

THE MEXICAN FILM BULLETIN

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Mother of Mercy, is this the Last Issue of MFB?

After 25 years of regular publication, this will be the last scheduled issue of MFB for a time. I appreciate the loyalty of faithful readers, and there will probably be at least one and possibly two "special" issues during 2020 (one during the summer and one at the end of the year). At some point in the future, regular publication may resume.

I hope to spend such "free" time as I have on a number of projects: two books (one that has some Mexican cinema content, one that does not), websites (existing and new), a return to YouTube video production, and so forth. We shall see what develops.

When I began MFB in 1994, the Internet was in its infancy, and information on Mexican cinema was hard to find in any format or language (but especially in English). Now there are many many many websites to choose from, as well as a gratifying number of academic (and even a few popular) books on the topic. MFB has always strived to present as much factual information as possible, within the parameters of (a) what I know or can find out, and (b) what interested me and what I felt would interest others.

Thank you again for your support over the years. If you are on the mailing list, you'll be alerted when MFB specials are available online. I'll also post news on the MFB website and my Twitter feed terpconnect.umd.edu/~dwilt/mexnews.html and @dwilt55



Obituaries

"Perro" Aguayo



Luchador and occasional actor Pedro Aguayo Damián, known as "El Perro Aguayo," died on 3 July 2019 in Guadalajara. Aguayo had a long ring career, retiring in 2001. His son, Perro

Aguayo Jr., died in a wrestling accident in 2015.

Perro Aguayo can be seen in *Superzan el invencible* (1971), *Ángel del silencio* (1978), *Soba* (aka *Justina en Estocolmo*, 2004), and the action comedy *Salvando al soldado Pérez* (2011).



Patxi Andión

Spanish actor Patxi Andión died in a traffic accident in Spain on 18 December 2019. Patxi Joseba



Andión González was born in Madrid in 1947, but his parents were Basque and he spent part of his youth in that region of Spain. Andión was perhaps best known as a

singer-songwriter, but he also acted in a number of films from the 1970s into the 1990s. These included the Spanish-Mexican coproduction *Acto de posesión* (1977) with Amparo Muñoz and Mexican actors Isela Vega, Gloria Marín, and Pancho Córdova.



Claudine Auger

French actress Claudine Auger died on 18 December 2019; she was 78 years old. Claudine Oger was born in Paris in 1941, and became an actress after competing in the 1958 Miss

World pageant. Her notable international films include Jean Cocteau's *The Testament of Orpheus* and the 1965 James Bond picture *Thunderball*. Auger



appeared in the René Cardona Jr. *Triángulo diabólico de las Bermudas* in 1977, a Mexican-Italian co-production, alongside John Huston, Marina Vlady, Gloria Guida, and Mexican actors including Hugo Stiglitz, Andrés García, and Carlos East.



Robert Forster

Robert Forster died of cancer on 11 October 2019; he was 78 years old. Forster, born in New York in



1941, was a stage actor who added films and television series to his repertoire in the 1960s and beyond. He continued to work until shortly before his death, earning nearly 200 credits. He also directed one feature film, *Hollywood Harry* (1986), in which he also starred. Forster was nominated for an Academy Award as Best Supporting Actor for *Jackie Brown* (1997).

In 1988 Forster appeared in the Mexican-Spanish coproduction *Escuadrón Counterforce* (titled just *Counterforce* in the USA) as a Middle Eastern dictator patterned after Moammar Gaddafi. The heroes out to get him included Jorge Rivero, George Kennedy, and Isaac Hayes.



Bárbara Guillén

Actress Bárbara Guillén died on 8 December 2019 in Chiapas after a long illness. Guillén--whose full name was Bárbara Guillén Rincón-Gallardo--had a romantic relationship with actor Alejandro Camacho when they were both theatre students in the 1970s; their daughter Francesca Guillén is also an actress.



Bárbara Guillén appeared in a number of films and television series, including *La primera noche* and *La segunda noche*, as well as the horror movie *J-ok'el*.



Marco Julio Linares

Film director and teacher Marco Julio Linares



died on 5 December 2019. Born in 1943, Linares was named director of the Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica film school in 2017, and was also an instructor and the author of a cinema textbook. Linares produced and directed

numerous cinema and television documentaries (including one nominated for an Ariel in 1980), and won the Best First Work Ariel for his only fictional

feature film, 1994's *Juego limpio* (he was also nominated as Best Director).

Linares was married to Ana Cruz, also a documentary director.



2019 Mexican Box-Office

The top film of 2019 in Mexico was *Toy Story 4*, which sold 25.2 million tickets, followed by *Avengers: Endgame* (24.8 million) and *The Lion King* (18 million). The top ten Mexican films were all comedies:

1. *No manches Frida 2* (6.6 million)
2. *Mirreyes vs. Godínez* (4.5 million)
3. *Tod@s Caen* (2.6 million)
4. *Dulce familia*
5. *Perfectos desconocidos*
6. *La boda de mi mejor amigo*
7. *Solteras*
10. (tie) *#LadyRancho* and *En las buenas y las malas* and *Como novio de pueblo*



Clifford Carr: Mexican Cinema's *Gringo Número 1*

Someone (possibly Porfirio Díaz, but who knows) once said "Poor Mexico, so far from God and so close to the United States!" Be that as it may, since the 1800s Mexican popular culture--including cinema--has frequently included images of U.S. citizens, not always positively. It is very likely that *estadounidense* characters in Mexican films outnumber any other non-Latin foreigners.



The first "official *gringo*" in Mexican cinema was Clifford Carr, who appeared in at least 37 films shot in Mexico between 1935 and his untimely death in 1947. He virtually always played a foreigner, with *gringo* roles predominating (he was also cast as British and German characters more than once). And, unlike those who followed in his footsteps--notably Arthur Hansel and Roger Cudney--Carr was almost never a negative figure on screen. [*Gringas*, on the other hand, were usually depicted in a relatively positive light.] Some of this may be attributed to the time period: the increasing politicisation of Mexican cinema in the 1970s and beyond meant many more films were made about the mistreatment of Mexican immigrants in the USA, for example, which led to negative *gringo* portrayals.

Clifford Carr had a long and interesting show business career before he arrived in Mexico in 1935. Although more research is needed, and the specific reason he left the USA and spent the rest of his life and career in Mexico has yet to be determined, an overview of Mexican cinema's first "official *gringo*" is long overdue.

Clifford Carr was probably born in Waterbury, Connecticut on 14 February 1902. This is the information he provided on his Draft Registration card in 1943. But to give an idea of how sources vary, in the 1910 U.S. Census his age was given as 7, and his place of birth New York. In the 1930 Census, his birthplace has been revised to Connecticut, but his age is only 21! This is almost certainly an error, since when he married actress Blanche Gray in New York in 1931, Carr's age was now given as "27" (still incorrect, but closer).



Carr's mother was Mildred Hawk, whose name and age also varied wildly in government documents over the years. Born Mildred Feller either in Switzerland (1910 Census) or Pennsylvania (1930, 1940 census and 1949 death certificate), at some point she married actor Edward Hawk, divorcing him and marrying actor William L. Carr in 1907. Mildred Carr is identified as "Bertha Feller" on Cliff Carr's marriage certificate in 1931, as "Mrs. Mildred Feller Carr" on his draft registration, and as "Mildred Dolly Carr" on her obituary and death certificate. Her age is given as "25" (1910 census), "35" (1930 census), "42" (1940 census), "48" (her husband's death certificate in 1945), and "52" on her death certificate (which lists her date of birth as 4 July 1896). Obviously, if her son Clifford was born in 1902, Mildred could not have been born in 1896. It's likely her date of birth was 1885 or 1886, since census records state her first marriage occurred at the age of 16.

Who was Clifford Carr's biological father? It was most likely not William L. Carr (sometimes referred to as Leon Carr or even L.N. Carr), who didn't marry Mildred until July 1907 (although it's stated that he met Mildred the previous year). Edward Hawk is one candidate, but this cannot be proven. A newspaper article announcing Mildred's marriage to William and the formation of the "Carr Trio" takes pains to state that Clifford is "Mrs. Hawk's son." William Carr may have adopted Clifford Carr--since the boy took the last name "Carr" as his own--and during their years together in vaudeville was usually assumed (and sometimes overtly stated) to be Clifford's father, but their

relationship is unclear. William is shown on Clifford Carr's marriage record as his father, but in 1943 Clifford listed his mother as his next of kin, despite the fact that William and Mildred were still married and living together in Los Angeles.

[As an aside, William Carr's "official" age--like that of his wife Mildred--fluctuated widely over the years. He's "25" (1910 census), "39" (1930 census), "45" (1940 census), and "53" in his 1945 obituary (his date of birth is given as 6 May 1891 on his death certificate). His likely date of birth is 1884-85. As performers, William and Mildred Carr probably shaved years off their actual age for business purposes.]

CARR TRIO PAGE THEATER TONIGHT



William and Mildred Carr were both lifelong performers, although the exact nature of their work post-1929 is vague. They were living in New York at the time of the 1930 census and their occupation is given as "actor," but the 1940 census states their residence in 1935 was Charlotte, North Carolina. By the time of the 1940 census William and Mildred are residents of Los Angeles and are listed as actors in "motion pictures." William's obituary indicated he was employed by Columbia Pictures at the time of his death (March 1945), but no film acting credits can be found for him. [A different William Carr was an actor and assistant director in Hollywood. He was the husband of actress Mary Carr and the father of director Thomas Carr (and 4 other children who became actors), but died in 1937.] Mildred Carr died of cancer in February 1949 in the Motion Picture Country Home, which suggests she had been working in films, but again, no film credits for her can be located.

At the **Bijou** ALL THIS WEEK Baby Thelma---The Valpos Master Clifford---Miss Kull The Hawks---Bijou - Scope **10c**

Regardless of his actual date of birth and the identity of his father, it's clear that the future "Clifford Carr" began his acting career at a very young age. Billed as "Master Clifford," Carr was performing with "The Hawks" (Edward and Mildred) as early as May 1906 at theatres in Canton and Piqua, Ohio. Their act was a "Refined Talking, Singing, Dancing Lightning Change [of costume] Speciality."

A review of the show stated "Master Clifford was another surprise for the audience which manifested its appreciation by frequent and hearty applause."

Little additional information about Clifford Carr's early performances with "The Hawks" can be found, but this portion of his career was soon to end.

The Hawks marriage (and the Hawks act) broke up, probably in the summer of 1906. Mildred and Clifford joined actor William Carr and began appearing as a team with the "Side Tracked" company, most likely in the fall of 1906 (the beginning of the theatrical "season"). When the trio visited the "New York Clipper" newspaper offices in June 1907, they announced a plan to go into vaudeville (rather than performing with a theatrical stock company), and Mildred said she'd now be known as "Mildred Hall" rather than Mildred Hawk.

These intentions changed a few weeks later: the "New York Clipper" of 3 August 1907 reported the July 1 wedding of William L. Carr and Mildred Hawk in Rochester, New York. The couple announced that beginning in August 1907 "the trio will be known hereafter as the Carr Trio" and would be employed with the Keystone Dramatic Company, Mildred as "soubrette," William "playing juvenile," and "Master Clifford doing his speciality."

The Keystone Dramatic Company was a "stock company" that traveled the country performing well-known plays in repertoire (i.e., a different play each night of their engagement).

Masonic Opera House
A. R. WOLFE.....Manager

ONE SOLID WEEK
Commencing Monday Oct. 7th.

The Keystone Dramatic Co.

In a fine repertoire of select dramas and comedies

6-Big Vaudeville Acts-6

A Fine Leather Couch given away Saturday night.

Prices—10, 20 and 30c.
Ladies' free ticket Monday night.
Chart on Saturday.

At some point stock companies began to include vaudeville acts which were performed during intermissions. So it was possible for William, Mildred and Clifford to have acting roles in the play and/or do their trio act separately.

The Carr Trio performed with Keystone from August through October 1907 in venues such as Greenville, Pennsylvania and Chillicothe, Ohio.

However, by November they were working with the North Bros. stock company, playing Richmond, Indiana and Cairo, Illinois. At some point in late 1907 the Carr Trio decided to strike out on their own (although they were listed as part of the North Bros. company as late as February 1908, this seems to be an error), braving the vaudeville circuit as a standalone act. They would continue this lifestyle for the next 20-plus years.

From contemporary descriptions, it seems the Carr Trio's act followed the format of The Hawks--

singing, dancing, quips, quick changes of costume, and then a special spot for Master Clifford to do his monologue and song, perhaps with a final number performed by all three Carrs. A 1910 Salt Lake City newspaper article described their act of that time:

"Mr. and Mrs. Carr make their appearance on the stage with a song, having a setting in a park with the moon faintly visible and the lights of a city shining on a river nearby. They are in evening dress. Mr. Carr next appears in song by himself and is followed by Mrs. Carr in a dance before the spotlight. She wins much applause at every performance by her graceful dancing and her gorgeous costumes. Master Carr, 6 years old [sic], has a splendid monologue and sings and dances in a pleasing manner."

— THE —
MILDRED CARR TRIO WILLIAM
MASTER CLIFFORD
Refined Singers and Dancers.
Western States Vaudeville Association.

Such family acts were not unusual, and Clifford Carr's debut on the stage at the age of 4 was also not out of the ordinary: Buster Keaton joined his parents on stage at the age of 3, while Mickey Rooney was even younger when he debuted. Master Clifford's precocious performances were a major selling point of the Carr Trio, although Mildred generally received good notices for her "French toe dancing" (and later, hula dancing). William Carr was rarely singled out for comment, although "Billboard" mentioned his "acrobatic dance in wooden shoes" as a highlight of the act.

In 1908 the Carr Trio played nearly 30 dates in towns and cities from Illinois to North Dakota, also performing in Moose Jaw and Edmonton, Canada. At some point they became affiliated with the Western States Vaudeville Association and for over



year did not appear east of the Mississippi River. In the summer of 1909 they made a southern and eastern swing, working in Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Georgia, Louisiana and North Carolina, before going west again for the next year. Most years the family returned annually to William Carr's hometown of Canandaigua, New York--where he reportedly owned a "chicken farm" and a cottage on Lake

Canandaigua--for a vacation.

Newspaper accounts of the Carr Trio's tours are a mix of promotional material supplied by their press agent, with the occasional actual "review" of their

performances (although even these were almost always positive, with the aim of encouraging attendance at the shows). The "Edmonton Journal" published several articles during their visit there in the fall of 1908, which give some idea of the family act's reception:



"By far the best "turn" seen in Edmonton for a long time, appeared at the Orpheum Theatre last night in the "Carr Trio," versatile and original artistes. The theatre was well filled and a splendid entertainment was provided. Although the major portion of

the time was, taken up by animated pictures, of which there were five of a very humorous kind, the public are this week treated to a wonderful fifteen cents worth. The "Carr Trio," who opened here on Monday night, again met with a great reception, which was certainly due to form. Their act, which comprises singing, dancing, patter and quick change business, is a very smart one, and the costumes worn are both expensive and attractive. Master Clifford Carr, a juvenile of tender years, created quite a furore of applause for his cute manner in delivering his song, and he was recalled again and again. The singing and dancing of "Pa" and "Ma" Carr was indeed good. The lady appearing in a number of costumes, changed with lightning rapidity. The termination of their clever act came with the trio singing a tuneful ditty entitled "Master Baby Bunting, of the Rocking Horse Parade," which fairly brought down the house. The "Carrs" have a good stage appearance, an easy and refined style, together with their exceedingly pleasant voices, and their items were accepted as a high standard of vaudeville act, for which they won unstinted applause; and should attract crowds to the theatre for the remainder of the week, when their engagement here expires."

Clifford Carr was clearly the main draw. As early as November 1907, a Cairo, Illinois newspaper wrote "Master Clifford Carr, a little fellow of four [sic] years, was also very good and received a hearty welcome." He was billed as "America's Foremost child comedian," "America's Foremost [sometimes America's Greatest] Boy Monologist," and "The Youngest Comedian on the Stage." As late as 1914 he was billed as "Master Clifford Carr, greatest baby monologist," which might have rankled the then 12-

year-old boy. Carr's youth was a major selling point-- a 1914 reviewer wrote "There is a youngster in this act who has many old-timers 'skinned' when it comes to entertaining. He appears to be thoroughly at home on the stage and he is delighting audiences nightly in a way that is at once appealing and amusing."

OPERA HOUSE TODAY HERBERT RAWLINSON, ANNA LITTLE and WM. WORTHINGTON EPISODE 11 THE BLACK BOX TWO PARTS GLEO MADISON THE DANCER in a powerful 3-part drama THE WOMAN HATER'S THE FOX HUNT BABY —Powers Drama Joker Comedy THE CARR FAMILY 3 PEOPLE Singing, Talking and Dancing Vaudeville Act. Have a laugh with that BOY COMEDIAN Adults 10c — Children 5c		OPERA HOUSE TUESDAY MRS. LESLIE CARTER in a film version of her greatest success The Heart of Maryland with WILLIAM SHEA Metro Special Feature—6 Parts See the Famous Betty Scene Adults 10c — Children 5c
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The Carr Trio, despite their good reviews, never broke into the big time. Between 1908 and 1922, the vast majority of their appearances were in cities and towns in the western United States, with rare forays to the East and South. They only occasionally worked in New York, Chicago, Washington DC, Los Angeles, San Francisco, etc. In 1919, for instance, when they'd been together for a dozen years, the Carr Trio played large cities like Phoenix, San Antonio, Pittsburgh, Minneapolis and Buffalo, but also worked in such venues as Salina (Kansas), Sheboygan (Wisconsin), Bartlesville (Oklahoma), and Moberly (Missouri).

FAMILY THEATER Management Wm. M. English Billing's Pioneer Place of Police Vaudeville THE BIGGEST AND BEST SHOW EVER SEEN HERE EVERY NIGHT AT 7:30 MATINEES SUNDAY, WEDNESDAY AND SATURDAY NOTE THE MID-WEEK CHANGE OF PROGRAM FRED LAWRENCE & CO. A BEAUTIFUL DRAMATIC CONCEPTION, "CHARITY" Lew Diamond Spaulding Bros. MONOLOGIST COMEDY ACROBATS THE CARR TRIO Character Change Artists, Singers and Dancers..... 10c Popular Prices 25c No Advance in Prices for This Stupendous Show... 10c Popular Prices 15c Matinees ENTIRE CHANGE OF PROGRAM THURSDAYS AND SUNDAYS	
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This doesn't mean the Carr Trio wasn't successful--even discounting the self-serving comments from the Carrs and their press agent which show up in the press of the day, the act's longevity and number of bookings year after year are still impressive.

Since Clifford Carr was now a teenager, he was no longer considered a precocious novelty (although as late as 1918 he was occasionally billed as "The Boy Monologist"), and was more integrated into the act rather than a "speciality," although his performance

on a "Chinese violin" (apparently a cigar box-pool cue-string contraption) is frequently mentioned. The familial connections between William, Mildred, and Clifford were no longer commented upon--the act is often described as "a couple of men and a woman" and in at least one case a newspaper article refers to them as "brothers and sister!" "Classy singing and dancing" were emphasized. Sometime in 1919-1920 the Carr Trio--now billed as "Entertainers DeLuxe"--seems to have revised the format of their act, presenting a more integrated skit entitled "Stranded." This was a precursor of the format they would adopt after 1922.

