnight. *Ecstasy* had not yet been shown in the United States, and no one except the German Community in New York had seen *Wir Brauchen Kein Geld*.

Critics went wild over her smoldering beauty, praised her performance as Gaby, and practically ignored Boyer. Magazines and newspapers fought for interviews with the brunette beauty.

Top stars even started emulating Hedy's high-bred elegance. Joan Crawford, who was having serious career problems, dyed her hair and parted it in the middle for her role in *The Ice Follies* of 1939. Blonde Joan Bennett also decided to switch to dark tresses, a flattering look familiar to viewers of her later movies.

Other dark-haired actresses also began to part their hair in the middle: Merle Oberon, Dorothy Lamour, Rosemary Lane, Eleanor Powell, and both Vivien Leigh and Olivia deHavilland in *Gone With The Wind*. Women everywhere were buying turbans and expensive costume jewelry, trying to look like the new star.

Although *Algiers* was definitely Hedy's picture, it received four Academy Award nominations for other people: Boyer, best actor; Gene Lockhart, best supporting actor; James Wong Howe, cinematography; and Alexander Tulloff, interior decoration.

While Hedy was enjoying newfound success in America, Fritz Mandl was still in Austria and having problems with the Hitler government. Nazi authorities seized the properties and resources of the munitions king, and he fled to New York. Today, Mandl is an old man.\* No longer bitter about the past, he lives on the Argentina Strasse in Vienna, not far from the Karlskirche, where he and Hedy weremarried.

When Mayer saw *Algiers*, he realized what an asset he had in Hedy and ordered the studio „build-up“ for her. And there were to be no more loan-outs!

All of Hedy's publicity was costing Metro not a cent, so they planned to take advantage immediately by putting her to work in *Lady of the Tropics* with Robert Taylor. Taylor was no more than competent as an actor, but he was fresh from his leading role opposite Garbo in *Camille*, and female fans considered him the epitome of masculine good looks.

The people at Metro decided that putting the studio's two most attractive players together in one picture would be a pretty good idea. The picture was not memorable. Hedy movingly underplayed the tragic half-caste Manon, however, and gave a lovely performance.

Indeed, she is so good that one almost forgets that

Taylor is even in the film. Joseph Schildkraut, although over-shadowed by Hedy's presence, gave one of his best screen portrayals as the vengeful Delaroch, a supporting performance that has been overlooked and underrated.

Metro planned next to cast her in the star role in *Poca-hontas*, opposite either Clark Gable or Spencer Tracy as Capt. John Smith. The idea seemed ludicrous to her; instead, she eloped with Gene Markey to Mexico, where they were married in the governor's palace on March 5, 1939. Markey, a writer who had previously been married to Joan Bennett, moved from his bachelor quarters into

\* Fritz Mandl died in 1977 at the age of seventy-seven.

They started having marriage problems immediately and hoped that adopting a child might help. When

they brought little James Lamarr Markey home, Hedy gave so much attention to the adorable boy that Markey felt neglected, and they were divorced within a year.

During the period after her divorce from Markey, Hedy was content just working and being a good mother to Jamie. She seldom socialized, but when she did, she was usually escorted by her good friend Reginald Gardiner, the one man she says she should have married but didn't.

Hedy's first legal tangle with MGM occurred late in 1939 when she announced that she would appear on the stage in *Salome*. Loew's Inc., with whom she was under exclusive contract, was granted a restraining order that prohibited her from going on with the play.

To make it even more difficult for her to appear on the stage, Metro reactivated production on *Take This*





With second husband Gene Markey at the premiere of *JUAREZ* (Dolores Del Rio is in the background)



Woman. Most of the original footage was scrapped, and except for Hedy and Spencer Tracy, a whole new cast was assembled. Walter Pidgeon, busy on another film, was replaced by Kent Taylor, Lana Turner by Laraine Day, Fanny Brice by Ina Claire, and Miss Claire in turn by Verree Teasdale.

One of MGM's busiest directors, W. S. Van Dyke, was called in to replace von Sternberg.

Although Hedy thought Tracy was a fine actor, she did not enjoy working with him. He mumbled a great deal, and she found him difficult to understand since she was not yet at ease speaking English. It would have been best if *Take This Woman* had been forgotten in the first place, for it turned out to be one of the worst pictures ever made on the MGM lot. Tracy tried nobly under trying conditions, Hedy seemed completely zonked, and Verree Teasdale was allowed to ham outrageously.

By now Hedy needed a really good picture. She not only got one but two in a row. She knew that *Boom Town* was going to be an important picture and set out to get one of the top roles. Clark Gable and Spencer Tracy worked well together and were both outstanding, but Claudette Colbert was less exciting in a rather colorless part.

Hedy had the smaller but better female role and was excellent as the other woman. Her performance as the smart financial tipster was so good that had she been given supporting billing, she might have been an Oscar contender.

