

JANE POWELL

In the space of a few short years, diminutive Jane Powell has won a top spot among Hollywood's singing stars. Young, talented and ambitious, Jane began her career in teen-age roles and has since graduated to the stature of a mature leading lady.

The girl who was hailed as a star following her meteoric rise to fame in "Holiday in Mexico," was born in Portland, Oregon, April 11, daughter of Paul and Eileen Burce. At the age of seven she was singing on a children's radio program. Not until she was eleven, however, did she take singing lessons. Her teacher, recognizing the promising quality of her pupil's voice, urged Jane to practise at least three hours every day.

It was that teacher who introduced Jane to the manager of radio station KOIN in Portland, arranging an audition there for her. Jane was given her own program as a result of that audition, and within a year became one of Portland's most popular radio entertainers.

The following summer she went to Los Angeles with her parents for a three-week's vacation. Jane's only interest at that time was to see the sights of Hollywood and get as many film star autographs as possible. But a great deal more than that happened to her.

Two nights after their arrival in Los Angeles, Mr. and Mrs. Burce took Jane to the Hollywood Showcase broadcast. As mistress of ceremonies, Janet Gaynor auditioned talented personalities and asked the public to choose its favorite.

The following week Jane was one of the six contestants on the broadcast.

She sang one song and received an ovation. The studio audience applauded and called for more. Jane then sang an aria from "Carmen" and by the time the program was finished, talent agents were trying to get in touch with her parents.

The very next day, Jane was signed to appear on the Chase and Sanborn Program. A week later, she was given a screen test by M-G-M Studios. As a result, she was signed to a long-term contract and soon, instead of just seeing Hollywood celebrities, she became one almost overnight.

While the studio was seeking for a vehicle in which to feature their new "find," she was loaned for the leading role in "Song of the Open Road," with W. C. Fields, Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy. Then came her first home studio assignment, "Holiday in Mexico," which brought instant success.

Films have always been one of Jane's favorite amusements. She manages to see at least one a week. She never misses a picture that stars Greer Garson or Walter Pidgeon, and her biggest Hollywood thrills include the introductions to them both on the set during the filming of "Mrs. Parkington."

One of Jane's proudest possessions is her collection of more than five thousand records. There isn't a Lily Pons or Lauritz Melchior recording that Jane doesn't have in her albums. They are her favorites.

At the close of a strenuous week of singing and acting, Jane spends her week-ends playing tennis or handball, her favorite outdoor sports.

She has blue eyes, brown hair and a slim, graceful figure. Her favorite subjects are mathematics, English and French. She answers to the nicknames, "Hep" and "Bert."

Her choice in reading leans to romance and biographies. She has a flair for writing. Her dominant trait is an honest simplicity.

On November 5, 1949, Jane was married to Geary Steffen, former ice-skating star and now in the insurance business. The couple live in an apartment in Beverly Hills.

STATISTICS

Born Suzanne Burce, April 1, in Portland, Oregon, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul E. Burce. Educated, at Beaumont Grade School in Portland, and at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios school. Married, November 5, 1949, to Geary Steffen. Height, five feet. Weight, 95 pounds. Hair, dark brown. Eyes, blue. Took the name Jane Powell for screen.

SCREEN: "Song of the Open Road," 1944; "Holiday in Mexico," 1945; "Three Daring Daughters," "Luxury Liner," 1947; "A Date With Judy," 1948; "Nancy Goes to Rio," 1949; "Two Weeks With Love," "Royal Wedding," ¹⁹⁵⁰ "Rich, Young and Pretty," 1950.

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