

ENTERTAINMENT FOR MEN

MARCH 1969 • ONE DOLLAR

PLAYBOY

PLAYBOY PREVIEWS
"HIERONYMUS MERKIN,"
THE WACKIEST,
SEXIEST FILM YET

AN INTERVIEW WITH
MARSHALL McLuhan

U. S. SENATOR
JOSEPH D. TYDINGS
ON GUN CONTROL

THE PLANETS—
ARTHUR C. CLARKE
ON MAN'S NEXT
SPACE TARGET





SOKOL

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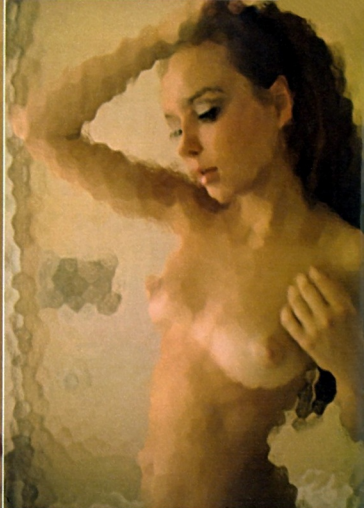
FLICKER FLICKA

*stockholm's marie liljedahl
—one of our most popular
“girls of scandinavia” and
now on the threshold of
screen stardom—pauses for
a revealing playboy pictorial*



A STAGE ACTRESS at 10 and a member of the Swedish Royal Opera ballet at 12, precocious Marie Liljedahl—one of *The Girls of Scandinavia* unveiled in *PLAYBOY* last June—appears, at 18, to be on her way to international sex stardom. In *Inga*, a Swedish-made film that has been attracting record audiences in the U. S. since November, Marie portrays a preoccupied adolescent whose aunt—in need of capital to finance her own bedroom capers—offers her to an elderly suitor. Inga loses her virginity but, in so doing, gains access to the brave new world of the senses. Like her film character, Marie is discovering herself and the new world around her.

She recently left her parents' villa outside Stockholm to find an apartment in the city—but while she's attracted to the metropolis, she also finds it overwhelming and frequently sails to an offshore island, where she enjoys not only needed repose but also the chance to study future roles without distraction. Marie views her frankly erotic performance in *Inga*—which involves repeated exposure, a masturbation scene and some Olympian lovemaking—with characteristic Swedish matter-of-factness: "There's nothing offensive or difficult about disrobing for the camera, if that's what the script calls for. I don't get emotionally involved with the actor in a love scene





nor embarrassed by the presence of the crew. We're all just doing our jobs." Marie's film career began three years ago, while she was vacationing in Greece with her family. A photographer for Germany's *Neue Illustrierte* approached her on the seashore with an invitation to enter a local beauty contest. Marie won easily and soon found herself studying Greek in order to act in her first film, *The Hot Month of August*. She then returned to Sweden, where she became a regular on television as an actress and a model. She turned down a number of roles because "the only thing the producers were interested in was getting me undressed." *Inga*, she felt, was a sensitive study of a young girl's coming of age. Some critics have disagreed, but the film has given Marie's career new momentum. She will soon appear in *Do You Always Want to Remain a Single Girl?* and—with Jacques Tati—*The Sexy Dozen*. After she fulfills her present commitments in Europe, Marie hopes to migrate to the States: "European men usually feel they have to try to get you into bed immediately. Americans aren't nearly as pushy—and that's a welcome relief."



"Hi, there!"



"When I told you I didn't believe in sex before marriage, I don't remember saying anything that would have given you the impression that I believed in sex after marriage."



HOMING PIGEON

a highflying bird who migrates regularly between our montreal hutch and her maryland family



"IT'S JUST THE WAY I AM," explains Kathy MacDonald—our nonconformist Miss March—when companions point out the contradictions in her quicksilver personality. Her favorite meal matches brook trout with a hearty beaujolais; she's a seashore *aficionado* who's loved her two years in inland Montreal; and, while most of her sister Montreal Bunnies jet out for weekends in Bermuda or New York, Kathy prefers to fly home for a quiet visit with her family in suburban Baltimore. Typically for Kathy, she came by her cottontail on impulse: "After I left the University of Maryland, where I had been studying nursing, I decided to become a stewardess. But the day before my interview in Baltimore, Mom saw an ad saying the Baltimore Playboy Club needed Bunnies. 'Why don't you go and see what it's like?' she asked me—jokingly, I thought. Of course, I never got to the airline interview at all. The Club personnel liked me—and I loved the Club—right away." Kathy put in a year and a half as a Baltimore Bunny before hopping up to Montreal. "I thought I'd just spend a winter up here, learning how to ski," Miss March says, "but Montreal's charm is magnetic. I found an ancient, tiny apartment with stained-glass windows and huge, *real* beams in the ceiling." Enthusiastic as she is about her new-found home away from home, Kathy still talks about new horizons—she has her eye on Los Angeles and its Bunny hutch, in particular—but, then, Kathy wouldn't be Kathy without a fresh place to explore.