The Carr Trio became "Carr Clifford and Carr" in the fall of 1923 (the first mention found is from September of that year). The reason for this name change is unknown, but it's possible this was an effort to modernise the act and, as noted above, removing it from the roster of "family acts." [There was also at least one other Carr Trio in show business at the time, which may have caused some confusion.]

NILE **Today Only**
CONTINUOUS 2:30 TO 11 P. M.

Bargain Matinee Prices to 4 p. m., Ladies 25c. Children 10c

**5 Act Road Show
VAUDEVILLE**

Rainbow Four "One Half Ton of Harmony"	Marcheta "The Igoratte Girl"
CARR, CLIFFORD AND CARR "The Cop, the Chauffeur, and the Lady in the Limousine"	
The Kellys "Artistic Poseurs"	Hinkel and Mae "A Timely Chat"

On the Screen, "Casey of the Coast Guard"
And Another Big Warner Bros. Classic

Although William, Mildred and Clifford still sang, danced, and delivered snappy patter, their act was now presented in the context of a comedy sketch entitled "The Cop, the Chauffeur and the Lady in the Limousine" (in 1927-28 the skit was referred to as "Traffic Violations" or "Traffic Violators," but was presumably the same content). Several articles and advertisements mention the "special written material [was] composed by one of New York's best vaudeville writers, Howard Leigh." Buying a script for an act was an acceptable and common practice for vaudeville performers, especially those who specialised in comedy and/or musical material (a bicycle trick-rider, not so much). The new act was described in breathless style in a 1925 article (probably mostly if not entirely supplied by the press agent):

"The stage setting of gold gauze backed with a french window effect impressing the audience of a

cozy little home in the suburbs of New York City and a little party is enjoyed by all, their three voices blend wonderfully in harmony singing. The comedy is fast and keeps each and every one in jovial spirits, then the dashing hero comes on the scene and gives the music lovers a treat with the Chinese fiddle which he handles with the grace and art of the very best musicians, closely followed by their big comedy dance finish with special scenery and light effects which takes the house by storm and leaves the audience begging for more, each member of the the trio is an entertainer of remarkable ability, the act is well staged with scenic and light effects, graceful dancing, splendid musical instrumentations, smart comedy talk all combined..."



The 1926-27 season was the last in which Carr, Clifford and Carr toured the Western USA extensively. In 1928-29 their recorded playdates are all in the East, no further south than Virginia, but mostly in the Northeast. In May 1929 "Vaudeville News" reported that the Carrs were back in New York "for a short while" but no further appearances of the trio have been discovered. The 1930 U.S. Census lists William, Mildred and Clifford Carr as living at 1973 East 35th Street in Brooklyn, New York, a single-family, semi-detached home built in 1925. All three of the Carrs as listed as actors in "vaudeville," but

CAPITOL
Hazelton's Finest

OPENING TODAY!
A BILL OF NEW VAUDEVILLE WITH A MIGHTY FILM SPECTACLE

A TITILLATING, FUNNY, SENSATIONAL REPERTORY:

FILIPINO HARMONISTS
IN A SERIES OF FASCINATING DANCING NUMBERS WHO GRADUATE WITH THEIR KEYTOL

PEGGY FAY
IN A SONG AND DANCE REPERTOIRE

CARR, CLIFFORD & CARR
IN A SONG AND DANCE REPERTOIRE

"TRAFFIC VIOLATORS"
WORLD CHAMPION DANCING TROUPE

THE THREE BROWNS
WORLD CHAMPION DANCING TROUPE

THE WHIRLWIND RAILROAD THRILLER!
A Stunning Romance of a Society Girl and an Engineer
WARNER BROS. presents

MONTE BLUE

De Koe TRIO
In a Sensational Head-to-Head Offering.

CAPITOL Duo-Overture
Unrivalled Orchestra and Concert Organ.

CAPITOL NEWS

KIDDIES!
See Our Latest "Black Diamond Express" KIDNEY PILLS at 11 o'clock, 11:30, 2:30, 5:30, 8:30.

THE BLACK DIAMOND EXPRESS
Edna Stewart, William Dumas, Clara McLaughlin, Carol Kay, William Dumas
Only by Special Train from Hazelton, British Columbia, to Hazelton, B.C., 1928-1929

DEDICATED TO
THE FAMED CRACK TRAIN OF THE LEITCH VALLEY RAILROAD
Come to the Matinee Today to see the Greatest of All Railroad Pictures.

William and Mildred's careers at this point are difficult to follow. As noted above, they were reportedly living in Charlotte, North Carolina in 1935, but eventually relocated to Southern California and entered the film industry.

Clifford Carr's professional life between the end of Carr, Clifford and Carr and his arrival in Mexico in 1935 is also not easy to track, but not for want of trying. One problem is the existence of at least two (possibly three) other Clifford Carrs in show business in this period. One of them was a New England band leader, the second an actor in burlesque, and a third

billed as "Prince of Clowns" and "Prince of Clown Comedy" (this could be the burlesque performer, but it seems likely it's a third man). Since our Clifford had been a stage performer and would later lead an orchestra, could any of these be him? It seems unlikely, since the New England Carr was still performing in the early 1940s, and the burlesque Carr--sometimes billed as Cliff "Percy" Carr--was acting at least through 1935, ruling them out because Clifford Carr, late of the Carr Trio, had relocated to Mexico by then. The "Clown Prince" Carr was working in New Jersey in 1934, which does not rule him out as being the former Carr Trio member.



Several brief notes in "Billboard" in June 1936 discussed Clifford Carr's new career in Mexico, mentioning his previous service with Carr, Clifford and Carr, and "Jackson and Clifford." [Note: not to be confused with "Jackson and Carr," a male-female act around the same time.] Once again, tracking Carr's activity is complicated by the existence of a second "Jackson and Clifford" act. Dick Jackson and Lee Clifford, occasionally billed as "London Comedians" (although they do not appear to have been British), were working in 1935-36, and possibly as late as 1939.

However, one suspects the "Jackson and Clifford" who worked in the New York-New Jersey area in 1930-31 is the team featuring Clifford Carr that's referred to in the "Billboard" article. As early as February 1930, the Jackson and Clifford team is mentioned as presenting a vaudeville act called "Merry Moments" at the Strand in New Britain, Connecticut. "Variety" listed the "two-man comedy act" among the "New Acts" performing at the 58th Street Theatre in New York, and by December Jackson and Clifford's act was called "Soup to Nuts," playing the Binghamton Theatre and "dish[ing] out plenty of laughs." Their appearance at the Hippodrome in New York identifies the duo as

"Dapper Dandies." In February 1931 the team's act was now "I Know a Girl," but this was the last verified trace of the first Jackson and Clifford team.

The "London Comedians" (later billed as "Mrs. Nertz's Sons") Jackson and Carr began to appear in 1935, although several newspaper articles and advertisements in 1934 are vague enough to suggest this might possibly be the "original" team or the new one. A January 1934 article calls them "two songbirds that sing all the old favorites as well as red hot jazz numbers," and a November 1934 ad bills them as "musical funsters," which could apply to either duo.

Perhaps coincidentally, the disappearance of Jackson and Clifford in February 1931 coincided with Clifford Carr's marriage. On 5 February 1931, Clifford Carr married Blanche I. Gray in Manhattan. Blanche's age is given as 21; she was living in New York City with her family, and is listed in the 1930 Census as an actress in the theatre.

Research so far has not turned up any additional information about the Carr-Gray marriage or Blanche Gray Carr.

Whatever Clifford Carr was doing between 1932 and 1934, it is clear that by early 1935 he was in Mexico. How and why he wound up there is still a mystery: as far as can be ascertained, neither the Carr Trio nor Carr, Clifford and Carr ever crossed the southern border of the United States, and he apparently had no personal connection to Mexico. U.S. acts did tour Mexico, including the Marcus Show and, in 1935, a Fanchon and Marco unit doing "Hello America!" The Fanchon and Marco company played Guadalajara in May 1935 and "Cliff Carr y su orquesta" was on the bill. While it would be tempting to identify this as Clifford Carr, formerly of the Carr Trio, there are several factors which mitigate against this: first, the "Hello America!" unit was based in California, and when last seen, Carr was living & working in the New York area; second, Carr had already been in Mexico since at least March 1935, when *El Rayo de Sinaloa* was shot. Neither of these is conclusive, and the presence of another Cliff Carr in show business in Mexico at this time would be a strange coincidence, if true. It is remotely possible Carr had been hired by Fanchon and Marco, that the "Hello America!" show had been touring in



Mexico for several months by the time it arrived in Guadalajara, that Carr had played a small role in *El Rayo de Sinaloa* in his off hours, and that he subsequently quit the Fanchon and Marco tour to remain in Mexico.

Regardless of the exact path he took, by 1935 Clifford Carr was living in Mexico. Although his film career is the easiest to research today, obviously Carr--and indeed, most actors in Mexican cinema then and now--could not make a living from film acting alone. A few of his non-movie jobs have come to light, but more research is needed in Mexican sources on this aspect of his life.

According to three short mentions in "Billboard" magazine in June 1936 (most likely supplied by Carr himself to the editors of the radio, vaudeville and "Bands and Orchestras" sections), "Cliff Carr and his Modern Mexican Music Makers" (a 13-piece orchestra) were performing at the posh El Patio nightclub at the time, after playing various other clubs and appearing on radio station XEW "for over a year." Carr led the band and sang "in both English and Spanish." It's not known how long this particular gig lasted.



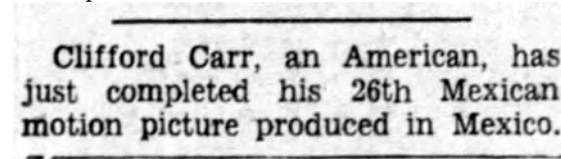
Within a few years Carr was much better known, his film roles had increased, and for some time he performed live as one of "Los Cuatro Vagabundos," a comedy musical group. Originally composed of Manuel Esperón, Jorge Treviño, Arturo Manrique, and Irving "Mister" Lee (another expatriate from the USA), this group appeared in *Canto a mi tierra* and *Juntos pero no revueltos* (both 1938, the latter coincidentally featuring Cliff Carr). By the following fall, Carr was touring with Los Cuatro Vagabundos, replacing Jorge Treviño in the group. Carr was billed as "Notable Imitator, Musician and Singer," and he, Lee, Manrique and Esperón were the "Four True Stars" of Theatre, Cinema and Radio." Carr's membership in the group apparently continued for some time. Elizabeth Borton de Treviño, an American reporter who married a Mexican and moved to Mexico in the mid-1930s and later became an award-winning author, commented in a column for the "Laredo Times" in March 1942:

"Last week's American papers were full of the story of the American Academy awards for the best pictures and best performances of the year. Mexico too, has a similar ceremony. The Society of Newspaper Motion-Picture Critics meet once a year

in the Patio Night Club, for a consideration of the merits of the year's production of movies. But this year the occasion was accorded even greater significance, for President Ávila Camacho himself presented the major trophy this year. It went to the Mexican motion picture, "Ay Qué Tiempos, Señor Don Simón," a nostalgic study of manners and morals in the time of Porfirio Díaz. The Secretary of the Interior, Lic. Miguel Alemán gave the trophy which went to Jorge Negrete, as best "galan," for his Work, in "Ay Jalisco, No Te Rajes." Manuel Esperón, who composed the wonderfully vigorous and catchy tunes for this movie, won an award for his work. Only two years ago Esperón was to be seen in a comic makeup, false nose and silly hat, accompanying Panseco, Jorge Treviño, and Cliff Carr in their comedy quartet scene. Now Panseco is making an important program in Mexico City, Cliff Carr is in business, and Jorge Treviño doing studio scripts. So changes the scene in the amusement world." [The "business" Cliff Carr was involved in is not currently known, but he didn't retire from acting in any case.]

In addition to his film, radio, music and "business" work, Cliff Carr also acted on the stage in Fernando Wagner's Teatro Panamericano, appearing in at least 4 plays between 1939 and 1943. [See separate article in this issue.]

When he moved to Mexico, Cliff Carr largely dropped out of sight as far as his former colleagues were concerned ("Variety" didn't even run an obituary when he died). However, he was mentioned in the 4 March 1942 "Mexico City" report by Douglas L. Grahame in "Variety"--"Clifford Carr, pic player, back from a visit to Hollywood. [presumably to visit his mother] He is the only American actor in Mexican pix. He has played in 26 of them." [By my count, he'd only been in 15--plus an unbilled cameo in one more--as of March 1942, so someone is wrong.] Ironically, this brief mention was converted into syndicated newspaper "filler"--one of the 2-3 line factoids used to fill in empty space in the newspapers of the day. "Cliff Carr, an American, has just completed his 26th Mexican motion picture produced in Mexico" showed up in at least 14 American and Canadian newspapers between March and September 1942.



On 16 November 1943, Clifford (no middle initial) Carr visited the American Embassy in Mexico City to complete his draft registration card. Carr's height was given at 5' 8.5", his weight 190 pounds, with blue eyes and light brown hair. His official address was that of his mother (1325 1/2 No. Bronson Ave., Hollywood 28, Los Angeles,

California), but his mailing address was Tabasco 260 in Mexico City, in the Colonia Roma Norte (made famous by Alfonso Cuarón in the film *Roma*, although the *colonia* has now been split into North/South designations). Carr listed his "employer" as Enrique Solís, head of the film workers' union of the period (U.T.E.C.M.), which may not necessarily mean Carr was a union employee, but rather a union member (since as a free-lance actor he wasn't under contract to a particular producer). It's curious that Carr's "business" alluded to by Elizabeth Borton de Treviño in 1942 is not mentioned.

Duplicate, DCS Form 1-F in reg. cover sheet 242

REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after February 17, 1897 and on or before December 31, 1921)

SERIAL NUMBER 2406	1. NAME (Print) Clifford Carr	ORDER NUMBER 10519A
2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print) 1325 1/2 No. Bronson Ave., Hollywood, 28. L.A. Calif.		
3. MAILING ADDRESS Tabasco 260 Mexico, D.F.		
4. TELEPHONE	5. AGE IN YEARS 42	6. PLACE OF BIRTH Waterbury Connecticut
7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Mrs. Mildred Feller Carr, (mother) 1326 1/2 N. Bronson, Los Angeles, Calif.		
8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS Sr. Enrique Solis, U.T.E.C.M., Paseo de la Reforma 90, Mexico, D.F.		
9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS above.		
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE. (signed) Clifford Carr		

D. S. Form 1 (Revised 1-1-42)

Clifford Carr continued to work and live in Mexico until his death of heart trouble on 20 November 1947. He was buried in the actors' section of the Panteón Jardín in Mexico City. However, his appearances in classic Mexican films like *Allá en el Rancho Grande*, *Campeón sin corona*, and *Los tres García* mean he'll be remembered after most of his vaudeville contemporaries are long forgotten.



Clifford Carr and the Teatro Panamericano

Fernando Wagner, born in Germany in 1906, was sent to Mexico in the early 1930s to work in the family business (a music publishing house) but his love for theatre took him in another direction. He taught theatre arts at UNAM and directed several plays featuring his students. Wagner also became a successful actor and *declamador* (someone who does poetic or dramatic readings). After visiting with members of the Federal Theatre Project in Chicago in late 1938, Wagner returned to Mexico and founded the Teatro Panamericano with the express purpose of staging "important" plays in English (and later, Spanish). The Teatro Panamericano [aka Pan-American Theatre] was in existence from 1939 to 1943.

Clifford Carr was a member of the company of actors, which included both Mexicans (such as Pedro Armendáriz and Isabela Corona) and foreigners (mostly Americans but also at least one English actress). Some of the performers were already professionals, while others had university and local

theatre experience. Annelies Morgan, who appeared in *Espionaje en el Golfo* with Carr, was one of the Teatro Panamericano's leading ladies, often paired with Edward Binns, who'd later have a long stage, screen, and television career in the USA.

Carr appeared in *Goodbye Again* in August 1939, in the Teatro Panamericano's first season. Morgan and Binns had the leading roles, as they did in *Boy Meets Girl*, which premiered in January 1940, the second season. Binns and Carr were cast as two Hollywood screenwriters (played by James Cagney and Pat O'Brien in the 1938 Hollywood film version) who plan to exploit pregnant waitress Susie (Morgan) for a new movie project.

After several years without any productions prominently featuring Carr (it's possible he had a smaller role in one or more plays), in the summer of 1943, the Teatro Panamericano put on its final "season." This was a series of performances to benefit the Red Cross. Clifford Carr appeared as "Patsy" in *Three Men on a Horse* in July 1943, opposite Ray Adams and Mary Temple; also in the cast were English-speaking Mexican actors Eduardo Noriega and Jorge Treviño. A 1943 article in the "Oakland Tribune" reported on the Teatro Panamericano and noted that Clifford Carr "made a good Patsy," although it misidentifies him as "another amateur" working in Fernando Wagner's company.

In this same, abbreviated 1943 season, Carr also had a small role in *Blind Alley*, and attracted the attention of playwright and critic Rodolfo Usigli, who wrote:

"The actors who have accompanied Wagner in his various seasons do good work . . . Cliff Carr, in his brief appearance, gives us a different type than his usual ones, and is always convincing."

The 1943 season was the last for the Teatro Panamericano, but many of those involved, including Fernando Wagner, had long careers ahead of them.



The Film Career of Clifford Carr

Clifford Carr appeared in at least 37 films shot in Mexico between 1935 and 1947, ranging from brief cameos to major supporting roles, in comedies, musicals, and dramas. Typecast as a foreigner, he most often played what he was in real life--a citizen of the United States of America--but was also called upon to play British, German, Sicilian and "unspecified" international characters. [In *Hijos de la mala vida*, a comedy-drama set in Mexico City, he played a priest, but since this film is currently unavailable for review, it is not possible to speculate about his character's nationality.]

Although Carr's "foreigner" characters were often humorously stereotyped, he was rarely if ever

portrayed in a completely negative light (especially when identified as a *gringo*--3 of his 4 British roles are morally ambivalent). In *El socio* he comes as close as he ever did to being a villain, but the role is



n nuanced and has a depth of characterisation which prevents him from being wholly unsympathetic. It's also of note that in this film his nationality is not defined: his character is named "Samuel Goldenberg," so one assumes he's Jewish, but it's specifically noted

that he went to school with the protagonist, who in the film is Mexican (although the novel was set in Chile and actor Hugo del Carril was Argentine), indicating Goldenberg is in any case not a recent immigrant.

