

Actress Lombard epitomizes Hollywood starlet

Gray Faces
by
Michael Stock

Carole Lombard is a perfect example of the '30s breed of starlet.

At the age of 12, Lombard starred in her first film, "A Perfect Crime," in 1921. By her teens, she had a film contract. But a serious automobile accident suddenly cut her quickly growing career.

After a painful recuperation, Lombard defied the Hollywood studio star system by freelancing her way to stardom. After appearing in a series of Mack Sennet's silent slapstick comedies, Lombard's transition to talkies was a smooth one.

Even Lombard's personal life was one surrounded by furor and fandom. Her marriage to William Powell in 1932 was short-lived. Apparently, the 24-year-old Lombard was not as ready to settle down as the 40-year-old Powell.

Lombard's second chance at a happy marriage also came in 1939. This time Clark Gable was the lucky man.

Curiously enough, Lombard and Gable made their first film together, 1932's "No Man Of Her Own," shortly before her marriage to Powell.

Lombard's marriage to Gable is considered to be one of the true Hollywood love stories. But their happiness was cut short by Lombard's untimely death in 1942.

Flying home from a War Bond Drive in the Midwest, Lombard's plane crashed, killing all aboard. The tragedy drove the mourning Gable to the Army Air Corps until 1945, when he returned to the screen with Greer Garson in "Adventure."

Although he remarried, Gable is said to never completely get over

Lombard, and constantly was seen around Hollywood with different women, all bearing a striking resemblance to Lombard.

Much of Lombard's finest acting surfaced in the great screwball comedies of the '30s. She appeared in such hilarious efforts as "We're Not Dressing" with Bing Crosby and "Twentieth Century" with John Barrymore in 1934. She performed in "My Man Godfrey" in 1936 with her then ex-husband, William Powell, "Nothing Sacred" in 1937 with Fredrich March and "To Be Or Not To Be" with Jack Benny in 1942.

"To Be Or Not To Be" was Lombard's last film, completed just two weeks before her death.

"Twentieth Century" was Lombard's 48th feature film, and the film she considered her most important.

"My greatest opportunity came when I was cast with John Barrymore in 'Twentieth Century,'" Lombard said in a 1938 New York Post interview. "I learned more about acting from that man in the six weeks it took to make the picture than I ever had before.

"I listened to him for the entire six weeks, and got a real course in dramatics. That was the beginning of knowing something."

Barrymore had hand-picked Lombard for his choice of a co-star, later recalling, "She is perhaps the greatest actress I ever worked with."

"Twentieth Century" allowed the flamboyant Barrymore one of his finest roles, seeming completely natural as the flamboyant screwball director, Oscar Jaffe.

The stage version of "Twentieth Century," was originally titled "The Napoleon of Broadway." Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur's original play was confined to the train journey from Chicago to New York on the Twentieth Century Limited.

The advantages of film over stage allowed Hecht and MacArthur to begin



Courtesy of Citadel Press

John Barrymore and Carole Lombard light up the screen in 1934's "Twentieth Century."

their story three years prior to the train journey.

Barrymore's character, Oscar Jaffe, is an enigmatic and eccentric egomaniac. As a Broadway director and producer, Jaffe discovers underwear salesperson Mildred Plotka, played by Lombard, and christens her the star "Lily Garland."

The magical power that Barrymore commands captures Lombard completely in his power, with such lines as "the sorrows of life are the joys of art."

Barrymore's flair for melodrama

is evidenced in Jaffe's character. Eventually, when Lombard's star arrives under Barrymore's direction, she moves on to a Hollywood contract and bigger success. All of Barrymore's productions fail miserably without Lombard.

Coincidentally, both Barrymore and Lombard are on board the Twentieth Century Limited. Both the drama and the screwball comedy surface highly polished on the train ride.

