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-the first of eight pages-

# UNITED ARTISTS



The founders of United Artists receive the news that final details of the company's organization have been completed. Left to right, Douglas Fairbanks, D. W. Griffith, Mary Pickford and Charles Chaplin.

**T**HE history of the United Artists Corp. is, in effect, the history of modern-day motion pictures. With the formation of the company as a major distributing organization on April 5, 1919, the motion picture industry took a tremendous step forward and quietly officiated at the demise of the Nickelodeon period. Formed in the days when movies were hardly out of their swaddling clothes, the new organization drew within its folds the leading stars of the day—Mary Pickford, Charles Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, together with the famous director, D. W. Griffith, who withdrew from various individual companies to found the new and powerful organization. The articles of incorporation were drawn up and signed by the founders on April 17, 1919.

**I**T WAS the period during the world war, and Miss Pickford, Chaplin and Fairbanks, the most famous film folk of the day, had been called upon by William G. McAdoo, Secretary of the Treasury and son-in-law of President Wilson, to make public appearances in connection with the Liberty Loan drives. Thus, when in January 1919, McAdoo resigned his Treasury post to

become Director General of the railroads and migrated to Los Angeles, the old friends of the Liberty Loan days met again.

Miss Pickford, Chaplin and Fairbanks, who were in the midst of forming the new organization, proposed that McAdoo head the new company. McAdoo, however, modified the proposal by suggesting that Oscar Price, his assistant, occupy the president's chair, while he agreed to act as counsel. The new company was incorporated under the laws of the State of Delaware on April 17, 1919. Price presided over the fortunes of the new organization for approximately one year and was then succeeded by Hiram Abrams who held the presidential reins until his death in 1926. Dennis F. O'Brien was selected as vice-president at the company's inception, and has acted both in that capacity and as legal adviser ever since.

B. B. Hampton, in his "History of the Movies," says: "The corporation was organized as a distributor, each of the artists retaining entire control of his or her respective producing activities, delivering to United Artists the completed pictures for distribution on the same general plan they would have followed with a distributing organization which they did not own. The stock of United Artists was equally divided among the founders.

## **Four Leading Personalities of 1919**

### **Form a Distributor to Release**

### **Their Own Motion Pictures**

**By LAMAR O. SELIG**

"This arrangement introduced a new method into the industry. Heretofore producers and distributors had been the employers, paying salaries and sometimes a share of the profits to the stars. Under the United Artists system, the stars became their own employers. They had to do their own financing, but they received the producer profits that had formerly gone to their employers and each received his share of the profits of the distributing organization."

**T**HE WHEELS of the new organization began to hum as soon as the legal seals were affixed, and within the next 10 years the original founders swelled their ranks by releasing pictures for 29 producers and by adding three additional owner-members to the United Artists Corp. Joseph M. Schenck, who had been producing Buster Keaton and Norma and Constance Talmadge pictures independently for six years, was the first new owner-member, and he was elected chairman of the board of directors of United Artists on Dec. 5, 1924. Schenck immediately fostered a policy of expansion, and during 1925 and 1926, Samuel Goldwyn, Norma Talmadge, Morris

Gest, John Barrymore, Gloria Swanson, Corinne Griffith and other outstanding figures in the industry aligned themselves with United Artists.

The Samuel Goldwyn productions which United Artists released during this period included "Stella Dallas," "Bulldog Drummond," "Arrowsmith," "Palmy Days," "Street Scene," "Whoopee" and "Condemned." Because of the extraordinary success of these productions both here and abroad, on Oct. 13, 1927, Goldwyn was unanimously elected as owner-member of United Artists by the other members. Shortly afterward, Gloria Swanson also joined the company in a similar capacity.

