

Sarita's Silent on Swain: Sarita Silent on Swain

Hopper, Hedda

Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File); May 20, 1956;

ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times (1881-1989)

pg. E1

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BY HEDDA HOPPER

A trip to Spain is not the usual remedy for a common cold, but that is what Sarita Montiel tells me she did after she became ill during the shooting of "Serenade" here. She continued working because of her conviction that the show must go on. When she landed in Spain she found she had pneumonia and recuperated for a spell in an oxygen tent. The ministrations of her family effected a complete cure.

The day I interviewed Sarita she was back in Hollywood on a three-week visit, a hummingbird flight in which she hovered around Warner Bros. studio sufficiently to help sell the Mario Lanza epic; but she was packing for her return.

"Next week I am back.

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NOT TALKING about her current romance, Sarita Montiel says she'll break news after her next picture. She gives this hint: he's an American and isn't an actor.

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to Spain," she thrilled, "for a beeg production. I play a beeg production. I play a very famous woman of the last — the last — " she groped for words, turning to her interpreter who supplied, "the last century."

"What is the title?" I asked. This threw her, she gazed at me in empty-eyed consternation.

"El titulo," cued the interpreter.

"Oh, el titulo!" Sarita beamed, "It is 'The Last Song,' and I am singer. It is interesting. The film will be made in Spain, Italy and at Moulin Rouge in Paris."

Sarita Montiel is the Spanish beauty who made her American debut with Gary Cooper and Burt Lancaster in "Vera Cruz." She learned her part phonetically, since she understood no English. Now she speaks well enough to give an interview with the aid of Lydia Jordan, formerly of the New York City Opera.

Friends 12 Years

She and Sarita met 12 years ago in Spain and became friends, and Sarita stays with the Jordans when she is in Hollywood.

This beauty is no newcomer to pictures. She has made 36 films all told, 10 of them in Mexico. "You did a wonderful job in 'Serenade,'" I told her. "I'm surprised to hear you speak English so well.

"When I began 'Serenade'

I could say a few words," she said. "I was much afraid. I know the part is very good and I want to do it. So I study hard, speaking English with someone all day and also listen to television. The language was difficult because it is not enough to know what you are saying: to do good work as actress you must understand the others . . . what they are saying and thinking . . ."

She dances and sings, but to quote her: "I do this only when they need it for the acting part. I do Spanish dances." She tells me she has little use for night clubs: "I prefer to be in my own house with comfort, music and books."

"Music and books!" I exclaimed, looking at her flashing dark eyes and perfect complexion. "How about men? What about love?"

"I love this country because I find my destiny here.

I can't tell you more now, but you will be first to know about it. He is American, a wonderful man. You will like him very much—he is not actor. As for me, I love him like Mmmmmmm!" She threw out her arms in an extravagant gesture.

Different Techniques

She tells me she had a very happy experience working with Mario Lanza: "I worked five months with him; he was good and kind and he is for me a wonderful person." Eleanor Powell is one of Sarita's close friends. Sarita is studying English at City College, and also studies with a teacher of Spanish songs.

Sarita finds making films in Latin countries different from here: "In America they are more simple when they act—it is more inside. There it is both inside and outside."

Released by Chicago Tribune-N.Y. News