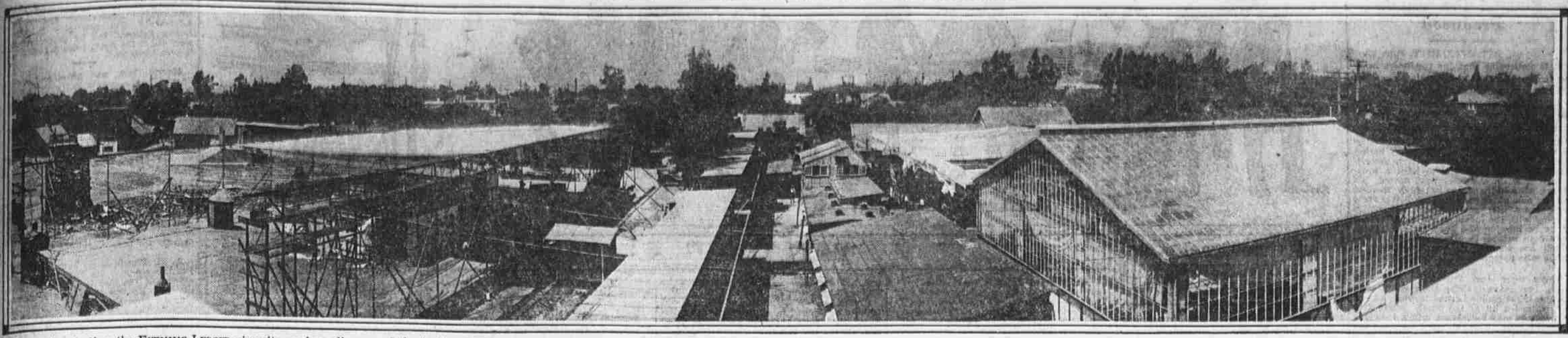


Evening Ledger Wedger

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY EVENING, JUNE 17, 1916.

WHERE THEY MAKE SCENARIOS INTO PHOTOPLAYS

PHOTOPLAY THEATRES DANCING MUSIC



From time to time the EVENING LEDGER gives its readers glimpses of the inside of Photoplayland—the studios where actors and directors make the myriad pictures that later flash across the screen. Here we have the Lasky studio, in Hollywood, Cal. Note the two varieties of stages. At the right may be seen the glass roof of an inclosed stage, while at the left are the platforms of the outdoor stages and the curtains of white cloth to diffuse the sunlight that would otherwise fall directly upon the players and the settings. Both sorts of stages are used for interior scenes. Exteriors are taken under the direct light of day at appropriate "locations," some of them miles away from the studio.

A "New Theatre" That the Movies Built

A Prominent Actor. After a "Rest in the Movies" Plans a Playhouse Endowed With His Photoplay Salary

By HOLBROOK BLINN

Holbrook Blinn, who has varied his association with Margaret Anglin in a revival of Oscar Wilde's "A Woman of No Rest" by appearances on the screen in World photoplays, announced some time ago that he was concerned in a project for the erection of a theatre which was to bear his name—Holbrook Blinn Theatre.

There is no need for a new theatre—but there is room for one. The revolutionary ideas in my proposed enterprise are not numerous. I mean to have a small, comfortable theatre, seating, perhaps, 700, with a balcony, but no gallery, and I mean to put on plays not commercially profitable to the ordinary manager.

Strangely enough, this type of play is doing very well now. When you can put on a play that is not a commercial success, it is a sign that New York is getting big enough to do things in. You see, we're getting to be a continental city, and people who want to see plays come to New York.

The Princess Theatre, which I started several years ago with a policy of one-act plays, was a step in the direction I am proceeding now. The Princess was unsuccessful for the lack of \$1 seats and the smallness of the house. Admission was denied to a great class of theatregoers who can sit only \$1. At that, with its terrific handicap of smallness, the Princess came so near to success over a period of two years that I have the greatest optimism for the new venture.

