

From
Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer
1540 Broadway, N.Y.C.

RICARDO MONTALBAN

Ricardo Montalban, hero of many Technicolor musicals, is carving an equally enviable position as straight dramatic star following a series of standout roles in recent films.

Born November 25 in Mexico City, son of Jenaro and Ricarda Montalban, who live in Torreon, Mexico. He was educated in the Torreon public school.

When a boy, he had dreams of becoming an engineer. The first indication that any member of the Montalban family, past or present, might enter the entertainment world was when the very young Ricardo would sing to his sister and brothers, Carmen, Carlos and Pedro.

It was then he conceived the idea of going on the stage, but when he was fourteen tragedy struck. He lost his voice completely for two years, during which he worked in his father's drygoods store in Torreon.

Recovering his voice, he went to Mexico City intending to study, but the schools closed shortly after his arrival.

On the suggestion of his brother Carlos, then in business in Los Angeles, Ricardo went to California, and enrolled in Fairfax High School. He studied drama under Arexi Jamgochian and appeared in several school plays. While playing the lead in "Tovarich," he was spotted by a talent scout, who offered him a screen test at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Fate intervened, in the form of brother Carlos, who advised Ricardo to go to New York instead and storm the Broadway stage. The Great White Way greeted him with an all-time high of indifference.

After several weeks of tramping from theater to theater, from producer to producer, he landed a job, as "The Latin from Manhattan," singing in 16-mm. movies.

He finally got his break, when he memorized, in four hours and without rehearsal, the lines for a role in Tallulah Bankhead's play "Her Cardboard Lover."

He followed this role with a period of summer stock in Maine, which laid the groundwork for his solid knowledge of the theater. Upon returning to New York, he won a role with Elsa Maxwell in "Our Bitters." As the only comedy part in an otherwise serious play, Montalban was a standout, and producers began to take notice of the dark-haired young man with the twinkling eyes.

Again M-G-M offered him a screen test, and he did a scene from "Tortilla Flat." Before a decision was reached, fate stepped in again. A telegram from Mexico sent him hurrying to the bedside of his sick mother. This was in 1941.

While awaiting his mother's recovery, Montalban accepted a small part in a Mexican film, but the director, Norman Foster, switched his role to a more important one when he saw him on the screen.

Altogether Montalban made nine pictures in Mexico, and for his last, "Los Nosotros," he was prominently mentioned for the Mexican Academy Award.

In the meanwhile, Montalban was the ideal choice for the role of Mario in "Fiesta," and Ricardo's long trek, from Fairfax High School to M-G-M was completed.

The immediate and overwhelming public acclaim which greeted the Technicolor film, led to his being teamed again with Esther Williams and Cyd Charisse in "On An Island With You." This was followed by "The Kissing Bandit" and "Neptune's Daughter."

In "Border Incident," hard-hitting action story set along the international line, Montalban demonstrated the dramatic talents which rated him one of Mexico's leading young stars. He followed this with one of the key roles in "Battleground," epic story of the defense of Bastogne, 1944.

After "Mystery Street," Montalban's fourth straight dramatic role was in "Right Cross" as a hard-hitting young prizefighter, followed by "Two Weeks With Love," with Jane Powell, and "Across the Wide Missouri," with Clark Gable.

Montalban's real-life love story rivals his romancing on screen for romantic highlights. In a Hollywood church, he spotted a girl whose picture, a small clipping from a magazine, he had carried in his wallet for years. He lost her in the crowd. Some days later, he was invited by Norman Foster to dinner. He hostess was Sally, one of the Young sisters, and seated next to him was the girl in his wallet, Georgiana Young.

Two weeks later, October 26, 1944, they were married and now have three children, Laura, Mark and Anita.

STATISTICS

Born Ricardo Montalban, November 25, in Mexico City. Parents, Jenaro and Ricarda Montalban, who live in Torreon, Mexico. Educated, Torreon public schools and Fairfax High School, Los Angeles, Calif. Height, five feet, eleven inches. Weight, 170 pounds. Hair, dark brown. Eyes, brown. Has two brothers, Carlos of New York and Pedro of Cuernavaca, Mexico, and one sister, Carmen, of Torreon, Mexico. Married to former Georgiana Young. They have three children, Laura, born August 12, 1945; Mark, March 13, 1947; and Anita, March 21, 1949.

STAGE: "Her Cardboard Lover," "Nancy's Private Affair," "Our Bidders," 1941.

SCREEN: October, 1941, to July, 1945, Mexican films; "Fiesta," 1945; "On An Island With You," 1947; "The Kissing Bandit", "Neptune's Daughter," 1948; "Border Incident," "Battleground," "Mystery Street," 1949; "Right Cross," "Two Weeks With Love," "Across the Wide Missouri," 1950.

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