Miranda, Carmen (1909-1955) Encyclopedia Article

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"The Brazilian Bombshell" exploded onto the American scene in the 1940s with her lyrically unintelligible songs, her excess, and her exoticism. Miranda, heralded by the Roosevelt administration as the "Ambassadress of Good Neighborhood," became the highest-paid actress in the world as well as the first Latin American to carve her name, handprints, and footprints on the Walk of Fame. Her films include *Down Argentine Way* (1940); *The Gang's All Here* (1943), the first of the "banana series" movies, in which she performs "The Lady with the Tutti-Frutti Hat" amidst tropical scenery replete with gigantic—and erotic—bananas; and *Copacabana* (1947), a low-budget comedy with Groucho Marx. Although she experienced a decline in her last years, after her death Miranda was turned into an icon of "kitsch culture" and continues to be one of the most powerful symbols of "latinidad."

Further Reading:

Gellman, Irwin F. *Good Neighbor Diplomacy: United States Policies in Latin America, 1933-1945.* Baltimore and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979.

Gil-Monteiro, Martha. *Brazilian Bombshell: The Biography of Carmen Miranda.* New York, Donald I. Fine, 1989.

Roberts, Shari. "The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat: Carmen Miranda, A Spectacle of Ethnicity." *Cinema Journal.* Vol. 32, No. 3, Spring 1993.