



Marlene Dietrich Collection Berlin is a division of Filmmuseum Berlin - Deutsche Kinemathek

If you want your fellow fans to receive this newsletter or if you just want to add informations write to [mdcb@filmmuseum-berlin.de](mailto:mdcb@filmmuseum-berlin.de) . If you want to support the work of the Filmmuseum Berlin-Deutsche Kinemathek of which Marlene Dietrich Collection Berlin is a division you can do so by joining the "Friends and Supporters of Filmmuseum Berlin". Just go to <http://www.fffb.de>

Dear friends and fans,

We are back after the summer break and yes, we forgot to tell you that there would be a summer break at all. Our apologies. The good side of this unpolite behaviour is that it made us aware that some of you really worried if they missed a number. No, you don't. But your questions made us happy. A few of you came to visit us during their holidays. It is always exciting to see that there is a real world behind the virtual reality of the Newsletter. Keep on coming to Berlin – it is an exciting city and for Marleneacs it is the one place you have to go. Even if you have already seen the permanent exhibition there is always something new to see as we change the costumes on display quite regularly.

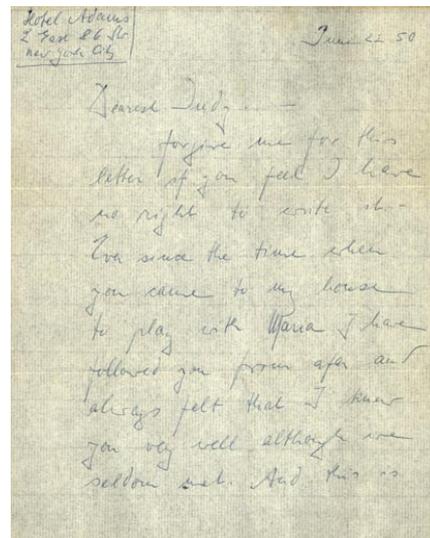
#### What I saw last summer

Silke spent her vacation in Austria and took the chance to visit St. Gilgen – the place where Marlene used to leisure up in the thirties. You surely remember that she stayed in St. Gilgen with her family and Douglas Fairbanks Jr. To make life even more pleasantly Marlene bought a bed which now is part of the collection. The house they lived in doesn't exist any more but there are still some people in St. Gilgen who remember Marlene. They used to call her "Sperrhaken- Leni", which is hard to translate. The german word "Dietrich" also has the meaning of "a key that opens all doors". In the Austrian language "Sperrhaken" is the word for "the key that opens all doors".

#### New item

The Friends and Supporters of Filmmuseum Berlin donated a letter written by Marlene to Judy Garland on June 22 in 1950 after Judy Garland tried to commit suicide. It starts:

"Dearest Judy, -  
Forgive me for this letter if you feel I have no right to write it. - Ever since the time when you came to my house to play with Maria I have followed you from afar and always felt that I knew you very well although we seldom met.  
..."



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#### New in the permanent exhibition



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Purple evening ensemble designed by Alexander & Oviat, worn by Marlene 1930 in „Dishonored“ .



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A white feathered Chiffon two-piece gown with swan head stole designed by Travis Banton. Worn by Marlene at a costume party given by Dorothy Di Frasso on July 4 1935.

Marlene appeared as Leda and the swan. If you see the costume on display you may wonder how she could move at this party without destroying her fabulous outfit. Maybe she did not move at all as everybody was moving towards her, maybe she just posed for the photographers. And who in the world was Dorothy Di Frasso, the lady who lured Marlene to that party? Here is an obit from 1954 - source unknown - and in the headline the late Dorothy Di Frasso is called

### **The Queen of adventure**

The shockingly sudden death of Countess Dorothy Di Frasso, 66, aboard a Union Pacific train on her way home from Las Vegas yesterday ended the life of one of the most colorful women in America and Europe. Dorothy apparently died shortly after the train left Las Vegas because when Clifton Webb and Tom Douglas, with whom she was returning to Los Angeles, went to awaken her she had been dead for some hours. Although she had complained of not feeling well, she had gone out New Year's Eve with Clifton and Tommy and had a wonderful time. She visited Marlene Dietrich in her dressing room. She said she was so tired she could die, and that she had better return to her suite at Hotel El Rancho Vegas. Marlene massaged

her neck and said, "You'll feel better tomorrow," not knowing that Dorothy was under treatment for an angina condition and had been warned by a doctor in Boston to take it easy. The next day, New Year's, she was unable to get up and Dr. Jack Cherry of Las Vegas was called.

