

Filmland Talent Scout

She Seeks Out Stars

By JERRY BUCK

HOLLYWOOD (P) — This town is filled with tourists who go places hoping to find stars. Renee Valente works the same way.

The difference is that Miss Valente hopes to find unknowns and make them into stars. As head of talent for Screen Gems, she only wants an autograph on a contract.

Accompanied by her husband, producer Burr Smidt, she spends many of her evenings at the many small theater productions in the Los Angeles area looking for possibilities.

"**THE MOST** important thing to me is what I see in the eyes," said Miss Valente, who went from dancer to secretary to producer to talent scout.

"You may see someone playing a role and if you watch the eyes and see that they're thinking it gives you a pretty good idea if they're giving their all."

Once she gets past the eyes she looks at the concept of the character. "There are several ways to play a character," she said. "I look to see which is the one they chose and why. I also look to see if I can tell that they're acting. If you can see the machinery, it isn't working."

MOSTLY, what she's looking for is believability. "You can tell most of the time in a few minutes if they have something," she contends. "I think you can be fooled more one way than the other. You can be fooled about how bad they are. But you can't be fooled about how good they are."

She claims for her own galaxy David Cassidy, the teeny-bopper superstar of TV's *The Partridge Family*; Burt Reynolds, who got his first starring role when she produced the *Hawk* series; Billy Dee Williams, whom she cast in "Brian's Song"; Jon Voight, who went on to star in "Midnight Cowboy" after she gave him his first career test; Meredith Baxter, costar of the upcoming series *Bridg-*



DAVID CASSIDY, MEREDITH BAXTER
... among Valente discoveries

et Loves Bernie; Bobby Sherman, and Lou Gossett.

DESPITE the fact that many people are anxious to become stars, Miss Valente says some actors hate their work after they achieve success.

"They're ashamed of it," she said. "They think they're not working. Many, many actors feel it's not physical, not a manly art. They remain insecure and they're never quite sure why they're making so much money just play-acting."

An ego problem that Miss Valente encounters often is "that most actors want to star as leading men and a lot of them shouldn't. There is a definite image today and it's not the character leading man of a few years ago. A leading man has to have animal magnetism." In other words, sex appeal.

She says one of the rewards of her work is seeing a discovery become well-known and successful.

"I feel proud, but the only way I can sustain that pride is that I don't expect anything from them," she said. "The only thing I expect is a hello if we meet somewhere."