Over the course of his career in Mexico, Carr worked multiple times with certain producers and directors. He appeared in 6 films produced by Raúl de Anda (3 of which were directed by Rolando



Aguilar), 4 for director José Bohr, 3 for producer Alfonso Sánchez Tello, 2.5 for Roberto Gavaldón (Gavaldón worked, uncredited, on *Naná*), 2 for Alejandro Galindo and 2 for Miguel Contreras Torres (he also made 2 films each for Ismael Rodríguez and Ramón Pereda/Ramón Peón, but since these pairs were shot more or less back-to-back, they're

essentially one project). In some cases it seems these filmmakers went out of their way to include Carr in a project. For example, although Carr doesn't have an acting role in *Una luz en mi camino*, Bohr inserts a



clearly identifiable shot of him attending a star-studded benefit concert. Miguel Contreras Torres, in his epic biopic of Simón Bolívar, includes two scenes featuring Carr as Col. Rooke, leader of a "British Legion" of soldiers supporting Bolívar--there is no

specific mention of who Rooke is or how he got to Venezuela, so viewers unfamiliar with history may have been puzzled by this footage, which comes out of nowhere. Carr has a substantial part in Galindo's *Konga roja* and a briefer one in the director's

Campeón sin corona, where he's actually called "Mr. Carr."

Carr's roles ranged from rather brief appearances to roles which have a significant impact on the main plot. Most of the latter occur after 1939, including *Mala yerba*, *Rancho Alegre*, *La liga de las canciones*, *Konga roja*, *Guadalajara pues*, *El socio*, and *Los tres García/Vuelven los García*. His best acting role is probably in *El socio*, where he demonstrates his ability to portray a multi-faceted character with little or no stereotypical aspects.

Carr, although only in his early 30s when he began acting in Mexican cinema, often played characters who seemed older than his actual age. Some of this may be attributed to his stocky physical appearance (his weight, reported in late 1943, was given as 190 pounds--he certainly looks much heavier in his later movies than in some of the earlier ones). Carr's natural hair colour was light brown, but in some films it seems to have been dyed blonde--in *Los tres García* he is definitely made up to look older than his age so he can play the father of Marga López (who was 22 at the time, compared to 44 for Carr). He's given facial hair in a handful of movies--but is clean-shaven in his *gringo* roles--and sports a monocle or eyeglasses in some (in real life Carr did wear eyeglasses). One of Carr's trademarks was a large cigar (replaced by a pipe in *El verdugo de Sevilla* and cigarettes in *Konga roja*), presumably a habit he had in real life. In general, he wore appropriate, not outlandish, costumes (in *Juntos pero no revueltos* he has donned a pith helmet to tour Mexico City, but later in the film wears standard business attire), including some very natty suits, panama hats, and two-tone shoes.

It would be interesting to know where Cliff Carr learned to speak Spanish. When he began his Mexican career, he apparently spoke and sang in Spanish as well as English. In a number of the films in which Carr plays a *gringo*, speaking fractured Spanish is a character attribute, but this is a Mexican pop culture stereotype, not something that only applied to Carr. In fact, while he'd never be mistaken for a native speaker, his Spanish in a number of films is perfectly fluent, albeit accented.



Clifford Carr
Boy Monologist
Opera House--Today

As mentioned before, the exact circumstances of Carr's departure for Mexico are not known. He could have, as did William and Mildred Carr, made

the move to Hollywood and become a character actor, or gone into radio, or continued trying to make a living on the theatre/nightclub circuit, but he would have been just one more "former vaudevillian" bucking the odds in these fields. Instead, in Mexico Carr stood out, and while he didn't become (very) famous or (we assume) rich, he did what he'd been doing since childhood: perform.

Not every motion picture made during Mexico's Golden Age was a classic, and some of those in which Cliff Carr appeared are objectively not excellent (full disclosure: I have not seen all of them), but others are quite famous and remembered even today (*Los tres García, Campeón sin corona, Allá en el Rancho Grande*), while others are excellent but are rather unjustly forgotten (*Konga roja, El socio, El verdugo de Sevilla*) and still others are very fine if not perfect (*La liga de las canciones, La Golondrina, Cinco rostros de mujer*). For fans and students of Mexican cinema, Clifford Carr is a recognisable name and face, even if the true extent of his career is not known.



Filmography



El Rayo de Sinaloa shot March 1935
 Prod: Raúl de Anda; Dir: Julián S. González
 Cliff Carr plays a "traveler" in his first Mexican film role. Antonio R. Frausto stars as late-19th century bandit/rebel Heraclio Bernal (later played by Antonio Aguilar in a 1950s' trilogy).



Marihuana (El monstruo verde) shot March 1936
 Prod: José Bohr & La Duquesa Olga; Dir: José Bohr

Cliff Carr is the manager of the Calxico Hotel, the front for a drug smuggling ring. His trademark cigar is present. Full review in **MFB 18/6**

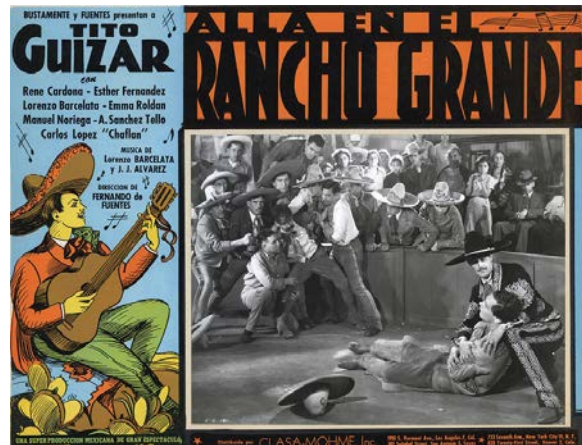


Así es la mujer shot May 1936*

Prod: José Bohr & La Duquesa Olga (Eva Limfiñana); Dir: José Bohr



Cliff Carr appears in the final sequence of this Hollywood-style musical about a masked radio singer (René Cardona) and his valet (Bohr). At the end of the film there is a broadcast wedding, with Carr as the "preacher." He's accompanied by the "Girls of the Marcus Show." *García Riera lists both *Marihuana* and *Así es la mujer* as being shot in March 1936, but Eduardo de la Vega's book on José Bohr cites May for the latter film.



Allá en el Rancho Grande [There on the Big Ranch] (Bustamante y de Fuentes A en P, 1936) Dir: Fernando de Fuentes; *Adapt*: Fernando de Fuentes, Guzmán Aguila [Antonio Guzmán Aguilar]; *Story*: Guzmán Aguila, Luz Guzmán de Arellano; *Photo*: Gabriel Figueroa; *Music Supv*: Lorenzo Barcelata; *Prod Mgr*: Alfonso Sánchez Tello; *Asst Dir*: Mario de Lara; *Film Ed*: Fernando de Fuentes; *Art Dir*: Jorge Fernández; *Makeup*: Dolores Camarillo; *Sound*: B.J. Kroger; *Sound Ed*: José Marino; *Studio*: Jorge Stahl; *Shooting began*: August 1936

Cast: Tito Guízar (*José Francisco Ruelas*), René Cardona (*Felipe*), Esther Fernández (*Cruz*), Lorenzo Barcelata (*Martín*), Emma Roldán (*doña Ángela*), Carlos López "Chaflán" (*Florentino*), Margarita Cortés (*Eulalia*), Dolores Camarillo (*Marcelina*), Manuel Noriega (*don Rosendo*), Hernán Vera (*Venancio*), Alfonso Sánchez Tello (*don Nabor Peña*), David Valle González (*don Nicho Perales*), Carlos L. Cabello (*Emeterio*), Armando Alemán (*young José Francisco*), Gaspar Núñez (*young*

Felipe), Lucha Ávila (*young Cruz*), Clifford Carr (*Pete the gringo*), Emilio Fernández & Olga Falcón (*dancers*), Juan García (*Gabino*), Paco Martínez (*doctor*), Trío Murciélagos, Trío Tariácuris, Jesús Melgarejo, José Ignacio Rocha (*peón*), Max Langler (*don Nicho's man*), Leonor Gómez (*Rancho Grande woman*)

Notes: although not really the “first” *ranchera* film (depending upon your definition), *Allá en el Rancho Grande* was extremely popular and influential, internationally as well as in Mexico. It



has most of the essential elements of the genre and is a good example to use when discussing “why *rancheras* aren’t just Mexican

Westerns,” despite the men in big hats carrying pistols and riding horses in a rural setting. The film is well-made but is certainly not perfect--the plot is even more contrived than usual, and Esther Fernández (despite having already appeared in half a dozen movies) delivers a very awkward performance. There are also some odd, out-of-context pseudo-political statements.

In 1922, kindly *hacendado* don Rosendo reminds his young son and heir Felipe that the *peones* on the Rancho Grande must be treated well, since they look to their *patrón* for guidance and assistance. When their widowed mother Marcelina dies, young José Francisco and Eulalia are entrusted to the brusque doña Ángela (their mother’s *comadre*) to be raised; Ángela also reluctantly agrees to take Cruz, an orphan Marcelina had been caring for. Don Rosendo says José Francisco will become Felipe’s companion, attending school with him and serving as his playmate.

1935: Felipe is now the *patrón* of Rancho Grande, and he promotes José Francisco to the post of foreman (*caporal*). José Francisco and Martín are rivals for the affection of Cruz, but she prefers the former. Doña Ángela treats Cruz as a servant, but considers Eulalia and José Francisco her adopted children. During an argument at a cockfight, José Francisco steps in front of a bullet intended for Felipe and is wounded; Felipe donates his own blood for a transfusion. José Francisco will ride Felipe’s horse Palomo in a race at a nearby *feria*. If he wins will have enough money to marry Cruz.

Meanwhile, doña Ángela is promoting a romance between Eulalia and the wealthy don Nabor. In need of 100 pesos for a new dress for Eulalia, Ángela offers to deliver the virginal Cruz to Felipe one night. He refuses, saying “you don’t have even a trace of morality,” but after thinking it over, agrees. However, Cruz has an attack (of asthma?) and also tells Felipe that she’s engaged to José Francisco. Felipe repents but Cruz is seen leaving his house that night and rumours spread.

[One of the major plot flaws of *Allá en el Rancho Grande* is the pointless secrecy with which José Francisco and Cruz treat their romance. Felipe makes a comment about Cruz’s attractiveness and José Francisco-- rather than saying “she’s my girlfriend”-- merely agrees with him. Later, Felipe asks Cruz point-blank if she has a boyfriend and she denies it. Finally, before he departs for the horse-



race, José Francisco tells doña Ángela if he wins he’s going to get married, but Cruz signals to him to not tell doña Ángela that she’s the one. If in even one of these instances the truth had been told, then the plot would have come to a grinding halt, because Felipe would have never considered “buying” Cruz and (presumably) doña Ángela would have never made the offer. This does not excuse Felipe’s behaviour (which he later admits was wrong) nor Ángela’s (her excuse was ignorance and that she was thinking of



her “duty” to Eulalia). It’s interesting to contrast *Allá en el Rancho Grande* with *Mala yerba*--in the latter film, René Cardona plays another *hacendado*, but in that case he is a serial rapist of the young women on his *hacienda*, not a good-hearted fellow who had a momentary moral lapse.]

José Francisco wins the race and comes back to Rancho Grande, then hears the news about Felipe and Cruz. Despite Cruz indicating “nothing happened,”

José Francisco prepares to shoot Felipe but the latter refuses to draw his gun. Explanations are made, Felipe is forgiven, Cruz's reputation is cleared, and José Francisco will marry Cruz and stay on as Rancho Grande foreman. The film concludes with a quadruple wedding: Cruz and José Francisco, Felipe and his new wife (seen in an earlier scene being serenaded by José Francisco, Martín and some *mariachis* at Felipe's behest), Eulalia and don Nabor, and Ángela and Florentino (her drunken, lazy, common-law husband).

Allá en el Rancho Grande contains a number of songs, but--aside from a poorly-dubbed Esther Fernández number early in the movie--they are mostly concentrated in three scenes, the aforementioned serenade, the cockfight scene, and a sequence in a *cantina* late in the film. In the latter, José Francisco finally performs the title song, and then has a musical duel (*coplas*) with Martín, which culminates with the exposure of Cruz's alleged infidelity. The scene in the *palenque* (cockfight arena) features two trios as well as a performance of the *jarabe tapatío* by future director Emilio Fernández and his partner.

The cockfight sequence also contains the only appearance in the film of Clifford Carr as "Pete," a *gringo*. His presence is not explained, although one might infer that he's part of a group of "railroad



engineers" Felipe alludes to in another scene (since Felipe addresses Pete by name, indicating they are acquainted). Pete is mildly comical, speaks somewhat incorrect Spanish, but is loyal to Felipe and the Rancho Grande and even enters the ring to assist Felipe when an argument breaks out (although he doesn't accomplish much).

Allá en el Rancho Grande, as noted above, also contain a few curious political statements. Florentino tells Cruz: "I'm a Communist--social equality. The rich don't work, right? Me neither...[and] if my crazy woman tells me to work, I'll declare a hunger strike!" During the cockfight sequence, don Nicho claims Felipe switched gamecocks, and says "what do you expect from Rancho Grande. Pure capitalists, exploiters of the poor!" Finally, Spanish shopkeeper don Venancio offers to celebrate José Francisco's victory in the horse-race with drinks on the house, from "Galicia, Communist, Soviet, atheist, for the love of God!" Although *Allá en el Rancho Grande* is specifically set in the present day, the *ranchera*

milieu makes it feel as if it is taking place in a bygone era, so these political references sound anachronistic even if they actually aren't. [Not to mention the film's depiction of *hacienda* life seems somewhat at odds with a post-Revolutionary Mexico setting.]

The performances in *Allá en Rancho Grande*--Esther Fernández aside--are generally good. Tito Guízar had previously appeared in one Hollywood film (*Under the Pampas Moon*, 1935) in a singing (i.e., non-acting) role: in *Allá en el Rancho Grande* he's satisfactory in a somewhat under-written role. René Cardona, on the other hand, is given most of the dramatic action and is quite good. Carlos López "Chaflán" overdoes the drunken comedy relief bit: since there is evidence in other films that he was capable of "straight" acting, one imagines director de Fuentes encouraged this particular style of performance. Production values are fine, with the *hacienda* locations lending an air of verisimilitude to the picture.



La gran cruz
shot
January 1937
Prod: Rex Films;
Dir: Raphael J.
Sevilla
Cliff Carr plays
"Jack" in this spy
drama with a
Spanish setting. He
wears a monocle
for the first (but not
last) time on screen.



Nobleza ranchera shot Febuary 1938
Prod: La Mexicana; Dir: Alfredo del Diestro
Carr plays a *gringo* in this rural melodrama based on the novela "La Parcela," filmed again in 1949 as *La posesión* with Jorge Negrete and Miroslava.



Los millones de Chaflán shot May 1938

Prod: Alfonso Sánchez Tello; Dir: Rolando Aguilar

Carr plays businessman Jacky Robinson in this comedy about rancher Chaflán, who sells out to an oil company and moves to Mexico City with his family. Full review in MFB 17/4



Cast: Medea de Novara (*Alma Gilbert*), Miguel Contreras Torres (*General David Castillo*), José Ortiz (*Lt. Col. José Mora*), Domingo Soler (*Simón García*), Sebastián Muñoz (*Lt. Rubio*), Armando Camejo (*Ben Abud*), Miguel Wimer (*Capt. Molina*), Eugenia Galindo (*Conchita Perales*), Stella Ametler (*Mrs. Hughes*), [Roberto] "Chino" Palacios (*Chino Lee*), Cliff Carr (*Jack Tracy*), Humberto Rodríguez (*hotel mgr.*), Rosa Quintero (*Rosita*), Vicenta Roig (*Josefina Castillo*), Gerardo del Castillo (*Lic. Tomás Robledo*), David Valle González (*Godínez, pistolero*), José Ortiz de Zárate (*Mora's manager*), Mario Sánchez (*José's mozo de estoques*), Adolfo Bernáldez (*police comm.*), Manuel Arena (*U.S. consul*), José Torvay (*Sr. Ayala*), Alfonso Bedoya (*Castillo soldier*), Daniel Herrera (*Castillo aide*), José Domínguez

Notes: *La Golondrina* is many films in one. It's a thinly-veiled version of the real-life romance between writer Alma Reed and Mexican politician Felipe Carrillo Puerto (also brought to the screen in 1973 as *Peregrina*, starring Sasha Montenegro and Antonio Aguilar, using the actual names of the individuals involved and following the facts more closely); it's also an "epic" film (running 150 minutes in its original version) spanning a number of years and events in Mexican history; it's a political drama pitting the corrupt García against the idealistic Castillo; it's a Medea de Novara vehicle, loaded with giant closeups of the star (who wears so many different costumes and hats!); and it's a romantic melodrama about a love triangle between Alma, Castillo, and Castillo's best friend José. There are many impressive scenes of Chichén Itzá, Mérida, Puebla and Cholula, plus *música típica*, *bailes*, a long bullfight sequence, and a *High Noon*-style showdown, followed by a tragic climax.

In 1915, U.S. novelist and journalist Alma visits Yucatán to gather material for her next novel. She's accompanied

by her traveling companion Mrs. Hughes, and archeologist Jack Tracy.

They begin excavating in the ruins of Chichén Itzá, but are arrested by the soldiers of revolutionary General Castillo. Tracy is accused of being an arms smuggler who defaulted on the delivery of weapons to Castillo. The American consul arrives in time to prevent the group from being executed: he proves archeologist Tracy is not the same Tracy who sells arms. Castillo apologises to Alma and her friends but she is cool to him. She is



La Golondrina [The Swallow] (Colonial Films, 1938) *Prod-Dir:* Miguel Contreras Torres; *Scr/Dialog/Story:* Miguel Contreras Torres; *Song Lyric & Dialog Collab:* Ricardo López Méndez; *Photo:* Alex Phillips; *Music:* Alfonso Esparza Oteo, Juan José Espinoza, Pepe Domínguez, Gabriel Ruiz, Mariano Villagómez; *Songs:* Guty Cárdenas, Mario Talavera, Alfonso Esparza Oteo; *Symphonic Music Arr:* Fausto Pinello; *Orch Dir:* Alfonso Esparza Oteo; *Prod Chief:* Paul Castelain; *Asst Dir:* Mario de Lara; *Film Ed:* [Juan] José Marino [credited as "Sound Ed"]; *Art Dir:* José Rodríguez Granada; *Sound:* José B. Carles; *Studio:* Jorge Stahl; *Shooting started:* March 1938

more appreciative of José, one of Castillo's officers, but eventually makes up with Castillo as well.



Mérida is the headquarters of García, a military rival of Castillo, but the triumph of the Revolution puts Castillo in control. He gives García 24 hours to get out of Yucatán. The jealous José refuses orders to go on a mission, thinking Castillo just wants to get him out of the way so he can court Alma.

A short time later, Castillo resigns his post and returns to his hometown of Cholula, where he takes up farming. In nearby Puebla, José meets Alma and professes his love for her, but she turns him down. José returns to his old profession, bullfighting, and Alma is afraid he'll deliberately die in the ring, so she attends the *corrida de toros* and José is a success. However, she is no longer interested in him romantically, preferring Castillo.

