

Carlos Borcosque:
Learning the Ropes in Hollywood
1927-1938

FIAF Symposium 2017:
Hollywood Goes Latin

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UCLA Film & Television Archive
California State University, Northridge

Linwood Dunn Theater
Pickford Center
Academy of Motion Picture
Arts and Sciences

Carlos Borcosque

Born: Valparaíso, Chile – September 9, 1894

Died: Buenos Aires, Argentina – September 5, 1965



1906 – 1920

Argentina

- Moved to Buenos Aires with his mother
- Studied in public schools & Colegio La Salle, where he met future director Luis César Amadori
- Became a journalist at a very young age
- Wrote for *El Hogar* & *Caras y Caretas*
- Also an aviation enthusiast

1922 – 1927

Chile

- Moved to Santiago, Chile
- Founded Estudios Cinematográficos Borcosque, a film production company & laboratory
- Directed several silent movies, including the cartoon *Vida y Milagros de Don Fausto* (1924), adapted from a newspaper comic strip, & *Martín Rivas* (1925).
- Also produced newsreels

MARTIN RIVAS

SE ESTRENARA

Mañana

simultáneamente en San-
tiago y Valparaíso

EN 5 TEATROS

SEPTIEMBRE
ESMERALDA
BRASIL Y
O'HIGGINS

— y en el —

SEPTIEMBRE
DE VALPARAISO



LA MAS FAMOSA
NOVELA CHILENA HA
SERVIDO DE BASE PARA
LA MEJOR PELICULA
NACIONAL

Modernización de la obra
— de —
BLEST-GANA

La primera película real-
mente de lujo hecha en el
país.

EXTRA MUNDANO EN SU
GENERO EN SU PAIS DE
NUESTRO
LACERADO EN SU
PAIS DE NUESTRO
ESTADISTAS DE SU PAIS

Protagonistas:

SYLVIA VILLALAZ

UNA DE LAS MAS GRANDES
ACTRICES DE SU PAIS DE
SU PAIS DE SU PAIS

JORGE INFANTE

UNA DE LAS MAS GRANDES
ACTRICES DE SU PAIS DE
SU PAIS DE SU PAIS

ARGUMENTO:

La historia de un huir-
tano provinciano que logró
conquistar el corazón de
una orgullosa dama y en-
trar, por propios méritos,
al estrecho círculo aristo-
crático.

ADAPTACION, DIRECCION Y FOTOGRAFIA DE CARLOS F. BORCOSQUE, PROPIETARIO DE LOS ESTUDIOS
BORCOSQUE. - ESPECTACULOS DE AURELIO VALENZUELA B. y Cia.



Young director
[Undated photo, probably Chile mid-1920s]

1927 – 1938

Hollywood

- Arrives in the summer of 1927 with wife Lucía & daughter María Elena
- With appointment as Vice Consul of Chile
- Two objectives:
 - learn the workings of Hollywood
 - gain practical experience

“Carlos Francisco Borcosque of Santiago, Chile, is here to promote the making of pictures based on historical and fictional South American data that will prove popular in Latin American countries”

Film Daily, October 10, 1927

His plans start to take shape – a year later:

“Carlos F. Borcosque, who is a member of the Hollywood Association of Foreign Correspondents, has been granted studio privileges by the credentials committee of the WAMPAS [Western Association of Motion Picture Advertisers].

Borcosque has resigned his position as Vice-Consul of Chile and is devoting his entire time to journalism. He represents three papers in Chile, one in Madrid, and also a Spanish magazine for Latin American consumption in Hollywood.”

Variety, July 11, 1928

In 1930, Borcosque starts *Ecran*

With friends in Chile, and writing from Los Angeles, Borcosque starts a film magazine

From 1930 to 1934 he is actively involved as a co-director, covering the business of Hollywood and also its gossip

Greta Garbo is on the cover of the first issue, April 1930

ecran



GRETA GARBO

HECHO EN CHILE POR
UNIVERSU



Posing with Gilbert Roland and Rosita Ballestero,
reading the first issue of *Ecran*, circa 1930



Borcosque and Gary Cooper
[Undated photo]

He often writes about the opportunities open for Spanish- language films in Hollywood:

““Amongst many players now in Hollywood suitable for making talkie pictures in Spanish, are Dolores del Río, Ramón Novarro, Antonio Moreno, Gilbert Roland, Lupe Vélez, and Barry Norton – all of whom speak a pure Spanish. Other players who speak Spanish with very little accent are: Raquel Torres, Don Alvarado, Lily Damita, Mona Rico, George Lewis, Donald Reed, and Lia Tora. Many other such players, who have had years of picture experience, are listed. It seems that there is real opportunity here for some enterprising producer”

Hollywood Filmograph, June 8, 1929

Borcosque intervenes in the debates about Spanish accents and Hispanic cultures:

He observes that the root of the problem is a lack of a “common Spanish, shared by Spain and the many nations of Hispanic America.