**A**MONG the stars who played in United Artists pictures during the first decade of the company's history were Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Norma Talmadge, Gloria Swanson, Lillian Gish, Vilma Banky, Gilda Gray, Corinne Griffith, Dolores del Rio, Alla Nazimova, Dorothy Gish, Edna Purviance, Norma Shearer, Mae Marsh, Madge Bellamy, Evelyn Brent, Carol

Dempster, Mary Philbin, Alice Joyce, Anna May Wong, Irene Rich, Mary Astor, Belle Bennett, Estelle Taylor, Lupe Velez, Greta Nissen, Anna Q. Nilsson, Louise Dresser, Thelma Todd and many others.

On the directors' lists were Charles Chaplin, D. W. Griffith, Ernst Lubitsch, Herbert Brenon, Fred Niblo, Raoul Walsh, Josef von Sternberg, Lewis Milestone, Edwin Carrewé, Mack Sennett, Henry King, George Fitzmaurice, Albert Parker, Roland West, Marshall Neilan, James Cruze, Victor Fleming, Clarence Brown, Allan Dwan, John S. Robertson, Sam Taylor, Donald Crisp, Luther Reed, Alan Crosland, F. Richard Jones, Arthur Rosson, Graham Wilcox, Jack Pickford, Buster Keaton, John Dillon, Charles F. Riesner, James W. Horne, Charles Bryant, and William Beaudine.



*Murray Silverstone*, United Artists' business commander-in-chief by virtue of his chairmanship of company's executive committee to which he was named in mid-1938, following standout service to UA in Europe, and, previously, in other sectors of the foreign field.

**T**HE RECORDS of this ten-year period also reveal many remarkable landmarks which brought a stamp of greater importance both to United Artists and the motion picture industry as a whole. Among these were the Mary Pickford pictures — "Pollyanna," "Suds," "The Love Light," "Through the Back Door," "Little Lord Fauntleroy," "Tess of the Storm Country," "Rosita," "Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall" and "Little Annie Rooney"—all sensationally successful films. Samuel Goldwyn "discovered" such stars as Ronald Colman, Vilma Banky, Belle Bennett, Lily Damita and developed Eddie Cantor on the screen.

Among other feature films which were released and made screen history were Gloria Swanson's "Sadie Thompson"; Charlie Chaplin's "A Woman of Paris," starring Adolphe Menjou; the two great Chaplin pictures, "The Gold Rush" and "The Circus"; Douglas Fairbanks' "Robin Hood," "Thief of Bagdad," "Three Musketeers," "Black Pirate," "Mark of Zorro" and "The Gaucho"; D. W. Griffith's "Way Down East," "Dream Street," "Orphans of the

Storm," "Isn't Life Wonderful?" and "Drums of Love"; Rudolph Valentino in the Joseph M. Schenck production of "The Eagle" and Valentino's final film, "The Son of the Sheik"; John Barrymore in "The Beloved Rogue."

**W**HEN in 1926 Hiram Abrams, the company's second president, died suddenly, the stockholders of United Artists selected Joseph M. Schenck from their board of directors to fill the vacancy, a post he held until 1935. Under the Schenck regime, several new enterprises were added to



Harry D. Buckley, UA vice-president since 1926. His industry experience is saga of versatility,—from theater, exchange, branch manager; supervisor of big roadshow pix; personal business manager for Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks,—to currently co-sparkplugging the powerful UA machine.

the company's roster of activities. There was organized the United Artists Theater Circuit, Inc., a chain of 20 pre-release theaters; in 1932, Walt Disney began releasing through United Artists his "Mickey Mouse" cartoons in sound, including the Silly Symphony shorts; in 1932, Edward Small and Harry M. Goetz organized Reliance Pictures Inc., producing pictures for exclusive release through United Artists; in the same year Alexander Korda formed his own company, London Film Productions, and the following year became affiliated with the company as an independent producer; in 1933, Schenck himself formed an independent producing firm with Darryl Zanuck, 20th Century Pictures, of which he became

president and whose productions were released under the United Artists aegis.

