



Wednesday, 8 January 2020

## Veola

At the age of 6, she was known as "The Wild Rose of KHJ." A few decades later, you could hear her on the Jack Benny radio show, playing perky French governesses, sales clerks from Alabama or sexy women, who got knowing laughs from the audience whenever a reference was made to her, um, physical appearance.

She was Veola Vonn.

Well, at least she was for a time. Before that she was billed as Viola Vonn, and when she appeared on KHJ radio in Los Angeles in 1924 she was named Vyola Von. It turns out they were all stage handles.

There were other names, too, thanks to holy matrimony. Vonn married radio actor Hanley Stafford in 1940 after he was involved in a rather messy divorce. The witness at their wedding was another actor, Frank Nelson. She and Stafford remained wed until he died in 1968, then Vonn married Nelson two years later (just after his divorce). That lasted until he died in 1986.

A little detective work using on-line government data has revealed a bit more background. To the right, you see Brazilian documentation stating her father's name was Frank Von Frankenberg. Actually, that's not correct. His last name was Von Frankenberg and his actual first name was Ingo, though he later went by Frank. He was a salesman from Pine Bluff, Arkansas who married one Rose Kerner in November 1917. Only Rose was better known, according to *Variety* at the time, as Peggy LaRue of the Reisenweber Revue, "The Girl With the Perfect Figure," so Veola came by her show biz talent quite naturally.

Her parents remained in New York while he she headed for Hollywood; she was already in motion pictures when she began her regular appearances on KHJ. She could dance (a *Los Angeles Times* photo shows her dancing a buck-and-wing on the hood of two-tone Auburn) and in the '30s she was singing in clubs before Eddie Cantor put her on his radio show as Mademoiselle Fifi in 1937. Her French accent was extremely convincing, and she found steady work using it (and other accents) on network radio. After the death of Blanche Stewart, she began acting as Mary Livingstone's stand-in on the Benny radio show.

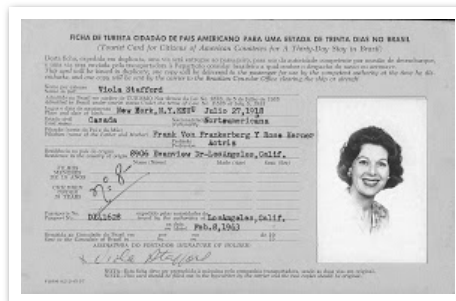
Vonn's press people decided to get hopping in 1953 as a number of short newspaper articles about her appear. We'll pass along a few. The first is from March 12th.

### Learning To Speak English Language Like Frenchwoman Pays Off For Film Actress

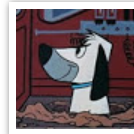
By BEN COOK

United Press Staff Correspondent

HOLLYWOOD — (UP) — The trick is not to speak French as the French would speak it, but to speak English like a Frenchwoman.



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14 minutes ago

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1 hour ago

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fernandollera.com  
14 hours ago

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Sorry... - As far as I know, I do not have any diseases. I just have too much to deal with right now so I won't be blogging much if at all. I'm postponing all the web...

19 hours ago

### Cartoon Research

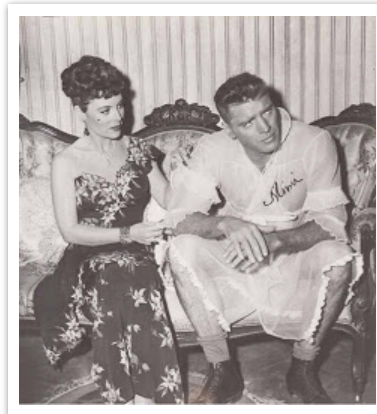
In His Own Words: H.T. Kalmus on Disney in Technicolor - Suspended Animation #276 Many

That is the system that paid off, anyway, for Veola Vonn, who parlayed a high school course in French into a successful radio career, and now into a screen career.

She never could seem to make any real headway when she studied French in high school at Los Angeles. But she did learn to toss in a "oui, oui" now and then and to shrug her shoulders and gesture the way an American thinks a Frenchwoman ought to.

She even fooled Charles Boyer, who mistook her for a real, honest-to-goodness French gal. It was one of her proudest moments.

"He began talking French to me," she recalls, "and I answered him in English—with accent, of course. I was doing fine until he asked me what part of France I came from."



#### In South Seas Film

Miss Vonn is displaying her stock in trade once again in an important role as a French hotel owner in "Sulu Sea," a Warner Brothers picture starring Burt Lancaster and Virginia Mayo. She plays the aunt of three teen-age nieces, and, instead of guarding them from a three-way romance with the worldly Lancaster eggs them on in true French theatrical tradition.

Veola entered radio 10 years ago on an Eddie Cantor program and since then has displayed her delightful French accent on nearly every big radio show. So well established is she as a French comedienne that radio script writers simply jot down, "a Veola part," when they want to describe a French character.

