

## **MONTEZ, MARÍA (MARÍA AFRICA GRACIA VIDAL) (1912–1951)**

Among the most exotic of Hollywood beauties, María Montez was born on June 6 in the Dominican Republic and educated in a Catholic convent in her father's native Canary Islands. She starred in *The Invisible Woman* (1940), *That Night in Rio* (1941), *South of Tahiti* (1941), *Lucky Devils* (1942), *The Mystery Marie of Roget* (1942) and *Tangier* (1946), but it was her performances in *Arabian Nights* (1942) and *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* (1944) that made her a box office favorite. Less known, Montez wrote songs, books of poetry, and served as U.S. Goodwill Ambassador. The Trujillo government in the Dominican Republic recognized her achievements as a “woman,” and named a street after her following her untimely death. In 1996 the town of Barahona named the airport after her.