In 1934, United Artists gave screen fans their first 'Mickey Mouse' cartoon in Technicolor, "Band Concert." In the following years Academy Awards were won by these shorts with "The Tortoise and the Hare," "Three Orphan Kittens" and "The Country Cousin." Other screen history-makers which climaxed the new United Artists alignments of this period included such outstanding films as the Samuel Goldwyn productions: "Kid Millions," with Eddie Cantor; "We Live Again," co-starring Ann Sten and Fredric March; "The Wedding Night," starring Anna Sten and Gary Cooper; the Reliance pictures: "The Count of Monte Cristo," which added the name of Robert Donat to the firmament of film stars; "Let 'Em Have It," "The Melody Lingers On," "Transatlantic Merry - Go - Round" and "Our Daily Bread"; 20th Century pictures: "Bulldog Drummond Strikes Back," starring Ronald Colman; Wallace Beery in "The Mighty Barnum"; "Clive of India," starring Ronald Colman; Clark Gable in Jack London's "The Call of the Wild"; Fredric March and Charles Laughton in "Les Miserables"; George Arliss as "Cardinal Richelieu"; Alexander Korda productions: Douglas Fairbanks in "The Private Life of Don Juan"; H. G. Wells' "Things to Come"; "The Scarlet Pimpernel," co-starring Leslie Howard and Merle Oberon; "Thunder in the East" with Merle Oberon and Charles Boyer.

IN 1935 Joseph M. Schenck resigned from United Artists to amalgamate his 20th Century Pictures with Fox, and Dr. A. H. Giannini, who for years had been financing entertainment businesses, succeeded to the president's chair. Dr. Giannini, who at one time financed Charlie Chaplin's "The Kid" with \$500,000 has been called "Doc" by some of the most important cinema magnates who sought his advice and



is credited with having settled more picture wrangles than all the law courts of California. In the same year that Schenck severed his association with United Artists, Alexander Korda became one of the producer-owners of the organization and was elected to the board of directors.

In June of 1935, David O. Selznick resigned from M-G-M to form Selznick International Pictures, and as president and producer of the new film organization contracted to distribute his annual output of pictures through United Artists. Among the Selznick hits which followed his independent set-up were "Little Lord Fauntleroy," "The Garden of Allah," "A Star is Born," the Technicolor feature co-starring Janet Gaynor and Fredric March, which broke box-office records everywhere; "The Prisoner of Zenda," top-billing Ronald Colman, Madeleine Carroll and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. which with "A Star is Born" broke records at the Radio City Music Hall.

Walter Wanger, the Hollywood producer known internationally for the development of unknowns into star names—he brought into the limelight the talents of Charles Boyer, Madeleine Carroll, Henry Fonda and others—joined the roster of United Artists producers in 1937. Under the Wanger trademark United Artists distributed such highly successful pictures as "You Only Live Once," directed by Fritz Lang with Sylvia Sydney and Henry Fonda sharing stellar honors; "History is Made at Night," with Charles Boyer and Jean Arthur; and Wanger's "Vogues of 1938," in which Joan Bennett made her Technicolor debut.

**T**RIBUTE by exhibitors and the picture-going public to the results achieved by United Artists through fostering production independence reached a new high during the 1935-1936 season when the



*Arthur W. Kelly, UA vice-president in charge of foreign distribution, through whose planning and efforts the company has progressed consistently in the overseas markets.*

organization presented Charles Chaplin in "Modern Times," for which Chaplin wrote the story, composed the music, did the producing and the directing; "These Three," Samuel Goldwyn's production of the great stage play;—"The Children's Hour," with Miriam Hopkins, Merle Oberon and Joel McCrea; Alexander Korda's production of "The Ghost Goes West," starring Robert Donat.

History was again repeated when critics from coast to coast wrote "raves" about Samuel Goldwyn's "Come and Get It," the Edna Ferber story starring Edward Arnold, Joel McCrea and Frances Farmer; "Dodsworth," Samuel Goldwyn's film transcript of the Sinclair Lewis novel with Walter Houston and Ruth Chatterton in the top



Harry L. Gold, sales manager of the Eastern division for UA, was this year further rewarded by the organization which named him to a vice-presidential post. He is also in charge of sales for the company throughout neighboring Canada.

roles; "Rembrandt," an Alexander Korda picture starring Charles Laughton.