I will produce only unusual plays, with, perhaps, an occasional revival of Wilde or Plinero. Then, if I get a particularly good one-act play, I shall add that to the regular repertoire which will be made up of one-act plays, now, in my theatre, I shall continue to make what elaborate stage sets or "props" are needed.

The difference lies in the fundamental distinction between the two branches of comedy, i. e., the probability that the comedian makes up his character along burlesque comedy lines. Also we find quite often that most elaborate stage sets or "props" are needed.

In the slapstick comedy we find that melodrama is the basis of the story, and the comedian makes up his character along burlesque comedy lines. Also we find quite often that most elaborate stage sets or "props" are needed.

In order to establish a policy a theatre must be free. That is why we are building a new one. We must have independence. In searching about we found no theatre in the better theatrical district which did not have alliances, and so we decided to build.

I shall try to make my theatre distinctive for good acting to be found in it. There will be no stars, and no actress friends of backers who have to be taken care of whether they can act or not. And there will be no type actors. We will have a few actors of the New York type, and success in one role. You know how managers say "That is John Drew's part," and "That is an Ethel Barrymore part," and "That is a Charles Clarys part," and so on. I shall never do that. All of the company will be people who act. I think it was so at the Princess. We tried never to place a square peg in a round hole.

I am attempting this new project because I fancy it, and because I feel that there is room for it. Not many actors would take the trouble, you know. It will have a considerable strain. That is why I have rested all year in the movies. Another reason for my film career is that I wanted to get some capital, for I don't expect to make much money out of the new proposition.

As for the child in the play, it is usually small, round-looking, as though it had been fed on candy and doughnuts, and no more powerful indictment of marriage could be imagined, so disgusting and sinister was its appearance. One story was about a baby and a burglar, and the infant seemed to be a laughing matter, and the parents were by and by night. As they were supposed to be wealthy persons, I marvelled that they did not hire a nursemaid. After going through the pantomime of eating dinner, they retire until the third act, when, en masse, they meet him and he departs, leaving the watch which he has hidden in the baby's crib.

Report comes from Boston that Mrs. Langtry, while appearing at Keith's Theatre there, was considerably annoyed by a fire there, was considerably annoyed by a fire there, was considerably annoyed by a fire there.

The semaphore is in use on Boston streets these days for the purpose of regulating traffic. Mrs. Langtry presented the Farber Sisters on the bill. While she was presenting the playlet, "Ashes," Constantine Farber was practicing with her semaphores in the wings, in plain view of the audience, and her company of imported actors. When she glanced in the wings and beheld a high sign reading "Stop" in black letters starting at her.

She decided that it was a new method of the stage manager to communicate with the players without disturbing the audience. When the sign swung around and read "Go" Mrs. Langtry was even more bewildered. The moment the curtain fell she demanded indignantly the reason for those alternate signals, and was told, in the best happy until she learned the truth.

LOUISE HUFF The Philadelphia girl who will be seen at the Stanley next week as a Famous Players-Paramount star in "Destiny's Boy."

Evening Ledger Scenario Lessons 12 and 13

By HARRY O. HOYT, Head of Metro Scenario Staff.

Comedy and Melodrama, Siamese Twins of Screen

THE "polite" or "drawing room" comedy has for a basis some novel twist in plot or some unusual situation. It rarely requires any grotesque "make-up" or extraordinary stage properties.

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The Counter-Plot—Its Importance to Films

WE have now seen how dramas and comedies are developed. We have paid some attention to the various elements in photoplay construction. It will be necessary to return to these elements and give them our special attention in some future articles, particularly the interrelation of one element to another.

All this sounds rather difficult, but, as a matter of fact, photoplay writing is a simple, a more or less mechanical operation. If you have the ability to conceive strong dramatic situations and to handle characters.

In order to lay a story out in scenes you approach nearer to the stage form than to any other kind of literary composition. On the stage you have from one to five acts, which usually means from one to five scenes. All your action takes place in these scenes, although the characters may tell in dialogue many things which occurred off scene or which have happened years before.

