

# "SEVEN SEAS TO CALAIS" UNFOLDS ADVENTURE-FILLED STORY OF SIR FRANCIS DRAKE, MASTER OF PIRACY ON THE HIGH SEAS

The roistering days of Sir Francis Drake, a pirate who plundered the world's treasure chests with a Queen's blessing, are brought to the screen in an adventure-filled drama in CinemaScope and color in Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's "Seven Seas to Calais."

This heroic and swashbuckling story is set in one of the most eventful periods of English history when, through its dominance of the seas, tiny England could defy the might of Spain.

Heading the large cast are Rod Taylor as Drake, the royal buccaneer whose exploits, capped by the spectacular battle of the Armada, brought a new spirit of pride and hope to England in the late 1500's; Keith Michell as Malcolm, his first lieutenant who follows Drake through each new adventure; and Irene Worth as Queen Elizabeth I, who professed herself a helpless woman while carrying on iron-fisted negotiations with Spain. Also in

prominent roles are Antony Dawson, Basil Dignam, Mario Girotti and lovely Hedy Vessel, cast as Malcolm's sweetheart, Arabella, who is used as a pawn in a plot to assassinate the Queen.

From the moment Drake and his crew set out on their famous three-year voyage, the story of "Seven Seas to Calais" unfolds one colorful and exciting episode after another as they pillage the fabulous gold mines of the Incas, rout the Spanish gold ships at St. Miguel in Panama, and discover California, which Drake christens New Albion. Here, members of the crew become attached to the welcoming Indian girls and Malcolm inadvertently is "married" to six of the native maidens. Drake, in the meantime, is introduced to the potato!

It is after their triumphant return to England that Drake, now knighted by a grateful Elizabeth, and Malcolm thwart a Spanish plot to murder the

Queen and place her sister, the imprisoned Mary, Queen of Scots, on the throne.

The story reaches a spectacular climax with the tremendous battle at sea in which the mighty Spanish Armada, outnumbering the English fleet by ten to one, is routed in an attack in which the English let loose fireboats on the enemy. And Drake, who has played a valiant part in the battle, once more is free to sail off to new treasures and new adventures.

Reality almost overcame Filippo Sanjust's screen play when the Marigold and Pelican, 16th century warships specially built for the picture, were caught in a storm between Salerno and Naples. Starting out with a camera crew of seven, Director Rudolf Mate finished with only two men standing, but still managed to get his shots.

Paolo Moffa, executive producer of "Seven Seas to Calais," not only called in leading naval tacticians to advise on the Armada sequences, but experts on heraldry and etiquette for the magnificently staged scenes in the courts of Elizabeth and King Philip of Spain.

## TURNING BACK THE SPANISH ARMADA!

The little iron foundry just outside Rome could not remember ever having had a comparable order—thirty 16th century-type cannon barrels capable of actually firing man-sized cannon balls. But finally an employee remembered he'd seen an illustration of such a weapon in an old book on naval warfare.

The guns were turned out in perfect firing order and, at long last, Sir Francis Drake's flagship, the Pelican, was ready to put to sea for shooting of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's film production, "Seven Seas to Calais." The motion picture, filmed in CinemaScope and color, and starring Rod Taylor as Drake, Irene Worth as Queen Elizabeth I and Keith Michell as Drake's lieutenant, Malcolm, deals with the swashbuckling adventures of the great English sea captain who turned back the Spanish Armada in 1588.

Studio filming was held to a minimum, and all sea sequences were shot off the Italian coast near Naples. The ships themselves, the Pelican and Marigold, nearly a year under construction at a Naples shipyard, combined 16th century exterior design, copied from old blueprints and paintings, with 20th century construction capable of handling the 20 tons of CinemaScope camera equipment and the camera crew.

The guns, supplementing 150 non-firing models, were but one item of a complicated inventory of props needed to recapture the full-blooded flavor of Drake's life at sea in the swashbuckling "Seven Seas to Calais."



## LEGS (THE MALE BRAND) SOMETIMES CAN MAKE OR BREAK A STRUTTING FILM STAR

Of all the hazards encountered by an actor in his career—and they range from jumping out of a space ship to diapering a three-months-old baby—none is more devastating than performing in tights.

Here, the male of the species, whether he likes it or not, must face the fact that his legs are going to be as keenly observed—and from the distaff point of view—as fiercely criticized as those of any night club showgirl. Many an actor has failed to cross this particular tight-rope and fallen into ridicule. Theatrical records, for instance, show no bandy-legged Hamlets who ever made good.

John Barrymore once remarked (since his own were superb) that "an actor with a good pair of legs can get away with murder." So, when an established actor like Rod Taylor turns up in tights for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's "Seven Seas to Calais" and shows a pair of pins to rival Barrymore's, you have a combination of talent and virility that is hard to beat.

Taylor's new role comes as a distinct contrast to the modern parts he has been playing on screen and television. He is cast as Sir Francis Drake, the English gentleman adventurer who led Queen Elizabeth's privateering fleet half-way around the world in search of treasure.

"Drake's tights really worried me," Taylor said, "and when I saw the doublets, ruffed sleeves and lace collars that went with them, I backed up in horror. But when I gave them a try and found I didn't look quite such an idiot as I had expected, I just decided to forget them. After all, those were the clothes they wore. You can't play Sir Francis Drake in blue jeans.

"I remembered, too, that Drake was something of an actor himself—a ham admittedly—but none the less an actor. He was also a human being, a man who took his boots off if they pinched him and padded around palaces in stocking feet. If a lace ruff bothered him, he simply ripped it off."

That's exactly what Taylor did when he literally got hot under the collar during a scene with Irene Worth, who plays Queen Elizabeth. He ripped the collar off and this bit of business went into the film.

"Once into the skin of Drake, other ideas came naturally," said the actor. "We were at sea off Salerno, Italy, for example, when the sails of the Golden Hind were fouled up and the crew was unable to bring them down. I couldn't imagine a fine sailor like Drake just standing by watching without doing anything, so I jumped into the action and hauled on the rope with the crew. And that's the way you'll see it in the film."