Pop posters brighten the Montreal apartment of Playmate-Bunny Kathy MacDonald. At right, she picks up French-language periodicals before boarding the city's new subway system for an offbeat chore at the Montreal Playboy Club—using slides to acclimate a newly recruited cottontail colleague.





Kathy makes a delightful—if sometimes disorganized—Bunny. "Losing an eyelash, and then being told that I was due in the Living Room ten minutes ago," she admits, "is just about par for the course."





On one of her periodic flights down to the MacDonald household in suburban Maryland, Kathy is greeted at the door by her mother and one of the family's three dogs. Around-the-house activities through the rest of the weekend always include helping Mrs. MacDonald with her hobby—carpentry—and in the kitchen, where Miss March and sister Susie act as chief taster and assistant chef, respectively. Of the three pets, Cinder—the poodle and the only male—gets most of Kathy's attention. "I've always been more comfortable with boys than with girls," Miss March says, with a wink.



MISS MARCH

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH





With sisters Jane (left) and Susie, Kathy pays a nostalgic visit to her alma mater, the University of Maryland, where initials in an old elm make her giggle. Home movies that night produce laughter at girlhood skirt lengths; and Sunday evening, a happy Miss March heads back to Montreal.





Over Brown

"Well, Prunella, you might say I was having a private little hoedown of my own."



"Nobody is ever going to accuse you of overreacting in bed."



"Frank, I don't want to start another argument, but I don't think this is going to put the magic back in our marriage."

**"CAN
HIERONYMUS MERKIN
EVER FORGET MERCY HUMPPPE
AND FIND
TRUE HAPPINESS?"**



anthony newley, joan collins and playmate connie kreski star in a wild flesh-and-fantasy-filled flick that more than lives up to its satirical title

AS IT TURNS OUT, the suggestively surnamed Hieronymus Merkin (a pubic wig) can't quite forget the more-obviously monikered Miss Humppe, so he doesn't exactly find true happiness, either. But as the film careens toward an answer to its marathon-title question, one finds that Anthony Newley—co-author, producer, director and star—has created what will be the movies' first Priapean musical comedy. Newley plays a likable 40-year-old rake who moonlights as a Hollywood singing idol and boasts a weakness for angelic nymphets—particularly Mercy, played by Connie Kreski, our January 1968 Playmate, whom Newley literally bumped into on an elevator at the London Playboy Club and later signed for the title role. As Hieronymus, he relives and reflects upon his exuberantly amorous past via film, tape and fantasy, and the result is a zany erotobiography that looks like a Marx Brothers movie shot in a nudist camp. "Like most normal men," Newley says, explaining the genesis of the film, "I have a certain fascination with erotica. I think truthful people are interested—artistically—in how people make love. The erotic films being made by young directors nowadays, however, are blatantly sexual without being either sensuous or romantic. I wanted to make a really erotic romantic movie, because I was brought up in a period when there was still romance." For Hieronymus, romance means an endless stream of delectable female fans whose devotion can be best expressed horizontally. He divides his more enduring passions between Polyester Poontang, his long-suffering second wife—played by Newley's real-life *(text concluded on page 137)*



As Hieronymus Merkin, Anthony Newley is possessed by a single-minded dedication to making hay while the sun shines—and while it doesn't, as well. After discovering dryadic Mercy Humppe (Connie Kreski, opposite page) riding a surreal carousel in the forest, Hieronymus promptly introduces his wood nymph to the mysteries of pastoral passion. Sometimes, though, his libidinous leanings trigger a kind of subconscious schizophrenia that finds Hieronymus flipping out of his own identity and watching The Mask—his windup, keyed-up alter ego—in amorous action with such willing barnmates as Helga Beck (above left), who later opts for a solo replay with The Mask under more civilized circumstances.





Demonstrating the wonders of satanic cookery, Good Time Eddie Fitch (Milton Berle, opposite page) gloats, "You can never put in too much yeast," as an outsized dish named Trampolena Whambang (Yolanda) pops out of his smoking oven. Although Good Time Eddie encourages Hieronymus to love 'em and leave 'em, his charge (in company with The Mask) attends an astrological ballet (left) in fashionable undress and blows his usual cool by falling in love with Polyester Poontang, to whom he nobly proposes after getting her with child.



