

April 24, 2019

Swiss Miss - Filmed December 28, 1937 through February 26, 1938. Added scenes shot April 1, 1938. Released May 20, 1938.

From a story titled *Swiss Cheese*.

Hal Roach had the idea of making a musical with a second plot so that Laurel & Hardy would not have to be on all of the time. Stan Laurel was not happy with this approach. In the words of Stan Laurel, "Hal Roach and I differed a great deal on story ideas, gags and what have you and we didn't get along too well on that picture; disagreed very much."

This picture was not billed as a Stan Laurel Production as it had been the previous billings for *Our Relations* and *Way Out West*. However, Stan did approve of the film's director, John G. Blystone.

Della Lind - Born Grete Natzler in Vienna. Her father was an actor and singer. She began making films in Germany in 1929 and made several more in England before arriving in the United States in 1935 to work for Paramount Pictures. Changing her name to Della Lind, she tested at Columbia in June of 1936, but eventually signed with MGM in July of that same year. She was married to Franz Steininger, a musical composer of numerous motion cross from the 1930's to the 1960's. *Swiss Miss* was Della Lind's final film.

Walter Woolf King - It was Della Lind who made the choice to have Walter play this part. The other actor, Ray Middleton was in Della's words "a little flirt. I'd rather have Walter Woolf King. He was my type." He was born Walter S. Woolf in San Francisco, California. He made his debut on Broadway in 1920 and would

continue to perform there through 1933. After a legal battle with Warner Brothers over breach of contract, he changed his name to Walter King. By 1937, his screen name was finalized as Walter Woolf King.

Charles Judels - The cheese factory owner, was born in Amsterdam in 1882. Starred on vaudeville in the early 1900's and made his Broadway stage debut in *The Ziegfeld Follies of 1912*. He appeared in more than 130 American comedy and drama movies. His expertise with dialects served him well throughout his career. Charles also did extensive work as a voice actor in animated films, most notably as the voice of Stromboli in Walt Disney's *Pinocchio* (1940). His last appearance on screen was in *Samson and Delilah* (1949).

Tex Driscoll - worked in Laurel & Hardy films *Way Out West*, *Block-Heads* in addition to *Swiss Miss*. He also appeared in *The Squaw Man* from 1914 in what is commonly accepted as the first feature length film to be made in Hollywood.

Eric Blore (Victor's assistant) - London born, he came to the United States in 1923 to work on Broadway and eventually wound up in films by 1932 in a supporting role in *The Gay Divorcée* with Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. He would appear in four more Astaire-Rogers and a total of 90 other films through 1950.

Doodles Weaver - Best remembered as part of Spike Jones' City Slickers band. His rendition of Feistlebaum is considered a classic. He plays the cab driver who brings Anna to the hotel.

Ludovico Tomarchio (The waiter) - was born in Sicily and came to the United States in 1923. He and his wife were performing

together in Los Angeles opera companies by 1930. He would go on to appear in films with Ramon Navarro, Jeanette McDonald, Lawrence Tibbett, The Marx Brothers and in *Maytime* with McDonald again with Nelson Eddy.

Adia Kuznetzoff (The chef) - Russia born, he made appearances in 40 films between 1936 and 1944. On occasion, he would get to display his operatic baritone voice. He would go on to work in "live" television during the early 1950's.

Charles Gemora - returns to the world of Laurel & Hardy as an angry chimp. He was also the make-up artist on this film.

Anital Garvin (housewife) - has a small part in this film. Her part with Eddie Kane was supposed to be an ongoing gag throughout this comedy, but Anita developed a thyroid condition that ended this role.

The St. Bernard in this film named **Buck** was trained by Carl Spitz. He opened his dog training school in Studio City, California in 1927 and stayed there for 20 years. Spitz devised a system to give the dogs silent hand signal off-screen. Buck also appeared in *The Call Of The Wild* with Clark Gable and Loretta Young, *Melody Trail* with Gene Autry and *Call Of The Yukon* with Richard Arlen. Carl Spitz's best remembered pupil was a Cairn Terrier named Terry who would become Toto in the 1939 classic *The Wizard Of Oz*.

Special Effects played a big part in this film. Fred Knoth created a miniature of the swaying bridge with Laurel & Hardy and the piano. Roy Seawright created the bubbles flying out of the pipe organ.

Originally in the script, the chef hated music and the fact that the composer would be up all night playing the piano. So, the chef put a bomb in the piano hoping that when the composer hit the right note, the piano would blow up. When Stan and Ollie are moving the piano across the bridge and an inebriated Stan keeps banging on the keys, the tension was supposed to be there. Hal Roach did not like this idea. Although these scenes were filmed, Hal Roach had them deleted.

REFERENCES

Laurel & Hardy: The Magic Behind The Movies by Randy Skretvedt

Internet Movie Database