In the photoplay we are able to show these scenes; hence, instead of three or four acts and as many scenes, we get four or five reels, with perhaps 50 scenes to the reel. The whole object of photoplay writing is to place your action—to tell your story in scenes. In order to tell it in scenes it is necessary to analyze your plot, to treat it mechanically, for it must be subdivided into scenes, and hence requires mechanical treatment.

To be able to perform these mechanical operations without destroying the beauty or the strength of your drama is the difficulty which besets you in attempting scenario writing.

As photoplays have improved and the art has grown, it has been found by directors and writers that certain words and phrases which they employ easily express and convey certain thoughts; hence, they are used, and these are simple, as we have seen in preceding lessons.

We have dissected the photoplay, both comedies and dramas, to discover just what elements were necessary to make a finished photoplay. If we were to write a play or a novel, we would find that the same elements entered into it. We would have plot and counterplot. We would have character, atmosphere, suspense, continuity; everything that we have in the photoplay.

Indeed, if we were to study any form of literature, we would be obliged to dissect it and to discover how it was constructed. The difficulty in photoplay writing.

As a rule, however, if you establish a comedy plot you can use melodrama without aim. Indeed, to secure the proper thrill, impossible melodramatic situations are conceived until it is almost correct to say that nothing is impossible, melodramatically speaking, in comedy.

Situations that could never be used in straight melodrama are in demand, because the very reason they are not useful in melodrama, being too impossible to be convincing as a drama, is the very reason why they are wanted in slapstick comedy.

Suspense should be worked up gradually in all kinds of comedies. Unlike drama, you cannot allow your story to sag in the middle. If you are writing a drama, you can bridge over a drop in interest by comedy or by characterization or other elements, but in comedy you have a progression of comedy interest starting from the beginning of the picture and culminating at the finish. It is quite permissible to have

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What Happens from Scenario to Screen

The President of the Mutual Describes the Processes and Tells the Cost of Making Film Productions

By JOHN R. FREULER

Being portions of an address delivered before the General Federation of Women's Clubs, in New York by J. B. Wheeler, president of the Mutual Film Corporation. It will give scenario writers among Evening Ledger readers some notion of the processes that lie between the script and the screen.

The picture is reassembled and it is projected and screened again before another conference with the titles in their proper places. If it passes this examination the negative is then cut to conform with the form and the approved positive print.

According to the scope of operations of the concern through which the picture is released or through which it is sold and delivered to the theatres, a large number of prints are made. In the instance of a certain great comedian a total of several hundred prints are made, while on the usual five-reel production it would be fair to say that from 30 to 50 prints would be made for release in the United States.

Each of these prints will be 5000 feet long and will require many hundreds of dollars' worth of film stock. The making of these prints involves expensive chemical and mechanical processes. Very large quantities of chemicals, costing as high as \$50 per pound, are used. If our five-reel production is run into a total of approximately 50 prints, we may say that probably not less than \$30,000 and maybe \$200,000 in capital is tied up in that production.

Now the distributing organization begins its work. These prints must be shipped to the motion picture exchange from which the theatres get service. In the case of the most extensive releasing concern in the United States this means supplying prints to 48 branch offices or exchanges. There are others nearly as large. From these exchanges the positive prints are distributed to the theatres which rent or booked this production. I have not burdened you with

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Making Movies on the Panama Canal with the Aid of Uncle Sam

representing the Pacific end of the Canal, which serves as an atmospheric background for the film; a large crew of men, backstage, working out sound and voice effects, and, last but not least, a Hawaiian quartet to sing old Panamanian, Hawaiian and negro melodies.

