

Herbert Marshall

Herbert Brough Falcon Marshall was born May 23, 1890 in London England. He was the only child of stage actors Percy F. Marshall and Ethel May Turner. His family included a number of highly respected actors, critics, and authors, including having in his family tree Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, author of Frankenstein. Raised primarily by three aunts because his parents were on tour, Marshall would ultimately accompany his parents during the summer, which resulted in a distaste for the theater. He is reported as saying he vowed never to go on the stage.

After graduating from St. Mary's College, Essex, he started working as an accounting clerk, from which he was fired. He then began working as an assistant business manager for a theatre troupe, then had a series of backstage jobs before turning to acting, because, as Marshall claims, he did not know how to do anything else.

He started stage work in 1911, and later was drafted to serve in the First World War. On April 9, 1917, while in a trench in France/>, he was shot in the knee. The doctors were forced to amputate his right leg near the hip. After over a year of rehabilitation and work with a prosthetic leg, he learned to walk with only a very slight limp. However, the prosthetic limb and phantom pain caused him discomfort for the rest of his life.

By December of 1918, he returned to the stage and performed in a number of plays until 1932. But in 1927, he started his transition to movies, appearing in Mumsie, his only silent film, and then to the talkies in the 1929 movie The Letter. He would appear in a total of 75 movies and 11 different television shows. Some of his notable works include Alfred Hitchcock's Murder! (1930), Trouble in Paradise (1932), Riptide (1934), Breakfast for Two (1937), Foreign Correspondent (1940), and The Secret Garden (1949). One of Marshall's best castings was in The Moon and Sixpence (1942) where, in the words of Turner Classic Movies, the movie "was hailed as one of Hollywood's most literate and sophisticated films, a status greatly aided by Marshall's intelligent reading of the narration."

In the 1950's and early '60's, Marshall also combined his film work with a number of television appearances. Yet it was his rich baritone and sophisticated deliverance that made him a popular attraction on radio. Among many shows Marshall was on, he was a frequent actor on Lux Radio Theatre and the Screen Guild Theatre. He appeared on the Jell-O Program, and took over as host for a season. He also took over as host of Hollywood Star Time in 1946. But it was his work on The Man Called X which he is best known. He portrayed the globetrotting, intelligence agent Ken Thurston, Mr. X, from 1944 until 1952.

Marshall was widely respected for his humor and easygoing manner, and also for his professionalism, talent, charm and sensitivity, being well liked by many in the industry.

The ailing Marshall's last film was The Third Day in 1965, in which he played a paralyzed family patriarch who was unable to speak. Marshall would pass away from heart failure on January 22, 1966 at the age of 75.

Information for this biography was taken from Wikipedia, Turner Classic Movies, The Internet Movie Database, and from John Dunning's The Encyclopedia of Old-Time Radio.

For the Old Time Radio Researchers, I am your announcer, Patrick André.