The picture did receive two nominations, for best cinematography and special effects. A Gallup poll also named *Boom Town* as the best-liked motion picture of 1940.

After *Boom Town*, Hedy and Clark Gable went right into *Comrade X*. This was her first chance to play comedy, at which she proved herself most adept. The two had a great time working together in that fast-paced comedy about a Russian streetcar conductor (Hedy) and an American newspaperman (Gable) who whoop it up, much as Greta Garbo and Melvyn Douglas had the year before in the similar *Ninotchka*.

As the Russian girl with the improbable name of Theodore, Hedy discarded her usual glamorous outfits to wear a motorman's uniform. Except for a negligee and a bath-robe, she got to wear no other female attire.

*Comrade X* was a huge success, and Walter Reisch received an Oscar nomination for his delightful screenplay. Hedy enjoyed working with Gable, for whom she had great admiration; they harmonized well in both pictures they made together. The escape

scene at the end of *Comrade X*, in which Hedy and Gable steal a tank to make their getaway, is one of the most hilarious chase scenes ever put on film.

Hedy was fast establishing herself as a Superstar. Metro had her contract rewritten, guaranteeing her \$25,000 per picture. The Studio was quick to notice Hedy's talent for comedy in *Comrade X* and rushed her immediately into another.

In *Come Live with Me*, she played a refugee who wants to become an American citizen so badly that she is willing to pay someone to marry her. It is an enjoyable comedy, with Jimmy Stewart as the mildly amusing fellow who accepts her offer.

Hedy loved working with Stewart, and he became her favorite leading man. She remembers that he was very easygoing and very helpful to her. She was often bored with her leading men but never with Jimmy, whom she found to be extremely intelligent and very mechanically inclined.

Hedy and Stewart co-starred next in *Ziegfeld Girl* (1941), and both were sorry that they had no scenes together; he played opposite Lana Turner.

*Ziegfeld Girl* is a picture that Hedy practically begged to be in but ended up regretting because of the hard work in making it. At the time, she felt a musical would be a nice change of pace from what she had been doing. Neither a singer or dancer, she knew she had the good looks to be the most glorified girl of them all.

How right she was! When *Ziegfeld Girl* was being cast, she went to Louis B. Mayer and asked him to give her a part. Since Eleanor Powell had dropped out, and Mayer needed another marquee name, he decided to have one of the minor roles built up for Hedy.

Her part was that of a girl who joins the Follies so she can help her down-and-out husband. Her role was not as important as those of Judy Garland and Lana Turner, but it was the most realistic and human of the three. She certainly was the most beautiful of the lot. She has never looked more stunning than she did then, gowned in the lovely creations of Adrian and photographed to perfection by cameraman Ray June.

*Ziegfeld Girl* was given a spectacular production and contained many dazzling musical presentations, the most glittering of which was the „You Stepped Out of a Dream“ number. That and the „Trinidad“ number were probably the best ever staged by the incomparable Busby Berkeley.

*Ziegfeld Girl* happens to be a favorite of this writer, but Hedy does not have fond memories of making it. She found working on the film to be most difficult. The costumes, which she had to wear for hours at a



Appearing on the Lux Radio Theatre's production of *ALGIERS*, 1941



Going over costume sketches with designer Adrian on the set of *LADY OF THE TROPICS*

time, were heavy and tired her out, particularly the gown adorned with stars. A board had to be placed across her back to hold up the halo of stars around her head, and it exhausted her.

Her memories of Judy Garland are happy ones; they were, she recalls, „great pals.“ She does not remember, however, ever talking off camera with Lana Turner.

Ziegfeld Girl is a delight to watch today. Occasionally shown on television and periodically reissued in theaters, it seems so much better now than ever, probably because of the principal players and the nostalgia they evoke. Hedy was at her most beautiful; Judy was at her freshest; and it was this film that elevated Lana to stardom; she has never given a better performance.

Not only Hedy's fans but many critics as well believe that Hedy gave the best performance of her career as Marvin Myles, the sophisticated copywriter of John P. Marquand's H. M. Pulham, Esq. When Metro announced her for the plum role, no one who knew the story believed that Hedy could handle the role of the New York career girl.

Where was Katharine Hepburn? Surely, she would have been better. But Hedy proved the doubters wrong by turn-ing in a splendid acting Job.

Robert Young was also first-rate as Pulham and gave his best screen performance as well. Good support was given by Ruth Hussey as Pulham's wife, Charles Coburn as his father, and Van Heflin as the best friend. King Vidor's direction was impeccable.

The year 1942 was a very eventful one for Hedy. She had three films released, became engaged to marry, and was reunited with her mother after a Separation of five years. Mrs. Kiesler had fled Austria. She made her way to England, then to California, where she has lived ever since.