A producer had noted that the studios had to come to some kind of agreement as to how Spanish should be spoken”.

Cinelandia, September 1930

Borcosque's Hollywood credits

- 9 films for MGM - 1930-1931
Spanish-language version of English originals
- 3 films for producer Fanchon Royer Productions -
1932-1933 & 1935: 1 Spanish of original
English version; 2 English versions
- 1 film for Universal Pictures - 1935
Spanish-language version of English original
- 1 film for Metropolitan Pictures - 1936

The Bridge of San Luis Rey

1929 MGM

Dir. Charles Brabin

Consultant, uncredited

Olimpia

1930 MGM

Assistant director of Spanish version

Original: *His Glorious Night*

The Library of Congress has a nitrate negative picture
+ 16 mm mag track

Wu Li Chang

1930 MGM

Dialogue director of Spanish version

Original: *Mr Wu*

Sevilla de mis amores

1930 MGM

Assistant director and dialogue director

Original: *Call of the Flesh*

Su última noche

1932 MGM

Dialogue director

Original: *His Glorious Night*

En cada puerto un amor

1931 MGM

Dialogue director

Original: *Way for a Sailor*

En Cada Puerto Un Amor

PRODUCCION Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

en español



LUNES ESTRENO

CINEMA ALHAMBRA

La mujer X

1931 MGM

Director

Original: *Madame X*

La Mujer



MARIA LADRÓN DE GUEYARA

JOSÉ CRESPO

RAFAEL RIVELLES

Metro

PELÍCULA *Goldwyn*

Mayer

HABLADA EN ESPAÑOL

Cheri-Bibi

1931 MGM

Director

Original: *The Phantom of Paris*



¡Millares de cartas
alabando a la
M-G-M!

**¡ACLAMADA POR LOS
PUEBLOS DE ABOLENGO
HISPANO** como la más im-
portante compañía productora
de PELICULAS HABLADAS EN-
TERAMENTE EN ESPAÑOL!

¡Qué contento está! Leo, el león
de la M-G-M presenta sus efusivos
agradecimientos a los numerosos
empresarios y concurrentes al
cinema que le han escrito dicién-
dole cuánto agradan sus produ-
cciones habladas en ESPAÑOL

**HE AQUI CUATRO NUEVAS
PRODUCCIONES HABLADAS
TOTALMENTE EN ESPAÑOL**

Es sabido en todo el mundo que la
M-G-M es la principal compañía pro-
ductora de películas. ¡Y ahora se con-
quista nuevos y brillantes laureles! ¡Los
países de habla hispana declaran al uní-
sono que la M-G-M les ofrece las cintas
más hermosas habladas en español!

**ERNESTO
VILCHES**
en
**SU ULTIMA
NOCHE** con
Conchita Montenegro
Juan de Landa
María Alba




LA MUJER
con
MARÍA LADRON DE
GUEVARA
JOSE CRESPO
Rafael Rivelles
Juan Martínez Pla

Del famoso drama de
Alexandre Bisson.
Diálogo español de
Eduardo Ugarte y
José López Rubio.
Dirección de Carlos
F. Borcosque.




**VIRGINIA FABREGAS
y JUAN de LANDA**
en
**LA FRUTA
AMARGA**
con Elvira Morla
María Luz Callejo

Adaptación de la Novela
"Dark Star" de Lorna Moon
Dirigida por Arthur Gregor




**ERNESTO
VILCHES** en
CHERI-BIBI
con
María Ladrón de Guevara
María Tubau
María Luz Callejo
Tito Davison

Adaptada de la Novela
de Gaston Leroux
Dirigida por Carlos Borcosque




Producción **METRO-GOLDWY MAYER**
"Siempre en los mejores Cinemas"



Trapped in Tia Juana

1932 Fanchon Royer Pictures

Associate director; writer of Spanish dialogue

The film has been released on DVD; also available
online, free-classic-movies.com

Dos noches

1933 Fanchon Royer Pictures

Director

Original: *Revenge at Monte Carlo*

Library of Congress has a 35mm print,
preserved from a nitrate composite positive