Castillo's old enemy García is also in Puebla, supporting the campaign of Robledo for governor. Urged by representatives of the workers, *campesinos*, and "the middle class," Castillo decides to run against Robledo. He rejects García's offer of a bribe and



ignores a threat against his life. The two men have a showdown, but García also has a henchman with him. Alma and Castillo's friends run to his aid, and Alma is shot and wounded. Castillo wounds García.

Alma recovers and agrees to marry Castillo. However, as the wedding party enters the church, García steps out of the crowd and assassinates Castillo. Alma sadly leaves Mexico.

La Golondrina is well-produced, mostly shot in some very picturesque locations in Mexico beginning in March 1938. Numerous extras appear in several scenes (not even counting the large crowd at the bullfight arena, but these scenes were shot at an actual bullfight, so the "extras" were not assembled just for the film), including Castillo's entry into Mérida, his return to Puebla, his engagement to Alma, etc. Special attention is paid to Chichén Itzá, with numerous shots of the ruins and some "arty" footage of Alma in a flowing white gown wandering through the temple. The colonial-era churches in Cholula and Puebla are also highlighted.

Contreras Torres' direction is not especially stylish otherwise, although the duel sequence between Castillo and García is set up effectively, shot in a very long colonnaded passage with alternating light and dark areas. The film's musical score comes and goes, with occasional underscoring and then long



stretches with no music at all. In one odd sequence, José and Lt. Rubio sit at a dinner table (José having been stood up by Alma) and awkwardly sing the song "Golondrina" (not the famous "farewell song" "Las Golondrinas," which is only heard at the very end of the picture).

The performances are adequate. Medea de Novara was not a bad actress but she has an almost expressionless face which is a bit off-putting. Miguel Contreras Torres is earnest, José Ortiz (an actual bullfighter who was also an actor) is fine, and Domingo Soler is his usual professional self. The substantial supporting role of Lt. Rubio went to Sebastián Muñoz, whose only other film credit appears to have been *La Paloma* (1937). Muñoz was a singer of the period who recorded with popular orchestras and sang on the radio as well as appearing in operas. He's perfectly satisfactory in his part.

As noted above, the original version of *La Golondrina* reportedly ran 150 minutes, but the copy I viewed (from a Cine Nostalgia broadcast) is about 126 minutes long. It's difficult to ascertain what might have been cut, but there is at least one curious bit: during the bullfight sequence, there are several

shots of actress Eugenia Galindo in the audience, looking irritated because José and Alma are smiling at each other. Galindo is billed as "Conchita Perales" but does not appear otherwise in the film.

La Golondrina has a fairly large number of *gringo* characters (Alma, Mrs. Hughes, Tracy, the U.S. consul) and treats them all quite fairly, with no anti-*gringo* bias. Alma (and Mrs. Hughes, to a lesser



extent) sings the praises of Mexico and Mexicans, and both Tracy and the U.S. consul are portrayed

favourably (Tracy disappears after the Chichén Itzá sequences but is glimpsed in the wedding procession at the end, apparently the "father figure" who will give Alma away). The only slight suggestion that there might be some dislike of *gringos* comes from Alma, who tells Castillo she thinks his political career would be harmed if he married "a foreigner," but he shrugs this off, given Alma's clear love of Mexico. It's interesting to note that two other "foreign" characters appear, both heavily stereotyped: Chinese cook Lee (played by Roberto Y. "Chino" Palacios) and Middle-Eastern stereotype peddler Ben Abud (Armando Camejo), who pronounces "p" as "b," etc.

Trivia notes: Although it might be a coincidence or my imagination, after the first section of the film, Miguel Contreras Torres wears a moustache which makes him resemble Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas. Contreras Torres made 10 films with his wife Medea de Novara--*La Golondrina* (The Swallow) followed *La Paloma* (The Dove), which must have been a little confusing to audiences. *La Paloma* was one of four films in which de Novara portrayed Empress Carlota.

La Golondrina is long, especially for the relatively simple story it tells, but it doesn't drag. The location settings are worth seeing and the characters--if somewhat stiff and/or predictable--are reasonably interesting.



El rosario de Amozoc shot May-June 1938

Prod: Vicente Saisó Piquer; Dir: José Bohr

Cliff Carr plays a German tourist in this rural comedy.

Padre de más de cuatro shot June 1938

Prod: José Luis Bueno; Dir: Roberto O'Quigley

Cliff Carr plays William, a *gringo* tourist who mistakenly gives ranch foreman-turned-boxer/wrestler



Juan León (Leopoldo "Chato" Ortín) 5,000 pesos for a lottery ticket. Juan León bets on himself and wins enough money to save his girlfriend's ranch. This film features an early appearance of a blonde *gringa* (Vicky Maxwell).



Juntos pero no revueltos [Together But Not Involved] (Prods. Sánchez Tello, 1938) Prod: Alfonso Sánchez Tello; Dir-Scr: Fernando A. Rivero; Story: Ernesto Cortázar; Photo: Lauron Draper; Music Dir: Manuel Esperón; Prod Chief: Enrique H. Hernández; Asst Dir: Felipe Palomino; Film Ed: Emilio Gómez Muriel; Art Dir: Mariano Rodríguez; Interior Decor: Luis Bustos; Makeup: Fraustita; Sound Engin: Roberto Rodríguez; Studio: Universidad Cinematográfica; Production Dates: November-December 1938

Cast: Jorge Negrete (*Rodolfo del Valle*), Rafael Falcón (*Carlos*), Susana Guízar (*Esperanza Robles*), El Chicote (*El Salpicaderas*), Agustín Isunza (*Lic. Juan*), Lucha María Ávila (*Luchita Robles*), María Porras (*doña Paz*), Hernán Vera (*Lázaro, husband of Paz*), Manuel Esperón (*Maino Esperoff*), Jorge Treviño (*Pietro Martinini*), Arturo Manrique (*Professor*), Irving Lee ("blind" beggar), Elisa Christy (*Norma*), Bohemia [aka Virginia] Serret

(Raquel), Miguel Inclán (*Col. Sisebuto Corrales*), José Arias (*policeman*), Guadalupe del Castillo (*La Rorra*), Laura Marín (*La Beba*), Josefina Betancourt (*La Nena*), Cliff Carr (*Mister Kimball*), Emilie Egert (*Mrs. Kimball*), Arturo Soto Rangel (*judge*), Juan García Esquivel (*radio station pianist*), Jorge Marrón (*Esperanza's uncle*)

Notes: *Juntos pero no revueltos* is an entertaining film with an impressive cast (many of them radio or variety theatre performers), but it is too long and over-loaded with obtrusive musical numbers.

In the provinces, the "disgraced" Esperanza is given a handful of money and banished by her strait-laced uncle. Esperanza and her little sister Luchita travel to Mexico City, and rent a room in the *vecindad* managed by doña Paz. The other residents include:

- radio singer Rodolfo and his room-mate Carlos, a tourist guide
- chorus girls Norma and Raquel
- the "Professor" (who lives off the earnings of a group of street kids) and his room-mate, a false "blind" beggar
- "Italian" opera singer Pietro and his pianist Maino
- cabbie El Salpicaderas
- retired military officer Col. Corrales
- three elderly spinsters
- verbose lawyer Juanito



Rodolfo is attracted to Esperanza. Although he loses his radio job (for refusing to sing popular tunes), he tries to help the impoverished newcomer and her sister. Rodolfo learns Esperanza is pregnant but continues to love her. The three spinsters, on the other hand, are scandalized and move out. Lawyer Juanito, acting as Rodolfo's manager, gets him a contract to sing on the stage; as Rodolfo is making his debut, Esperanza goes into labor and has her child. The Professor's children failed to sell one last lottery ticket but luckily this is the one that wins the big prize, which is shared among all of the residents of the building.

Juntos pero no revueltos contains some minor sub-plots as well, mostly comedic in nature. Carlos

is hired as a guide for *gringo* Mr. Kimball and his wife; Mrs. Kimball initiates an affair with Carlos, and her husband is none the wiser (in one sequence Mr. Kimball frowns when Carlos seems to be singing directly to his wife, but when Carlos switches his attention to other women at the party, the *gringo* is mollified). There is a very brief hint of conflict between Carlos and Rodolfo over Esperanza (Rodolfo catches Carlos in Esperanza's room, but he was merely checking on her health); in fact, the film concludes in a very odd fashion with Carlos declaring his devotion to the adolescent Luchita! There is another subplot dealing with El Salpicaderas, who constructs a car ("the first automobile manufactured in Mexico") out of stolen parts.



Unfortunately, a dispute with the lawyer concludes with the car's destruction (but the winning lottery ticket allows the purchase of a new auto, and El Salpicaderas gets a fancy chauffeur's uniform).

For a 1938 movie, the sexual innuendos of *Juntos pero no revueltos* are mildly surprising. We have an unwed mother (Esperanza), infidelity (Mrs. Kimball), suggestions of "free love" (Carlos and Rodolfo have casual romantic relationships with Raquel and Norma), and even some hints of gayness. Perhaps it's just my 21st century sensibility, but the Professor and the fake "blind" beggar live together, sleep together, and exhibit the sort of physical and emotional familiarity that appears a little gay to me. [Rodolfo and Carlos are room-mates but they sleep in separate beds and are clearly heterosexual. Pietro and Maino also live together but don't display the same intimacy as the Professor and his pal.]

The performances are generally good and most are rather multi-dimensional. As noted earlier, many of the performers came from radio or variety theatre backgrounds, so we're exposed to comic songs by Esperón, Treviño, Manrique, and Lee (Manrique and Treviño were a team known as "Panseco" and "Panque"--puns meaning "Dry Bread" and "Bread With [Butter]") and El Chicote, as well as a tango and "waltz" by Falcón, two numbers by Negrete (including "Negro es mi color" by Ernesto



Lecuona, sung in blackface makeup), a "tropical" number by the Professor's child performers, a "Virginia reel" dance number, and "Las mañanitas" by most of the cast. Most of these are fairly entertaining but they do take up a lot of time.

Trivia note: Treviño, Manrique, Esperón and Lee formed a comedy-music group known as "Los Cuatros Vagabundos," and had previously appeared in *Canto a mi tierra* (aka *México canta*, 1938). Cliff Carr joined Panseco, Mr. Lee, and Manuel Esperón as one of "Los Cuatro Vagabundos" for a tour in 1939 (replacing Jorge Treviño). For their appearance at the "Montparnasse" in Guadalajara in October of that year, they were advertised as "Four True Stars of Theatre, Film, and Radio" in a "comedy singing quartet."

The production values are decent, the *vecindad* itself is a large and elaborate set and there are some scenes shot on location as well.

This isn't a great classic but it is a well-made, entertaining picture.



Una luz en mi camino shooting begins 26 December 1938

Prod: Joaquín Busquets; Dir: José Bohr

Joaquín Busquets (father of Narciso Busquets, who also appears in the film) was an actor who had recently lost his eyesight. This film features a huge number of Mexican film actors who worked on the film as a favour to

Busquets. Busquets plays a blind composer hopelessly in love with a young woman who loves another man (Consuelo Frank, Pedro Armendáriz).



The climax of the film is a benefit concert for the composer; Cliff Carr (who is uncredited) can be glimpsed on the "red carpet" entering the theatre, accompanied by an attractive young woman (they are followed by Jorge Negrete). After the concert there is a scene in the El Patio nightclub, coincidentally where Carr had appeared with his orchestra early in his Mexican career.



Adios mi chaparrita shot Jan 1939

Prod: Central Cinematográfica Mexicana? (some sources cite Ixtla Films); Dir: René Cardona



Cliff Carr is good-hearted rancher Mr. Clark, who pawns his own ring to pay off his Mexican migrant workers--including Chávalo (played by Rafael Falcón, who'd just been seen with Carr in *Juntos pero no revueltos*)--when their jobs fall through. Chávalo is later falsely imprisoned for murder, and his friend and Mr. Clark intervene to get him released from prison. Full review in **MF3** 3/11 and 23/1



Mala yerba [Bad Weed] (Hnos. Soria, 1940)

Prod/Dir/Adapt: Gabriel Soria; Scr Collab/Orig Novel: Mariano Azuela; Photo: Víctor Herrera; Music: Fausto Pinelo Ríos, Julio Cochard; Prod Mgr: Antonio Soria; Prod Chief: Fidel Pizarro; Asst Dir: Roberto Gavaldón; Film Ed: José Marino; Art Dir: José Rodríguez Granada; Sound: José B. Carles; Studio: Azteca; Shooting begins: June 1940

Cast: Arturo de Córdova (*Gertrudis*), Lupita Callardo (*Marcela Fuentes*), René Cardona (*don Julián Andrade*), Miguel Montemayor (*Tico*), Estela Inda (*Mariana Bermúdez*), Pedro Armendáriz (*Chuy Rodríguez*), Luis G. Barreiro (*don Anacelto*), Clifford Carr (*Mr. John*), Miguel Inclán (*Miguel*), Miguel Pozos (*Pablo Fuentes*), Max L[angler] Montenegro (*Emiliano, peon*), Rafael Icardo (*town mayor*), Antonio Badú (*Lieutenant*), Joaquín Coss (*don Petronilo*), Salvador Quiroz (*Jesús Ramírez*), Roberto Cañedo, José Ignacio Rocha (*Refugio Hernández, peon*), Aurora Ruiz (*Juana*)

Notes: *Mala yerba* was based on a 1909 novel by Mariano Azuela, best-known for his 1916 Mexican Revolution novel *Los de abajo* (filmed twice). While *Mala yerba* pre-dates the Revolution, it depicts the social and economic injustice that existed during the presidencies of Porfirio Díaz.

Marcela and her aged father work on the *hacienda* owned by Julián Andrade. Julián returns after a long absence and Marcela find him handsome, although she's engaged to Gertrudis, who's currently working in the USA. Julián visits Marcela's hut and offers to make her life more comfortable if she becomes his mistress; she refuses, and he rapes her. Julián later

accosts Marcela when she's fetching water at the river. She fights back and fellow *peon* Chuy intervenes, striking Julián. Julián shoots and kills Chuy as the latter attempts to flee.



Gertrudis returns in the company of a troop of soldiers and learns Chuy has been killed. Julián is accused of the crime but is acquitted. It is later accepted that he also murdered Marcela's father after the latter testified against him in the trial. Julián discovers Marcela and Gertrudis together; when Gertrudis leaves, the jealous Julián threatens to kill Marcela, but in the end cannot do it, claiming he loves her. Marcela vanishes shortly thereafter. Leaving the *hacienda* because she fears Julián will kill Gertrudis, Marcela is given a ride by *gringo* engineer Mr. John, who has been surveying the area with the idea of building a dam.

A week later, Mr. John and Marcela return to San Francisquito, the town nearest the *hacienda*. Marcela



is now wearing "modern," stylish clothing, and she moves into Mr. John's house. However, it's clear she is not

sleeping with him, and Mr. John complains that she hasn't upheld her end of the bargain. Marcela tells her story and Mr. John releases her from her debt; when she says she has nowhere to go and offers to work as a servant, he says it wouldn't work—"Listen, I'm a *gringo* but I'm not a block of ice." Instead, he offers to help Marcela and Gertrudis cross the border into the USA.

Marcela is spotted in Mr. John's house by Mariana, another *peón* on the *hacienda*. Having romantic designs on Gertrudis, Mariana tells him what she saw. Gertrudis gets drunk the night before he is to ride Julián's prize horse in a race. When Gertrudis passes out, Julián locks the door and

advances on Mariana...[fade to black]. Gertrudis recovers and goes to town, where he meets Marcela: she explains everything and they reconcile, but Gertrudis won't stain his honour by leaving before the horse race. The next day, Gertrudis rides and wins.

Julián tells Marcela he'll kill Gertrudis when the latter shows up for her. They go to Julián's hunting lodge, but the mentally-challenged Tico (a friend of Marcela, Gertrudis, and the late Chuy) follows.

When a drunken Julián makes a move on Marcela, Tico intervenes and is pistol-whipped. However, he recovers and shoots Julián to death with the *hacendado's* own pistol. Gertrudis arrives and embraces Marcela.



There are a number of interesting facets to *Mala yerba*. It seems to have been shot mostly on location, although the Azteca studios were also used, probably for the interiors: the locations seem quite authentic, and there are numerous extras and considerable men on horseback in the San Francisquito *feria* scenes.

The film's ideology is certainly pro-*campesino*, with *hacendado* Julián raping two women and murdering two men over the course of the film. [The scene in which Julián refrains from murdering Marcela because he loves her is thus somewhat out of character--once Marcela runs away, Julián quickly turns his attention to Mariana.] The *hacienda* has its own store/*cantina*, and in one scene Julián's foreman Manuel doles out the weekly corn ration to the workers, withholding full rations for those the *amo* doesn't like (including Tico).



Gertrudis returns from California wearing a Western-style hat (rather than a *sombrero*) and a plaid shirt, which sets him off from his former companions (he's also clean-shaven, a novelty for a Mexican cinema leading man in this era). His transformation is mirrored by that of Marcela: she spends one week in Mexico City with Mr. John and returns with her hair up (rather than in braids),

wearing a fancy dress and hat. Later, when she has reconciled with Gertrudis, there's a scene in which she hurriedly removes her new clothing (including a corset) and dons her *rebozo* and other "rural" garments.

There are only a few references to the political situation: a portrait of Porfirio Díaz on the wall of the mayor's office, and a mention of Díaz by *gringo* engineer Mr. John. Curiously, the soldiers who accompany Gertrudis on his trip back to San Franciquito are not depicted negatively--in fact, Gertrudis is quite friendly with them, and they serve as agents of law and order, "investigating" the death of Chuy and remaining in town until Julián's trial has concluded. *Mala yerba* makes no particular broader point of any of this: there are no calls for revolution, or even vague wishes for a "change." The socio-economic situation is personalised rather than generalised, so one could imagine that other *haciendas* might have been run by less ruthless and selfish individuals.

The character of *gringo* Mr. John is generally positive. He speaks satisfactory Spanish, is given a decent amount of character development, and while he initially seems something of a womaniser (when Julián says his guest can have anything he wants, Mr.



John suggests Marcela!), he is quite polite and fair to Marcela, despite feeling he's been made a fool of by her. Nonetheless, as she tells Gertrudis, even when she thought Gertrudis was going to marry Mariana and

thus decided to give in to Mr. John, the *gringo* (knowing she loved Gertrudis) turned her down and offered to help her escape.

For today's viewers, the character of the mentally-challenged Tico may be problematical. He's presented as child-like, carries a pet goose, and seems to have difficulty carrying out simple commands. On



the other hand, he's brave, loyal to his friends, and tries to save Marcela from Julián. However, Tico shoots Julián not solely to save Marcela from the *hacendado's* drunken clutches, but also to save

himself from harm, and to avenge Chuy. He laughs and fondles the pistol after he kills Julián, and at the

film's climax he's riding on the back of the carriage taking Gertrudis and Marcela to a new life. And he's carrying his goose.

