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Eva Bartok and '10,000 Bedrooms'

By DON ROSS

Eva Bartok, a Hungarian actress who has just finished making her first film in this country, "10,000 Bedrooms," was in town the other day, and we stopped at her hotel to find out what all the hurrahs are about.

"Hurrah," we said, as soon as we saw her. She is a delectable girl with brown eyes, a lovely complexion, a breath-taking smile, and a pretty way with the English language.

Maybe she can act, too, but somehow that didn't seem important at the time. "10,000 Bedrooms" is a Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture about an American lad who inherits a chain of hotels abroad. The film, in which Dean Martin also appears, will open at Loew's State next month.

Made Films in Europe

Miss Bartok is well known in England and Germany, where she has appeared in numerous pictures. Several of the films she has made abroad have been shown in this country. Perhaps the best known of these is "The Crimson Pirate" with Burt Lancaster.

Her real name is Eva Szoke (pronounced Serka). Some years ago she appeared in a British film called "The Tale of Five Women," which was written by Richard Llewellyn, the author of "How Green Was My Valley." She told Mr. Llewellyn that she wished to get out from under the name Szoke. He advised her to make a list of ten Hungarian names that English-speaking people wouldn't stumble over. She did, and he looked them over and chose Bartok as one that no one could have any trouble with.

She was somewhat aghast at her temerity at including the name Bartok in the list, because she considers it sacred to the memory of the late Bela Bartok, a Hungarian who was one of the greatest modern composers. But, aghast as she was, she took the name anyway.



A Dramatic Actress

In Europe Miss Bartok has a reputation as a dramatic actress. For example, in one of her German films she is the wife of a lawyer who takes to drugs because he has developed a stammer. At the end, she is ready to take dope herself because she can't bear to see him take the stuff.

"10,000 Bedrooms" is nothing like that. "It seemed like a holiday after the nervous tension and the concentration required by my other parts," said Miss Bartok. "This was just having fun."

On several previous occasions American producers, after taking a good look at Miss Bartok and saying "Hurrah," have tried to sign her up to a long-term contract. She has refused because she likes to feel untrammelled and free to go where the best opportunity is. This time there was no contract requirement, so she accepted. She likes the United States (New York is one of her three favorite cities along with Rome and London) but she doesn't want to be tied down here.

Her Next Film

In April she starts another picture in Hollywood. This one is in her accustomed dramatic style—as the wife of a scientist with whom she has a tragic life because they can have no children.

In August she will make a pilot film for a half-hour filmed television series called tentatively, "Forever Eva," which seems to be

more of a comedy than anything else. She appears as a Hungarian girl who comes to the United States to look up the handsome and glib Americans she met in Budapest and elsewhere after the war. One episode tells how she drops in on a former American colonel who told her in civilian life he was an important man in the citrus industry and to look him up if she ever came to the States. She finds the embarrassed ex-colonel packing oranges into a crate.

Miss Bartok is forming her own television production company with Alexander Paal, a Hollywood film producer.

One 'Real' Marriage

Since Mr. Paal is one of Miss Bartok's former husbands, this seems a good time to explore her somewhat tangled marital affairs. Miss Bartok says she was married only once, and loyal Bartokians accept this short count without question.

She said her only real marriage was to Curt Jurgens, the German actor, from whom she was divorced in November. But she admits that she has participated in marriage ceremonies with Mr. Paal and William Wordsworth, the great-great-grandson of the poet.

Mr. Paal, who used to work as a photographer-reporter on "Az Est" ("The Evening"), a Hungarian newspaper of which her father was an editor, agreed to marry her in 1943, she said, just to get her out of Hungary. Mr. Paal was living at that time in Hollywood. The marriage *au passeport* was a success, Miss Bartok got out of Hungary, and she and Mr. Paal were later divorced.

Miss Bartok said there is a chance that she and Mr. Jurgens will remarry. He almost



Eva Bartok

popped the question to her a second time not long ago, she said, and she expects him to visit Hollywood to talk things over.

In June Miss Bartok may go over to Italy to make a film called "The Queen of the Desert." This will be done in Italian and Spanish versions by an Italian company. "It is supposed to be the biggest film the Italians have ever made," she said. "It will be in Cinemascope and color. It is about the queen of a small island that rebels against

Roman rule. A Roman consul is sent out to subdue her. She leads her troops in battle. In the end he captures her, but she really conquers him."

Miss Bartok is clearly the sort of woman who is happiest in the company of men. Nevertheless, good trouser that she is, she obeyed without a murmur when M-G-M ordered her to fly to Detroit the other day and be the guest of honor at a dinner of 1,300 clubwomen.

"I was so terrified wiss all zose women," she said.

