

A Star is Born

By BRIAN LOCKHART

They have managed to make and re-make the movie A Star is Born four times.

Usually a remake is an updated version of a movie that did well at the box office and has a good story.

You find a current star, or stars, put them in the modern version of your movie, and fool the current generation into thinking they are seeing something new ? and make a few million dollars for your effort.

Why this movie needed an original followed by three re-makes is beyond me.

In the lead role, you've got Janet Gaynor, 1937, Judy Garland, 1954, Barbra Streisand, 1976, and Lady Gaga, 2018.

Every time, a grizzled older alcoholic, and apparently suicidal, performer, takes a younger new singer / actress, under his wing, and helps her rise to stardom before dying either by his own hand or in some ridiculous fashion.

The young ingenue becomes the new star and goes on to bathe in the glory of fame and celebrity while finishing the movie with a heartfelt rather sappy performance staring up into the heavens in tribute to her now deceased mentor.

At one time, being a star actually meant something. At least the four actresses in the Star is Born franchise, if you can call it that, did indeed earn a star rating.

The whole stardom thing started with Hollywood and the invention of movies, of course.

Prior to that, some theatre performers did enjoy celebrity to a degree, but no where near the power of film where an actor could be seen across the entire country at the same time.

The term 'star' in reference to performers actually goes back quite a ways and by the start of the 20th century it was a commonly used term.

However, the term 'movie star' was used to distinguish those who appeared on celluloid from those who performed on stage.

During the 30's and 40's, being a movie star was a glamorous profession. You became a star because you had a certain quality ? see Clara Bow, the 'it girl,' so-called because she simply had 'it' ? an almost undefinable quality when she appeared on screen.

Or maybe you could say 'Here's looking at you kid,' with a slight lisp, a fedora and a trench coat, with a Douglass DC-3 revving its engines in the background lit only by the runway lights, and look really cool saying that line. Humphrey Bogart was indeed a cool guy ? at least he was on screen.

A star was someone who stood out in that profession, or was a good enough actor to achieve a leading role in a movie.

These days, a 'star' is apparently anyone who is lucky enough to get a part in a TV show. And it doesn't even matter what the role is.

If you're on TV, you're a star! At least according to tabloids, entertainment magazines and shows, and Yahoo news.

Every day I see a new story about some 'star' who has announced they have a disease ? that's popular these days ? has married or divorced, is in rehab, or for some reason needs to show a photo of themselves in a bathing suit.

And this makes the news.

Most of the time I have no idea who these people are. But apparently they are 'stars.'

Occasionally I will look up a bio of someone in the news who is there because they bought a new pair of shoes or something and posted it online.

Wow, this actress who bought new shoes, plays a minor character on a bad TV show, but she's a star because she's on TV.

You've probably all heard the name Kardashian. They are an entire family of people who are famous 'for being famous' after being made famous, because someone thought following them around with a camera would make a great TV show.

It's easy to lose count of how many times each week Kim Kardashian shows up on Yahoo news.

Best known for having her backside injected with ten quarts of 10-W-30 motor oil or something similar to produce her now-infamous giant buttocks, she's a TV 'star' because people tune in to watch the ridiculous made up weekly drama that occurs between her and her sisters and their group of hangers-on.

No one has that much drama in their lives.

I guess it's just a sign of the times that with so much media out there that has to fill TV, Netflix, Crave, pod-casts, internet broadcasts, and web pages, becoming a 'star' is just a matter of being on a screen.