At the same time, Hedy announced that she would marry actor George Montgomery, later the husband of singer Dinah Shore. He was at 20th Century-Fox filming Ten Gentlemen From West Point with Maureen O'Hara, while Hedy was working with Spencer Tracy and John Garfield in Tortilla Fiat at Metro. It was on the set of Tortilla Fiat that their engagement picture was taken, with Hedy in her peasant costume. Montgomery was soon called into the Service and found himself far from Hollywood. Hedy, meanwhile, kept herself busy in front of the cameras during the day and hurried home to spend the evenings with son Jamie.

War was raging in Europe and the Pacific. Hedy, like so many other Hollywood stars, lent her Services

to the war effort. She went on bond drives and helped build GI mor-ale by entertaining at the Hollywood Canteen. She and her pal Ann Sothern danced with the boys, handed out donuts and coffee, or took their turns in the kitchen washing dishes.

It was at the Canteen on Christmas Eve, 1942, that Bette Davis, one of the stars who had helped organize the Canteen, introduced her to John Loder. He was an English actor who had just appeared with Miss Davis in *Now, Voyager*.

The two seemed to like each other and started dating, although many of their dates were no more than the shar-ing of duties at the Canteen. After a few months, they realized they were in love and decided to marry.

Hedy and Loder were married on May 27, 1943. The ceremony, performed in the Hollywood home of an old friend, Mrs. Conrad Veidt, was followed by a honeymoon at Lake Arrowhead. George Montgomery did not receive the usual „Dear John“ letter. Instead, he learned from a newspaper story that his lovely fiancée had married some-one else.

The first of Hedy's films to be released in 1942 was *Tortilla Fiat*, based on John Steinbeck's best seller about paisanos on Monterey's Cannery Row. That delightful comedy provided Hedy with one of her favorite roles, that of the Portuguese girl Dolores, who packs fish in a sardine factory. The part gave her the chance to get out of high-fashion clothes and into peasant dresses, which she dearly loved.

Hedy still felt uncomfortable working with Spencer Tracy, but she did like working with John Garfield, whose acting she greatly admired. As good as the three stars were, it was Frank Morgan who stole the picture. Morgan, who usually overacted (as he had done with Hedy and Tracy in *Boom Town*), gave his greatest performance in *Tortilla Fiat*. His poignant portrayal of the old hermit whose only friends are his dogs earned him an Academy Award nomination as best supporting actor.

Hedy's next film, *Crossroads*, was far from her best. William Powell was cast as a diplomat suffering from am-nesia, and Hedy played his loyal wife, who cannot believe he is guilty of robbery and murder. The picture gave Hedy little to do except stand around and wonder what would happen next.

Powell, in a change of pace from his *Thin Man* roles, seemed uncomfortable with his part, although he and Hedy worked well together. *Crossroads* was often confus-ing and difficult to follow, as if much of it had been made up as they went along. In the supporting cast, Basil Rathbone was particularly good as a blackmailer, and Felix Bressart played his familiar



On the set with her stand-in Sylvia Hollis

role as the good doctor. But Claire Trevor as a nightclub singer and Rathbone's cohort had a ridiculous part.

The role of the central character in Leon Gordon's *White Cargo*, the black sorceress Tondelayo, was coveted by many Hollywood actresses. But Metro had Hedy in mind from the beginning.

A number of well-known actresses have played Tondelayo since Earl Carroll first produced *White Cargo* in 1923. Annette Margules and Betty Pierce each played the role during its run of 104 weeks in New York, and several stock companies later featured such names as Lili Damita, Ann Corio, and Sally Rand.

But of all the Tondelayos, the one who is best remembered is Hedy Lamarr. Who will ever forget her entrance through those bamboo curtains as she utters a sultry, „I am Tondelayo.“

Her performance could not have been better; every cat-like move, every inviting gesture, was perfect. One could almost read the cunning thoughts behind her alluring eyes. Costumed by Kalloch in something called a „lurong“ she was a knockout as the native vixen. The musical score by Bronislau Kaper was sultry and set the desired mood.

Walter Pidgeon was appropriately cynical as the overseer of a rubber plantation, Frank Morgan was better than usual as a gin-soaked doctor, and Richard Carlson turned in a polished performance as the weak husband who couldn't hold Tondelayo.

Her role in *White Cargo* made Hedy a favorite of GIs in army camps and foxholes everywhere. Photos of her in the scanty sarong made her a popular pinup girl, competing with such lovely gals as Ann Sheridan, Rita Hayworth, Dorothy Lamour, and even

adorable dimpled Betty Grable.

Hedy's only film in 1943 was a mild little comedy in which she was paired again with William Powell. She and Powell had proved that they were a good team in *Cross-roads*, so Metro decided to star them together again in *Till You Return*, titled *The Heavenly Body* in final release. A pleasant little yarn about an astronomer who neglects his pretty wife, it did a good box-office business, mostly because of the drawing power of the two star names on the marquee.

Both carried off their assignments with routine work that did not require much from either of them. In the supporting category, Fay Bainter's talents were wasted, daft Spring Byington was out in left field, as usual, and James Craig was handsome.

