

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

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Dear friends and fans,

this is the fiftieth edition of our Newsletter and we have to thank you for your continuing interest in our work, sharing our enthusiasm for the life, the character and the collection of Marlene. We started with about 80 addrees; at the moment the circulation is reaching 1000 recipients. Keep on spreading the word... We promised to make this a „Special Number“ – so we choose to illustrate this issue with pictures which reflect the image and persona of Marlene and at the same time are meant as a hommage to a great personality.

The first part of our Newsletter is the reprint of an interview by Marlene to Louella Parsons in 1931 when she came back from her trip to Germany. We have never seen this interview quoted in any book so we saved it for this specuial occasion. Janet Bergstrom from UCLA helped us to get our hands on it. Robert Rechter from Melbourne wrote a remarkable letter and it seems appropriate to print this as the second part of our “Jubilee”-edition.



Claudia Schiffer photographed by Gunther Sachs



With this interview of May 20, 1931, Sunkist broadcast the final program in a season of sixteen Sunkist Musical Cocktails, a weekly feature of the coast-to-coast network of the Columbia Broadcasting System. Sponsored by Sunkist to tell the nation of a huge crop of oranges at bargain prices, this program had the generous cooperation of the motion picture industry which presented its famous stars for Interviews with Louella Parsons, world's foremost motion picture writer.

Parsons: Good evening. I know from the many letters I have received since we announced that Marlene Dietrich was to be our guest star that the listeners-in are as thrilled as I am at having her here. I am happy to introduce - say, by the way - won't you please tell me how you pronounce your name?

Dietrich: Mar-leen-a Deet-rich-and I am glad that you asked me that question because it is invariably pronounced Mar-leen Deet-rick.

Parsons: Well, one day, Marlene Dietrich - how do you like my German accent? - I hope to be able to speak German as well as you speak English. Where did you learn your English?

Dietrich: Your German sounds all right. I was taught to speak English and French in the German schools as most German children are. That is a part of our education

Parsons: And very sensible. I think our American children should have better training in languages. By the way, were you ever outside of Germany and Austria before?

Dietrich: No - I was never in any other countries but Germany and Austria until I came to the United States. It was in Vienna, of course, that I made my stage debut.

Parsons: Well, that's very interesting news to me just as I am sure it must be to all those listening today. I am surprised to find that you speak French and English without a German accent since your environment was so essentially German.

Dietrich: I try very hard to speak English as well as possible and if I succeed at times, it is because of my musical education, which undoubtedly developed my ear.

Parsons: I have heard you sing on the screen and, of course, I've listened to your phonograph records, but tell me - do you play any musical instruments?

Dietrich: Yes - I play the violin, piano and sometimes - when I am provoked to do so - the musical saw.

Parsons: I know everyone will want to know why you happened to become an actress.

Dietrich: I sprained my wrist because I practiced on the violin six hours a day and while waiting for my hand to become better I entered Max Reinhard's School of Acting, and then I became an actress in his theatres.

Parsons: I wonder if you know how anxious we were to see you when we heard that Josef von Sternberg was bringing you to America? At that time most foreign actresses were on the wane. Among all the stars whose pictures you've seen since you've come to America, which is your favorite?

Dietrich: Greta Garbo.

Parsons: It must be a case of mutual admiration because Miss Garbo has told her friends that your records are her favorites. You two girls dress in a similar manner. The mannish clothes

that you wear are the same type I've often seen Miss Garbo wearing at luncheon.



Nicole Kidman 1994

Dietrich: In Europe every well-dressed woman wears mannish clothes for morning attire. You must have noticed that other European women who come to Hollywood wear tailored clothes. Lilly Damita, for instance.

Parsons: Returning to the subject of your success in America at the time when other European players were on the wane - your success must be a source of great gratification to you?

Dietrich: Yes - I am quite happy about it. I love America - but I love Germany, too; and you can understand that it makes me very sad sometimes to be deprived of the pleasure of making a film in the German language.

Parsons: I don't blame you. The charm of the screen has always been its international appeal. And it's a pity that the people who have made such successes in America cannot have their pictures shown abroad as they did in the silent days.

Dietrich: Sometimes it is possible - I just came from Europe a few weeks ago where "Morocco" is playing in all countries in the English language. There is so little dialogue and so much visual movement that this is one picture easy for foreigners to understand.