AN impressive list of sure-fire hits inaugurated the 1937-1938 season of United Artists. Among them were: Samuel Goldwyn's "Stella Dallas," remake of his former success with Barbara Stanwyck in the title role; "Dead End," Samuel Goldwyn's production of the Sidney Kingsley stage hit with Sylvia Sydney, Joel McCrea, Humphrey Bogart and the original sextet of Dead End kids; Alexander Korda's "Knight Without Armor," starring Marlene Dietrich and Robert Donat; David O. Selznick's "The Prisoner of Zenda"; Walter Wanger's "Vogues of 1938."

On the evening of Nov. 9, 1937, Samuel Goldwyn's "The Hurricane," had its New York premiere at the Astor Theater, and was launched on a two-a-day basis. The photoplay, directed by John Ford from a Dudley Nichols screenplay, had a cast of principals including Dorothy Lamour, Jon Hall, Jerome Cowan, Mary Astor, C. Aubrey Smith, Raymond Massey, Thomas Mitchell and John Carradine. The picture required one year of production preparation and was three months before the cameras. Hundreds of Polynesians appeared in the native scenes.

Among the United Artists attractions which were released for the balance of the 1937-1938 season were Samuel Goldwyn's "The Goldwyn Follies" in Technicolor and "The Adventures of Marco Polo." David O. Selznick's "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" and "Nothing Sacred," both in Technicolor; Walter Wanger's "52nd Street," "Stand-In" and "I Met My Love Again"; Alexander Korda's "Divorce of Lady X," and "Knight Without Armor."

The 1938-1939 season saw the release of such films as "The Cowboy and the Lady," and "Wuthering Heights" from Samuel Goldwyn; "The Young in Heart," and "Made for Each Other," from Selznick International; "Drums" and "Prison Without Bars" from Alexander Korda; "Trade Winds," "Algiers," and "Stagecoach" from Walter Wanger.

UNITED ARTISTS, at the beginning of the 1939-40 season celebrating its 20th Anniversary, finds itself basically stronger than at any time in its history. Twelve producers, combining to give the distributing organization 28 to 32 productions, represents the most extensive releasing program undertaken by the organization in its entire history.

Besides contributions from David O. Selznick, Samuel Goldwyn, Alexander Korda, Walter Wanger, Hal Roach and Edward Small, the new season marks the return to active production activity of Douglas Fairbanks. It also marks Charlie Chaplin's return to the screen for the first time in three years for his initial talking picture. Producers new to United Artists are: Ernst Lubitsch, Sol Lesser, David L. Loew and Richard Rowland. Some \$25,000,000 will be spent by the 12 United Artists producers on approximately 28 to 32 productions.

**ALTHOUGH** it does not appear on the balance sheet, the greatest asset of United Artists lies in the skill, energy and purpose of the people who carry on its work around the world. The reason for this is obvious. Just as the prestige of a government depends, to a great extent, on the type of men who represent it abroad, so does the reputation of an international distributing organization such as UA depend upon the quality of its foreign manpower.

Selling pictures in foreign countries is a complex business, calling for specialized training and ability. Unlike his domestic brother, the foreign film representative must be a combination showman-linguist, diplomat-banker. Even in so-called normal times, the UA foreign manager has to contend with problems that never trouble his American confrere—restrictive legislation, quota laws, embargoes on money, contingents and political censorship.

Since UA pictures are shown in every civilized corner of the globe and in a great many uncivilized ones as well, the minute something happens anywhere—whether it be an earthquake in Chile, a revolution in Central America, a flood in China or a war in Europe—the company feels the effects immediately.

