

Evadne Baker--A Jolly Good Show Herself

BY HEDDA HOPPER

• Beautiful girls are Hollywood's top commodity. They come from all over the world, and surprisingly some of the prettiest turn out to be the most talented.

I saw Evadne Baker at a showing of paintings at Raymond Burr's gallery. The room was filled with sleekly groomed and glamorous people, but she stood out because of an added something and I asked to meet her. I found her charming, intelligent, well-mannered. Talking with her later I learned something about the problems of the young actresses today and of the determination they must have to survive.

Chief Problem

Her chief problem when pictures are concerned is casting. "They regard me as an English girl because I was born in Cape Town, South Africa," she said. "Actually, I'm French, Dutch and German. Casting directors tell me: 'You speak like an English girl but you're not the right type—we want a fair-skinned blond!'"

Under contract to 20th—one of the few junior players kept on through



EVADNE BAKER

the studio's period of adjustment—she hasn't yet had a part which she feels presented her with a good acting opportunity.

"I consider any chance to get before the cameras valuable, and have had some funny experiences," she said. "In 'Take Her, She's Mine,' I played a member of the school board in the opening scene. I was dressed in a plain oxford-gray wool, and my hair, which I wear straight, was tightly curled so I'd appear unmodish and of uncertain age.

Nobody recognized me, so you could say I achieved identification

with the part, and the experience was good for me. In 'Shock Treatment,' I had a small role, and unfortunately wasn't one of the asylum inmates. That would have provided more of a challenge."

Trained in ballet since she was 6, Evadne went to England when she was 9. She studied dancing in London, Paris, and Geneva, paid for her lessons by working as a model for the English edition of Vogue, and worked with many famous instructors, including Margot Fonteyn.

She considers her most valuable experience, "summer stock which I did with Mickey Rooney. It was all off-beat and remarkable, and is the nearest thing we have in this country to English repertory. Mickey's the most superb talent I've ever encountered. Few actors can turn their talent off and on the way he does, and almost nobody else has such an endless bag of tricks to fall back on. He was kind to his fellow players, puts the girls he's worked with up for parts whenever possible. Behind his terrifying efficiency you have a sense of surety, of support."

This unusual girl feels her greatest fault lies in not getting around as

much as most young actresses do.

"Perhaps I have a dual personality, but I work at writing a lot. I've done three novels and while I was dissatisfied with them all and threw them out, I still keep writing. I'm trying a play now and work with a tape recorder which I find very satisfactory; it helps achieve natural dialogue.

"I feel writers must express what is in an integral part of society. If we're living in an unpleasant time or under unpleasant conditions, it's certain to be reflected in the literary output of our day and writers shouldn't be criticized for it."

Comedy Next?

She'd like to try comedy but doesn't know whether or not she's cut out for it.

"I've usually played earthy parts, strong dramatic roles. A disagreeable woman provides the best acting opportunity, providing the part integrates well with the overall subject and her dialogue is right."

I was curious about the name Evadne, and found it comes from the ancient Greek, and it isn't as rare in Russia as it is in our country.

Revised by Chicago Tribune N.Y. News Syndicate, Inc., 1945