Trivia notes: *Mala yerba* was released on DVD by Tekila Films in the 2000s. The box lists the title as *Mala hierba* and the film itself is missing most of the credits, including the main title screen. Video quality is fair. One song is included, "sung" by Estela Inda to a drunken Gertrudis. She's clearly lip-synching and the song itself is out of place (it's not even a *ranchera* tune).

Overall, *Mala yerba* is reasonably entertaining and professionally made.

Heavily revised from original review in MFB 11/1 (2005)



Rancho Alegre (Prods. Raúl de Anda, 1940) *Dir:* Rolando Aguilar; *Adapt/Dialog:* X. Randa [Raúl de Anda], Rafael Saavedra, Rolando Aguilar; *Story:* X. Randa; *Photo:* Raúl M[artínez] Solares; *Songs:* Felipe Bermejo; *Asst Dir:* Roberto Gavaldón; *Film Ed:* Rolando Aguilar; *Art Dir:* Mariano Rodríguez; *Sound Engin:* B.J. Kroger; *Studio:* Azteca; *Shooting begins:* November 1940

Cast: Raúl de Anda (*Rául Gallardo*), [Carlos López] El "Chaflán" (*Pancho*), Carmen Conde (*Anita*), Emilio Fernández (*Pascual*), Agustín Isunza (*Ildefonso*), Clifford Carr (*Mr. Wolf**), Consuelo Quiroz (*Paquita*), Manuel Pozos (*don Antonio*), Rafael Icardo (*Atenógenes*), José Y. Torbay[sic] (*Pedro*), Max L[angler] Montenegro (*Máximo, rustler*), Gilberto González (*rustler*), Pepe del Río (*Ramón*), Enrique Carrillo (*trouble-maker*), Manuel Buendía (*judge*), José L. Murillo (*José*), Alfonso Bedoya (*man outside tienda*), Arturo Soto Rangel (*don Manuel, stationmaster*), Trío Los Porteños [including Miguel Aceves Mejía], Julio Ahuet (*storekeeper*), David Valle González (*cmdte.*), Humberto Rodríguez (*priest*)

*García Riera lists Carr's character name as "Burr," but it definitely sounds like "Wolf" to me.

Notes: a combination *ranchera*-Western with a lot going on, both in the plot and thematically. Raúl de

Anda's devotion to Mexico, *charros*, etc., is plainly on view here.

The Rancho Alegre, managed by elderly don Antonio, is plagued by cattle rustlers. The criminals, not satisfied with merely stealing cattle, also murder José when he discovers them cooking a stolen calf. However, don Antonio and the ranch workers are heartened to learn Raúl, the owner of the ranch, is returning after many years: he was sent to the USA by his (now deceased) father for an education.



However, don Antonio, his daughter Anita, and foreman Pancho are disillusioned when Raúl arrives, accompanied by his friends Ildefonso and *gringo* Mr. Wolf. They are all dressed in "city" clothing, and Raúl announces that he's selling the ranch to Wolf. Raúl is now an engineer and has no interest in running a cattle ranch.

The matter of the rustlers has to be cleared up before the sale can be completed. After Ildefonso and Mr. Wolf are harrassed and humiliated by a group of men outside the ranch store, Raúl sees that Anita doesn't respect him any more and overhears Pancho saying he's going to quit. Raúl changes into a *charro* outfit, tames El Diablo (a horse), and sets out to find the outlaws. He captures two of them and sends for the local authorities. When the police arrive, Raúl sends the prisoners to town in Pancho's care. But the chief of the cattle rustler band is Pascual, owner of a neighboring ranch. He stabs Pancho and frees his henchmen. Pascual then abducts Anita, whom he's been courting even though she doesn't care for him.



Meanwhile, Raúl and the police round up the rest of the outlaws. Learning the news, Raúl sets off after Pascual, who has reunited with the two freed prisoners. Raúl shoots the duo but his pistol is empty when Pascual approaches with a knife. Raúl is saved when Ramón, the young son of the murdered José, shoots Pascual (multiple times!).

Raúl tells Mr. Wolf he's not selling the ranch, but will stay and use his engineering expertise to build a dam and otherwise return it to prosperity. A year

later, Mr. Wolf returns to act as the godfather of the infant son of Raúl and Anita.

Rancho Alegre's cattle rustling plot is actually subsidiary to the main theme of the film, which is the restoration of Raúl's *mexicanidad*, as exemplified by his return to the macho *charro* lifestyle. Years spent in the USA studying engineering have made him immune to the "voice of the land," and he strenuously insists he has no desire to run Rancho Alegre, seeing it as only the means by which he can gain enough money to set himself up in the engineering business in Mexico City. Raúl changes his mind chiefly because Anita rejects his (indirect) romantic advance, but eventually embraces his true identity.

Ildefonso similarly changes from a *catrín* (dude) into a *charro* by the film's end. Ildefonso is apparently Mexican, but his specific origins are not clear. He's the comic relief character, who dresses in a pith helmet and short pants--claiming he wore them in Africa and China with no problem--and constantly brags about his adventures around the world. After his humiliation



by a group of trouble-makers outside the *tienda*--he and Mr. Wolf are tossed in the river--Ildefonso takes to his bed claiming illness, only emerging to join the police as they follow Raúl to rescue Anita. Ildefonso has a romance with servant Paquita, and in the final scene he appears--now dressed in full *charro* garb--with Paquita and his 3 children (triplets).

[This situation is later mirrored in *Guadalajara pues...* which casts Carr and Isunza in very similar roles. In both films, Carr's *gringo* is a more sympathetic character and Isunza is the comic relief, until late in the film when the *gringo*-ised Mexican regains his *mexicanidad*.]

Clifford Carr has a very substantial role as *gringo* Mr. Wolf, whose desire to purchase Rancho Alegre is the motivating factor of much of the plot. Wolf, in contrast to Ildefonso's outlandish garb, dresses in functional working clothes, speaks good Spanish, and is not portrayed in a negative fashion at all. He originally has nothing but praise for the ranch and the surrounding area, is irritated when he's dunked in the river and threatens to leave, then complains when Raúl changes his mind about selling Rancho Alegre, saying "All Mexicans are crazy!" However, as noted above he reconciles with Raúl and becomes his *compadre* at the finale.

When Mr. Wolf says he'll help his godson attend a university in the USA, Anita balks, indicating her

child will be educated in Mexico and learn how to be a *charro*. So Mr. Wolf is not mocked or demonised as a *gringo* (he's not even exploiting Raúl's desire to sell the ranch, it's Raúl who keeps trying to convince Wolf to buy), and while Raúl's engineering education in the USA will allow him to make Rancho Alegre prosperous again, the general theme of the film seems to be that Mexicans should stay in Mexico (but if they do go to the USA, they should not take on *gringo* attitudes and customs).

Rancho Alegre was shot mostly on location and is generally well-made. The battle between the police and the rustlers is poorly directed and cut, but there are other scenes which are especially nicely executed. For example, when Raúl first returns to the ranch, he enters his old room and looks at his old possessions, portraits of his parents, etc., accompanied only by a guitar theme. There is no music score as such: in addition to the scene just mentioned, instrumental music is heard only once or twice otherwise, leaving most of the movie without music. Two songs are performed by the Trío Los Porteños, whose lead singer is future star Miguel Aceves Mejía. Aceves Mejía appeared in numerous films in small (mostly singing) parts before finally getting leading roles as an actor in the mid-1950s.

Rancho Alegre, shot in November 1940, has a number of interesting aspects but the script lacks focus and the film seems longer than it actually is.



Simón Bolívar shot June 1941

Prod/Dir: Miguel Contreras Torres

Cliff Carr has two scenes in this big-budget biography of Simón Bolívar, the *Libertador* of much of South America. Carr plays Colonel James Rooke, a British officer who led the British Legion in support of Bolívar's revolution against Spain.



La liga de las canciones [The League of Songs) (América Films, 1941) "Alfonso Sánchez Tello & Mauricio de la Serna present..." *Dir/Adapt:* Chano Urueta; *Story:* Ernesto Cortázar, Fernando Cortés, Domingo Soler, Jorge Reyes; *Photo:* Agustín Martínez Solares [Raúl Martínez Solares credited in some print sources]; *Music Arr/Dir:* Manuel Esperón; *Songs:* Rafael Hernández, Manuel Esperón, Luis Arcaraz, Hnos. Hernández, Ernesto Cortázar; *Prod Chief:* Antonio Guerrero Tello; *Asst Dir:* Luis Abbadie; *Film Ed:* Charles L. Kimball; *Art Dir:* José Rodríguez Granada; *Makeup:* Felisa Ladrón de

Guevara; *Choreog:* Pepín Pastor; *Sound Engineer:* B.J. Kroger; *Studio:* Azteca; *Shooting begins:* August 1941

Cast: Ramón Armengod (*Ramón Rios*), Mapy

Cortés (*Mapy*), Domingo Soler (*Asdrubal Santacana*), Fernando Cortés (*René Mares*), Jorge Reyes (*Alberto Arroyos*), Clifford Carr (*Mr. Johnson*), Fanny Schiller (*doña Gertrudis*), María Elena Galindo (*Margarita*), Paco Miller and "don Roque," Regine & Shanley (*dance team*), Trío Mixteco [Carmen Molina, José Molina, Enrique Pastor] (*Jalisco number dancers*), Marina



Herrera "Marilú" (*Marilú*), La Panchita [María de los Ángeles Muñoz Rodríguez] (*singer in Jalisco number*), Abel Salazar (*president of conference*), Acerina (*conference delegate*), Blanca Estela Pavón (*dancer*), Ramiro Gamboa (*announcer*), Raúl Guerrero ("*fifth columnist*"), José Arratia, Luis Arcaraz & Manuel Esperón (*themselves*), Roberto Cañedo (*hotel guest*), Eduardo Noriega

Notes: *La liga de las canciones* is a pretty amazing film in a number of ways, a well-produced political musical comedy with a fine cast and a number of bizarre, absurdist touches.

Although produced before the United States or Mexico entered World War II, *La liga de las canciones* is fairly topical. *Gringo* Mr. Johnson is at first viewed with extreme suspicion by the other characters in the film (representing various Latin American countries), but he wins them over with his enthusiasm for Latin American culture, appeals for hemispheric solidarity, and with expensive gifts and cash loans. The United States was at this time cultivating the friendship of Mexico and the rest of Latin America, in order to secure the hemisphere against fascist influence (one by-product of this was a U.S. government project to assist the Mexican film industry). The Hotel Do-Re-Mi is owned by Asdrubal Santacana (a Spaniard), but populated by Latin Americans, a reference to Spain as the "mother country" of most of the New World, although when the film was made Spain was (politically, at least) somewhat on the outs with Mexico due to the fascist government of Francisco Franco.

Musical numbers take up almost half of the film's running time: some of these are presented within the context of a radio broadcast or during the cabaret



show (which consumes the last 25 minutes of the movie), but there are also songs which are integrated into the

plot (i.e., every so often someone will just break into a song). One running joke features the Argentine Alberto; whenever he has a romantic setback, he says: "There's nothing else for me to do, but--sing a tango!" It's rather curious that Jorge "Che" Reyes, not really known as a singer, gets to do two songs in the film. Also, several songs are repeated, which is sort of a cheat (even though they're done differently each time).

A "great Panamerican conference" is "feverishly searching" for a formula to achieve "continental solidarity." Delegates Ramón (Mexico), René (Cuba), and Alberto (Argentina) are put in charge of a "pacifist philharmonic" that will foment "peace and freedom" in Latin America: "no more wars, no more borders." However, they're penniless at the moment. René takes them to the Hotel Do-Re-Mi where he lives: kindly don Asdrúbal allows performers and artists of all types to live there and doesn't hassle them about the rent (that's the job of his wife doña Gertrudis). René has his eye on attractive Puerto Rican singer-dancer Mapy, but sparks fly when she meets Ramón.



Gringo Mr. Johnson is brought to the hotel because a Lions' convention has packed Mexico City: "the hotels are all full of lions!" He doesn't like the noisy ambiance but changes his mind when he sees Mapy. Ramón, René and Alberto plan a radio broadcast and a cabaret for their "*Liga de las canciones*" project. [This is a pun on the Spanish name for the League of Nations, *La liga de las naciones*.]

Ramón, René and Alberto suspect Mr. Johnson of "sabotage" when he sends flowers to Mapy and gives

René a loaded cigar. Someone shuts off the lights while Mapy is singing and steals some sheet music. Don Asdrúbal doesn't want to blame the *gringo*, partly because Mr. Johnson is the only guest (aside from Mapy) who pays his bill! Mr. Johnson arrives--dressed in a *sombrero* and *serape*--with numerous packages, but his feelings are hurt when he's seated alone at a separate table for lunch. "It has come to my attention that you all don't like me. Why? I've been a good friend to you all the time. I've done everything possible, but it's all useless? Why don't you trust me? I'm American, and you're Americans too. We speak different languages but feel the same things. I want union and friendship--I don't want to fight. Why won't you let me be your friend?" Ramón: "Look at the *yanqui*--defending us. Against what?" Johnson: "You doubt my sincerity, well you'll see..." He starts to open his packages, and everyone cowers, until they see he's brought musical instruments. "I know you are all going hungry because you've pawned everything. This is a gift from me for all. Viva el proyecto!"

Everyone cheers. Mapy does a song ("Oh, Mexico") which describes how various foreigners came to love Mexico, including "a tourist from New York." Mr. Johnson sings "*me gusta very mucho México!*" The number is interrupted when an arrow



bearing a warning note is shot into a nearby wall. Mr. Johnson, who had earlier dismissed the charges against him as *calumnias*, shouts "I said so--the Fifth Column, the Fifth Column!" Shadows of men holding their arms in a strange manner (similar to Egyptian murals) are spotted. However, rehearsals for the radio broadcast and the cabaret go on. Don Asdrúbal fears the hotel will have to close before the project is finished, but Mapy empties her bank account and gives him the money anonymously.

Mapy is jealous when attractive young woman Margarita arrives looking for Ramón. She is cold to Ramón and pretends to care for Alberto instead, unaware Margarita is Ramón's sister. During the radio broadcast, Mapy's song is interrupted by Germanic-sounding gibberish and the lights go out again.

The next day, Mr. Johnson tells don Asdrúbal (whose name he keeps mispronouncing, but don Asdrúbal gets back at him by calling him "Mr.

Honson") that he wants to pay the overdue bills of everyone in the hotel. The total is 2,300, the hotel owner says. "Pesos or dollars?" Johnson asks. "Whatever you like, it's the same to us," doña



Gertrudis replies. "It's pesos, then," Johnson tells her (well aware of the exchange difference). He tells them the money isn't his, it's an investment in the Panamerican project by the bank he works for. Later, Johnson receives a telegram that his *nena* (baby) is arriving soon.

Ramón and René accompany him to the airport, but Johnson ignores a maid carrying an infant and instead embraces an attractive blonde. [There is some confusion about her relationship to Johnson--she might be his daughter, because she quickly forms a romantic relationship with René and Johnson is OK with it.]

The "Liga de las Canciones" nightclub opens, but the angry Mapy refuses to perform. Instead, we get Paco Miller and his dummy don Roque, Arturo sings



another tango (he'd done one during the radio broadcast) as Regine & Shanley dance. Young Marilú reprises the "Oh, México!" song. Ramón sings "Prisionera del mar" for the

second time (a plate juggler performs during the instrumental break). Mapy arrives and apologises when she learns Margarita's identity. She does a lavish production number accompanied by numerous dancers and a combo. Suddenly the "Fifth Columnists" appear again, shouting "Down with popular music!" They aren't fascists, just crazy anarchists and do a nonsense song. René makes a speech: "There are those who believe that countries are made great through tyranny and force. We believe that countries are made great through liberty and art. We continue then with our project..." A "tribute to our host nation, Mexico," includes a song by Ramón, then one by La Panchita as the Trío Mixteco (including future actress Carmen Molina) do a version of the *jarabe tapatío*, including an abbreviated cockfight on the dance floor!** Mapy does "La conga" with lots of dancers. Then the national flags come out for the big finale, once again

doing "Oh, México!" but with altered lyrics such as "All the continent will also sing, America, America!"

**[The Trío Mixteco may have performed this same number in the Broadway musical "Mexicana" in 1939 under the supervision of Celestino Gorostiza. This "Musical Extravaganza" also featured a number of performers familiar to Mexican cinema viewers, including Amparo Arozamena, Los Cuates Castilla, and Beatriz Ramos.]



As noted above, there are a number of almost surrealistic touches in *La liga de las canciones*. I wondered if perhaps Chano Urueta had seen Olsen & Johnson's *Hellzapoppin'*, which has some similar wacky running gags, but the film version of that play wasn't released in the USA until after *La liga de las canciones* was shot (and not until March 1942 in Mexico). I suppose someone could have seen the stage version, which ran from 1938-41. Two men, who do everything in unison (walk, dance, etc.) periodically stroll across the screen, but are never identified and are not part of the plot. The actions of the "Fifth Columnists" also have an absurdist touch. Also, one of the hotel guests is a painter constantly working on the same portrait of a woman--erasing



parts of it, running his hands through his hair in frustration, etc. His easel is set up in the lobby, but he is also standing on stage during the radio broadcast, is seen in the background of other

shots, and walks into the cabaret as well. He always has his back to the camera (except when he comes into the cabaret, then his face is covered by the painting he's carrying). There is no "reveal" at the end, he has no part in the plot, and remains a weird enigma. Could this be director Urueta in a cameo?

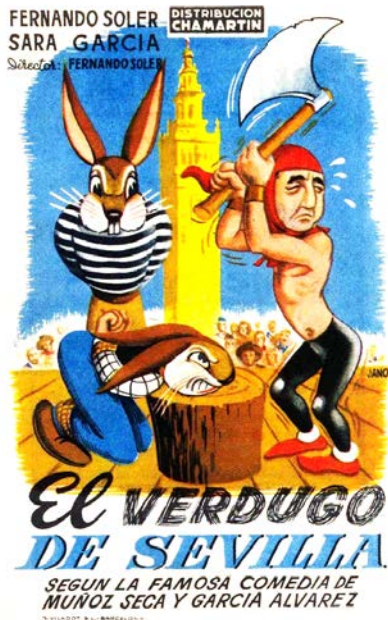
The supporting cast of *La liga de las canciones* is interesting. Blanca Estela Pavón, who achieved fame as a frequent screen partner of Pedro Infante later in the decade before dying in an airplane crash, plays a dancer who lives at the Hotel Do-Re-Mi. She isn't involved in the plot, but someone must have liked her because she's on-screen quite frequently, does a

couple of brief dances, and is seated with don Asdrúbal, doña Gertrudis, and Marilú at the cabaret in the finale. Also visible are newcomers Abel Salazar and Roberto Cañedo (who gets one, split-second closeup). Eduardo Noriega is apparently also in the film but I've not been able to spot him. Singer La Panchita was the wife of ventriloquist Paco Miller, although I'm not sure they were married when the film was made. Cuban musician Acerina has a brief role in the peace conference sequence. Real-life composers Manuel Esperón and Luis Arcaz play themselves, but their appearance is limited to playing piano during one song.



