

Looking at Hollywood with Ed Sullivan

Suggestion to Academy: New Acting Standard

By ED SULLIVAN

Hollywood.

IT IS interesting to glance back at the five characters, male, who reached the finals of the Academy award balloting this season, because I think that they are fairly indicative of your current trend in entertainment. A priest, two gangsters, a doctor, and a pseudo-scientist reached the Academy finals. The priest was Spencer Tracy, who brought Father Flanagan to the screen in "Boys Town." The gangsters were Charles Boyer in "Algiers" and James Cagney in "Angels with Dirty Faces." The doctor was Robert Donat in "The Citadel." The pseudo-scientist was Leslie Howard in "Pygmalion."

So it goes to show that 1939's streamlined, sophisticated audiences haven't changed a great deal from audiences of earlier years, because gangsters and doctors and men of the cloth always have been screen and stage favorites.

You can go beyond that deduction and state with some authority that actors who play gangster rôles or priestly rôles should not be allowed to compete on even terms with other performers. They have an advantage, the one melodramatic, the other spiritual, that puts other actors at a decided disadvantage.

and grab himself a gun and shoot down his confrères and score a hit. There is nothing so very difficult about it. Some of the poorest actors from the Broadway and Chicago stages have become big stars out here because they were fortunate enough to be cast as gangsters or menaces, the actorproof rôles of Hollywood.

Mind you, I'm not running down the histrionic ability of Jimmy Cagney or belittling what he did in "Angels with Dirty Faces." He did what he had to do exceptionally well. Yet I do say that any good actor, given the same rôle, would have scored a tremendous hit in it, because melodramatic blood-and-thunder always is effective. It seems to this reporter that the Academy of Motion Picture



At left: Charles Boyer (right) bids adieu to Hedy Lamarr in his vote-getting gangster role in "Algiers."

Leslie Howard and Wendy Hiller in "Pygmalion," the rôle that won an Academy listing.



Arts and Sciences, if it wished, should have a special statuette for the best gangster rôle of the season, and perhaps a special statuette for the best clerical characterization of the year. Clearly they should not be allowed in competition with pure dramatic efforts. How, for instance, would you obtain a common denominator in trying to rate Paul Muni's Zola with a gangster characterization? Muni's performance, from the standpoint of technique, would be infinitely superior in every detail, but the blood-and-thunder aspects of the gangster rôle

might persuade many that it was superior. The fact that Lionel Barrymore's magnificent performance in "You Can't Take It with You" didn't even get Academy recognition indicates the point that is at issue. He had no chance at all against gangsters, a priest, a doctor, and a speech connoisseur. Yet Barrymore's projection of the tolerant grandfather required greater expertise, because the rôle itself lacked spectacular qualities.

Along the same lines, the performance of Robert Morley in "Marie Antoinette" was an

exquisite gem of technical strength. He gave it undertones and overtones that brought a baffled king to full life on the screen. It is manifestly illogical to make him enter into competition with a gangster character who covers up the flaws of his performance by shooting down a score of cops, but under the present system this is the type of thing that happens out here yearly.



Another gangster winner—James Cagney in "Angels with Dirty Faces."

What I am trying to drive home is that the Academy must compile a new standard if it is to fulfill the high purpose which animated its organization. Let there be a class for comedians, and an award for them; let there be a class for dramatic actors, and an award for them; let there be a class for gangsters, and an award for them; but in the name of all that's holy let's get away from this competitive hash, which produces a winner in defiance of all the laws of performance.

Under the present system we have a situation analogous to that which would obtain if you were asked to decide whether Man o' War, Bill Tilden, or Babe Ruth were the greater performer—or if you were called upon to determine whether Gabby

Hartnett was superior to Hank Greenberg. Just as there would be no common meeting ground on either of these two queries, so there is no common meeting ground out here where performers of all classifications are compared.

What the Academy needs is a revised edition of dramatic weights and measures. At least that is one man's opinion.

Two Stars in Color

Color photographs of these movie stars appear on page one of today's Picture Section.

● BETTE DAVIS, really Ruth Elizabeth Davis, was born on April 5, 1908, in Lowell, Mass. She shortened her name to Bette when she was 12 years old to avoid confusion in the Davis household. Her mother's name is Ruth. Educated at Newton High school and Cushing academy she enrolled in John Murray Anderson's dramatic school in New York. George Cukor engaged her in his stock company in Rochester, N. Y. While playing in stock at the Cape Cod Playhouse she was given a leading rôle in a production on Broadway. She was signed by Warner Brothers and scored in her first picture, "The Man Who Played God," opposite George Arliss. Miss Davis is 5 feet 3 1/2 inches tall and weighs 106 pounds. She recently finished work in "Dark Victory," with George Brent, and in "Juarez," opposite Paul Muni and Brian Aherne.

● CLAUDETTE COLBERT was born Claudette Chacholn in Paris, France, Sept. 13, 1905. Shortly after she entered show business she took her grandmother's name. When she was 6 years old her family moved to New York, where she studied fashion designing at the Art Students' league. She was fired from her first job, however, and taught French as a side line. One of her pupils introduced her to Ann Morrison, playwright, who gave her a three-line part in "The Wild Westcotts." It wasn't long before she met Brock Pemberton, the producer, who gave her the leading rôle in "The Marlonette Man." After appearing in many stage successes she went to Hollywood and movie stardom. She won the 1934 Academy award for her performance in "It Happened One Night." She is the wife of a Los Angeles physician, Dr. Joel Pressman.

