Lamour, Dorothy (1914-1996) Encyclopedia Article

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Born Mary Kaumeyer in New Orleans, the curvaceous brunette Dorothy Lamour was treasured for her trademark sarong (which she first wore in her debut film, *The Jungle Princess* (1936) and her combination of sultriness and breezy good humor. She enjoyed a long career under contract (with the usual loanouts) to Paramount, draped in that sarong in numerous South Sea romances, including John Ford's *The Hurricane* (1937) and *Aloma of the South Seas* (1941), but is forever remembered as the bone of contention between Bing Crosby and Bob Hope in six "Road" films, beginning with *Road to Singapore* in 1940 and ending with *Road to Bali* in 1952. (She was replaced by Joan Collins in *Road to Hong Kong* [1962], but briefly appeared as herself). Before beginning her movie career, Lamour worked as an elevator operator and was Miss New Orleans (1931) before becoming a band vocalist (for her first husband, bandleader Herbie Kaye) and radio performer. Much loved by audiences and her peers, she made over 50 movies, including Rouben Mamoulian's *High, Wide and Handsome* (1937), in which she played a saloon singer; a role as Tyrone Power's girlfriend in *Johnny Apollo* (1940); she danced the Can-Can in *Slightly French* (1949); and donned star-spangled tights for *The Greatest Show on Earth* (1952). Thereafter she made a handful of cameo screen appearances, but took to the stage in 1951 and made her Broadway debut in 1958 in *Oh! Captain.* In 1961, Lamour toured with her own nightclub act and later with the musicals *DuBarry Was a Lady* (1963) and *Hello, Dolly!* (1967). During the 1950s, she made several guest appearances on television shows such as *The Colgate Comedy Hour* and *Damon Runyon Theatre.* She published her autobiography in 1980.

Further Reading:

Lamour, Dorothy. *My Side of the Road.* London, Robson, 1981.

Mielke, Randall G. *Road to Box Office: The Seven Film Comedies of Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, and Dorothy Lamour, 1940-1962.* Jefferson, North Carolina, McFarland & Co., 1997.