While *The Heavenly Body* was in production, two other films were announced for Hedy: *Duel in the Sun* and *Dragon Seed*. But she lost the role in *Duel* when author Niven Busch abandoned plans for his own production and sold the property to David O. Selznick. Jennifer Jones took over Hedy's role as the half-breed Pearl Chavez and was nominated for an Academy Award.

About this time, Hedy was in the habit of turning down nearly everything, including *Gaslight*. And when Metro offered her the star role in Pearl Buck's best seller *Dragon Seed*, she refused it; she says she could not imagine herself as Jade, the Chinese heroine. Perhaps for spite, Metro refused to loan her to Warners for *Mr. Skeffington* or to Fox for *Laura*, two films for which she would have been ideally cast.

Turning down *Dragon Seed* was a mistake, for it was an important picture. Marguerite Roberts and Jane Murfin fashioned a good screenplay from the book, a huge cast of important actors was assigned prominent roles, and Sidney Wagner produced some superior photography. Katharine Hepburn inherited the part Hedy refused and gave one of her usual fine performances.

It has been said that Warner Brothers had tried to borrow Hedy from MGM for their production of *Casablanca*. Whether that is true or not, everyone knows that Ingrid Bergman got that choice part opposite Humphrey Bogart.

When Warners tried again for Hedy's services, they were more successful. Since Hedy was giving her home Studio so much trouble by turning down so many films, they finally decided that getting her off the lot for a few weeks would be a good idea. *The Conspirators* was supposed to be another *Casablanca*. It wasn't.

*The Conspirators* was, nevertheless, an interesting picture of wartime intrigue. Hedy, cast as the wife of

a double-agent, played by Victor Francen, was reunited with Peter Lorre, with whom she had worked in Germany eleven years previously in *Die Koffer des Herrn O. F. Paul Henried*, a friend from her Vienna days, was her leading man. Important supporting roles were well handled by Sydney Greenstreet, Joseph Calleia, and Eduardo Cianelli. Henried seemed to be repeating the exact role he had played in *Casablanca* and suffered just as intensely.

But, as the mystery woman, Hedy was more interesting to watch. And the watching was quite easy; she looked absolutely ravishing in one gown after the other from the stunning wardrobe designed for her by Leah Rhodes.

Between 1940 and 1945, Hedy also worked in radio frequently. Some of the programs on which she appeared were the „Lux Radio Theatre,“ the „Screen Guild Players,“ „Star and Story,“ and the „Kay Kyser Show.“ She appeared on the Lux broadcasts of *The Bride Came C.O.D.* with Bob Hope and *Love Crazy* with William Powell and repeated her original roles in *Algiers* and *H. M. Pulham, Esq.*

Ironically, she got to do *Casablanca*, after all, starring with Alan Ladd and John Loder in its Lux presentation in 1944.

One picture Hedy regretted turning down was *Gaslight*, for which Ingrid Bergman won her first Oscar. After she saw how good it was, Hedy jumped at RKO's offer to star in *Experiment Perilous*. It was a psychological mystery of the sort that Studio was known for. Although not as good as *Gaslight*, *Experiment Perilous* did turn out to be a fine film; Hedy gave a glowing performance as the adored Allida.

George Brent was as bland as usual, but Paul Lukas, who had just won an Academy Award for his performance in *Watch on the Rhine*, added not only prestige to the picture but a fine acting job as well. The doomed sister-in-law, Cissy, was admirably played by Olive Blakeney, a talented actress whom Hedy thought should have become more famous.

*Experiment Perilous*, based on a novel by Margaret Carpenter, was Hedy's second loan-out in a row from Metro. Besides providing her with one of her best roles to date, it gave her a chance to wear beautiful turn-of-the-century costumes. She was also given a completely new hair style, lightened to a very becoming shade of red. As one of the most beautiful women of her time, she played a very sympathetic part and delivered what many consider her best performance. Her fans hoped she might get an Academy Award for the part. But she did not, for World War II was a period for actresses. With the best actors at war,



Surrealist painting by Reginald Gardiner



Drawing by famed artist James Montgomery Flagg

the best parts were written for women, and there were just too many in competition.

Hedy's next film, *Her Highness and the Bellboy*, was done back on the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer lot. It is a picture that she dislikes so much that she prefers not even to discuss it. It was a project that had been planned as far back as 1942, with Hedy as the princess and Mickey Rooney as the bellboy.

By the time it finally reached the screen, Rooney had been replaced by Robert Walker. Mickey Rooney must be thankful to this day!

It was a silly story about a bellboy who thought a princess was in love with him. With the exception of June Allyson in a sympathetic role, the rest of the cast did not fare well.

Walker was silly as the bumbling bellhop, and „Rags“ Ragland's dumbbell was so ridiculous as to be totally unbelievable.

