

## Document Citation

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## DON JUAN 1926 (Eighteenth film)

Directed by Alan Crosland. With Mary Astor, Estelle Taylor, Warner Oland, Montague Love, Myrna Loy, Gustav von Seyffertitz, Hedda Hopper, Willard Louis, Philipe de Lacey.

Warners took spectacular revenge for "The Sea Beast" (although their reluctance and skepticism had been repaid by startling box-office success) by having John Barrymore flamboyantly involved with nearly every beauty on the Warner lot as the traditional Don. He pretended to find it extremely vexing but obviously enjoyed himself enormously in his first Fairbanks-type role, leaping, riding, scaling balconies, descending on vines with flashing rapier and ready dagger. Apart from the comic book quality of its script and direction, "Don Juan" survives as a milestone: it was the fully synchronized feature that along with a program of singing, talking, dancing shorts, introduced Vitaphone to astonished and enthusiastic crowds in New York City on August 6, 1926 at the Warner Theatre on Broadway between 51st and 52nd Street. The shorts included a song by Martinelli, solos by Mischa Elman, Efram Zimbalist, Harold Bauer and Marion Talley. There was a film talk by Will Hays, a song by Anna Case with the dancing Cansinos in support. Rita Hayworth (then a Cansino) was in the group. The score for "Don Juan" recorded on Vitaphone was played by the New York Philharmonic. It was a formidable array of talent but it failed to smother Mr. Barrymore's shadow. Some veteran critics agreed his was the worst performance they had ever beheld. But watching it today, we know how wrong the critics were: Barrymore was better than the music.



DRYDEN THEATER TRIBUTE 1949



Barrymore's own sketch of the aged Don in "Don Juan."