Trivia notes: as has been noted elsewhere, the last names of the three male leads are all water-related (*río, mar, arroyo*), for whatever this is worth.

Significantly revised from the original review in MFB 3/1 August 1996



El verdugo de Sevilla [The Executioner of Seville] (Films Mundiales, 1942) *Prod:* Diana S. de Fontanals; *Dir:* Fernando Soler; *Scr:* Paulino Masip; *Orig Play:* Pedro Muñoz Seca & Enrique García Álvarez; *Photo:* Gabriel Figueroa; *Music:* Manuel Penella, Raúl Lavista; *Prod Mgr:* Felipe Subervielle; *Prod Chief:* Armando Espinosa; *Asst Dir:* Felipe Palomino; *Film Ed:* Jorge Bustos; *Art Dir:* Jorge Fernández; *Makeup:* Anita Guerrero; *Sound:* Rafael Ruiz Esparza, Howard E. Randall; *Script Clerk:*

Moisés Delgado; *Studio:* C.L.A.S.A.; *Shooting begins:* July 1942

Cast: Fernando Soler (*Bonifacio Bonilla y Cordero*), Sara García (*doña Nieves*), Domingo Soler (*Angelini Sansoni*), Julio Villareal (*Talmilla*), Miguel Arenas (*Sinapismo*), C[onsuelo] Guerrero de Luna (*Madame Aurelia Perrin*), Francisco Jambrina (*don Ismaelito*), José Morcillo (*Frasquito*), José Pidal (*Fresolis*), Florencio Castelló (*Pedro Luis*), Clifford Carr (*Mr. James Koles*), José Ortiz de Zarate (*Valenzuela*), Andrés Novo (*don Rosendo*), Marcia Jordan (*Rosario*), Aurora Segura (*Presentita*), Manolo Noriega (*president of audiencia*), José Luis Menéndez (*Rosendito*), Ricardo Montalbán (*Jacobito*), Dolores Jiménez (*Modesta*), Francisco Valera (*Riverita*), Salvador Quiroz (*prosecutor*), Robert Cañedo (*hotel employee*), Ignacio Peón (*man on street in Sevilla*)

Notes: *El verdugo de Sevilla* is an amusing film based on a Spanish play that premiered in 1916. The movie's stage origins are obvious--most of the action occurs in the Madrid boarding house "La Locomotora" and the hotel Abderramán in Sevilla--but the characters, dialogue and action are extremely entertaining despite this slight staginess.

The basic premise of *El verdugo de Sevilla* is: mild-mannered, failed inventor Bonifacio gets a government job through the efforts of Valenzuela, who thereby hopes to recoup some money he lost due to Bonifacio's ineptitude.

The job is to be the executioner in Sevilla: three members of the Conejo family have been sentenced to death after



killing some policemen in an altercation. Bonifacio doesn't know what his new job entails, but he was going to Sevilla anyway: he has invented a powder that kills rabbits [*conejos* in Spanish], and since Sevilla is currently being overrun by the furry animals, he hopes to get the exterminator concession.

Nearly every other person involved with Bonifacio also has their own sub-plot. His landlady, doña Nieves, was abandoned by her lover Angelini 20 years before, so Bonifacio agreed to be named on her infant's birth certificate as the father. Now the child, Presentita, is a young woman and intends to marry into high society, to Rosendito. But the young man's father, don Rosendo, insists Nieves marry her daughter's "father," presumably Bonifacio. Nieves agrees, but suddenly Angelini (a circus acrobat)

returns and wants to meet his daughter. To



complicate matters even further, the woman for whom Angelini left Nieves 20 years earlier is boarding house guest Madame Perrín (who does a circus act with parrots that sing opera)!

Another resident of the boarding house is Sinapismo, a *picador* and a distant relative of the Conejos. He plans to travel to Sevilla and assault the new executioner, buying time so the condemned men can appeal their case. Lawyer don Ismaelito is also traveling to Sevilla on legal business.

Bonifacio arrives in Sevilla but his name and new position have been published in the newspaper and no hotel or boarding house will rent him a room, either because they sympathise with the Conejos or



are superstitious (or both). Bonifacio can't understand why everyone is so hostile. Finally, his supervisor orders Frasquito, owner of the hotel Abderramán, to allow Bonifacio to stay there.

Frasquito doesn't like it but complies. For the rest of the movie, various people come to the hotel and ask if the new executioner is staying there--Frasquito denies it, but when the potential guests turn to leave (because they want to be in the hotel with their friend), Frasquito quickly changes his mind (in one case saying, "When you said *verdugo*, I thought you meant Sr. Verdugo, not the actual executioner."). Before too long, doña Nieves, Presentita, Sinapismo, Angelini, Madame Perrín and don Ismaelito are all guests at the hotel in addition to Bonifacio.



Other guests include ill-tempered actor Talmilla and British businessman Koles. Koles is fascinated with macabre topics and asks Bonifacio about his work. Bonifacio, thinking he's talking about the rabbit poison, says the *conejos* will die painlessly. "I guess that's good for their families," Koles replies. "Oh,

I'm going to kill them all, young and old," Bonifacio says. "There won't be a *conejo* left alive."

A series of misunderstandings result in Sinapismo clubbing hotel employee Pedro Luis (who's dressed in a Roman gladiator costume for the Good Friday religious procession), thinking he's the executioner.

Angelini mistakes Talmilla for the executioner and punches him in the nose. Koles gets in an argument with Angelini and is pushed into the fountain; he insists on having a duel with the aggressive circus performer, but



Angelini doesn't show up. Bonifacio is convinced that the only solution to all of the problems is to commit suicide, but he's too timid to do it, so he tries to irritate Talmilla and Angelini enough to make them kill him, but they refuse.

Finally, everything is resolved. The Conejos are given a stay of execution. Angelini runs off with Madame Perrín, doña Nieves will marry Bonifacio and Presentita can wed Rosendito.

One of the interesting things about *El verdugo de Sevilla* is the opportunity to see two of Mexican cinema's finest actors performing against type--or at least, against the type of character they're best known for playing. Fernando Soler, usually cast as an



imposing middle-age authority figure, had previously portrayed the mild-mannered "Plácido Bueno" in *Pobre diablo* and *Con su amable permiso* (both 1940), and he largely repeats that sort of role here as "Bonifacio Bonilla," the

diffident failed inventor. Sara García, remembered today primarily as "The Grandmother of Mexico," appears in *El verdugo de Sevilla* as a character close to her own actual age, without grey hair (and with teeth), doña Nieves.

Although Soler and García are the two top-billed stars, *El verdugo de Sevilla* is really an ensemble film, with even players in relatively small roles getting their moment or two to shine. (This doesn't include Ricardo Montalbán, who does nothing distinctive in his few moments of screen time, nor Roberto Cañedo, who can only be glimpsed for a

split second in a montage sequence.) Cliff Carr discards his usual *gringo* act to play a pompous British man (who smokes a pipe instead of Carr's usual cigar), complete with monocle. He's the butt of some jokes but is not necessarily any more ridiculous than Madame Perrín (French) or Angelini (Italian).

El verdugo de Sevilla is a delightful comedy which clearly shows its stage origins but is still cinematically entertaining. [One jarring sequence inserted to "open up" the story combines stock footage of the Good Friday procession in Sevilla with a medium close-up of Sara García and Fernando Soler allegedly in the crowd--they're clearly just walking in place and the dialogue they share could have easily been delivered in another setting. There's also an added courtroom scene at the beginning of the film depicting the Conejos receiving the death sentence.] The characterisations and dialogue are highly amusing, the production values are satisfactory, and overall this is a very fine film.



Espionaje en el Golfo [Espionage in the Gulf] (Prods. R. de A., 1942) *Dir:* Rolando Aguilar; *Scr:* Roberto O'Quigley; *Photo:* Lauron Draper; *Music:* Jorge Pérez; *Prod Chief:* Enrique Morfín; *Asst Dir:* Américo Fernández; *Film Ed:* Mario del Río; *Art Dir:* José Rodríguez G.; *Sound:* Eduardo Fernández; *Studio:* Azteca; *Shooting begins:* September 1942

Cast: Julián Soler (*Luis Navarro*), Raquel Rojas (*Linda Moran*), José Baviera (*Eric Von Steiner*), Carlos Villarías (*don Pepe González*), Antonio Bravo (*Dr. Guillermo Vasco*), Víctor Velázquez (*Carlos Martínez*), Clifford Carr (*William O'Malley*),

Annelies Morgan (*Mary Lou**), José L. Murillo (*Capt. García*), José Elías Moreno (*Nazi henchman*), Charles Rooner (*first speaker at conference*), Ignacio Peón (*chairman of conference*), Gilberto González (*heckler at conference*), Salvador Quiroz (*Col. Estrada*), María Cecila Leger (*hotel maid*), Juan García (*Naval officer*), Bill Miller (*Miller, Nazi agent*), Stefan Verne (*Nazi henchman*), Ramón G. Larrea (*newspaper employee*), Eufrosina García "La Flaca" (*don Pepe's secretary*)

*some sources list her character as "Betty Lou," but it doesn't sound like that at all.

Notes: this is a rather good spy film with decent production values and location shooting, a solid cast, a fair amount of action, and a rousing propaganda conclusion.

Espionaje en el Golfo went into production at the beginning of September 1942, 3 months after Mexico declared war on the Axis (1 June 1942). The impetus for Mexico joining the Allies was the sinking of two Mexican tankers, the "Potrero del Llano" on 14 May and the "Faja de Oro" on 21 May 1942; both incidents are referred to in the film, as is the declaration of war itself.

Espionaje en el Golfo begins with stock footage representing the sinking of the "Potrero del Llano," with a "Mayo 14 de 1942" superimposed title, and one bit of original footage: as two sailors climb a ladder on the sinking ship,



there is a closeup of a life jacket labeled "Potrero del Llano" and a bloodstain that resembles a swastika! The front page of the (actual) *Excelsior* newspaper announcing the sinking is shown in closeup.

Excelsior editor don Pepe wants to send reporter Luis to Miami to interview the *Potrero del Llano* survivors, but Luis is on a tour of bars and *cantinas* with Mary Lou, a blonde "Follies" chorus girl. Don Pepe sends a message informing Luis he's fired, so Luis finally visits the newspaper office. Another reporter has flown to Miami, but Luis is given one more chance: interview Dr. Vasco, whose plane was forced down in Guatemala and is traveling--now by train--to Mexico for a conference. Somehow Luis catches the train before it reaches Mexico City (did he take a plane?) and meets Dr. Vasco. He also bumps into an attractive young woman, Linda, and flirts with her. When two men attempt to abduct Linda at gunpoint



while the train is stopped, Luis intervenes, knocking out one man; Linda shoots the other before he can kill Luis. However, this causes them to miss the train, and they hire a car, narrowly escaping capture by the police. Linda won't explain why the men were pursuing her (they were searching for documents she has, but Luis doesn't know this). When they arrive in Mexico City (on a bus, disguised as *campesinos*), Linda gives Luis the slip, and he's chewed out by don Pepe for failing to get the interview with Dr. Vasco.

Dr. Vasco appears at a Latin American conference. He makes a speech urging Latin American nations to remain neutral in the war and concentrate on their own progress, but is interrupted by a heckler who accuses Vasco of being in the pay of the Nazis. The man is hustled away by two thugs.



Luis is at the conference and spots Linda there: he insists she tell him what's going on. Linda is also greeted by Von Steiner, the secret head of the Nazi spy organisation in

Mexico. Linda asks Luis to meet U.S. agent O'Malley, arriving the next day. She has documents he needs to fight the Nazi infiltration of Latin America.

Linda is a double agent, and pretends to be helping Von Steiner and the Nazi cause. If Mexico enters the war on the side of the Allies, won't Von Steiner have to flee? The Nazi spy leader says he's planned for this, but the fifth column work will continue, disseminating "confusion, doubt, fear, demoralising...false rumours, lies, all the lies we need to achieve our goals."

The Germans sink another Mexican ship, the "Faja de Oro." In a bar, Luis's friend Carlos learns his brother was killed in the attack. Carlos tells Luis the tanker was empty and was sunk without warning. Luis sympathises with him. Carlos: "Aren't there any free countries in the world?" Luis: "That's what millions of men are fighting for, Carlos: the right to be free in the whole world." When three of Von Steiner's men warn Luis to stop investigating Nazi espionage, a brawl breaks out and Carlos joins in to help his friend.

U.S. agent O'Malley arrives in Mexico City, and Luis passes him the information Linda obtained in Central America (which was why the two Nazi agents on the train were after her): a list of Nazis in Latin America and their plans. O'Malley meets with Col. Estrada of the Mexican secret service and an aide in a hotel room, but Von Steiner's men abduct

O'Malley at gunpoint. After they leave, Luis blunders into the room and a gunfight between the Nazi agent left behind and the two Mexican officials leaves them all (except Luis) dead.

Linda accompanies Von Steiner to his hideout, where she sees O'Malley, bound and gagged. Von Steiner discovers Linda is working for the Allies.



They plan to decamp for a *hacienda* on the Veracruz coast. Linda tries to help O'Malley escape, but the U.S. agent is callously executed by Von Steiner. Linda manages to drop a note on the street with information about the Nazi plan.

Thanks to the note and an amazing coincidence, Luis discovers the Nazi hideout is located at the *hacienda* owned by Carlos's family (to be fair, earlier in the film Carlos did mention it was rented to "foreigners" who might be "fifth columnists"). Accompanied by young Carlitos and his father, the two men take a boat to the *hacienda*. After dropping Luis nearby, Carlos pretends he's just checking up on his property, but one of the Nazis recognises him as Luis's friend (from the café brawl earlier). Luis is spotted nearby and Von Steiner shoots at him with a sniper rifle, hitting young Carlitos instead (he shoots a second time and wounds Luis). Aided by a



boatload of Mexican Navy sailors who arrive just in time, Luis defeats the Nazis, shoots Von Steiner, and rescues Linda. He then makes a radio broadcast of the story back to don Pepe at the newspaper (he's apparently dictating

his story, not making an actual radio speech, but it isn't exactly structured that way). [This sequence is quite reminiscent of a similar speech at the end of *Foreign Correspondent*, 1940.]

"I did not have to leave the country to be in the presence of the tragedy and suffering of those millions of unfortunates who have fallen under the military boot of the Nazi aggressors...I have felt the suffering of the fathers and the brothers, the wives and the children, of all those sacrificed in Norway, in

France, in Greece...an innocent 12-year-old boy has fallen, fatally wounded by a bullet fired without mercy by those who also fired on our own sailors...That boy and those sailors could hardly have hindered the voracity of the conquerors! Now I know that every free man, every heart that loves liberty and equality will be implacably eliminated because they hinder them. We must wake up! The danger surrounds us! It is the same danger that has surrounded the world with flames and covered it with blood. Comrades, companions, friends, brothers, we're in the line of fire! Under the same threats, with the same risks. We must wake up! We must all join together to fulfill our duty to preserve liberty, to defend the rights of man, to conserve the progress of humanity. Comrades, friends, brothers, wake up!"

Espionaje en el Golfo concludes with a montage of actuality footage, including President Ávila Camacho declaring war, and numerous military parades.

Espionaje en el Golfo is a good *pastiche* of Hollywood & British spy films. Luis is a typical hard-drinking, womanising, intrepid reporter, and Linda--while her actual origins are unclear, she's clearly not Mexican--is the mysterious female secret agent playing a dangerous double game. Von Steiner is a curious villain: José Baviera, his hair dyed



blonde and shorn of his usual moustache, looks a bit like Liberace-with-a-monocle, and doesn't really project an air of sinister Teutonic menace. However, he does contribute to the two most shocking moments in the film, the cold-blooded murder of O'Malley and the death

of young Carlitos. These are both set up effectively. O'Malley is tied to a chair and gagged; Linda tries to cut his bonds with a pen-knife, but when the Nazis return, she gives the knife to O'Malley. However, Von Steiner then shoots the helpless O'Malley twice before leaving the room with Linda. At least there's no blood visible, which cannot be said for the death of Carlitos. Carlitos, 12 years old, peeks in the window of the *hacienda* and sees the Nazis, then runs to warn Luis when Von Steiner appears on a balcony with a rifle. Carlitos is shot, falling into Luis's arms, his shirt very bloody, crying for his mother. Interestingly enough, the fate of Carlitos is left open for a time: only in Luis's radio report does he indicate the boy died of his wounds.

This is one of the films in which Clifford Carr's character is wholly heroic, without any notable *gringo* mannerisms or flaws (except for dying rather ignominiously, but not through any fault of his own).

He's a competent secret agent and cooperates fully with the Mexican authorities. Carr could speak Spanish well when the script allowed it, and this is one of those circumstances.

There were at least two other *estadounidenses* in the cast of *Espionaje en el Golfo*. William Colfax "Bill" Miller plays a Nazi agent and speaks heavily-accented Spanish. Miller fought in Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish Civil War, then moved to Mexico and had a (García Riera's words) "marginal" film career there.

Annelies Morgan, who plays "Mary Lou," apparently made no other films, but she was a student actress at the University of Wisconsin and Stanford University in the 1930s (her father was a professor of German at both institutions), worked for a New York art dealer, appeared on stage for Fernando Wagner's Teatro Panamericano, served as a translator, and married artist John Masteller, an American resident in Mexico. She later returned to the USA and worked as a radio actress under the name "Lisa Morgan." It's very possible Morgan got the role in *Espionaje en el Golfo* on Cliff Carr's recommendation, since he was also a member of the Teatro Panamericano company and had appeared in several plays with her.

Antonio Bravo, as Dr. Vasco, speaks with a slight Argentine accent (perhaps a nod at Argentina's

neutrality for most of WWII), but is apparently supposed to be from another, "small" country in Latin America (at one point he says he spent time in Argentina and Brazil, which indicates he's not from either of



those countries). His pro-neutrality speech is not well-received by the conference attendees, including one who accuses Vasco of ordering his enemies beaten and even murdered. Vasco is later exposed as "as much a Nazi as if he was born in Germany. He's the secret leader of a mass political movement in Latin America that supports the Third Reich."

Trivia notes: Charles Rooner, demoted from his role of chief Nazi agent in *Soy puro mexicano*, has a one-scene cameo as a German-accented speaker at the Latin American conference in *Espionaje en el Golfo*.

Roberto O'Quigley, who collaborated on the script of *Soy puro mexicano*, wrote the screenplay for *Espionaje en el Golfo*. O'Quigley was a Canadian-born writer and director who had written a handful of Hollywood Westerns in the early sound era, then

relocated to Mexico. He married a Mexican actress and directed 6 feature films (including *Padre de más de cuatro* with Cliff Carr in 1938), writing more than a dozen, although he had only one credit after 1950.