Speaking of wars, the foreign department had two to contend with during the past

year—the war in Spain and the war in China. And if any further proof were needed to emphasize that the foreign legion contains the “unhonored and unsung” heroes of our industry, the following note from Norman Westwood, UA's manager in Shanghai, will clinch it:

He wrote: “Our office is situated right on the border of the troubled area. And the bombing has shattered all the ground floor windows in our building. From our windows we can see the dropping of bombs and the explosions. Droning of planes means nothing to us now, as we are quite used to it.”

Despite the chaotic conditions over there, UA has continued to do a very fine busi-



L. J. Schlaifer, known to filmland by the more intimate appellation of Jack, is UA's Western division sales manager. Recognition by company solons of his long and valuable services brought him a vice-presidency at the 1939 sales conclave held in Los Angeles.

ness in China. The same thing happened in Spain, where until recently, the company did business on both sides—in the Loyalist territory and in the Franco territory. It is needless to point out, that it takes a superior brand of courage and a helluva lot of guts to carry on the battle of business in the midst of the business of battle!

Such examples of fortitude and resourcefulness are the rule in United Artists, rather than the exception. Every member of the company's far-flung empire, which embraces over 3,000 employees, keenly realizes his obligations and responsibilities.

It is this comforting knowledge that the foreign legion can be depended upon to deliver, regardless of what obstacles stand in its way, that gives UA executives and producers the courage to initiate policies for expansion and development and to invest millions and millions of dollars in pictures to the end that United Artists may continue to maintain its leadership in the industry.

One of the most vital links in UA's worldwide chain of distribution units is the British organization, which is under the able supervision of E. T. Carr and George Archibald, joint managing directors. Carr, it is interesting to note, started his career with the company 18 years ago as a salesman in Birmingham, England, and in typical Horatio Alger fashion worked his way to the top—a shining example of the company's traditional policy of promoting from the ranks.

Archibald is also managing director of UA Export, Ltd., which controls and directs the operations of the company's exchanges and licensees throughout Continental Europe—a herculean job in which he has the expert assistance of Lacy W. Kastner, general sales supervisor.

In France, UA is fortunate to have at the helm Georges Rouvier, a man who thoroughly understands both the art and science of selling high quality product. Other UA ambassadors in Europe include such "merchants of entertainment" as Marcel Coppens in Belgium, O. B. Mantell in

Czechoslovakia, I Madsen in Denmark, Harald Astrom in Sweden, E. Arias in Barcelona and Paul Rappaport in Switzerland.

"Down under" in Australasia, UA holds its ranking position by reason of the aggressive and enterprising work of Cecil Marks, general manager, and Bernie Allen, manager in New Zealand. Daniel Webster, the great American statesman, orator and jurist, was once described as "a steam engine in trousers." It might fittingly be used to describe "Smiling" Cecil Marks, with this streamlined difference: Marks is a dynamo in pants!

In the Far East, Norman Westwood in China, mentioned above, and Joe Goltz in Japan, continue to keep the UA banner flying despite wars and acts of God. Such men as Charlie Core in the Philippines, Sydney Albright in Java, Carlos Moore in India, A. A. Lowe in South Africa and "Lucky" Max Baker in the Straits Settlements (he gained the "lucky" sobriquet through his consistent winning of various lotteries in his territory) reflect the high ideals of character and service that have been associated with United Artists for 20 years.

In the various Latin-American countries, which are actively supervised by Walter Gould, division manager, UA is ably represented by another group of showmen-managers, whose indefatigable and magnificent efforts have added enormously to the power and prestige of the company. Men like Guy P. Morgan in Argentina, Enrique Baez in Brazil, Jorge Suarez in Chile, W. F. Frohlich in Colombia, Henry Weiner in Cuba, Sam Seidelman in Mexico, Victor J. Schochet in Peru, Carl Ponedel in Puerto Rico and Guy C. Smith in Canal Zone have safeguarded the company's interests over a period of two decades and have written an illustrious chapter in UA's "good neighbor" policy below the Rio Grande.

If ever a history is written of the motion picture industry's achievements in the foreign field, a special chapter will have to be devoted to the foreign legion of United Artists.