Parsons: There's one question I want to ask you. I have heard it said many times that you don't like Hollywood and that you are very homesick.

Dietrich: It is true that I was very homesick the first time I came here. I had no friends and I was a complete stranger but I like Hollywood much better this time. I have grown accustomed to the sun and my little daughter, Maria, whom I

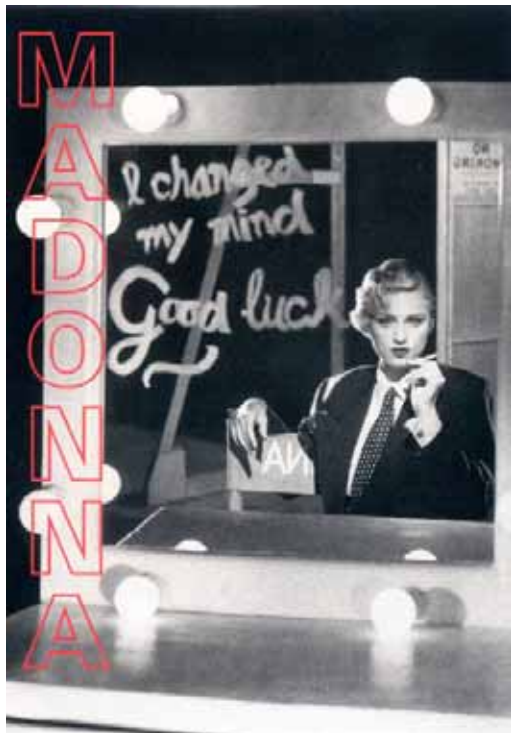
brought with me this time, loves Hollywood, hot sun and all.

Parsons: You must have seen Charlie Chaplin recently when he made his tour through Germany and England. I am curious to know how the German people received him. Did they like him?

Dietrich: Germany is mad about Mr. Chaplin and all other American stars. Everyone who visits Germany gets a royal welcome.

Parsons: I don't know whether you know it or not, but I talked to Mr. von Sternberg because I wanted to get something about your personality before we talked on the radio. He told me that, for one thing, he is lucky if you say three words in a whole conversation.

Dietrich: I do not believe in talking unless you have something to say.



Madonna's Hommage to „Morocco“

Parsons: Among other things, Mr. von Sternberg told me that it was you who found the book "Morocco" for him. He also said you are intensely interested in the camera and the technical side of motion pictures.

Dietrich: I don't think that's so strange, do you? – that I should be interested in the inside workings of picture making. I believe that everyone should understand the mechanics of his trade.

Parsons: I'm going to ask you a question that's a little prosaic when applied to a glamorous being like yourself. If you don't want to answer out loud just whisper in my ear. Is it true you like to cook?

Dietrich: I don't mind telling out loud that I really and truly do like to cook. I have many German

friends in Hollywood who are fond of goulash and since it's difficult to get anyone to cook it in the proper way, I cook it myself for my guests.

Parsons: Won't you tell us something about your little daughter? Is she learning to speak English?

Dietrich: She is learning - but slowly. Her English now consists of "by by," "Thank you very much," "swimming pool," and "thank you, I am fine." She swims like a fish. She is in the pool all day long. Just the other day she said, "I love Hollywood and I will never leave it unless I can take my swimming pool along."

Parsons: How old is your little daughter and does she look like you? I realize, Miss Dietrich, these are very personal questions, but I know the people listening in who admire you are interested in her.

Dietrich: I am very glad to tell all about her. She is very blonde and I think she resembles my husband, but since everyone says he and I look alike, I suppose the baby resembles both of us.

Parsons: Do you find it easy to combine the duties of motherhood with those of being a successful actress?

Dietrich: Yes, I do, because my daughter is the greatest incentive I could possibly have. I have never been so happy in my life as since I've had her.

Parsons: Do you think little Maria will be an actress or a musician?

Dietrich: I hope that she will have enough talent to become an actress because I think it is the most beautiful and interesting career a woman can have. And now, Miss Parsons, I would like to say good-night. You see, I promised to tell my little daughter a story before she goes to bed and it's getting late.

Parsons: Good-night, Miss Dietrich. Thank you very much for coming.

