

First decisions not always the best Bette Davis and Errol Flynn as Scarlett and Rhett?

Associated Press

Picture Sylvester Stallone starring in "Beverly Hills Cop," Tom Selleck as "Indiana Jones," or Frank Sinatra as "Dirty Harry."

Those were the original casting decisions for three blockbuster movies, according to an article in the October issue of *Cosmopolitan*, but circumstance intervened.

Stallone quit "Cop" after the producers were less than thrilled with his attempts to rewrite the script to show off his physique, and Eddie Murphy got the part.

Selleck lost out on "Raiders of the Lost Ark" when CBS exercised its option for the "Magnum, P.I." series, and Harrison Ford was picked for the role.

Sinatra broke his wrist and withdrew in favor of Clint Eastwood.

In one of the most famous casting mixups, Bette Davis and Errol Flynn were cast as Scarlett and Rhett in "Gone With The Wind," but Davis considered Flynn such a poor actor she turned down the deal that depended on their being hired as a team.

Ego, money, contract technicalities, "bankability" and spirited rivalry can make casting major movies a major nightmare.

"Ninety percent of a motion picture is casting,"

director Robert Altman said. To Milos Forman, "Casting is everything."

Studio executives urged Forman to cast Burt Reynolds as Salieri and Timothy Hutton as Mozart in "Amadeus," but Forman stuck with relatively unknowns F. Murray Abraham and Tom Hulce.

John Travolta, who turned down leads that went to Richard Gere in "American Gigolo" and "An Officer and a Gentleman," wanted the role of the novice priest in "Mass Appeal" but demanded \$3 million. The part went to Zeliko Ivanek.

Ego can cause fights about billing, which was why Steve McQueen didn't star with Paul Newman in "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid." They couldn't agree on first billing.

A star's box-office standing and "bankability" is another factor. Willie Nelson seemed ideal for the sheriff's role in "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas," but it went to the big box office name, Burt Reynolds.

Bankability is why Hollywood stars replace the original stars of Broadway musicals — Barbra Streisand for Carol Channing in "Hello Dolly!," Rosalind Russell for Ethel Merman in "Gypsy," Lucille Ball for Angela Lansbury in "Mame," and non-singing Audrey Hepburn for Julie Andrews in "My Fair Lady."

Pregnancy also complicates casting. Lucille Ball replaced a pregnant Lana Turner in "Best

Foot Forward," Ginger Rogers danced for the first time with Fred Astaire in "Flying Down to Rio" because his original dance partner was pregnant, and Grace Kelly won her Oscar for "Country Girl" because pregnancy forced Jennifer Jones out of the picture.

Jack Nicholson won an Oscar for "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" after Kirk Douglas failed to get backing to play the role himself. Nicholson won another Oscar, for "Terms of Endearment," after Burt Reynolds decided against playing a potbellied, womanizing ex-astronaut.

Some big stars were second choices. Audrey Hepburn won an Oscar for her first starring role, in "Roman Holiday," because Jean Simmons was unavailable. Sean Connery became James Bond when the producers of "Doctor No" couldn't meet the salary demands of Richard Burton, James Mason or Peter Finch.

Casting flukes accounted for some of the most famous performances in Hollywood history. Judy Garland became Dorothy in "The Wizard of Oz" because MGM couldn't borrow Shirley Temple. Bette Davis played Margo Channing in "All About Eve" after Claudette Colbert sprained her back. Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman took over the leads in "Casablanca" after the original stars, George Raft and Hedy Lamarr, objected to what they considered a dumb script. □

Kiri Te Kanawa records misty music

By MARY CAMPBELL

Associated Press

WHEN KIRI TE KANAWA, A beauty from New Zealand, a Dame of the British Empire, an opera soprano who sang Handel's "Let the Bright Seraphim" at Prince Charles' wedding, decided to make a pop cross-over record, she decided that Nelson Riddle should pilot the ship.

"When I was young, I used to listen to Frank Sinatra records made with Nelson Riddle," Kiri says. "That's why I love that late-night, misty music and I rather thought I would like to do something like that myself."

The result is "Blue Skies," on London Records.

On "Blue Skies," she doesn't sound operatic. As Maria in the new "West Side Story" conducted by Leonard Bernstein for Deutsche Grammophon, she does.