Hedy, pregnant with her first child, was so uncomfortable with the whole thing that she was indifferent to the fate of the picture. She was embarrassed with the result and so unhappy with the roles she was being offered by Metro that she asked to be released from her contract.

Hedy gave birth to her first child on May 29, 1945, at Cedars of Lebanon Hospital in Los Angeles. She named her daughter Denise Hedwig Loder in a christening ceremony attended by her husband and the child's godmother, Bette Davis. Loder then adopted Hedy's son James and changed the boy's last name from Markey to Loder.

Hedy was away from the cameras for over a year after the birth of her baby. She had committed herself to star in *Last Year's Snow* for producer Arnold Pressburger on a free-lance basis. She had known Pressburger when they were both working at Sascha in Vienna and was eager to start the assignment.

She was forced to cancel the deal, however, when she learned that she was pregnant. She was still in the middle of *Her Highness and the Bellboy* at the time and knew that before another picture was completed, her figure would show too much. Pressburger sued her for breach of contract, but the matter was settled out of court.

Since she was free from MGM, Hedy decided that she would produce her own pictures. Her partners in the venture were producers Hunt Stromberg and Jack Chertok. The Company purchased two stories, *There's Always Love* and *The Immortal Smile*, in which Hedy would star.

Both stories, however, were discarded in favor of *The Strange Woman*, a best seller by Ben Ames Williams. It turned out to be a wise decision, providing

Hedy with one of her best roles to date.

The story, set in Bangor, Maine, in 1820, gave her the chance to play the wicked Jenny Hager, one of the most evil bitches in modern literature. The film was given a sumptuous production, with magnificent sets erected to resemble the Maine logging town, and exquisite period costumes.

Hedy's performance was one of the best of her career, with only one jarring note. One was always aware of the Viennese accent instead of the necessary Down East drawl.

Gene Lockhart was excellent as her aged husband, as was Hillary Brooke as her best friend. But George Sanders, of all people, was miscast as a Maine lumberjack. The direction was handled with a certain flair by Edgar Ulmer, who had worked with Max Reinhardt in Europe. One can only wonder why such a lavish production was not filmed in color, a common process by that time.

*The Strange Woman* made bundles at the box office.

Because of the success of her first independent venture, Hedy was eager to start work on another picture immediately. She chose next to do *Dishonored Lady*, a story about a beautiful but despondent magazine editor, based on a true murder case. Katharine Cornell and Joan Crawford had appeared in earlier stage and screen versions. Hedy's Version is the least memorable of the three. Due to the strict production code of the time, the story was heavily censored and the nymphomania of the central character written out of the script.

Hedy's performance was one-dimensional, although she did see to it that she got to wear pretty clothes as usual. She had talked her husband, John Loder, into playing the role of a wealthy jeweler who gets murdered, and hired Dennis O'Keefe for the other lead, but got little support from either. Natalie Schafer and Margaret Hamilton, in lesser roles, contributed their usual touch of „camp,“ and William Lundigan was only adequate as the weakling turned murderer.

*Dishonored Lady* was badly received and barely made back the money that it cost to make it. The headaches involved in running her own Company were more than Hedy had anticipated or could cope with, so she decided to dissolve the association. It was just as well, for during the filming of *Dishonored Lady*, she discovered that she was pregnant again. Her son Anthony John Loder was born March 1, 1947.

Her marriage to Loder had been deteriorating long before this, and in July, she started divorce proceedings. Part of the blame for the failure of the marriage

perhaps was because Loder was seventeen years older than Hedy. Loder's son by a previous marriage, Robin, was almost as old as his lovely stepmother. She complained that her husband fell asleep all the time and never talked to her. Hedy had desperately wanted the marriage to work and today speaks of Loder with fondness, describing their union as having been a „good match.“

After the birth of her son, Hedy was off the screen for a year. Her divorce had also become final, and during this time, there was a brief romantic interlude with Mark Stevens. He was a popular actor at the time who made several films at 20th Century-Fox, among them a couple of pretty Technicolor musicals with June Haver.

The affair did not last long, nor did Stevens' career. He soon left Hollywood and went to Majorca, where he became a tennis instructor. Hedy was next involved romantically with wealthy businessman Herbert Klotz. That lasted long enough only for the announcement of their engagement. Hedy Klotz?

After two heavy dramas and the demise of her production company, Hedy decided that what she needed was a comedy. She then accepted the role of a lady psychiatrist, opposite Robert Cummings in *Let's Live a Little*, a little farce made by Eagle-Lion that did nothing for either of their careers. Hedy, however, had to wait only a year for her greatest success, *Samson and Delilah*.

She also canceled plans made at this time to appear in producer Albert Zugsmith's *Hideaway House*. (Zugsmith later was to become well known for his exploitation films with Mamie Van Doren.)

Instead, she planned to move to New York and appear on the Broadway stage in *A Legend of Good Women*, a comedy by Maurice Valency.