Voice of the Movie Fan

Letters published in this department should be written on one side of the paper. If you wish a personal reply please inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Dear Miss Tinée: We have just seen an "unimportant" picture with some supposedly mediocre

stars, but in this movie, "Nancy Drew, Detective," was a young man who we think is the only child actor in Hollywood—Frankie Thomas.



FRANKIE THOMAS

Frankie isn't just a personality who flaunts himself all over the screen, kissing every girl in sight, but he is a boy who can act so well that he takes an unimportant rôle and makes it the outstanding part of the movie.

This is the first time we have seen him since "Wednesday's Child," and we would like to see Hollywood give him a better break. By that we mean more and better pictures, since we believe that we can appreciate real acting ability.

To start our seeing more of him, could you possibly squeeze a picture of him in with this letter?

Best of luck to your column and to Frankie Thomas. Sincerely, JOHN SCANLAN and RUSSELL WAGNER.

Editor's note: I hope Frankie sees your letter! It would give him such a lift. Thanks for your good wish. Luck is what we like.

Dear Miss Tinée: I went to the Chicago theater and got the surprise of my life. Benny Rubin appeared on the stage, and I thought he was Ed Sullivan. I must admit I was a little disappointed, but then he introduced Mr. Sullivan. Well! I was in for a nice bit of entertainment. He not only is good looking but has talent also (and, like you said, "he looked awful purty in that white coat"). It's not every movie columnist that can do what he did. Could you?

So, Miss Tinée, if I can be so pleasantly surprised in Mr. Sullivan, it applies to you, too. So please print a picture of a certain Miss Mae Tinée. Thanks for his'nin'. ISABEL ELLSWORTH.

Editor's note: No, I certainly couldn't! Thanks for the request—but didn't you see me in the paper several weeks ago?



Creamed salmon in a bright green spinach ring is a simple dish but a colorful one, as good to look at as to eat.

COOK'S LURE—A MEXICAN MENU

By MARY MEADE

THE CRAZE for Mexican pottery and woven tablecloths has brought with it a renewed interest in Mexican foods. Chicken and tamale pie is a Mexican dish which will make your reputation as a cook once you serve it to guests at Sunday supper. Bake it in individual Mexican pottery casseroles and top it with a thick coating of Parmesan cheese.

cheese, and bake at 375 degrees for 45 minutes.

With such a spicy main dish serve hot muffins, plenty of crisp relishes, French fried potatoes, and fruit for dessert.

Spinach ring with creamed salmon is a simpler Sunday (or other) night food whose contrast in color is sufficient decoration for any table.

SPINACH RING

- 2 tablespoons minced onion
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 3 cups cooked, drained, and chopped spinach
- 1/2 cup bread crumbs
- 2 cups white sauce
- 2 eggs, separated
- Salt, pepper

Brown the onion in butter. Make white sauce, using 1/4 cup butter, 5 tablespoons flour, and 2 cups milk. Combine sauce, onion, spinach, crumbs, and egg yolks, which have been beaten. Season to taste and fold in stiffly beaten egg whites. Bake in buttered ring mold in a pan of hot water for 45 minutes or until set. The oven temperature should be 375 degrees. Unmold and serve on a hot platter. Fill center of ring with creamed salmon.

MEXICAN CHICKEN AND TAMALES

- 1 or 2 cans tamales
- 1 pound sliced chicken, breasts preferred
- 1 cup canned tomato sauce
- 1/2 cup chili sauce
- 1 cup whole kernel corn
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons chicken fat, bacon fat, or butter
- 1/2 cup scalded and chopped raisins

Remove husks from tamales, cut them into thick slices, and arrange in the bottom of a buttered casserole. Place sliced chicken over the tamales. Combine all other ingredients to make a sauce. Add more seasoning if needed. Pour over chicken and tamales, sprinkle thickly with grated Parmesan



KITCHEN FRESH IS THE BEST!

4 Served at the Price of 1 When You Make CHOP SUEY or CHOW MEIN at Home

Compare the cost of making Chop Suey or Chow Mein at home with a trip out and you have another good reason for following this week's recipe.

FINE CHOP SUEY

- 1 No. 2 can FUJI CHOP SUEY VEGETABLES (well drained)
- 1 lb. sliced pork or beef
- 1 cup celery, shredded (onions if desired)
- 3 tbsp. FUJI SAUCE
- 2 tbsp. COOK'S MAGIC
- 1 tsp. sugar

In a greased pan over a medium flame, cook meat, celery (and onions) until nearly done. Season with the sauce, sugar, salt and pepper. Add Chop Suey Vegetables (except sprouts), slicing Water Chestnuts and Bamboo Shoots. Add meat stock or water thickened with cornstarch, and Cook's Magic. Fold in Bean Sprouts. Serve with hot rice.

ASK YOUR GROCER



NEVER A DULL MEAL WITH FUJI CHOP SUEY FOODS

So You Think All Good CHEESE MUST BE IMPORTED



EVER TRY GOLD-N-RICH?

Voted Finest Domestic Cheese and Second Best in World by California Food and Wine Society

★ There's a taste thrill in every bite of mellow, creamy Gold-N-Rich! No wonder it's the cheese sensation from coast to coast... but you'll never know how good it is until you try it! Serve it with crackers for dessert tonight!



Here's what to serve at a Mexico-themed Sunday night supper—pottery casseroles of chicken-tamale pie.