When Rex Beach wrote "The Ne'er-Do-Well," he contributed to English literature the first story written around the Panama Canal. Recently "The Ne'er-Do-Well" was made into a 10-part picture by the Selvig Polyscope Company, of Chicago, producers of "The Spoilers," and in this form will be seen for the first time in Philadelphia at the Forrest Theatre tomorrow night. There will be a symphony orchestra of 20 pieces, for one thing; a massive stage setting

All this entertainment will be in keeping with the spirit of "The Ne'er-Do-Well," which is a story of the construction of the Panama Canal, and all the scenes of which were actually filmed on the isthmus and in Central America. A company of several hundred players was transported, at a considerable expense, to both these locations. Special permission of the United States Government had to be obtained before anything could be done at Panama. When it was secured, General Goethals, the governor of the Canal Zone, did everything in his power to help the good cause along. As a result,

many striking phases of the construction of the "big ditch" are shown throughout the action of "The Ne'er-Do-Well." The various characters in the play moving about in all the scenes as though they were an actual part of the work, and not merely puppets who had no business there at all. This is the entire atmosphere of the picture rendered distinctly natural—in violent contrast, for example, to the average photoplay, set in artificial surroundings and taken in some studio far removed from the locale supposed to be represented. In fact, the brilliant tropical sun of the isthmus insured perfect light for the camera and all this was taken due advantage of.

In "The Ne'er-Do-Well" Kathlyn Williams and Wheeler Oakman are supported by many Panamanians and natives of Central America.

Movie Art of the Future

The art form toward which moving pictures seem to be struggling is a form of suggestive pantomime. Just what type of pantomime this will be we cannot yet say, but it seems fairly certain that it will be on the order of a frank, naturalistic spectacle, such as "Cabrera." It will not lie in "screen versions" of famous novels or plays, however much this particular kind of feature film may be exploited at the present time.

For these "screen versions" are neither more or less than a book or plays, they are essentially different. Moving-picture directors, in their more honest moments, will tell you this. They know only too well that "movie" plays are not the same in structure or in form as the regular "legitimate" plays from which they are now so often taken. "A fair average," a director said recently, "is this: one-third is taken direct from the original play, one-third more is adapted with considerable alterations, one-third is original—created."

The emotional appeal of a book or play adapted for the movies is much weaker than the emotional appeal of an original "movie" play. Compare an ordinary short film, written especially for the screen, with the photoplay version of some famous novel which you have not read. In case you have read it a fair judgment will be difficult, because associations and memories give the film a certain extrinsic value. There will be no question—the frank "movie" play will be remembered long after the tedious episodic feature film is forgotten.—The New Republic.

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FLORENCE NASH WAS THE LADY WITH THE LISP

Florence Nash promises that she will work without a lisp in the future. To help her keep her word, Willard Mack, the author of "Pansy's Particular Punch," which Miss Nash will present at E. F. Keith's Theatre next week, has carefully eliminated all words which Miss Nash might find difficult to enunciate. He has especially tabooed the word "disgusted," whose comedy pronunciation by Miss Nash has caused all preceding writers of her roles to put it into her dialogue.

It will be remembered that Florence Nash's first real hit came when she appeared in "The Boys of Company B" as a stammering schoolgirl, who also lisped. The stammer and the lisp pleased her audience so much that managers insisted upon her continuing in this sort of role. Frank Daniels had a part written in "Miss Hook of Holland" for Florence Nash and her lisp, and again she scored. Then the management of "The Algerian" insisted that she play a lipping soubrette. She objected, but the director had his way. However, in her next role, that of a manservant girl, in "When Sweet Sixteen" she cut out all tricky speech, and from then on she discarded her peculiarities of enunciation and spoke straight English, getting her comedy from slang. Instead of stumbling speech, talking to Willard Mack about vaudeville audiences, during a rehearsal of the new sketch, Miss Nash remarked:

"Vaudeville is a great school for actors. In the two-day you cannot go out and say, 'I will dawdle a bit in this scene and make it up later.' You simply cannot let down for a single minute. You've got to act up to the mark all the time you are on the stage." To all of which the dramatist heartily agreed.

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FLORENCE NASH To be seen at Keith's next week in a playlet, "Pansy's Particular Punch."

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