A Letter from Robert Rechter, Melbourne, Australia

Dear Marlene Dietrich Bulletin, here is my reply to a letter you posted in the last newsletter from 'Ali' requesting information on Marlene Dietrich dolls.

Dear Ali, I am a huge collector on Marlene Dietrich and met her as a young boy here in Melbourne briefly after a concert in 1975. We corresponded for over a decade when she retired from touring to Paris. The doll you are talking about has a hat on, as I have that issue of playboy somewhere. It was used in a few photo shoots and I think it was by doll-maker Clark Hanford, as I have an article on him with a similar doll in black lace and hat, dated April 19 1979 from The Australian Women's Weekly. I don't know if this doll-maker is still making dolls, he would be 57 now. As I too collect dolls you

should search ebay under 'celebrity dolls' in the doll section. I have a new 16" Marlene Dietrich doll by Madame Alexander that is beautiful, its from Shanghai Express, but the outfit isn't particularly authentic. The doll however really looks like Marlene, and even more so with the hat off. The Garbo doll in this 'legends series' they did is no where near as good. You can buy her off ebay or search Google.com for shops that have her. Here she is, soon to be deleted...

<http://www.someonespecial.com/cgi-bin/someone/alexandersilver.html>



Looks like a doll but isn't one: Japanese artist Morimura Yasumasa as "Lola"

Other dolls of Marlene Dietrich were by Paul Crees and Peter Coe. These are very expensive and sometimes one-off dolls. You can search his archives in the link below. Their Marlene doll on stage in the 70's (2nd link) The 3rd link is a Marlene doll wearing the famous white swans down coat. I also have Paul Crees catalogues with others they made of Marlene, one from the classic Western 'Destry rides Again' is particularly wonderful.

<http://www.paulcreescollection.com/>
<http://www.paulcreescollection.com/Collection/gallery/images/marleneL.jpg>
<http://www.paulcreescollection.com/Collection/s/1999/marlenefull.htm>

I hope I have been of some help. The new Madame Alexander doll is worth getting as there are very few dolls of Marlene Dietrich. I also have a large color statue of her from 'Manpower' sitting on a stool. It was deleted very quickly and I have NEVER seen another one. I am an illustrator and have done paintings of Marlene several times. She truly has always

been an inspiration for me. I collect everything I can on her, including posters, stills, lobby cards, books, post-cards, calendars, magazine covers and clippings for all my scrapbooks that go in order by year. Meeting her was mind blowing, her aura was so electric, the air ignited around her. I remember her 'mink eyelashes' ageless face and shock of blonde hair. I just could not speak as she held my arm. Up close she was so amazing, like a vision. Every night after the concert she would stand on the running board of a classic white Rolls Royce and meet her fans and hand out photos. Crowds from the theatres and restaurants would gather before she would disappear into the night for a late snack at 'Two Faces' restaurant. Australia loved Marlene, and she it. I have kept all her letters and signed books and photos to me, and copies of my letters to her. I have theatre programs and articles on her from all over the world. I will never forget the extreme kindness she paid me by replying to me in person for so many years. My whole family always adored her, and for me to be corresponding with her was so unbelievable. We discussed many things, she loved to receive clippings about her from here in Australia. She once stopped a bootleg album from being on sale after I alerted her to its existence. In one letter we discussed the awful books written by the daughters of Joan Crawford and Bette Davis. She didn't mince words in what she thought of them either... "the bitches writing about their respective mothers whose money they took so willingly" (Mommie Dearest has since been proven to be mostly lies, and adopted daughter Christina (a failed actress) extremely jealous of her mothers celebrity and success, according to a new book) Marlene assured me not to worry about Maria doing that to her and said whatever her daughter might write about her would "be intelligent and in the style of the serious biographer"....

Marlene Dietrich has left us so much to cherish from her long life and wonderful career. Her breathtaking classic films are truly dazzling to see today in art houses or on DVD. They can never repeat the lighting cinematography or costumes that made these films magic, let alone the hidden sexual symbolism. Her beauty and celebrity, films, live concerts and recordings will be remembered for ever. She tirelessly entertained the troops longer than any other star, and only now is she being truly recognized for her war service. To me she was the most exciting and interesting woman that ever lived.

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End of Newsletter
Newsletter 51 will be sent within the first week of March 2003.