

The following narrative is based on an interview w was which was conducted by Max Millard for publication in New York City in a free weekly paper: *TV Shopper*. Titled "A Man for All Seasons," he talks with Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., in July, 1979.

Six times he has received an advance to write his autobiography, and six times he has returned the money because of the enormity of the task. The life of Douglas Fairbanks Jr. is too rich and varied to be condensed into a one-volume narrative.

The only child of Douglas Fairbanks Sr., America's first great matinee idol, he has acted in more than 75 feature films, produced 160 television plays and a dozen movies, performed in countless stage plays and musicals, made numerous recordings, written screenplays, published his articles and drawings in many of the nation's leading magazines, and given his time freely to at least 50 public service organizations. Ten countries on four continents have presented him with major awards for his diplomatic and philanthropic activities.

"One morning I woke up and said, 'I suppose I must have retired,'" notes the tanned, vigorous 69-year-old at his Madison Avenue office, from behind his huge antique desk with brass lions' heads for drawer pulls. But in our long discussion, it becomes obvious that he has never actually retired, either as an entertainer or as a force in public affairs. His office is fairly cluttered with mementoes of his world travels — swords, statuettes, novelty lamps, old photographs, oversized travel books. The white-haired, melodious-voiced actor sits looking very comfortable as he tells about his ongoing stage career.

"My favorite type of work right now is doing plays for limited periods. In 1940 I gave up stage acting, but in 1968 I did the first big revival of *My Fair Lady*, and since then I have been in several other plays....

He acted in his first movie in 1923 while barely in his teens, and in 1932 he was designated a star. He continued to make films until 1941, when he joined the U.S. armed forces and served for more than five years. Then he resumed his film career with much success before turning his hand to producing in 1952.

"Everybody misuses the word 'star' today," he explains. "Legally, it only means having your name above the title. There's no such thing as a superstar. That's a term we have let creep into the language. Actually Charlie Chaplin may have been a superstar, but he's one of the very few."

...Asked whether his career was helped by having a famous father in the movie business, he replies that "the advantages were ephemeral. They were limited to people being polite and nice, but that wouldn't necessarily lead to any jobs. It usually meant that I would be underpaid rather than overpaid, and they would expect more of me. By the time I became a star, my father had already retired."

...His overall career, concludes Fairbanks, "does not have a single theme, because it's been so diversified. It's been a series of themes. Maybe it's cacophonous. The

things I find most interesting don't pay a penny. But possibly all my activities blended together have something to do with

a person who's got a lot of curiosity and
75 energy and capacity to enjoy and appreciate life."

1. What is the author's unifying theme about Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.?
 - A) He hasn't retired despite his age.
 - B) He considers himself a superstar.
 - C) He's had a varied and amazing life.
 - D) He's done significant public service.

2. What does Fairbanks think about stardom?
 - A) His father was a movie star, so it's not surprising that he is too.
 - B) Some movie stars are difficult and unpleasant.
 - C) Stars and superstars are common.
 - D) Being a star is not a big deal.

3. In line 60, *ephemeral* most nearly means:
 - A) fleeting and flimsy.
 - B) significant.
 - C) annoying.
 - D) nice and helpful.