Cinco fueron escogidos shot Nov 1942 Carr appears in English language version only

Prod: Alpha Films; Dir: Herbert Kline

Cliff Carr does not appear in the Mexican-cast version of this film. An English-language version, known as "Five Were Chosen," was made simultaneously with a mostly different cast. This film was apparently released in the USA and the UK, but cannot be located today. Full review of the Mexican version in **MFB 21/3**



Konga roja [Red Congo] (Producciones Raul de Anda, 1943) Dir/Scr: Alejandro Galindo; Photo: Víctor Herrera; Music Dir: Rosalio Ramírez; Prod Chief: Enrique Morfín; Asst Dir: Luis Abbadie; Film Ed: José Bustos; Art Dir: José Rodríguez G.; Cost Des: Armando Valdez Peza; Sound Rec: B.J. Kroger; Studio: Azteca; Shooting begins: March 1943

Cast: Pedro Armendáriz (*Federico Robles*), María Antonieta Pons (*Rosa*), Tito Junco (*Armando Silva*), Toña la Negra (*Marta*), Carlos López Moctezuma (*Macario Carrera*), Luis G. Barreiro (*doctor*), Clifford Carr (*Mr. Powers*), Salvador Quiroz (*don Rómulo*), [Guillermo] "El Indio" Calles (*Cambujo*), Raúl Guerrero (*Barba*), Max L[angler] Montenegro (*Mestizo*), Paco Astol (*Merengue, waiter*), Hernán Vera (*don Rufino*), Leonor Martorell (*Catalina*), "Son Clave de Oro" (*musical group*), Wello Rivas (*singer*), Jorge Arriaga & José L. Murillo (*henchmen*), Alfredo Varela Sr. (*ship's captain*), Ignacio Peón (*don Martín*), Alfonso Jiménez "Kilómetro" (?*Armando's assistant with umbrella*), José Ignacio Rocha (*banana grower*), Fakir Harris (*waiter*), Stefan Verne (*sailor on dock*)

Notes: An entertaining, extremely well-produced and directed tropical drama. The plot borrows quite heavily from *The Virginian*, transposing the Wild West and cattle rustling to the Caribbean and banana rustling! The overall *mise-en-scene* (art direction, photography) is excellent, including a very large and

elaborate set for the "Siete Mares" (Seven Seas) saloon. The other production values are quite good--there is even some nice exterior location shooting (in Tuxpan, Veracruz) which adds a lot to the overall impact of the film--and the crowd scenes boast a decent number of extras.



Viewers expecting a María Antonieta Pons musical are likely to be disappointed: Alejandro Galindo seems to have deliberately shot her musical numbers in a "non-star" fashion, either showing Pons in extreme long-shot (sometimes even from behind!) or in low-angle closeup focusing on her shoulders and face. Pons sings rather more than she dances in the film, but even in numbers like "Babalú" and "Bongocero"--sung by others--her dancing is not highlighted at all. She looks great, wears revealing costumes, and dances energetically, but Galindo is more interested in the overall *mise-en-scene* than he is in presenting a glossy, Hollywood-style musical sequence.

There are 3 songs in the first 16 minutes (two by Pons, one by Toña la Negra) and Galindo shoots them (and the others in *Konga roja*) in the same fashion, long or medium shots of the performers with frequent cutaways to long shots of the interior of the Siete Mares club, closeups of the principals (Armendáriz, Junco, etc.) watching, closeups of the band members, etc.

A ship (a decent but obvious model) arrives in Puerto Largo, a small Caribbean port (the exact location isn't specified, but it is certainly NOT Africa, so the film's title is a bit odd). Federico Robles disembarks. He is the new local superintendent of the Star Fruit Company, whose representative, Mr. Powers, tells Federico they have been having trouble filling their quota of bananas.



Rival buyer Macario Carrera will stop at nothing to sabotage their operations; his henchman Mestizo even shoots and kills don Martin, a grower who refuses to sell to Macario. One of Macario's part-time henchmen is Armando Silva, an old friend of Federico's. When they were both working in Puerto Rico, Armando saved Federico's life. Armando refuses to take a steady job with Federico's company, preferring to earn the odd illegal dollar. He has been having an affair with singer Marta, who nursed him through a bout of fever, but is now concentrating his efforts on the fiery dancer Rosa. Rosa rejects his attentions since she is Marta's friend (Rosa is also attracted to Federico, once he arrives).

Cambujo, a malaria-stricken old Indian who relies on Macario for his quinine (sort of a filmic euphemism for drug addiction), kills Barba, Federico's assistant, who is guarding a bargeload of bananas. Later, Armando, and the rest of Macario's gang hijack a shipment of fruit, but are captured by Federico and his men. Macario escapes undetected. Federico wants to offer Armando and the others



immunity (and a ticket out of Puerto Largo) if they identify the ringleader, but the men refuse to talk and the banana growers insist on making an example out of the rustlers.

"We're going to let you go at dawn," says don Rómulo. "Why do we have to wait until dawn?" one rustler asks. "So we can see you when you leave," is the reply. After a long, suspenseful scene, Armando and the others are "shot while trying to escape."

Federico, searching for Macario upriver, is shot from ambush by the villain (who has also murdered Cambujo to eliminate him as a witness). He is nursed back to health by Rosa. Returning to town, Federico is confronted by Macario who actually says "Puerto Largo isn't big enough for both of us." If Federico doesn't leave on the boat that night, the next time they meet there will be a duel. Rosa begs Federico to leave, saying "[Macario's] the best shot in the region." When Federico gives her the "a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do" excuse, she replies: "Do you think a woman loves a man because he's brave? Or loves him less because he's a coward?"

Later that evening, Macario and Federico have a showdown on the docks, and even though Macario tries to shoot his opponent in the back, Federico manages to draw first and kill Macario. Peace returns to Puerto Largo.

As can be seen from the previous synopsis, *Konga roja* borrows plot elements from *The Virginian* in particular, and Westerns in general, right down to rustling, gunfights, the long buildup to the final showdown, and so forth. Instead of Richard Arlen being lynched for cattle rustling, Tito Junco has the *ley fuga* applied to him for trying to hijack a shipment of bananas. Pedro Armendariz takes Gary Cooper's role, while Carlos López Moctezuma plays Walter Huston as "Trampas." Galindo had worked in Hollywood before returning to Mexico, and a number of his films pay homage to Hollywood genres, but few as closely as *Konga roja*.



The acting is generally fine, with Tito Junco being particularly good. The supporting cast is filled with familiar faces. Galindo's direction is very smooth and assured. He varies his camera angles--especially using low-angle shots, requiring ceilings on many of the sets--and moves his camera effectively; the composition of the shots themselves, as well as the lighting, is excellent. Galindo stages the action

scenes--such as the attack on the banana boat and the subsequent gun battle when Federico's men arrive (this scene was filmed on an actual boat and barge on a real river, not a studio mockup)--professionally, something of a rarity in Mexican cinema which had no tradition of action pictures, second units, and stuntmen. At the climax, he milks the suspense efficiently and even in an amusing manner: Macario walks into the crowded saloon and the crowd falls silent; when he leaves, they begin talking again. Then Federico comes in, and the crowd falls silent, again; when he leaves, they start talking again!



One problem with *Konga roja* is that it really has two climaxes, the death of Armando and his cohorts

and the final showdown between Macario and Federico. There is such a big buildup to the first one that, when it's over, there is an inevitable let-down and the film seems to drag until Macario gets his just desserts.

Trivia note: according to García Riera, Pedro Armendáriz replaced Raúl de Anda in the leading role, after de Anda was hit in the face with a vine. De Anda can reportedly be seen in some long shots, although these aren't readily noticeable.

Overall, a very slick, stylish and entertaining picture.

Reprinted (with additions and changes) from MFB Vol. 5 No. 7 (March 1999)



Naná shot Oct 1943

Prod: Alberto Santander; Dir: Celestino Gorostiza (and Roberto Gavaldón, uncredited)

Cliff Carr plays banker Steiner (with beard and monocle) who becomes the first "sugar daddy" of Naná (Lupe Vélez). When he goes bankrupt, she moves on to other wealthy patrons.



El mexicano shot May 1944



Prod: Películas de México; Dir: Agustín P. Delgado

Cliff Carr is a *gringo* (again) in this adaptation of a Jack London story about a Mexican boxer (David Silva) who fights to provide funds for the Mexican Revolution. London's story was adapted to the screen again by Hollywood in the 1950s, and twice more in Mexico (in the '60s and '70s).



Sinfonía de una vida

shot March 1945

Prod: Alejandro Salkind; Dir: Celestino Gorostiza
Biography



of composer Miguel Lerdo de Tejada (Julián Soler). After many struggles he forms an orchestra that plays "typical" Mexican music. Promoter Smith (Carr) arranges a U.S. tour for the orchestra.



Escuadrón 201 shot May 1945 Carr cut from existing prints

Prod: Productores de Películas & Films Mundiales; Dir: Jaime Salvador

Fictionalised tale of Squadron 201, a Mexican unit that fought in the Pacific during World War II. Although Cliff Carr is billed as "Johnny," he does not appear in existing prints. One assumes his character appeared in the sequences set in Brownsville, Texas, where the Mexican airmen train.



Guadalajara pues... (Prods. Raúl de Anda, 1945) Prod/Dir: Raúl de Anda; Adapt/Dialog: Carlos Gaytán, X. Randa; Story: Ernesto Cortázar, Raúl de Anda; Photo: Domingo Carrillo; Music: Rosalío Ramírez; Prod Chief: Guillermo Alcaide; Asst Dir: Carlos L. Cabello; Film Ed: Carlos Savage; Art Dir: José Rodríguez G.; Camera Op: Enrique Wallace; Sound: B.J.

Kroger, Francisco Alcaide; Studio: Azteca; Shooting begins: May 1945

Cast: Luis Aguilar (*Pedro*), Joan Page (*Betty Smith*), Agustín Isunza ("*Joe*



Flowers" aka *José Flores*), Katy Jurado (*Rosa*), Amanda del Llano (*Lupita*), Miguel Inclán (*Filiberto Correa*), A[rturo] Soto Rangel (*Atiliano González*), Clifford Carr (*Billy Smith*), Guadalupe Inclán (*Petra*), Roberto Cañedo (*Vicente*), Raúl Guerrero (*Donato*), Teddy Múzquiz (*Jorgito*), José L. Murillo (*campesino*), Ignacio Peón (*party guest*), Hernán Vera (*potter*), José Pardavé (*Nico*)

Notes: this is an interesting film but not necessarily a very good one. The plot is interrupted by several long sequences of actuality footage, not to mention numerous songs, and what seems to be the climax comes about 15 minutes before the end of the picture, leaving a long time before the foregone conclusion is finally arrived at.

On the other hand, *Guadalajara pues...* prominently features *gringos* in its cast and makes them central to the plot, a bit of a novelty for the time. Also of interest is the portrayal of a *pocho* (a Mexican who has become "Americanized"), and a World War Two reference even sneaks in.



In the small town of Tlaquepaque, don Atiliano receives a mysterious letter in English. The helpful cantina bartender, a former *bracero*, reads it: "Joe Flowers" sends his greetings to his *compadre* Atiliano and says he is returning to Mexico after 14 years in the USA. Atiliano realizes "Joe" is José Flores. Filiberto complains that Flores left his sister Petra at the altar when he departed, but Atiliano says let bygones be bygones.

Joe arrives in Tlaquepaque with his employers, Betty and Billy Smith (brother and sister). They are made welcome by don Atiliano, his grown daughter Lupita, his almost-grown son Jorgito, and--when he arrives later--his other son Pedro. Betty is an attractive blonde but wears wire-rimmed glasses and concentrates on business, even during the fiesta that don Atiliano throws to welcome his guests.

Billy and Lupita are attracted to each other, and Pedro and Betty become friendly (Pedro punches a drunk who makes a pass at Betty while they are



watching a parade). This is upsetting to Filiberto, who wants his lazy son Donato to marry Lupita, and his attractive daughter Rosa to marry Pedro.

Billy and Betty are in Tlaquepaque to set up a business, importing the pottery that don Atiliano makes in his factory. However, the "factory" turns out to be three or four guys working in a shed, with no machinery. The Smiths need much more product than Atiliano can provide. He suggests that he organize all of the pottery-makers in the area to supply the Smiths, but Filiberto beats him to this plan. Billy signs a contract with Filiberto. To top it off, don Atiliano owes Filiberto a debt of 10,000 pesos.

Pedro and the repentant Billy come up with an idea. A cooperative is formed among the *alfareros* (pottery-makers), with a loan from Billy to pay back

the money that Filiberto had advanced them. The members of the co-op also give don Atiliano the money he needs to pay off Filiberto.

Rosa, disappointed at losing Pedro, tells Betty that he doesn't really love her. Betty goes to Guadalajara to catch a plane back to the USA. Pedro follows, but she has already departed...apparently. But Betty lost her seat on the plane to a military officer on official business (this was during WWII, remember), so she returns to her hotel and there she and Pedro reconcile.

The characters of Betty and Billy Smith are presented in a very fair and even-handed way. While obviously foreigners, they speak Spanish (reasonably well--in fact, when the Smiths' car runs out of gas



and they have to ask a passing *campesino* for assistance, the man can't understand Joe's fractured Spanglish, but Betty's Spanish is perfectly intelligible to him), and have an appreciation for Mexican customs and values. Betty calls bull-fighting a "savage diversion" but Billy enjoys it; when Pedro tells Betty that he will show her the bridge "where Cortés met La Malinche," Betty (who knows her Mexican history) says "Wasn't that in Tabasco?" (they are in the state of Jalisco).

Betty is something of a sex object (when she arrives at don Atiliano's house she changes into a bathrobe that reveals her legs, and there is a wolf whistle on the soundtrack), and the Smith's single-minded concentration on business (Billy even uses the phrase "Business is business," which is used in Mexican cinema to explain any ruthless deal) is a typical *gringo* trait in Mexican movies, but the visitors are not ridiculed excessively (Billy gets drunk and falls into a fountain but is less of a comic figure than either the would-be womanizer Jorgito or the practically comatose Donato) and in fact are allowed to pair off (presumably permanently) with Lupita and Pedro, respectively.



Less attractive is Joe Flowers, the Mexican who has been living in the USA for more than a decade. As noted, when the Smiths' car runs out of gas, Joe

tries to talk to a passing *campesino*, but his mangled English-Spanish is incomprehensible to the man. Joe also wears outlandish "cowboy"-style outfits. Late in the film, he is captured by his former fiancée, Petra, who orders him at machete-point to eat her unused wedding gown! Instead, Joe changes back to José, regains his Spanish fluency (even using the "pues'n" phrase that the locals insert frequently into their sentences), and marries Petra.

Raúl de Anda was very proud of his Mexican heritage and his films frequently contain "folkloric" aspects, but in *Guadalajara pues...* this is done in such a manner that the pace of the picture is seriously hampered. There is a long sequence of a parade, intercutting actual footage with studio shots of the actors observing it. The parade includes numerous marchers wearing "Aztec" and other pre-Conquest outfits (also some dressed like conquistadores), "folkloric" dancers (from Michoacán), and even some U.S.-style floats. There is a curious bit in this sequence: a young boy turns to his mother and says "Look at the *inditos*, mama." The mother is dressed in "typical" Mexican dress and has *mestiza* features, which points out the distinctions in Mexico in class and race (ironically, it seems to me, but possibly this was not de Anda's intention).

In addition to the extended parade sequence, there is also a long bullfight sequence (again, intercutting actual footage with studio footage), that concludes with the death of the bull and its carcass being dragged out of the ring. Towards the end of the film there is another sequence with a lot of actuality footage, this time of a massed group of *mariachis* and dancers, allegedly part of the "celebration" of the establishment of the cooperative. This comes after Filiberto's defeat, and should have been the end of the movie, but instead there is another quarter hour of intrigue with Rosa, Betty's departure for Guadalajara, another song from Pedro who's standing outside her hotel, Betty's trip to the airport, scenes in the hotel lobby, and so forth.

The cast is adequate: Luis Aguilar is satisfactory, but tends to get lost among the rest, especially given the presence of scene-stealers like Isunza, the two Incláns, and Carr. Joan Page is attractive but isn't given much of a personality (she starts off as assertive and business-like, but loses this and gets pretty insipid once she and Pedro start to like each other); Katy Jurado is surly, Amanda del Llano is sweet but definitely a supporting player. The production values are decent, although the contrast between the actuality footage and the studio footage is obvious.

Guadalajara pues... is useful for historical purposes, but its entertainment value is hampered by the relatively poor pacing.

Reprinted with edits from MFB 6/8 May 2000



El agente Víctor contra Arsenio Lupin shot July 1945



Prod: Ramón Pereda; Dir. Ramón Peón

Sequel to *Arsenio Lupin*. In early 20th-century Paris, someone steals valuable government bonds. Gentleman thief Arsenio Lupin (Pereda) poses as secret policeman Víctor and eventually exposes Count Antonio as the culprit. Cliff Carr plays a British accomplice of Count Antonio, but has almost no dialogue and nothing to do (other than to be murdered, late in the film). Full review **MFB 19/4**



Las memorias de una vampiresa [Memoirs of a Vampires] (Pereda Films, 1945) Dir: Ramón Peón; Scr: RP [Ramón Pereda]; Addtl Dialog: Ramón Pérez; Inspired by the Work by: A. Laszo ("Pájaro de fuego" [Firebird])*; Photo: Jesús Hernández Gil; Song: Teddy Fregoso; Prod Mgr: Juan Mari; Prod Chief: Enrique M. Hernández; Asst Dir: Valerio Olivo; Film Ed: Alfredo Rosas; Asst Ed: Eufemio Rivera; Art Dir: Ramón Rodríguez; Camera Op: Manuel Santaella; Asst Cam: Fernando Galicia; Makeup: Román Juárez; A. Lamar's Gowns: Delia; Sound Engin: José B. Carles; Special Titles: Saviur y Eddy de Cine-Servicio; Studio: Azteca; Shooting began: August 1945

*this is how the source is credited on the main title of the film; it has proved difficult to find any other references to this play. Curiously, Pereda's *Pecado de una madre* (1943) was also based on a play titled "Firebird," this one by Laszlo Zilahy. One wonders if

the attribution on the main title card of *Las memorias de una vampiresa* is actually erroneous. The book "Ramón Peón: El hombre de los glóbulos negros" by Arturo Agramonte and Luciano Castillo indicates the screenplay for this film was not a literary adaptation.

Cast: Adriana Lamar (*Virginia Sol*), Ramón Pereda (*Roberto*), Jesús Valero (*Juan Copillo*), José Goula (*Francisco Fernando, Conde de Villana*), Elena D'Orgaz (*Rosa*), Juan Pulido (*opera singer*), Antonio Palacios (*Juan, the minister*), Felipe Montoya (*Tomás Bertier*), Cliff Carr (*Colonel*), Francisco Reiguera (*butler*), María Elena de la Cruz, Ramón G. Larrea (*ex-lover*), Manuel Nogaes, Micaela Castrejón, Guillermo [Alvarez] Bianchi (*ex-lover*), José L. Suari

Notes: solid information about this film is very hard to come by. Made in August 1945 but apparently never shown theatrically in Mexico City, even comprehensive works such as Emilio García



Riera's *Historia documental del cine mexicano* have only the most basic cast and crew data. Virtually no "paper" material--

aside from a Spanish handbill--can be found. As a result, this title is sometimes included in "Vampire Film" lists, on the assumption that it might be supernatural. It isn't--it's a comedy, apparently adapted from a stage play, although even that is difficult to prove (as noted above).