But this arrangement also fell through, and she landed her most important role just as her career was going into a swift decline. When Cecil B. DeMille started work on *Samson and Delilah* early in 1949, he could think of no one better suited than Hedy to play the seductive dame who gave Samson his famous clipping. She had worked with the legendary director on several Lux Radio Theatre broadcasts and was eager to do the film, which she knew would be monumental.

She was perfect as Delilah and perfectly beautiful in Edith Head's fabulous costumes. DeMille personally gathered peacock feathers from the birds on his farm to make up one of her lavish gowns.

Hedy considers her performance as Delilah the best of her career and *Samson and Delilah* the best film in which she ever appeared. Critics generally agree.

Greeting her mother, Mrs. Gertrud Kiesler, in Pasadena in 1942 after a five-year separation



Her performance was definitely the main asset of the film, one for which she deserved an Academy Award nomination. She was not only beautiful but cunning, tempting, vicious and greedy when necessary, and remorseful as well.

Victor Mature was quite acceptable as the massive Samson. George Sanders, who seemed to be in his glory, was appropriately nasty as the Saran of Gaza. Blonde Angela Lansbury, on the other hand, was miscast as Delilah's sister, and the dialogue given to the minor players was at times so painful as to make one cringe. Regardless of some minor flaws, Samson and Delilah was a colossal success. Hedy's first color film, it became one of the all-time money making films.

Hedy denies rumors that she and DeMille did not get along. In fact, they got along so well that when DeMille was casting *The Greatest Show on Earth*, he offered her the leading role of the trapeze artist that finally went to Betty Hutton. It was a part that required very strenuous work, which she turned down in favor of spending more time with her children.

DeMille still wanted to do another film with her and proposed a grand production of *Thais*, but Hedy could not be persuaded.

Louis B. Mayer was so impressed with her performance as Delilah that he was willing to meet her financial terms when she decided to work again. Hedy did not like Mayer and resented his years of ill treatment.

Now in a bargaining position, she made the old man squirm by asking for a fee of \$90,000. Knowing that the Lamarr name was good box office, he not only agreed to her asking price but also to a four-week shooting schedule.

She returned to the Metro lot after a five-year absence to make *A Lady Without Passport*. It was a property that she did not care for. She had already turned down *Father of the Bride* because she did not want to work with Spencer Tracy again and thought herself too young to play Eliza-beth Taylor's mother. Since her other demands had been met, she decided not to have any more hassles. As a stranded refugee lingering in Havana, she was given little to do but look attractive in a few pretty dresses, while John Hodiak was given more footage and George Macready the best dialogue.

Paramount had been so pleased with the results of *Samson and Delilah* that they contracted Hedy for two more pictures. The first was *Copper Canyon*, a Western filmed in color with an Arizona setting. Her Viennese accent seemed wrong for the saloonkeeper from New Orleans, and she looked out of place in curls and ante-bellum costumes.

Likewise, Ray Milland, who was more at home in an English drawing room, was not a good choice for the fast-drawing Western hero. Nevertheless, Hedy liked making the film and working with Milland. She seldom got the opportunity to go on location for a picture and enjoyed the time the Company spent in Arizona.

*Copper Canyon* was well mounted, and the beautiful Technicolor photography by Charles B. Lang, Jr., was an asset. Since Westerns were as popular as ever, it did a good business at the box office.

In her next film, *My Favorite Spy*, she fared much better; her talent for comedy was put on display again opposite Bob Hope. It was a very funny picture, which Hedy feels would have been even better had some of her best scenes not ended up on the cutting room floor.

When Hope asked her to become his leading lady in the picture, she jumped at the opportunity. Much to Hope's chagrin, she came off better than he in many of their scenes. Because of that, she believes he had many of her best scenes cut from the final print. This has always angered her, and to this day, she never has a pleasant word for the ski-nosed comedian.

Hedy began to tire of picture making and made one of her many retirement announcements. She took her children to Acapulco for a vacation and met former band leader Ernest (Ted) Stauffer there. He owned *La Perla*, a smart nightclub hangout for tourists in that Mexican re-sort, and had been married to another actress, Faith Domergue. Hedy married Stauffer in Los Angeles on June 12, 1951. He hoped that she would enjoy living in Acapulco. But she hated the heat, found the food unbearable, and „got awfully tired just sitting down there doing nothing.“ They were divorced a year later.

Unfortunately, Hedy did not make the next film that she had planned to do; 20th Century-Fox had offered her Ernest Hemingway's *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* with her friend Susan Hayward and Gregory Peck.

Since Hedy and Hayward had no scenes together, Hayward's scenes were filmed first. Then Hedy decided against the part, and it went to Ava Gardner, who gave one of the best performances of her career. Rumor has it that Hayward was furious when Ava got the part and would have refused to appear in the film if she had known Hedy would turn the part down.

Hedy, who had lived in the United States for many years, became a citizen on April 10, 1953, in Los Angeles.