Alas sobre el Chaco

1935 Universal Pictures

Assistant director

Original: *Storm over the Andes*

The Fighting Lady

1935 Fanchon Royer Pictures

Director

The UCLA Film & Television Archive has
a 35mm nitrate print

El carnaval del diablo

1936 Metropolitan Pictures

Supervisor and dialogue director

Writer of Spanish version

Original: *Devil on Horseback*

Borcosque and his Hollywood friends

Among his many friends in the Spanish-language colony of Hollywood:

Ramón Novarro

Antonio Moreno

Lupita Tovar

Dolores del Río

Gilbert Roland

Lupe Vélez

And the Chileans: Tito Davison, José Bohr
and Jorge Délano



Ramón Novarro and Carlos Borcosque

[Undated photo, probably in the set of *Sevilla de mis amores*, directed and starring Novarro, 1930]

And the Spaniards hired by MGM in 1930:

Edgar Neville

Miguel de Zárraga

Eduardo Ugarte

José López Rubio

Salvador de Alberich

María Ladrón de Guevara

Ernesto Vilches

José Crespo

Conchita Montenegro



José López Rubio, José Crespo, Carlos Borcosque, Catalina Bárcena, Gregorio Martínez Sierra y Antonio Moreno saludan desde el escenario después de una representación teatral.

no hacía reír si no le sucedían cosas realmente graves. Realizó una escena de *Luces de la ciudad* que me hizo quedarme atónito. En esa película hice un papelito junto a Edgar Neville y Eduardo Ugarte, en una secuencia que sucede en las calles de Nueva York. Yo le dije que quería un rincón de inmortalidad, estar en una película cuya era como estar en *La ronda de noche*, de Rembrandt, en aquella temporada lo vimos con frecuencia. Edgar Neville llegó a tener una enorme amistad con él.

alidad, te diré que era un hombre muy

Borcosque has a radio show: 1936-1938

Tangee cosmetics sponsors a 15-minute weekly radio show, starting in August 1936.

El repórter de Tangee en Hollywood - Tangee's Hollywood Reporter.

Modeled after the very popular radio show of Hollywood gossip columnist Jimmie Fidle, also sponsored by Tangee.

Recorded on discs – “electric transcriptions” - delivered by mail to over twenty radio stations in Latin America.

Format of the radio show:

An announcer opens and closes it, with a fanfare introducing Carlos Borcosque.

He offers tidbits about the professional and social life of the stars

Comments on the film industry, and reads an “Open letter”, on a topical issue, to stars and producers

In program 9, held at the Herrick Collection, he asks the studios to think of the Latin American audiences.

It's Smart to be Natural!



"Natural Lips Have Won Fashion's Favor," says HATTIE CARNEGIE, one of America's leading designers.



"Natural Lips Are This Year's Favorite," says MME. LOUISE-LANGER, noted French couturiere.

That "Painted Look" is out of style... **Naturalness is the newest vogue in make-up!** • Of course you've noticed that lips are again softly feminine. The hard, coarse "painted look" is passé.

And this new vogue is the reason why Tangee is preferred by today's smartest women. For Tangee can't give you "that painted look" because it *isn't* paint. Instead, Tangee changes from orange in the stick to a lovely blush rose on your lips, blending with your own skin tones, and giving your lips warm, feminine appeal.

TRY TANGEE. It stays on for hours, its special cream base keeps your lips soft and smooth. And when you buy... be sure to ask for TANGEE

NATURAL. There is another shade of Tangee called Tangee Theatrical... but it is intended only for those who insist on vivid color and for theatrical use. Tangee comes in two sizes, 39c and \$1.10... at all leading stores.

WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS LIPSTICK
TANGEE
ENDS THAT PAINTED LOOK



TANGEE LIPSTICK • TANGEE ROUGE • TANGEE FACE POWDER • TANGEE CREME ROUGE

Borcosque continues his journalistic career

As a foreign correspondent based in Los Angeles, Borcosque regularly writes about Hollywood for several publications, including *Sintonía* (Argentina), *Ecran* (Chile) & *Cinelandia* (USA)

In 1936 he participates in the organization of the Foreign Press Society, a precursor of the HFPA.



ecran



Nº. 128

Año IV

SANTIAGO, 4 DE JULIO DE 1933

DIRECTOR EN HOLLYWOOD: CARLOS F. BORCOSQUE.
APARECE
LOS MARTES

Precio: \$ 2

Editada por la Empresa Zig-Zag. — Casilla 64-D.
Bellavista 069. — Santiago de Chile.

