

PREMIERE SUPERBRILLIANT

United Artists' Theater Opening Most Dazzling Event in Downtown Theatrical History

BY EDWIN SCHALLERT

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Flourishing the standard of "the picture's the thing," the United Artists' Theater flung open its portals for the first time Monday night. The occasion was one of superbrilliance, with virtually all the first magnitude stars of filmdom present.

It was incidentally the most dazzling event of the type thus far celebrated in downtown Los Angeles, rivaling even the achievements of Hollywood, famous for the pageantry of its first evenings.

The United Artists' Theater is the fulfillment of the ambitions of an organization of the most strongly entrenched stars of the motion-picture business. Mary Pickford spoke of it in her dedication as the "culmination of dreams of years standing." It is to be one of twenty-two built in various cities of the country, among which might be named New York, Chicago, Washington, Detroit, San Francisco and others. It is the first of this chain.

ALMOST AN INNOVATION

The policy is definitely identified with the furthering of film entertainment. It is the plan to present no prologues, but to blend music and the films with stage pictures. In a day and age where pictures are occasionally nothing but an afterthought on a program of vaudeville this is almost an innovation.

The opening program disclosed the strict adherence to this purpose. It was preceded by a dedication ceremony, in which Mayor Cryer made the initial remarks, followed by John Barrymore, who then introduced Miss Pickford, who spoke the words of dedication.

Speeches and music for the theater were broadcast, a microphone being placed on the stage. Mr. Barrymore evoked considerable amusement when he referred to this as an "inverted cuspidor" describing it as rather terrifying to the speaker on this account. He referred to the United Artists Theater chain as an "imperial necklace," and paid a tribute to Joseph M. Schenck, president of the organization, and to Miss Pickford, describing her as "that delightful artist and much-beloved person."

PRESENTATION QUIET

In spirit the actual presentation was quiet. There was an ovation for Miss Pickford, and applause for the various members of the United Artists organization as they were introduced in a film, each identified with some city in this screen novelty, and also for Miss Pickford's feature "My Best Girl," as the primary event of the evening.

There was much glamour to the arrival of the stars. The theater affords a most satisfying opportunity to observe their entry. Not only is there a large lobby, but a highly ornate foyer, which doubtless will prove a source of satisfaction to those who desire to view at close advantage the first-night procession.

Actually the playhouse seems designed for the social show, as well as the cinema, and gives new pre-eminence therefore to attending the picture theater from that standpoint—one has amply prevailed in the grand opera-house and the spoken-drama theater, but not in so elaborate a degree heretofore in the film theater.

Thus is a new graduation from the good old nickelodeon days accomplished.

One can speak well of the interest vouchsafed by the premiere program. Miss Pickford's film, "My Best Girl," is the most enjoyable and apt that she has appeared in for several seasons. It is very cheerul, and

rather ideal in comedy attractions for the holiday season. It will serve to popularize several people who act in support of the star, notably Charles Rogers as the juvenile lead, and Lucien Littlefield in comedy. It will, additionally, attract some special attention to Sunshine Hart as the shop girl heroine's mother.

ROLE WELL ADAPTED

Miss Pickford's role is very well adapted to her requirements, being a nice compromise between the youngster roles she previously has played and grown-up-ness. There are several scenes, principally the one where she discovers the social differences between herself and the young boy with whom she is in love when she is intrigued into his home, that evidence rather striking her ability in acting. In fact, few Pickford films have furnished the equal of these particular episodes.

Littlefield is amazingly funny as the easy-come-easy-go father of the girl, whose main difficulty consists in providing smelling salts whenever his portly wife shows signs of being about to faint. Littlefield will gain considerable attention by virtue of this performance.

Young Rogers has real appeal. His talent seems very clean-cut, and his personality remarkably sympathetic. He appears destined for considerable development.

Miss Hart has much to offer of genuineness in her interpretation. Despite a certain obviousness in the character itself it is in some ways, the most real portrayal. Carmelita Geraghty does capably the heroine's ne'er-do-well sister, and there is a girl of rather attractive presence, Avonne Taylor, as the fiancée of the hero. Hobart Bosworth, Mack Swain, Evelyn Hall and John Junior are others. Bosworth having the most prominence among these.

Sam Taylor has done an unquestionably workmanlike job in the direction. The film was adapted by Hope Loring from the story by Kathleen Norris, with the screen play by Allen McNeil and Tim Whelan. Charles Rosher was responsible for the photography.

Among the added features is an excellent scenic of New York which is exceptionally fine in the general impression it gives of the metropolis. This won much approval. Interesting is the fact that it relates the original purchase of the island for \$24, which should prove an inspiration even to an abullient Southern California real-estate man. I understand that this is the New York picture made by Robert Flaherty, who produced "Nanook of the North," although this fact was not cited on the screen. There is a color film called "Comrades," that is well done, but lacks vitality in its subject.

Carl Elinor directed the unusual opening program, the orchestra being supplemented with a chorus singing back stage. A very beautiful setting of the Maxfield Parrish type is used as a tableau during the overture.

At the conclusion of the program the stars were shown pictures of themselves arriving at the theater, as a novelty of the evening, and indicating the rapidity with which motion film can be developed.