She said she was so sick that she wanted to come back to Los Angeles. Tommy Douglas, the interior decorator, asked her to come to his house instead of going to Hotel Beverly Hills. Turning to Clifton and Tommy she said: "It's too bad that I am going to die so soon. I have been having such a good time. I won't be much company." She was still dressed as if for a party when they found her. She wore a stunning black sequined evening gown and a full-length mink coat.

Jewelry she had on her and which she had tucked into her luggage was estimated to be worth \$250,000. One of the pieces was a sparkling \$100,000 diamond.

Tommy said she had been eating nitro-glycerin pills "like pop-corn." She was taking as many as six at a time in the belief that they would relieve the painful pressure on her heart. A perennial party lover—and always welcomed to them because of her gay spirit—she attended her last Sunday night with Marlene, Marlene's daughter, Maria Riva, Clifton, Tommy, the Van Johnsons and other stars.

Her fabulous jewelry were turned over to the coroner, pending arrangements by her brother, Bert Taylor, former president of the New York Stock Exchange. The Taylors were flying here from Europe.

Cary Grant, a close friend of Olive and Bert Taylor, and of Dorothy, put in a long distance call to St. Moritz, Switzerland, where the Taylors have been spending the holidays to tell them of the sad news.



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Dorothy DiFrasso, Clark Gable and Marlene at Ciro's 1936.

Few have lived harder, played harder, had more fun or more adventures than Dorothy. She was born to wealth in Watertown, N. Y., and later inherited a \$12,000,000 fortune from her late father, Bertrand Taylor.

When she was still very young she married Graham White, the famous English aviator. Their brief marriage ended in divorce, in 1916 and in 1923 she married the late Count Carlo di Frasso. That marriage also ended in divorce several years later.

The beautiful Villa Madama she bought after she married Count di Frasso had ceilings painted by Raphael, fabulous art treasures, and furnishings beyond price.

After she became the Countess di Frasso her associates were Italian royalty and the villa was the scene of many parties attended by royalty and by her American friends.

Dorothy was so close to the Italian royal family that she dared to take "Bugsy" Siegel, gangster, right into the inner circle.

She never used the nickname Bugsy. To her he was Benjamin, and she never believed he was a gangster, always saying: "I don't know any Bugsy."

The first time I ever saw Dorothy di Frasso was when she came to Hollywood, invited here by Gary Cooper whom she had met on a safari in Africa. She was then quite plump, but so vivacious and attractive, and Gary was crazy about her, and she about him. This was before Lupe Velez came into his life, and long before he married Rocky.

When Dorothy saw the slim princesses in Hollywood (this, mind you, was her first visit here) she started to diet and at the time of her death couldn't have weighed more than 116 pounds.



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Dorothy and Marlene sailing on the "Buccaneer"

Her life story was filled with more color and thrills than many a movie script.

One of her most publicized adventures was the voyage of the so-called "hell-ship" Metha Nel-

son in 1938 to Central America on a treasure hunt.

Among the passengers were Marino Bello, stepfather of the late film star, Jean Harlow; a nurse, Evelyn Husby, the only other woman aboard; Richard Gulley, Hollywood sportsman and cousin of British Foreign Secretary Sir Anthony Eden, and Siegel.

The ship foundered off the Mexican coast and its passengers were rescued by an Italian vessel. Later the skipper testified that the Countess had accused Siegel of threatening to kidnap her. For three days everyone aboard was terrorized when the boatswain ran wild with a gun, the captain said.

During the ill-fated voyage, Bello married the nurse.

A Los Angeles grand jury investigated the weird voyage but indicted no one.

Once Dorothy caused a stir in society circles by curtsy to Wally Simpson, the Duchess of Windsor.



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Golden locket, given to Marlene by Dorothy Di Frasso, with a dedication engraved: "To Marlene with love from Dorothy" Reverse: "I'm lost and I'm the 'Dream Girl', please return me to the USA."

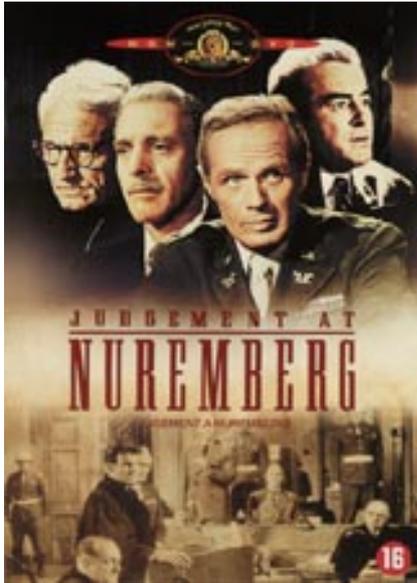
Her parties were memorable. At one time in her Beverly Hills home she had a prize ring erected in her garden under floodlights. Professional boxers staged a bout, with Clark Gable and Frederic March serving as seconds. I saw her in New York when I was there six weeks ago, and I thought how young she looked and how attractive.