The screwball element of ridiculous characters and situations are carried brilliantly under the perfect

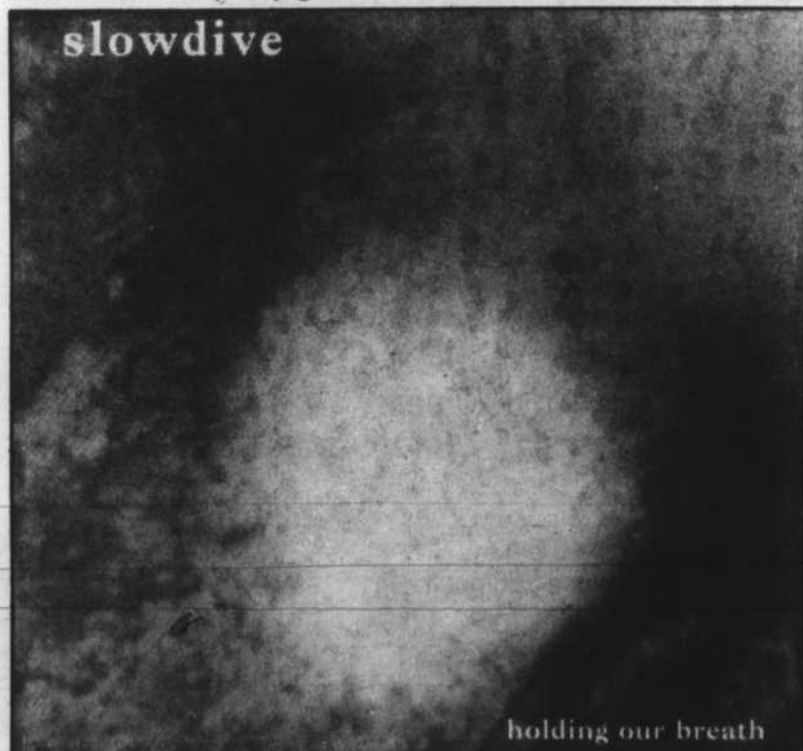
direction of Howard Hawks, in his first role as a comedic director.

"I'm offering you a chance to be immortal," Barrymore promises Lombard if she returns to his stage.

"No thanks. I'd rather be mortal with responsible management," Lombard counters.

Barrymore was the perfect choice for the role of Oscar Jaffe. Hollywood considered Barrymore as somewhat eccentric in real life and one of the quintessential film actors of the pe-

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slowdive

holding our breath

Courtesy of Creation Records

New Slowdive album makes a leap into swirling pool of godlikeness

By Michael Stock
Senior Reporter

Feedback is good.
Feedback can be quite beautiful.
Slowdive is quite good and beautiful.

Welcome to the world of the post-My Bloody Valentine players.

My Bloody Valentine had no idea what they were starting a few short years ago with their single, "Feed Me With Your Kiss," or their accompanying album, "Isn't Anything" on Alan McGee's Creation records.

It was described as sounding like a f—ing racecar. And it did. It sounded like a fuzzy racecar.

Since then audiences have seen the birth of Ride, Chapterhouse, The Boo Radleys, Moose, Bleach, Curve and a swarming host of other bands. All were created to pay some sort of



"Holding Our Breath"
Slowdive
Creation Records
Grade: A

homage to the long-lost Reid brothers of "Psychocandy" days.

The Jesus and Mary Chain has seen better days. Slowdive is a better day.

Their 1990 debut "Slowdive" EP gave a sneaking suspicion of Slowdive's brilliance. The "Moonrise"

EP furthered the suspicion. "Holding Our Breath" proves it. It's perfect.

The covers are a giveaway. All three EPs offer swirling, fuzzy images that wouldn't be half as beautiful if the pictures were in focus.

"Catch the Breeze" opens the new EP with a tentative, stumbling and syncopated rhythm — far from baggy. The scene then opens for a panoramic, beautiful peek into Slowdive's swirling godlikeness.

The lyrics are as swirling as the guitars, saying something like "the breeze it blows, it blows everyone." Or something like that.

Who the hell cares what she's singing? No one argues with what Elizabeth Fraser sings.

"Golden Hair" begins with a majestic crashing cymbal, and the heav-

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