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Film Clips

By Derek Zemrak



Baby Peggy Photo provided

Diana Serra Cary ("Baby Peggy") will be inducted into the Classic Film Hall of Fame in The Rheem Theatre at 7 p.m. on April 22.

Cary, 98, the only living silent screen movie star, will be making a rare appearance at the Classic Film Hall of Fame where the documentary "Baby Peggy: The Elephant in the Room" will be shown along with a few of her short films. Patti Leidecker will be performing the live musical score on the baby grand piano.

One of the silent era's most popular child stars, Baby Peggy was born Margaret ("Peggy Jean") Montgomery on October 26, 1918 in Merced, to a show business family. Her father, Jack Montgomery, was a cowboy and a stuntman in early films, and was the double for cowboy star Tom Mix.

Between 1920 and 1923 Baby Peggy appeared in nearly 150 short films and nine feature films. When Peggy was three the Century Film Corporation signed her to appear in their shorts and feature films, although she was occasionally loaned out for other productions, such as "Penrod" and "Fools First" (both 1922), or to Universal in the successful feature "The Darling of New York" (1923). Baby Peggy was the silent star precursor to sound era child star Shirley Temple of the 1930s. Peggy made the first film version of "Captain January" in 1924, and Shirley appeared in the remake a decade later. Many of Baby Peggy's popular comedies were parodies of movies in which she imaginatively imitated famous screen actresses Mary Pickford and Pola Negri. After the advent of sound, Peggy appeared in smaller roles during the 1930s, and retired from the screen in 1939. She earned several million dollars in her short career.

According to an article published in the 1923 edition of "The Blue Book of the Screen," Peggy celebrated her fourth birthday by purchasing a new home in Beverly Hills, where Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks, Charles Chaplin and others lived at the time.

Baby Peggy, who is known today as Diana Serra Cary, is a grandmother, silent film historian and respected author of several books about Hollywood including "Hollywood Posse" and "Whatever Happened to Baby Peggy?"

The local community can pay tribute to a living legend, Diana "Baby Peggy" Serra Cary.

Admission: \$10 for California International Film Festival members and \$15 for non-CAIFF members

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