

Jeanette MacDonald

Jeanette MacDonald was born June 18, 1903. In November 1919, she landed a job in the chorus of Ned Wayburn's *The Demi-Tasse Revue*. In 1920 she appeared in two musicals, Jerome Kern's *Night Boat* as a chorus replacement, and *Irene on the road* as the second female lead (Future film star Irene Dunne played the title role). In 1921, MacDonald played in *Tangerine*, as one of the "Six Wives." In 1922 she was a featured singer in a Greenwich Village revue, *Fantastic Fricassee*. Good press notices brought her a role in *The Magic Ring* (1923). She had a number of other plays in the next several years. Her last play was *Boom Boom* (1929) (the cast included young Archie Leach, who later changed his name to Cary Grant).

Film star Richard Dix spotted her and had her screen-tested for his film *Nothing but the Truth*, but the Shuberts wouldn't let her out of her contract to appear in the film. In 1929, famed film director Ernst Lubitsch cast her as the leading lady in his first sound film, *The Love Parade*, which starred Maurice Chevalier.

In the first rush of sound films, 1929–30, MacDonald starred in six films, the first four for Paramount Studios. In 1933, MacDonald left again for Europe and signed with MGM. Her first MGM film was *The Cat and the Fiddle* (1934).

In *The Merry Widow* (1934), director Ernst Lubitsch reunited Maurice Chevalier and MacDonald. It had a huge budget, partially because it was filmed simultaneously in French as *La Veuve Joyeuse*, with a French supporting cast and some minor plot changes.

Naughty Marietta (1935) was MacDonald's first film in which she teamed with newcomer baritone Nelson Eddy. The film won an Oscar for sound recording and received an Oscar nomination for Best Picture. It was voted one of the Ten Best Pictures of 1935 by the New York film critics, was awarded the Photoplay Gold Medal Award as Best Picture of 1935 (beating out *Mutiny on the Bounty*, which won the Oscar).

The following year, MacDonald starred in two of the highest-grossing films of that year: *In Rose-Marie* (actually filmed at Lake Tahoe) (1936). Eddy's definitive portrayal of the steadfast Mountie became a popular icon. In *San Francisco* (1936), she starred with Clark Gable and Spencer Tracy.

After MacDonald and Eddy left MGM in 1943 (they went to Universal), they appeared frequently on radio together while planning several unrealized films that would have reunited them onscreen. cker Holiday, and had lost money.

MacDonald returned solo to MGM after 5 years off the screen for two films. During her 39-year career, MacDonald earned two stars in the Hollywood Walk of Fame and planted her feet in the wet cement in front of Grauman's Chinese Theater.

MacDonald suffered in her later years with heart trouble. She worsened in 1963 and underwent an arterial transplant at Methodist Hospital in Houston. She died on January 14, 1965. [<http://en.wikipedia.org>]