A flashback to his adolescence reveals Hieronymus as a fledgling vaudevillian—and lover—whose on- and offstage act is adorned with statuesque chorines.

As the protagonist in a symbolic Black Mass, Hieronymus ceremonially initiates a young convert.



Hieronymus disports with a frisky extra in a tableau reminiscent of Peter O'Toole's clowning in *Becket*.



Good Time Eddie's campaign to turn the adolescent Hieronymus into the highest-scoring lover of all time begins with an introduction to *Little Assistance* (Margaret Nolan). Before they do their thing on a handy brass bed, Eddie advises: "She has a very small mind, but the rest of her is very intelligent."





Young Merkin blissfully heeds only the final phrase of the warning sign in this uninhibited interlude set in an amusement-park atmosphere that's meant to suggest his euphoria.



Eschewing the nearby merry-go-round, Hieronymus energetically embarks on a merry ride of his own—moving Good Time Eddie to high praise. "As a rapist and lecher and all-round good fellow," he observes, "there's nobody can touch him—that he hasn't already touched."



But when he is later confronted with films of such carnal carnival capers as the one at left, the older, disillusioned Hieronymus exclaims: "I'm like the bubonic plague—the pubic plague! I should be forced to wear a bell around my neck and yell, 'Unclean! Unclean!'"



spouse, Joan Collins—and Mercy, an archetypal innocent who symbolizes ideal love as well as the perfect roll in the hay. But despite his humming hormones, Hieronymus is too selfish to really fall in love. Feeling, at 40, that his life has been futile and misspent, he is haunted by *The Presence of Death*, a darkly senile creature—portrayed by George Jessel—who's given to telling shaggy vaudeville gags as pointless parables. The chief cause of Hieronymus' troubles, though, is Milton Berle, as Good Time Eddie Filth. Eddie materializes in a cloud of lavender smoke when Hieronymus is a randy teenager, and thereafter urges him to make a career of lechery. The wild retrospective of Merkin's youth—complete with dream sequences, a stag-film-within-the-film and a trio of critics who watch and comment on the movie-in-the-making—becomes a combination sermon/pep talk that gives him the insight and courage to change his wicked ways. "I am often asked," Newley told us, "to sum up the movie's theme in a few words, but there is no short phrase that will describe it properly. I prefer, like that great one-man band, Charles Chaplin, to say, 'Let the film speak for itself.'" And, as these pages prove, *Hieronymus* has plenty to say—and see.

Co-starring as the wayward hero's much-deceived mate proved quite a kick for Newley's off-screen wife, Joan Collins (opposite). "I enjoyed being Tony's leading lady more than anything I've ever played in my life," she told us. "The part of Polyester—his fun- and pleasure-loving wife—is very like my own character. She's even a Gemini." Their actual marriage, needless to say, bears little resemblance to the wild union in the film. As Hieronymus, actor Newley—below, doubling as director—fondly remembers their wedding: "We were married in front of a 14-inch television set. The ceremony was performed by a suburban justice of the peace whose fly was open during the entire ceremony. You notice little things like that at a wedding." An exotic dancer in her first film outing, Yolanda (bottom left) also attracts Merkin's attention—first as a courtesan who matches him bounce for bounce in bed and then as an animal-loving princess in the stag-film sequence. Also making her movie debut, Playmate Connie Kreski re-creates with Newley (bottom right) the typically atypical circumstances of her contract signing: "I got a telegram in London asking me to fly to Malta—where Hieronymus was being shot—and play Mercy. I signed the contract at the continuity girl's desk on the edge of the Mediterranean, where the company was filming a beach scene at the time."





Playmate Connie Kreski's first appearance in *Hieronymus Merkin* is described with unabashed enthusiasm in the script's stage directions: "Seated on a carousel, and looking like some magical Alice come to life, is Mercy Humppe—a cloud of pink-and-white silks and bows. She is Snow White, Cinderella, Goldilocks. She is all the sweet heroines of all the glorious tales ever told." Hieronymus himself puts it somewhat differently. "She was the personification of every nymphet I had ever chased across the green meadows of my imagination." That Connie amply embodies that lyrical image is evidenced by this exclusive uncoverage of her against the rugged Malta landscape.



*"What sort of
peace did you have in
mind, Mr. Smith?"*



Vargas



"It's a nice place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there."



BUCK BROWN

"Tell me I'm wrong, Newton—tell me you're not just using me!"



"Now, there's an exhibitionist's exhibitionist!"



"Well, to tell you the truth, I just got out of a sickbed. . . ."



"Now to test your reflexes."



"How was I to know? It was dark and he said 'Me Tarzan.'"