

## MICHAEL CURTIZ, DIRECTOR, 72, DIES

Oscar-Winner Made Many  
Films—'Discovered' Stars

1962

HOLLYWOOD, April 11 (AP) — Michael Curtiz, Academy award-winning motion picture director, died of cancer last night. He was 72 years old.

Mr. Curtiz, who won an Oscar for directing "Casablanca" in 1943, had been a distinguished director in Europe before he came to this country in 1927. He was with Warner Brothers studio for more than twenty years, directing seventy-four pictures for that studio alone.

### Demanded Perfection

Mr. Curtiz was one of Hollywood's most successful directors, a perfectionist who was familiar with every aspect of film-making. He drove himself and his actors hard during the filming of a movie and sometimes seemed to have no time for anything but the world of celluloid make-believe.

There is a story that when John Barrymore was watching marathon dancers another actor said to him, "Those poor people. How can they stand it?"

"That is nothing," Mr. Barrymore replied. "Have you ever worked for Michael Curtiz?"

He was also known in Hollywood for his unorthodox use of English. His malapropisms often became conversation items, but he was literate and cultured nonetheless. "He just speaks a language of his own," a friend once commented.

A famous command by the director, uttered during the filming of a Western, was: "Bring on the empty horses!"

He complained about a dull movie script that it had no "spontaneity." He also asked two actors, "Could you get a little closer apart?" And so the tales went. But he got his ideas across.



Michael Curtiz

1950

In his long career, Mr. Curtiz was credited with having discovered many actors. Among his most successful "finds" were Doris Day, John Garfield, Errol Flynn and Danny Thomas.

He used to go for several days without sleep to finish a picture, and he rarely took a vacation.

Describing his philosophy of movie-making, Mr. Curtiz once remarked, "I put all the art into my pictures that I think the audience can stand."

#### Directed Typical U. S. Films

He directed in silent films, talking pictures, Cinemascope, Vista-Vision and other forms of motion pictures. Despite his European background, he directed such typically American pictures as "The Jazz Singer," "Under a Texas Moon," "Cabin in the Cotton," "Dodge City," "Yankee Doodle Dandy" and "White Christmas."

Mr. Curtiz, the son of a poor carpenter in Hungary, joined a touring circus at the age of 17 as an acrobat and juggler. Later he studied at the Royal Academy of the Theatre and Art in Budapest and became a stage actor and then director.

After serving in the Austrian artillery in World War I, he began filmmaking. He directed movies in Hungary, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, France, Italy and England.

In the United States his best-known pictures were "Casablanca," "Captain Blood," "Charge of the Light Brigade," "Angels With Dirty Faces," "Life With Father" and "Mildred Pierce."

Survivors include his widow, the former Bea Meredith, a writer, from whom he had been separated for a year; a daughter, Mrs. Kitty Radhan of Los Angeles; two brothers, David and Gabriel Curtiz of Los Angeles; and two sisters, Mrs. Margaret Manhart of San Francisco, and Mrs. Regina Deragnyi of Canada.