The Villa Madama, with its gold bathtubs and objets d'art reverted to the Italian Government after Mussolini was hanged, and Dorothy was extremely bitter about it because it was her money that had bought it and kept it up. However, she looked over the stables, of the gorgeous villa and converted them into a most attractive house. In 1948 when we visited there, she entertained us at the stables, as she called her new home.

Recently she had been living in New York's Hotel Langdon, 2 E. 56th St.

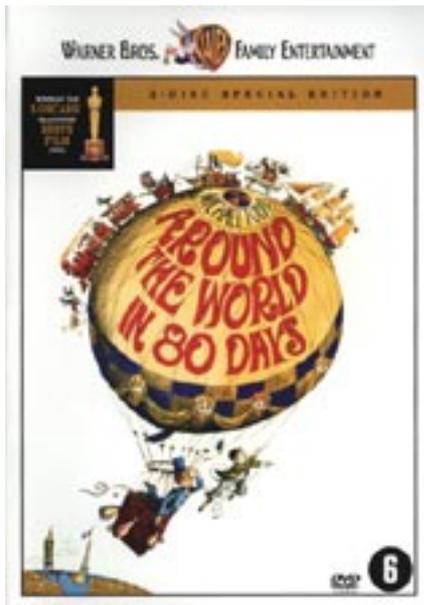
### New DVD

As mentioned in Newsletter 64  
Martin Roumagnac is published on DVD now.  
Studio Canal, original version in French  
(without subtitles), b/w, Format 1.33 4/3,  
103 m  
Poor Supplements: Filmography of George  
Lacombe (director), Jean Gabin and Marlene  
Dietrich.



### Judgement at Nuremberg

MGM Home Entertainment, b/w, Format: 4:3  
(widescreen), PAL, code 2, 179 min.  
Extra: interactive menus, direct access to  
chapters.



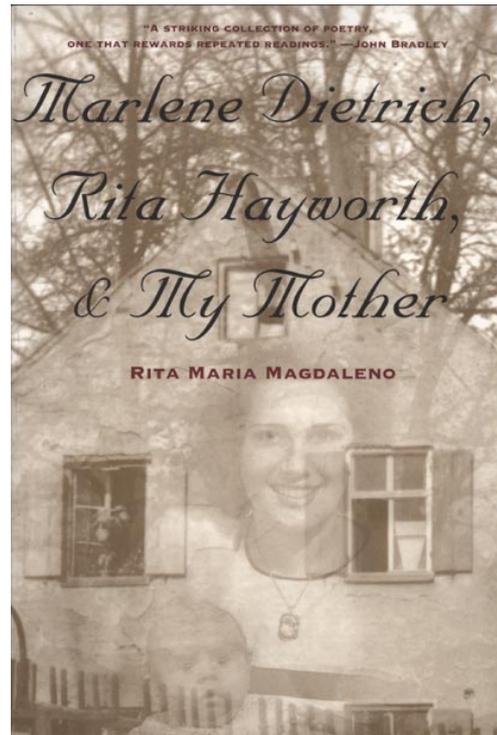
### Around the world in 80 days

Warner Bros. Family Entertainment, two CDs  
(CD1 108 min.; CD 2 66 min.), Dolby Digital,

A lot of Extras:

- outtakes
- documentary "Around the world of Mike Todd"
- L.A. premiere on December 23 1956
- Academy Award on March 27 1957
- Playhouse 90 Broadcast "Around the world in 90 minutes" from October 17 1957
- introduction by Robert Osborne (TCM)

### New Book



### Rita Maria Magdaleno: Marlene Dietrich, Rita Hayworth and My Mother

The University of Arizona Press, Tucson 2003,  
100 pp.

Our thanks to Daniel Starr and Robert Richter who donated the book when they visited the collection.

This is a book of lyrics. Rita Maria Magdaleno was born in Dachau. Her mother was german, her father a mexican-american GI. To make things worse her uncle was a member of the infamous SS. The poems clearly raise the question of cultural identy and Magdaleno uses german words to strengthen the strange atmosphere of her childhood. No one ever escapes Dachau.

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