Memorias de una vampiresa is set in an undefined time and place. The monetary unit referred to is *francos* (i.e., francs), which would suggest France or some other place in Europe (Switzerland, Belgium, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco). There are oblique references to the "world war" and the "atomic bomb," so presumably this is a contemporary rather than pre-war setting (but this lines could have easily been added for the film, since one assumes the original play--if it even exists--was pre-war).

Newspapers report actress Virginia is writing her memoirs, in which she will name her numerous lovers, among them many influential and wealthy men. These include the Count of Villana and a government minister, who fear their social status will be ruined if they are exposed. Virginia is living in a large country house, accompanied by her secretary Rosa. The Count visits, hoping to convince Virginia to change her mind about the book. A number of other ex-lovers are expected to show up as well.

Meanwhile, Roberto sends his chauffeur Juan into the house on the pretext that their car broke down. Juan chats up secretary Rosa and learns Virginia keeps a large sum of money there. Hearing this, Roberto goes to meet Virginia; while he's waiting, he encounters Tomás, another former boyfriend of the actress. Roberto pretends to be in the same boat, and accepts 10,000 francs from Tomás to pay off Virginia. Tomás departs, and when Virginia arrives, Roberto pretends to be him--Virginia doesn't recognise him, but she had only a brief fling with Tomás seven years before, and Roberto knows the pet names they used, so she accepts his claim.

Other ex-lovers show up, including a British colonel, an Italian opera singer, a banker, the government minister, and even the grown son of an ex who couldn't come himself. Virginia insists she's going to publish her memoirs, although she confesses privately to Roberto that she just wants to throw a scare



into the men, as payback for the way men have always treated their ex-lovers. Roberto holds a meeting with the group, assuring them that he can dissuade Virginia, but each ex-lover must pay him 50,000 francs when he delivers their pages from the manuscript and their love letters to Virginia.

Meanwhile, Juan has been romancing Rosa, and convinces her to sign her bank account over to him in anticipation of their marriage.

The next day, the ex-lovers depart. However, Tomás returns and Virginia discovers Roberto is an impostor. She thinks he's a swindler but he explains: he's a wealthy man who likes "adventures," and intends to use the money he'll get from the ex-lovers for charity. Virginia, who loves Roberto, agrees to his plan and they embrace. Roberto says Juan is an old schoolmate of his who turned to crime, but will now go straight (and legitimately marry Rosa). This *denouement* is something of surprise,



albeit a slight cheat: the film earlier suggests Roberto and Juan are going to steal money kept in Virginia's house rather than swindle the ex-lovers, only one of whom has even arrived at the mansion when they show up. Consequently, either this is a script flaw, or Roberto somehow knew the ex-lovers would be there and he was deceiving Juan about the actual scheme.

[Speaking of errors, it's made clear that Tomás and Virginia had a brief affair in Monte Carlo. However, when Virginia is talking to Roberto, she says "Biarritz." I initially thought this was her way of testing him--to see if he corrected her--but nothing ever comes of it. The script does stretch credulity by having Virginia accept Roberto as "Tomás," even though their affair lasted only 3 days and ended 7 years before: the two men look nothing alike, meaning either Virginia has an extremely poor memory or had so many lovers that she can't keep them straight!]

Most of the action in *Memorias de una vampiresa* takes place in Virginia's luxurious mansion. The sets are quite lavish, however, and there is even a bit of outdoor location footage, so the film doesn't look cheap.



Although it's technically a comedy, the film has relatively few "jokes"--most of the humour arises from the personalities of the characters. There are a few good lines, though. When Rosa signs over her bank account to Juan, she says "Do you love me?" and he replies, "*Con todos tus ahorros, digo, con todas mis fuerzas*" (roughly, "With all your savings, I mean, with all my heart"). As he departs, Rosa says "Goodbye, my treasure," and Juan replies "Truer words have never been spoken." Earlier, Tomás tells Roberto that he can't stand a scandal, "I'm the president of UFA." Roberto: "The film company?" Tomás: "No, the Unión Familiar Aristocrática [the Aristocratic Family Union]."

The performances are generally good. Ramón Pereda is suave and cheery as the suspected con man, and Jesús Valero is quite amusing as his accomplice. Adriana Lamar is fine, but Elena D'Orgaz handles more of the comedy as her ditsy secretary. Lamar, not known as a singer, performs one song during *Memorias de una vampiresa*--she's fine but the number seems out of place. There are 8 ex-lovers (counting the real Tomás) but only about half of them are given much to do: José Goula, Antonio Palacios, Felipe Montoya, and--to a lesser extent--Clifford Carr, playing a British colonel, who says "England always wins. Also, we're partners in the atomic

bomb." It's interesting to see Guillermo Alvarez Bianchi in an early role--he's still portly, but is



considerably thinner than he is in later films.

Trivia notes: Ramón Pereda was born in Spain and he populated many of his films with his countrymen.

At least half of the credited cast of *Memorias de una vampiresa* was born in Spain: Pereda, Valero, Goula, Pulido, Palacios, Reiguera, and Bianchi, and one or two of the other actors might have been. Pereda made 13 films in 1943-46 (skipping 1944 for some reason), and all of them were apparently based on pre-existing literary works (novels, plays, stories), mostly Spanish and French, although the occasional Hungarian and Italian work was also utilised. Ramón Peón was Pereda's favoured director in this era, directing nine of these films (Pereda himself directed several and Alfonso Patiño Gómez directed one).

Memorias de una vampiresa is light entertainment at best, but the time passes pleasantly enough.



El socio [The Partner] (Films Mundiales, 1945)
Exec Prod: Raúl Gutiérrez E.; *Prod:* Carlos Carriedo Galván; *Dir:* Roberto Gavaldón; *Scr:* Tito Davisón [García Riera also credits Chano Urueta]; *Orig. Novel:* Genaro [sic Jenaro] Prieto; *Photo:* Raúl Martínez Solares; *Music:* Manuel Esperón, Rosalío Ramírez; *Prod Chief:* A. Guerrero Tello; *Asst Dir:* Carlos L. Cabello; *Film Ed:* Gloria Schoemann; *Art Dir:* Manuel Fontanals; *Decor:* Antonio Guerrero Tello; *Camera Op:* Manuel Gómez Urquiza; *Costumes:* Royer; *Makeup:* Sara Herrera; *Sound Dir:* José de Pérez; *Dialog Rec:* Fernando Barrera; *Music Rec:* Manuel Esperón; *Studio:* Azteca; *Shooting begins:* September 1945

Cast: Hugo del Carril (*Julián Pardo*), Gloria Marín (*Anita*), Susana Guízar (*Leonor*), Nelly Montiel (*Graciela*), Cliff Carr (*Samuel Goldenberg*), Rafael Alcaide (*Lucho*), Federico Mariscal Jr. (*Pedrito, Julián's son*), Beatriz Ramos (*outraged woman*), Octavio Martínez (*Raúl Gutiérrez*), José Morcillo (*Col. Ramírez*), Vicente Padula (*don Fortunato*), Luis G. Barreiro (*don Ramiro*), Roberto Meyer (*don Cipriano*), Juan Pulido & Alfonso Jiménez (*men trying to see Davis*), Raymundo Guízar, Roberto Corell, Eduardo Noriega & René Cardona (*men in stock market*), Joaquín Coss (*assistant to notary*), Héctor Mateos (*party guest*); José Muñoz, Fernando Curiel & Luis Aceves Castañeda (*men in stock market*); Daniel Arroyo & Félix Samper (*men playing billiards*); María Valdealde (*woman with portrait*)

Notes: Jenaro Prieto's 1928 novel *El socio* has been filmed a number of times in various countries. In addition to the Mexican version, there have been at



least 5 other theatrical films, a TV-movie, and a TV mini-series, in France, Italy, the UK, Spain, Chile, and the USA (the latter a 1996 movie starring Whoopi Goldberg!). The Mexican *El socio* was the third film adaptation (preceded by Italian and British version) and is an extremely slick, well-produced film that has some effective aspects but does not qualify as a great picture.

Hugo del Carril was a popular tango singer in Argentina who started acting in cinema in 1936 and became a major screen star. However, after making *La cabalgata del circo*, both del Carril and fellow singer/actor Libertad Lamarque left Argentina for Mexico. That film featured the future Eva Perón in the cast, and Lamarque's clash with "Evita" during production led to her self-exile, but it's unknown if del Carril had similar issues. In any event, he made only a handful of films in Mexico before returning to Argentina (whereas Lamarque didn't make another Argentine film until the 1970s), adding directing and producing to his repertoire. Del Carril is given a number of songs in *El socio* and while most of them are tolerable, they are certainly out of place in the plot and hamper the film's pace. Particularly ludicrous is a song he sings to Gloria Marín with his lips about one inch from her ear as they cuddle. It's

also hard for the audience to accept del Carril as a impoverished businessman--who desperately needs



money at various times during the picture-- when (based on the talent he displays) he could have easily gotten a job as a professional singer!

El socio also suffers from an inconsistent tone. It's a drama, sometimes with comedic overtones, then the plot veers close to *film noir* without going all the way, finally winding up with a sappy melodramatic conclusion (after a prolonged false climax). The basic premise starts off reasonably well, but towards the end it goes off the rails: everyone assumes "Walter Davis" is dead, when they have no proof of this (not that they had any proof he ever existed in the first place). Even the name "Walter Davis" is arrived at in an unbelievable manner: Julián, pressed to name his "partner," sees a newspaper ad for a (fictitious)



film starring "WALTER Pidgeon" and "Bette DAVIS"—in that order and with that difference in font—and voila! "Walter Davis."

First, it's unlikely Walter Pidgeon would have been billed before Bette Davis. Second, I feel fairly confident in saying no movie ad would print one actor's first name LARGE and the other actor's last name LARGE. It's patently ridiculous and there's no particular reason the ad had to be printed that way—Julián could have figured it out even if the names were printed in the same size font. "Walter Bette? No. Pidgeon Davis? No. I've got it! Walter Davis!" [This does not occur in the novel: Julián had previously written down the name of his nonexistent partner, and when asked, he searches his pockets to find the napkin upon which he had written "Walter R. Davis." His inspiration for this name is not provided.]

Don Fortunato, hearing the name “Walter Davis,” says “A *gringo*, then?” Julián says “yes,” then, “no, an Englishman.” In the novel, Julián says his partner has his own way of doing things, and Fortunato says “like a good *gringo*,” which Julián takes to mean “an Englishman.” Although in Mexico *gringo* generally means someone (non-Latin) from the USA, in Argentina it applies to European immigrants (a 1984 mini-series called *Los gringos* refers especially to Italian immigrants). I’m not sure if *gringo* in Chile is a generic term for people from England, but that’s how the novel uses it.



In addition to the general production gloss and some effective direction by Roberto Gavaldón, *El socio* also has several things to recommend it. First, Clifford Carr gets perhaps his finest, most substantial role in Mexican cinema. Despite his character’s name—“Samuel Goldenberg”—he’s not stereotyped as a *gringo* (compared to “Walter Davis,” especially, who has a horrible “foreign” accent and makes various grammatical errors) and is apparently supposed to be a long-time resident of Mexico, if not



a Mexican himself (he and Julián attended the same school). Carr spoke Spanish well and in *El socio* he is not given any grammatical or pronunciation errors, nor any malapropisms. He doesn’t sound like a native speaker, but, then again, *El socio* features Argentine (del Carril, Padula), Cuban (Alcaide), and Spanish (Morcillo) actors in addition to the native Mexican performers, and all are supposedly Mexican characters in the context of the film. As Goldenberg, Carr at times seems to veer into the role of villain—or at least, a not-entirely-ethical businessman—but his character has considerable depth and when he is defeated by Julián & “Davis,” he’s quite effective and even earns the viewer’s sympathy.

Del Carril is satisfactory in his role, as is Susana Guízar (as the selfless wife), but Carr and Gloria Marín are the stand-out players in *El socio*. Marín’s character is interestingly nuanced, although her “heel” turn towards the end of the film seems slightly out of character.

Julián is a failed businessman who needs money for his ill son. Everyone he asks for a loan turns him down, claiming they “have to ask their partner” first. Goldenberg, an old school friend of Julián, offers to let him in on a slightly shady stock deal, but Julián is suspicious; rather than turn his friend down, he claims he needs to ask his partner. Later, pressed by some business acquaintances, Julián says his partner is “Walter Davis,” an eccentric and reclusive British man. Julián uses a small inheritance to buy some stock, telling broker Martínez it’s for his partner. The stock goes up, but when Julián tries to get money out of the account, he’s told he needs a power of attorney signed by “Davis.” Julián travels to a small town, disguises himself as Davis, and gets the power of attorney.



Soon, Davis is heralded as a business genius. Goldenberg asks his wife Anita to invite Julián to dinner, hoping to get an introduction to Davis. Anita and Julián fall in love and she becomes his mistress. Julián, his wife Leonor, and their son Pedrito move into a luxurious home. However, Julián is beset by people who want to sell something to Davis or otherwise take advantage of his business acumen. Julián even has to pay off a woman who claims Davis jilted her and left her with a child, although he knows it couldn’t be the nonexistent Davis (it’s later revealed that Julián’s womanising friend Lucho claimed to be Walter Davis to seduce her). No one gives Julián credit for anything.

Goldenberg tries to bankrupt Davis by short-selling a stock, but Julián foils this attempt. Goldenberg will be ruined; he asks Anita to speak to Julián on his part, but she refuses. She will, however, talk to Davis. When Julián refuses her request to meet his partner (finally admitting Davis doesn’t exist, something Anita doesn’t believe), Anita breaks off their relationship. Julián feels badly and arranges to bail out Goldenberg, but decides to end the Davis charade once and for all. He writes a letter—allegedly from Davis—to a newspaper insulting Julián, and Julián replies in kind. His friends applaud this, but insist Julián’s honour has been stained and only a duel with Davis will clear his name!

Julián goes to a small town for the “duel” and news leaks that Davis has been mortally wounded. Julián is shunned and no one will do business with him now that his “benefactor” is gone. To make matters worse, Julián hears a rumour that his wife Leonor had been having an affair with Davis—when she claims an emerald ring she owns was “a gift from Davis,” he suspects she’s been unfaithful with someone. He decides to commit suicide but changes his mind and reconciles with his family (Leonor confesses she bought the ring by selling some family heirloom earrings she never liked). Julián tells Leonor there never was a “Walter Davis” and she is impressed by his creativity (compared to Anita, who thought Julián was lying when he said that to her).



El socio looks great, with excellent sets (including a massive recreation of the Bolsa de valores or Stock Market) and a few appropriate exterior locations. The cinematography is quite stylish and effective, as is Gavaldón’s direction. One of the film’s most impressive shots occurs after Goldenberg has lost his bid to defeat Davis. A high-angle long shot shows the tiny figure of Goldenberg slowly trudging out of the deserted Bolsa de Valores.

As noted above, the script has some flaws and the film goes on for a bit too long—one would expect that the climax would be the “death” of Davis, but *El socio* continues on for about 10 minutes after that. Some judicious editing would have improved the pace, but the film’s inherent unbelievability—seen from a 21st century perspective, when the existence or non-existence of Walter Davis would have been discovered fairly quickly—is a central issue, as are the various tonal jumps.

One final note: “Walter Davis” is seen a number of times throughout the film, in double-exposure. During the false “duel,” he’s about 50 feet tall, but most of the time he is normal-sized, speaking in heavily-accented Spanish and constantly rebuking “Mister Pardo” for his actions. Davis also gets a musical leitmotif, a few notes of “For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow” on the soundtrack.

In general, *El socio* is a fine film but falls short of greatness.



Campeón sin corona shot Oct 1945
Prod: Raúl de Anda; Dir: Alejandro Galindo

Story of Mexican boxer Kid Terranova (David Silva) who is talented but never becomes world champion due to personal (and personality) issues. Cliff Carr plays “Mr. Carr,” the manager of rival boxer Joe Ronda, and appears in two sequences--the signing of the contract for the bout, and the boxing sequence itself, with Carr as one of Joe’s corner men.



Hijos de la mala vida
shot March 1946

Prod: Miguel Salkind;
Dir: Rafael E. Portas
Urban melodrama-comedy starring Manolita Saval and Fernando Soto “Mantequilla” with Cliff Carr as a priest.



Una mujer de Oriente shot April 1946
Prod/Dir: Juan Orol



Spy film set in the USA. Cliff Carr plays a detective sergeant who works with U.S. agents Col. Campbell (Juan Orol) and Capt. Raymond (Carlos Badías) to foil the plans of Japanese spy Saito (Carlos López Moctezuma) who continues to fight on despite the fact that World War II has been over for months.

Full review **MFB 18/1**



Cinco rostros de mujer shot August 1946
Prod: CLASA Films Mundiales; Dir: Gilberto Martínez Solares



The story of five women in the life of Roberto Torres (Arturo de Córdova). In one sequence, he meets Yvonne Parker on a transatlantic voyage. She is abused by her drunken husband Enrique (Carr). Roberto agrees to take some documents ashore in France for her upcoming divorce, but it's all scam--Roberto is arrested for smuggling diamonds. He is released and refuses to identify Yvonne as the actual smuggler. Full review **MFB 15/3**



Los tres García & Vuelven los García

shot beginning Oct 1946

Prod: Rodríguez Hermanos; Dir: Ismael Rodríguez

These two films were shot back-to-back beginning 21 October 1946. Cliff Carr, made up to look much older than his actual age, plays *gringo* John Smith who--with his daughter Lupita (Marga López)--visits their Mexican relatives, the García family, including Sara García, Pedro Infante, Abel Salazar, and Víctor Manuel Mendoza.



Clifford Carr Gallery



Pito Pérez se va de bracero shot Sept 1947

Prod: CLASA Films Mundiales; Dir: Alfonso Patiño Gómez



Cliff Carr appears towards the end of this film in one scene as an American judge who sentences Pito Pérez (Manuel Medel) for the latter's involvement in smuggling aliens across the boarder. Joan Page (last seen with Carr in

Guadalajara pues...) plays "herself," an entertainer with a soft spot for the philosophical vagabond Pérez. Full review in **MFB 3/9** and **23/2**



Adventures of Casanova shot -?- 1947

Prod: Bryan Foy Prods; Dir: Roberto Gavaldón

Cliff Carr plays Salvatore, a Sicilian patriot fighting with

Casanova (Arturo de Córdova) against the foreign occupiers of the island in the late 18th century. Aside from de Córdova, most of the major roles went to Hollywood performers, but there are numerous bilingual Mexican actors in the supporting cast. This and *Beyond All Limits* aka *Flor de Mayo* were Gavaldón's only English-language films.



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