With "Songs of the Auvergne," Jeffrey Tate conducting the English Chamber Orchestra for London, she uses her operatic voice. And she uses it on an album of Christmas music, such songs as "Mary's Boy Child" and "The 12 Days of Christmas," which London will release next year.

But listening to "Blue Skies," one wouldn't know Kiri sang opera at all. A listener might think of Barbra Streisand or Barbara Cook. The songs were chosen carefully and by the time all decisions were made, any possible operatic approach was eliminated. Arrangements called for

about an octave of voice, and Riddle chose keys that kept Kiri's voice toward the lower part of her register.

She says, "I listened to Ella Fitzgerald. I can't do what she can do. She's a whiz kid. I'm singing what I think is best for me, who doesn't sing this music. I think it but I don't sing it."

"The wordy songs need a pure American accent; they need to be sung the way only Americans can use their language. I suppose I was going for the tune more than the words."

"Nelson wanted very much for me to do 'Sophisticated Lady.' We tried it; you could hear it didn't suit me. On some songs he'd say, 'Start in at the chorus; you don't suit the verse.' He kept pulling them out one after one, like cards at Monte Carlo."

Although her first choices were George Gershwin songs, none wound up on the album, Kiri says.

"We slipped further and further from it (Gershwin songs)," she says. "Gershwin suited me but not in Nelson's style. He created these wonderful orchestrations. If you're a Nelson Riddle fan — I haven't yet met any that aren't — you hear it and you immediately know whose it is."

"I love 'The Folks Who Live on the Hill,' 'Yesterdays' — which has Peter King on sax — and 'Blue Skies.' My favorite orchestration is 'So in Love.' Des' favorite is 'Blue Skies.'"

Des is Desmond Park, the Australian engineer whom Kiri married while studying music in England. She left New Zealand at the end of regular school, to prepare her voice for opera. They have two school-age children. They're renting a house on Long Island and are looking for a house to buy. Kiri's heritage is about

one-quarter Maori, the Polynesian people of New Zealand.

About her new album, Kiri says, "I recorded in a booth with a lonely piano and several bottles of Perrier and a telephone to the upstairs control room. The studio was filled with 60 players, the English Chamber Orchestra and a rhythm section and any special soloists. It took five days, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m."

"It had to be one of those very special experiences. You tend to want to work with these more brilliant people, which brings out what talent you have. It's like the pro will always make you look good in tennis."

She'd like to make another record of this kind. "But we've got to let the dust settle with this one first," she says. "One is relying on the public liking it and buying it. You have to make sure they want to."

Kiri's opera records include "Cosi fan tutte," "The Marriage of Figaro," "Carmen," "La Rondine," and "Tosca," the last not yet released. In February she'll record "Faust" for Philips and next summer will record "Arabella" for London.

SHE SANG "TOSCA" AT THE Paris opera but doesn't expect to do it again. "It's for a stronger, bigger, more dramatic voice than mine," she says.

"If you're singing Puccini, violas play along with the vocal line," Kiri explains. "He's about the only composer that does that. Your voice doesn't have its own little channel to go in, which is where my best sound is."

She also has "Come to the Fair," folk songs, on Angel Records, and

"Ave Maria," sacred songs, on Philips.

Last season she sang less opera than usual. "I wanted to sort of get away from it a little bit," she says. "You can't see the woods for the trees sometimes. I wanted to step back."

This season at the Metropolitan Opera she's singing in Handel's "Samson" and Verdi's "Simon Boccanegra." In November she'll sing the Marschallin in "Der Rosenkavalier" at the San Francisco Opera.

"It's all I have time to do there," she says. "My big problem is I need another six hours in the day. Maybe I could stay up all night and not sleep at all." Kiri has been troubled by insomnia all her life, rises early and gets her deepest sleep in a two-hour afternoon nap.

AT EVERY CONCERT SHE sings, Kiri is asked to include "Let the Bright Seraphim," the piece Prince Charles chose for her to sing at his wedding. The request to sing at the royal wedding came on the telephone.

"It was on April Fool's Day," Kiri says of the call. "I did think it was a joke. I was woken up out of the blue from my afternoon sleep. Would I sing at Charles' wedding. Charles who? Charles Windsor. I don't know any Charles Windsor."

Kiri was in the "Don Giovanni" movie as Donna Elvira. She hasn't been asked to do any more operas. "They're usually done around a tenor, aren't they?" she asks. "I'm going to come back in my next life a tenor." □