As if she had not learned her lesson in producing her own films, she tried the same course again in 1953.

She gained the backing of Texas oil man W. Howard Lee and went to Italy to make a picture that never was released in America. The film was called *Eterna Femmina* during a limited European release and ended up on U.S. television years later as a trilogy called *The Love of Three Queens*.

The venture was disastrous. She and the other Investors lost a great deal of money on the project. To make matters worse, she was sued by lawyers who had represented her during legal problems concerning the ill-fated picture.

Hedy and Lee were married in New York at the Queens County Courthouse on December 22, 1953. He took her to Houston to live, a place she came to detest.

„How anyone who has seen anything of the world can live in Texas is beyond me,“ she said.

She was not accepted by his family. To get away, she suggested he buy a place in Aspen, Colorado. Since they were both avid skiers, he consented. The lodge he built cost \$300,000 and was called the *Villa Lamarr*.

Hedy remained away from the camera for four years, trying to content herself with just being Mrs. Lee. When producer Irwin Allen offered her a cameo role in *The Story of Mankind* (1957), she decided to accept since it would not take long to film her segment. It was a curious picture, with bizarre casting, and did very badly in the few bookings it got.

Hedy was seen as Joan of Arc in the longest episode in the picture. She had more footage than some of the other stars, who were on and off the screen so fast one had trouble spotting them. She received top billing, along with her old friend Ronald Colman.

Many others in the film were also old friends or former co-stars. Her dear friend Reginald Gardiner played Shakespeare; Edward Everett Horton, from *Ziegfeld Girl*, was a wild choice for Sir Walter Raleigh; Agnes Moorehead, the countess in *Her Highness and the Bellboy*, was a believable Queen Elizabeth I; Peter Lorre, with Hedy in both *Die Koffer des Herrn O.F.* and *The Conspirators*, gave some conviction to his role of Nero; fellow Viennese actor Helmut Dantine was Mark Antony; and the tragic Cathy O'Donnell, who had been in *Eterna Femmina*, had a bit part.

In her last film, *The Female Animal*, Hedy looked too young to play Jane Powell's mother. In reality, she is only fifteen years older than Miss Powell. Overcoming an inept script, Hedy, in the role of a famous movie star with an eye for younger men, managed to outplay the other members of the cast.

Miss Powell looked tired and overacted. George

Nader, a last-minute replacement for John Gavin, looked terrific but seemed embarrassed with his sexy he-man role. Jan Sterling played competently in a bitchy part as a rival actress who also likes her men on the younger side of thirty.

In the same year that she made her last film, 1957, Hedy made her dramatic television debut. She was a guest star on the „Zane Grey Theatre“ in an episode called *Proud Woman*. In it, she played the role of a woman who takes over the management of a ranch when her father becomes incapacitated.

Hedy's marriage to Howard Lee, which she has described as „the darkest chapter in my life,“ became so intolerable that she separated from him in August 1958. She was granted a divorce in April 1960 and awarded a settlement of \$500,000, of which she swears she never received a cent. She became so distraught during the divorce action that she came down with pneumonia and had to send her stand-in, Sylvia Hollis, to court to testify for her.

In 1963, she was to have appeared in a CBS television special called „The Man Who Bought Paradise.“ An all-star cast also was to include Robert Horton, Angie Dickinson, and Buster Keaton.

One could almost have predicted the outcome: Last-minute details between Miss Lamarr and the network could not be worked out. Whether the dispute was over billing or salary, it was not made known. Salary, however, would be the better guess. At any rate, Hedy was replaced by another great beauty, Dolores Del Rio.

Hedy's lawyer during her court battles with Lee was Lewis J. Boies. He became so infatuated with his client that he began sending her flowers and gifts and finally asked her to marry him. She consented, and they were married in Fresno, California, on March 4, 1963. The marriage lasted two years.

She was granted her sixth divorce on June 21, 1965, after her teen-age son testified that it had been a „destructive relationship.“

Tony said that he had seen Boies push his mother on occasion and threaten her with a baseball bat. Hedy said that she had spent „about a half million dollars“ on her husband, money raised by selling paintings from her valuable art collection.

The saddest chapter in her life occurred when she was arrested on a shoplifting charge on January 28, 1966. She was accused of taking \$86 worth of cosmetics and clothing from The May Company department store in Los Angeles. She said she had only stepped out of the store to summon her business manager to pay for the items.

Because she was a star, she was accustomed to pa-



The official engagement photo of Hedy and George Montgomery taken on the set of *TORTILLA FLAT*, 1942

Attending a 1942 military ball at the Hollywood Palladium with Mario Davies, George Montgomery, William Randolph Hearst, Rita Hayworth and Lou Costello (behind Hearst)



ying for all purchases at once instead of individually. Hedy suffered the indignity of being jailed for five hours before bail money arrived. At the time of the arrest, she was carrying \$13 in cash and two checks totaling \$14,000.

