



Richee

WHEN Erick von Stroheim selected Fay Wray for the leading rôle in "The Wedding March," Fay burst into tears. That's the feminine way of registering pleasure. On the opposite page, you will find Dorothy Spensley's story of this newcomer.

Snatched from Slapstick

Only last year little Fay Wray
was playing in film comedies

By
Dorothy
Spensley



FAY WRAY wore a red hat. She wore it so jauntily, so assuredly, so sublimely, that even the ghost of Gloria, which hovered over and caressed the gold and pale green of the Louis Seize furniture, sighed a bit at the beautiful assurance of youth.

She wore a red hat and a black and white checked dress with a tight black velvet bodice, and every once in a while that restless right hand would wander from the soft rose of her lips to the topmost button of her frock and then idly flutter to her lap.

Fay may have been nervous, but only the weaving of the right hand betrayed it.

Fay is Erich Von Stroheim's latest, and undoubtedly most beautiful, discovery. Fay is the little girl who was snatched from comedies and westerns to play a leading rôle in tragedy.

Just nineteen and Canadian and very beautiful—that is Fay. Beautiful in that pale oval-faced way, with almond shaped eyes, unslanting, with tapering brows, a mouth all tender and rosy, and long, lustrous dark hair.

Last year playing with Janet Gaynor and Olive Borden in Hal Roach comedies, where, Fay quaintly says: "They tried to make a curly-haired-little-girl-housewife out of me, and I could only see the housewifely part of it. So, really, I wasn't very good."

Last month playing in Westerns, being rescued by valiant Universal cowboys.

This month playing in tragedy, deep and continental, with people like ZaSu Pitts, Dale Fuller, George Fawcett, Maude George, George Nichols, with Erich Von Stroheim both acting and directing.

That is the story of Fay Wray who plays *Mitzi* in "The Wedding March."

Fay's red lips parted in amazement. Was it great to work with Von Stroheim?

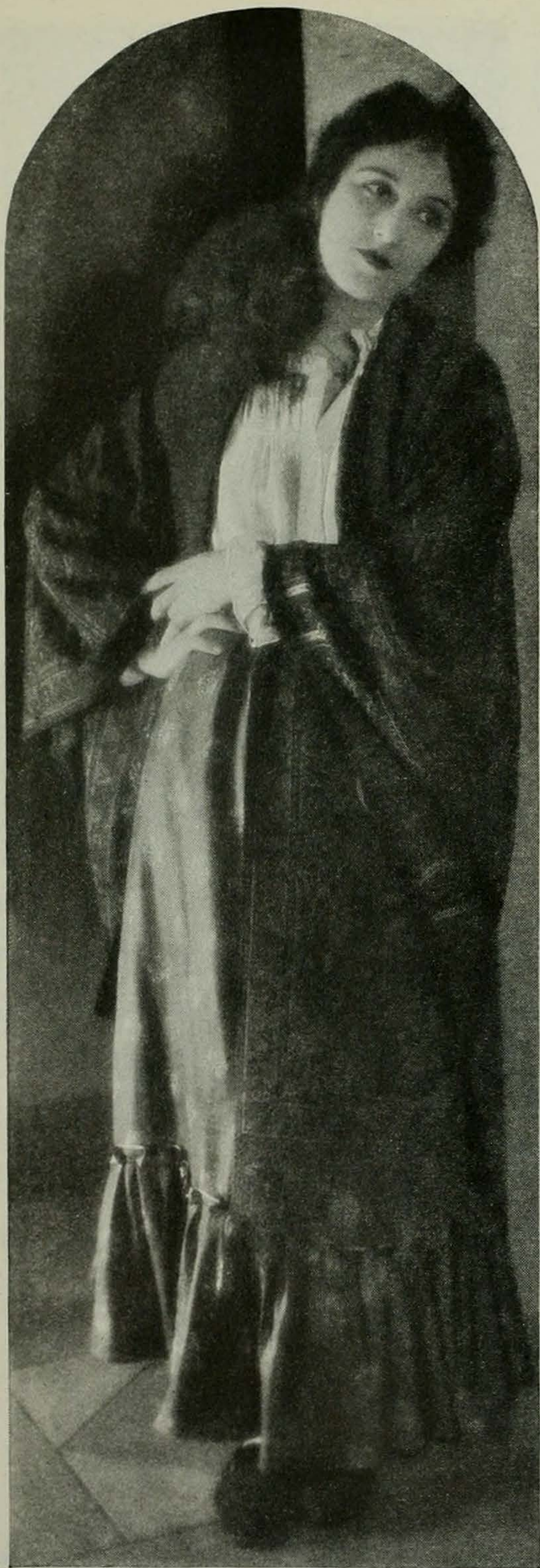
"It is great . . . it is grief . . . it is marvelous!"

