RKO Radio’s “Abe Lincoln in Illinois” Wins All Washington in Gala, Colorful World Premiere

RKO Keith’s Theatre, Washington, welcomed Hollywood headliners, arbiters of the capital’s 400 and diplomatic and governmental celebrities in the historical world premiere of “Abe Lincoln in Illinois” on the evening of January 22.

With Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt the guest of honor, the premiere was sponsored for the benefit of charity by the Newspaper Women’s Club of Washington. It will long be remembered along the banks of the Potomac.

Virtually every ticket holder in the audience rated mention in one or another of the “Who’s Who” encyclopedias and the assemblage was said by veteran observers to have been one of the most brilliant ever to gather in the socially-minded city.

In the balcony alone were such luminaries as Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace, Secretary of Navy Charles Edison, Maj. Gen. Thomas Holcomb, Commandant of the Marine Corps, Senators Sheridan Downey and Francis T. Maloney.

Included in the audience were Lord Lothian, British Ambassador; the Italian Ambassador and Princess Colonna; Mrs. Evelyn Walsh MacLean, complete with her Hope Diamond headlight; Finnish Minister Diplomat Proops; Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Mrs. Hull. Mrs. Nicholas Longworth was honorary chairman of the affair.

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, honor guest at the brilliant benefit performance of “Abe Lincoln in Illinois” sponsored by the Newspaper Women’s Club of Washington, meets Raymond Massey in the RKO Keith Theatre lobby. Mr. Massey plays the role on the screen he created on the Broadway stage, acclaimed by critics as the finest of his many dramatic portrayals.
“Led by the First Lady of the United States, Mrs. Roosevelt, and welcomed homespun Abe Lincoln,” the newspaper headline read.

Senator Barbour of New Jersey was among the guests arriving at the Keith Theatre lobby.

Mary Howard arriving in Washington for the premiere.

Lord Lettsen, British Ambassador.

Producer Harry Goetz (left) with S. Barrett McCormick, director of publicity, and his assistants.

Mrs. McCormick and daughter, Joan.

Delayed by a train wreck, Mr. Massey was brought by chartered plane from Harrisburg, Pa., for special screening of Fred Rogers at White House. At left, Mrs. Massey, at right, plane stewardess.


A group of film folk and others arriving in Washington for the premiere. Left to right: Rappaport, Emanuel Hertz, E. J. Felland, Jay Emanuel, James Ivers, Charles Lewis, Frank Leichth, Arthur James, A. W. Smith, Jr., George Morris and Red Lion.

Manager Hardie Moshkin, RKO Keith Theatre, presents little diary, cocktail hour. "Times, Herald, morning.

Representative Edith Nourse Rogers of Massachusetts, and friend.

As Washington applauded the critics, Nelson B. Bell of the Post said, "It is a fine night for films."
Land, a 24-carat Washington audience back to the Capitol last night

Ruth Gordon (left), who plays the role of Mary Todd Lincoln, with Producer Max Gordon and Mrs. Gordon.

Mary Howard, who is featured in the cast as Ann Rutledge, with Director John Cromwell and Mr. and Mrs. Mason.

Supreme Court Justice Owen J. Roberts was among those in the distinguished audience.

Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau Jr. and Mrs. Morgenthau.

Mrs. Roosevelt and Helen Livingtson Kneudler, General Chairman of the Benefit, at the microphone in the lobby of the Keith Theater.

Raymond Massey before the statue of Lincoln at the Lincoln National Capital.

Sticks cheered! STARS AS IMPERISHABLE AS THE
SUNDAY EVENING IN WASHINGTON

The stars and stripes
“Despite Mrs. Roosevelt and an array of diplomatic and official celebrities that even had Supreme Court Justices sitting in the balcony... the greatest possible compliment, however, is that it stole the show from its own world premiere.”

—DON CRAIG, Washington Daily News

“Will be echoed by audiences everywhere so long as the celluloid upon which it is recorded shall last.”

—CAROL FRINK, Washington Times Herald

“It is a drama that every American should see, not once but many times.”

—NELSON B. BELL, Washington Post

“...Messrs. Sherwood and Massey have accomplished another of those miracles of collaboration which Providence sees fit to make a rarity... Hollywood is entitled to feel it has created a fitting memorial to Lincoln.”

—JAY CARMODY, Washington Evening Star
TRADE PUBLICATIONS HAIL "LINCOLN'S" DRAMATIC MERITS AND MASS APPEAL!

“A TRIUMPHANT ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MOTION PICTURE.” - Motion Picture Daily

“DISTINCTIVE, RICH IN DRAMA, SHOULD REPEAT AS AWARD WINNER AND AT BOX OFFICE.” - Film Daily

“ONE OF THE FINEST PICTURES WHICH EVER HAS REACHED THE SCREEN.” - Hollywood Reporter

“TRANSCEDES ALL PREVIOUS EFFORTS...A SUPERB JOB.” - Hollywood Variety

“ONE PICTURE EVERYONE SHOULD SEE AND EVERY EXHIBITOR PLAY.” - Red Kann, in Box Office

“ONE OF THE GREATEST, MOST WARMLY HUMAN FILMS...HOLLYWOOD HAS EVER TURNED OUT.” - The Exhibitor

“HOLDS ONE SPELLBOUND...SCREEN'S FINEST...A PICTURE TO BE SEEN AND TREASURED.” - Showmen's Trade Review

“AN EMOTIONAL SMASH WHICH WILL SEND FILMGOERS OUT OF THE THEATRE TO LAUD IT.” - Variety