She was accompanied to the Sybil Brand Institute, a detention center for women, by her business manager, Earl Mills. Asked about the charges lodged against her, she said that it was all a misunderstanding. But she was booked under the name Hedy Boies and told to appear in Division 59 of Los Angeles Municipal Court on February 2 at 1 P.M.

Her son Tony told reporters, „For the past thirty years my mother has been doing a great deal for the United States and the people in it, and in return she has received a slap in the face-for nothing. I mean, she has given a lot to everyone even when she was above everyone in fame and recognition.

„During the past ten years, she has been more or less down and out; she’s had her own problems off the screen. The divorces do upset her a great deal, more than anyone can imagine. And since she is in this condition, no one looks after her or takes care of her, as she has done for others.“

Denise also defended her mother by saying, „These last ten years have been a constant strain on my mother both financially and emotionally. You know, in just one day during World War II, my mother sold more than seven million dollars worth of bonds.“

In a much-publicized trial, Hedy took the stand to tell of her health and career problems and the loss of her money and property. The Jury, who seemed in awe of the famous star, pronounced an emphatic verdict of „not guilty.“ Thus, amid the applause of the spectators in the court-room, ended weeks of mental pain inflicted upon her.

Because of the shoplifting fracas, Hedy was too fatigued to start work on her first picture in years and was fired. She had signed to co-star with Don Ameche in *Picture Mommy Dead*. Producer Bert I. Gordon claimed that because of high production costs he could not await Miss Lamarr’s availability. He replaced her with Zsa Zsa Gabor. Gene Tierney, who is married to Hedy’s ex-husband Howard Lee, had also been a contender for the part.

Hedy has since refused starring roles in two films to concentrate on her \$2-million lawsuit against The May Company store for false arrest. Columnist Sheila Graham once suggested that she drop the suit.

„Oh, no-I was acquitted, but I have not acquitted them,“ she replied. „It was an emotional thing for me. I still can’t go into a store without shaking.

„The way they treated me!

„You know, I had a check for fourteen thousand dollars in my pocket. No, I shall enjoy this appearance in court.“

After all these years, she is still involved in litigation, and no settlement has been made.

At present, Hedy isn’t interested in acting and turns down the offers that she continues to receive. Not too long ago, she was asked to appear in a stage production of *The Killing of Sister George*, a London and New York stage success that was made into an interesting film.

But one screen role in recent years would have interested her, she says, that of the countess in *Something for Everyone*.

She would have been just right as the Austrian countess in *The Sound Of Music*. One can only wonder why she wasn’t approached to play the part. But it was done by Eleanor Parker, a fine actress who was too American for the role.

Recently, an interviewer asked her how it felt to be a beautiful woman.

„I was really never aware of being beautiful. I never thought about it, and I never had any ego problems,“ she said. „I’m just like anyone else with two eyes and a nose and mouth. I do, however, have my own nose and my own teeth.

„I believe in simplicity and inner beauty-I can find something beautiful about all the people I like. What’s important is to be yourself and be accepted as such-not what you look like. A person just can’t live by relying on outer beauty-it fades.

„Once in a while I have a glimpse of myself, and I think I’m quite good-looking. My mother always said to be beautiful all the time, and that instantly made me subconsciously not want to be. Some rely on beauty, but I don’t. If you do, you’re dead.“

Hedy has always been close to her family and sees them as often as possible. Her son Tony, a photographer, lives in West Los Angeles. Her mother „Trude“ lived with him there until her death in 1977. Tony, twice married, has two children, the older of whom, Lodi, lives with her mother in Paris. Hedy’s daughter Denise, also a beautiful woman, is a model in Seattle, where she resides with her own daughter Wendy. Hedy’s older son James, a policeman in Nebraska, made headlines himself a few years ago after accidentally shooting a black girl during the outbreak of a race riot in Omaha.

Today, Hedy Lamarr lives in an apartment on New York’s fashionable East Side and spends much of her time now going to the movies, listening to lectures,

roaming the art galleries, and painting. She is a good artist herself and has had her work exhibited in many of the better galleries in New York, Los Angeles, and Houston.

She enjoys winter vacations in Aruba and other Caribbean resorts, where she is often joined by Denise. Many summer weekends are spent with friends at Sag Harbor or Fire Island, delighting them with amusing stories and anecdotes. She is completely happy living in the Hast and seems glad to be away from the Hollywood scene.

Still sleek and lovely, Hedy has conquered several bouts with pneumonia and two serious eye operations. From time to time, the daily trade papers continue to report that Hedy will emerge from retirement to accept another film role, but as pleasant as it would be to see her on the screen again, it is quite unlikely. Perhaps she no longer has the desire to ever make another film. If so, that is understandable.

Time, to be sure, has tempered the image that once evoked cries of „Ecstasy!“ It cannot, however, temper the vision of beauty and excitement preserved for us in the films of Hedy Lamarr.



In her New York apartment with Christopher Young