

ROBERT C. SCHMITT

More Movies We Missed

THE CONTINUING SAGA of Hawaiian moviemaking now includes 132 feature films made in or about the Islands. In 1988, the Hawaiian Historical Society published a monograph describing 120 such motion pictures produced prior to Statehood.¹ Three years later an addendum listed 12 others, plus further detail about three of the films previously cited.² Here are three more which have recently come to the author's attention:

1933

Die Blume von Hawaii ("The Flower of Hawaii").

German. Riv-Pascal Prod. April 1933 (New York showing); Hon., NA. Sound, b&w, 85 min. Dir., Richard Oswald. With Marta Eggerth, Hans Fidesser, Iwan Petrovich. Based on Paul Abraham's operetta of the same name.

The plot, according to *Variety*, concerned "an Hawaiian queen disguised as a waitress in a Paris cafe, with an American officer falling in love with her, and some political conspirators kidnapping her to Hawaii, where she is supposed to marry the king, who nobly stands aside, however, when he finds out how deeply she loves the American officer." Calling this a "weak picturization of

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a well-known operetta," the reviewer faulted its "mediocre pictorial treatment" and found it "'stagey' and dragging." No mention was made of any location shooting.³

The source of this bonbon was a wildly popular 1931 stage work, described both as a musical comedy and operetta, by a Hungarian composer, Paul Abraham. Hit songs, mixing English and German lyrics, included "Ein Paradies am Meeresstrand," "Wir singen zur Jazzband," and "Die traumschöne Perle der Südsee" (this last accompanied by Hawaiian guitars).⁴ Subsequent revivals updated the story line; the 1967 Vienna production, for example, portrayed post-Statehood Hawaiian nationalists plotting to overthrow U.S. rule and restore the Monarchy, plus such characters as a Hawaiian prince and princess and an American general.⁵

1942

Wake Island.

Paramount. Rel. Aug. 6, 1942; Hon., NA. Sound, b&w, 87 min. Dir., John Farrow. With Brian Donlevy, Macdonald Carey, Robert Preston.

War picture about the heroic, and ultimately unsuccessful, efforts of outnumbered American forces to hold Wake Island when attacked by the Japanese in December 1941. Brief Pearl Harbor scenes at the beginning of the picture were shot in front of a painted backdrop; the rest of the film, set on Wake, was shot on the shores of California's Salton Sea. *Variety* gave it a rave review.⁶

1951

Flying Leathernecks

RKO. Rel. 16 July 1951; Hon., NA. Sound, Technicolor, 102 min. Dir., Nicholas Ray. With John Wayne, Robert Ryan.

Marine pilots on Guadalcanal during World War II. The movie begins at Ewa Marine Corps Air Base on O'ahu, represented by stock footage of the base and Diamond Head.⁷

NOTES

- ¹ Robert C. Schmitt, *Hawai'i In the Movies 1898-1959* (Honolulu: HHS, 1988).
- ² Robert C. Schmitt, "Some Movies We Missed," *HJH* 25 (1991): 197-204.
- ³ *Variety Film Reviews 1907-1980*, vol. 4, 1930-1933 (New York: Garland, 1983), entry for 25 Apr. 1933.
- ⁴ Kurt Gänzl, *The Blackwell Guide to the Musical Theatre on Record* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990) 301-03.
- ⁵ Chuck Frankel, "Hawaii 'Blumes' in Vienna," *HSB*, 5 Dec. 1967: C-II.
- ⁶ *Variety Film Reviews 1907-1980*, vol. 6, 1938-1942, entry for 12 August 1942; Matt Locey, unpublished chronology of South Seas movies.
- ⁷ *Variety Film Reviews 1907-1980*, vol. 8, 1949-1953, entry for 25 July 1951; Locey, unpublished chronology.