And her voice made it a tone-poem of joy. A lyric of feeling.

"I knew all along I would get the part. I had always wanted to work under Von Stroheim's direction. I knew I would sometime, if it was right. And it was right." There is a candor in Fay's voice. Candor in her grey eyes. She is child-like, but not childish. Young, but not infantile. She has a direct simplicity which is pleasing.

"When I went to interview Mr. Von Stroheim about the part I was frightened, maybe, just a bit." The restless right hand flew to her firmly rounded

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"It is great—it is grief—it is marvelous," says Fay Wray of her opportunity to play *Mitzi* in Erich Von Stroheim's "The Wedding March." Fay is nineteen, not long graduated from the Hollywood High. Von Stroheim found her playing heroines in Western melodramas

Snatched from Slapstick

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 58]

chin, re-living the moment. "But I knew it was right for me to have that part.

"Mr. Von Stroheim's office has two rooms, maybe you know?" The two tapering brows were lost in query under the jaunty brim of the red hat. "Two rooms, rather dark. Mrs. Schley went with me. She is the woman who was responsible for the interview.

"He sat in one of the rooms. In a corner sat his secretary. He didn't talk to me at all, but I knew he was looking at me. He talked to Mrs. Schley, and I sat there, in that semi-darkness. Presently he said, looking at last at me:

"Are you sure you can do it?"

"I know I can." And I did.

"Then Von Stroheim swung about in his swivel chair.

"Whom does she look like to you, Mrs. Westland?" he asked.

"Mitsi," answered his secretary. Not a word more. That was all.

"It seemed that the darkness grew heavier. Not a word was spoken. Von Stroheim arose and approached me. He put his hand over mine:

"Good-bye, Mitsi!"

Fay's eyes grew misty under that audacious red hat. It became a hateful, taunting thing—that crimson bonnet. Her hand, the restless one, clenched the passive left for a moment and she continued:

"I cried. I couldn't help it. That part was right for me. I knew I would get it. But when Mr. Von Stroheim said 'Good-bye, Mitsi,' it was just too much.

"Mrs. Schley cried. Mrs. Westland cried. Tears came to Mr. Von Stroheim's eyes. They left me and I sat in that dark little room and cried until it seemed I could cry no more."

And Fay smoothed the gay little black-and-white checked skirt so it completely covered the gold and pale green of the period chair that had been made for Gloria Swanson's dressing room. The voluptuous sleekness of the black satin chaise longue, that had also been made for Gloria, sprawled before her eyes. Something of the spirit of Gloria seemed to pervade the tiny mauve-paneled interview room.

It might have been reflected in the almond-shaped, but not oriental, eyes of Fay, strangely like, and yet unlike, Gloria's. In the parted rosy lips. In the delicately arrogant set of her head upon her slim young shoulders.

Certainly the spirit of Gloria insinuated itself into Fay's remark:

"It is great . . . it is grief . . . it is marvelous!"

Not only the spirit of Gloria, but the spirit of every motion picture actress who has found herself at the top of the film heap was in those naively spoken words. It is great—the joy, pride and happiness; and it is grief—the sorrow, misgivings, heartaches. But it is marvelous, if you can forget the greatness and the grief.

"I waited two months without hearing a word from Mr. Von Stroheim. I knew he wouldn't forget. I made a Western. My heart wasn't in the rôle. Then came my first scene in 'The Wedding March.' I was so happy. Happy, you know, to think that I really had the part. It was the courtyard sequence. Everything was pink apple blossoms.

"Mr. Von Stroheim okayed the very first shot without a retake. I was so happy I didn't notice it. The cameraman came over to me:

"Say, do you know how lucky you are?" he asked. "Von has okayed your first scene." I didn't know, then. I was too happy to understand. And Harry Carr nodded his head in approval.

"It seemed quite natural, quite right that he should. But I didn't understand it then, like I would now."

The red hat was again a flagrant thing. A crimson crepe over a saddened oval face. Fay knew greatness and grief. But in the distance was this marvelous thing of fame, which to a girl not long graduated from the Hollywood High School is the most priceless thing on earth.

Then came a smile that made her look very, very young, and with the slightest sigh, Fay remarked:

"Do you like the new shade of red they are wearing this winter?"

Here Are the Winners

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 35]

extent, and the prestige of PHOTOPLAY's circulation. To those who did not win, PHOTOPLAY says, "Come in on our next contest, and better luck to you."

To the winners, PHOTOPLAY extends heartiest congratulations.

ADDITIONAL PRIZE WINNERS

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33]

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