Suscripción semestral. . . . \$ 46.—

suscripción anual. . . . \$ 90.—

MARLENE DIETRICH se vá....

Se va Marlene y llega la Garbo. No es que se reemplacen, pues no hay en ellas nada de común. Las dos caben en el cine y queda aún mucho sitio libre para muchas otras grandes estrellas que pudiesen venir—¡y ojalá viniesen!—a reemplazar a las docenas de figuras mediocres de que los estudios echan mano en vista de que no abundan, por desgracia, las Dietrich y las Garbo.

La estrella alemana se va de

vacaciones, después de haber hecho varias películas. No ha trabajado en exceso, pues en total, ha filmado en Hollywood cinco películas desde que viniera, por vez primera, desde Alemania, habiendo hecho durante ese tiempo otro viaje de descanso a

Por
Carlos Borcosque



Los labios de la gran estrella.

pertenecer, durante un año, a la empresa Paramount.

—Lo arregla usted todo admirablemente—me agrega—, ¡ojalá sea así!

Marlene Dietrich es una mujer interesantísima. Viste esa noche una extraña combinación que

su país. Pero se va porque, como todas las grandes estrellas, le resulta más interesante hacerse desear que prodigarse. Muchas



Spencer Tracy and Borcosque
[Undated photo, circa 1936]

Borcosque leaves Hollywood

He receives proposals to work in Mexico and Argentina

Accepts the lucrative contract offered by Atilio Mentasti, owner of Argentina Sono Film

He arrives in Buenos Aires in May 1938, with his family, and collaborator Jack Hall

Borcosque makes 29 films in Argentina, between 1939 and 1966, his last released picture

Borcosque & Jack Hall:
A six-film writing collaboration –
Argentine stories
with a Hollywood know-how

<i>Alas de mi patria</i>	1939
<i>... Y mañana serán hombres</i>	1939
<i>Nosotros, los muchachos</i>	1940
<i>Una vez en la vida</i>	1942
<i>Un nuevo amanecer</i>	1942
<i>La juventud manda</i>	1943
<i>Valle Negro</i>	1943

INCHER 1 HOY 2 3 4 5 6
Cine LC Logar MP

Y MAÑANA SERÁN HOMBRES

EL TEMA MAS APASIONANTE
PRESENTADO POR UNA
PELICULA ARGENTINA

LA PELICULA COMPLETADA
DEL AUTOR
CARLOS BORRERO

CON
SEBASTIAN CHIOLA
MALISA ZINI
DANIEL BELLUSCIO
TRILLO TALITOS

20047 BARRIO DEL CINE ARGENTINO



LIBERTAD LAMARQUE

"una vez
en la vida"

director **CARLOS BORCOSQUE**

ARGENTINA
SONO FILM
presenta



"un nuevo
AMANECER"

con Silvia
LEGRAND ★ **CORES**
SEMILLITA y Elena **LUCENA**

FROILAN VARELA · ENRIQUE CHAIKO · EDUARDO CUITIÑO

DIRIGIDA
POR

Carlos BORCOSQUE



LA FAMOSA
NOVELA DE
HUGO WAST

Maria
DUVAL

VALLE NEGRO

con *Nélida BILBAO* - *Eduardo SANTALLA*
- *E. GARCIA SATUR*

Carlos
CERES



DIRIGIDA POR **CARLOS BORCOSQUE**

What Borcosque brings to the Argentine film industry:

- His contributions are important and long lasting
- He streamlines the filmmaking process – adapted from the Hollywood system
- Implements the use of daily call sheets to organize shooting schedules
- Uses the camera to emphasize continuity, favoring tracking shots
- Makes editing more agile, American style



Borcosque on the set of *El alma de los niños*, 1951

As told by his son,
Carlos Borcosque Jr.

“Papá siempre hablaba de Hollywood”

Coda

Without Bob Dickson, in the Margaret Herrick Library, and Marcela Cassinelli, at the Fundación Cinemateca Argentina, I would not have found the first two key pieces of the Borcosque “Rosebud”, on time for the Symposium. They told me about the 50 radio programs, held at the Academy, and helped me contact his son, Carlos Borcosque , Jr., in Buenos Aires.

Borcosque Jr. lives a few blocks from my home in Buenos Aires, and within walking distance of where his father, mother and four older sisters settled when they came to Buenos Aires in 1938.

All comes full circle – and then some: this research has just begun.