"Sulu Sea" is her second picture. Her first was "The

Big Sky," in which she showed she could look as well as sound, authentically Gallic in the role of a French barmaid.

Miss Vonn was born in New York and is the wife of Hanley Stafford, radio actor who for years played the role of Baby Snooks' father.

It would appear Veola met with a gaggle of reporters toward the end of the year. Both the National Enterprise Association and United Press took the same angle in their stories. The first appeared in papers around December 22nd as part of a column on a number of celebrities, the second is from November 19th.

## Veola Vonn Says Seductive Voice Beats Oomph Shape

By ERSKINE JOHNSON

HOLLYWOOD (NEA)—A Hollywood radio actress, hailed by Jack Benny and Edgar Bergen as "the girl with the most-undressed voice on the air," insists that a plunging contralto is more important to a woman's sex appeal than a plunging neckline.

"Voice seduction," says Veola Vonn, "is much better than a 38-inch bust. Marlene Dietrich could quote racing odds and still sound inviting."

A regular on the Benny, Bergen and other top CBS radio shows from Hollywood, Veola's theory is: "Too many would-be femmes fatales stress the wrong thing. They're more interested in undressing themselves than their voices. Many an illusion has been shattered when a walking dream attempts to be a talking dream."

### VEOLA MAKES IT PAY

## 'Undressed Voice' Cloaked by Radio

By VERNON SCOTT

HOLLYWOOD (UP)—The name Veola Vonn is not well known, but her sultry voice has paved the way to a sparkling income in radio because, as she says, "A plunging contralto is more important than a plunging neckline."

Described by Jack Benny and Edgar Bergen as radio's most "undressed voice," Veola is well qualified to discuss physiques. She has a neat 38-inch measurement herself.

Too many would-be temptresses stress the wrong thing," according to Veola. "Gals are more interested in the measuring tape than in scales musical ones. Seductiveness begins and ends with a woman's voice as far as I'm concerned."

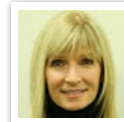
THE POLISH-Hungarian actress says many illusions have been shattered when so-called "walking dreams" turn out to be nightmares the minute they open their mouths. Veola, who uses a variety of dialects as a regular on the Benny program and other radio shows, once received a marriage proposal from a Frenchman who heard her as a sensuous Parisienne maid on the Benny program. She never studied the language.

"That just proves the importance of the sound of sex," Veola smiled. "No matter what the nationality, language, accent or dialect, the voice is still the thing. That sound has got to be

references may be found regarding two-strip Technicolor. I have been guilty of discussing Walter Lantz's King of Jazz (1930)...

1 day ago

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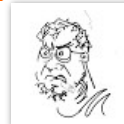


Mary Turner 1985 - Mary Turner today Mary Turner really

rocked the house. Normally when any of the jocks got a reaction, it'd be split. The ones that were really liked wou...

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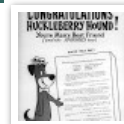
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TONIGHT, 11:54 PM. - COPYRIGHT 2020 BY MILTON KNIGHT

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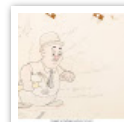


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1 week ago

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Wabbit Twouble: A Small Addendum to An Outstanding Podcast -

Original animation drawing from Wabbit Twouble with color notations for the ink and paint department. Release date: 12/20/41 Availability: Looney Tunes Gol...

3 weeks ago

#### Mark Kausler's CatBlog The Lady and the Tiger -

From the Cathy Hill Archive of Unpublished Comics comes "The Lady and the Tiger". This story was drawn before Cathy started the "Mad Raccoons" series. U...

4 weeks ago

#### Termite Terrace headlines

Porky's Hot Dog Intake - Western Publishing definitely isn't free of cannibalism when it comes

there."

TO PROVE her point, Veola thought a minute and came up with a good example Marilyn Monroe.

"That gal has one of the sexiest figures in the business, and she has a vocal coach working to make her sound like she looks. And Lauren Bacall spent hours yelling at the top of her lungs until her voice was husky enough to suit Howard Hawkes who directed her first picture."

Summing up her theory, Veola says, "A girl with a good figure and no voice just can't make the grade. But give any kind of a gal a sexy voice and men will forget about her shape."



Vonn's first appearance on the Benny show was January 25, 1942 as a French maid. By the time the radio show signed off in 1955, she was standing in for an increasingly absent Mary Livingstone and taking parts in playlets that Mary would have done in earlier years.

Vonn was born on July 27, 1918 and died in Glendale on October 28, 1995.

Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:02](#)



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And yet another distraction from this brick and mortar blog... I've entered the world of podcasting with renowned animation director and historian Bob Jaques...  
10 months ago

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That's all, folks! - My posts have gotten thinner over the years. I'm aware of that. I've been hopeful for a long time, that I can remain active with blogging and sharing furth...  
1 year ago

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[The Flying Man](#) - 'The Flying Man' is a very short absurdist film in which a man drops his coat to take a swim in mid air. Another man with a dog drops by, tries the same th...  
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