

AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS':

Earth-Shaking Beauty, Entertainment in Film

By ROSE PELSWICK

YOU can roll out every glowing adjective in the book for Michael Todd's production of "Around The World in 80 Days." The picture presented to an enraptured audience at the Rivoli last night is absolutely the tops.

For Todd's come up with a fabulous entertainment that'll have you laughing and gasping and applauding for some three hours and wishing there were more.

It's big. It's beautiful. It's hugely amusing. It has a delightful story, an extraordinary cast headed by David Niven and Mexico's Cantinflas and superb color and photography in the revolutionary Todd-AO process: with its vast curved screen which practically envelops the audience into the action, with its brilliance of lighting, its remarkable depth and clarity and its dramatic directional sound, the picture from a technical standpoint alone is nothing short of camera magic.

As one whose knowledge of electronics is limited to turning switches on and off, this corner has no desire to be drawn into any argument as to the comparative values of the various king-sized screen processes. But this Todd-AO system does offer a startling illusion of sweep and depth, particularly noticeable in the picture's panoramic harbor scenes.

Widest Film Yet

The negative camera film is 65 MM wide and composite prints with sound track are 70 MM wide, wider than those used in other systems. This eliminates distortion from any angle.

As to the great increase in light, that is largely due to the use of a new type arc lamp that has a rated maximum of 200,000 lumens whereas no standard arc lamp exceeds a maximum forced light output of 40,000 lumens. Buckling or scorching of the film is negated by a patented refrigeration process that pours a jet of air 30 degrees below zero on both sides of the film surface.

A filmization of the Jules Verne classic, blithely scripted by S. J. Perelman and imaginatively directed by Michael Anderson, "Around the World in 80 Days" was actually shot all over the world and offers one spectacular episode after another. Here, however, is more than eye-filling grandeur of background: every scene is rich in humor and charm and suspense as well. And in addition to its principals, there are some half a hundred big name stars who appear with tremendous effect in little more than bit parts.

You remember the story, of course: an Englishman of 1872, Phileas Fogg by name, makes a bet of 20,000 pounds with five

members of London's dignified Reform Club that he can girdle the globe in the then-unheard of time of 80 days.

Accompanied by his loyal valet, Passepartout, who carries a huge carpetbag stuffed with money, he sets off on the journey and encounters a series of exciting adventures that become even more so when a Scotland Yard detective suspects him of having robbed the Bank of England.

There just isn't space enough here to list all the breath-taking shots of far-away places against which the tale unfolds: the London of Queen Victoria's day, Paris, Spain, Marseilles, Suez, Bombay, Kholby, Alahabad, Calcutta, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Yokohama, the wide-open spaces of the great American plains and other colorful points East and West.

The mode of transportation includes a fascinating variety of trains and boats, a balloon, elephants and ostriches; whenever obstacles pop up in the race against time, and there are many, Fogg and Passepartout overcome them with hilarious resourcefulness.

And there isn't space, either, to enumerate all the sparkling, inventive incidents that follow one after the other in rapid succession: from Passepartout's scooping up ice from the top of the Alps to chill the champagne Fogg brought along in the balloon, to the rescue of Indian Princess Aouda (Shirley MacLaine) from being burned alive in a "suttee" ceremonial; from the villainy of the trailing detective (Robert Newton) to the riotous bull-fighting sequence in Spain; from the red-skin attack in the Rockies and the rescue by the U.S. Cavalry to the bang-up finish with not a moment to spare.

Niven is simply perfect as the impeccable, imperturbable Britisher whose bath water has to be exactly 1 foot, 3½ inches, whose morning toast has to be 83 degrees Fahrenheit and who has a passion for whist.

What 'Extras'!

As Passepartout, who can do everything from bull-fighting, dancing and acrobatics to general trouble-shooting, Cantinflas makes a magnificent Hollywood debut; the idol of Latin America, he's a superb actor bet of 20,000 pounds with five

"AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS." at the Rivoli Theatre. A Michael Todd production in Todd-AO Process and Eastman color; directed by Michael Anderson from a screenplay by S. J. Perelman; based on the novel by Jules Verne; music by Victor Young; foreign location director, Kevin McCrory. Running time: two hours, 55 minutes.

THE CAST

Phileas Fogg David Niven
 Passepartout Cantinflas
 Mr. Fix Robert Newton
 Aouda Shirley MacLaine
 and
 Charles Boyer, Joe E. Brown, Marine Carol, John Carradine, Charles Coburn, Ronald Colman, Melville Cooper, Noel Coward, Finlay Currie, Reginald Denny, Andy Devine, Marlene Dietrich, Luis Miguel Dominguin, Fernandel, Sir John Gielgud, Hermione Gingold, Jose Greco, Sir Cedric Hardwicke, Trevor Howard, Glynnis Jones, Buster Keaton, Evelyn Keyes, Beatrice Lillie, Peter Lorre, Edmund Lowe, Victor McLaglen, Col. Tim McCoy, A. E. Matthews, Mike Mazurki, John Mills, Alan Mowbray, Robert Morley, Edward R. Murrow, Jack Oakie, George Raft, Gilbert Roland, Cesar Romero, Frank Sinatra, Red Skelton, Ronald Squires, Basil Sydney, Harcourt Williams.

As to the "extras", whom Todd calls cameo players, you can see Marlene Dietrich as the owner of a Barbary Coast saloon, with Frank Sinatra appearing as the piano player and George Raft as the bouncer; Ronald Colman as a railroad official in India; Charles Boyer as a travel agent in Paris; Jose Greco as a Spanish cafe dancer; Beatrice Lillie as a revivalist captain; Gilbert Roland as an Oriental potentate, and Cesar Romero as his henchman; Buster Keaton as a train conductor; Fernandel as a Parisian coachman and John Mills as a London cabby.

You'll spot Noel Coward as manager of a London employment agency, interviewing a gentleman's gentleman played by Sir John Gielgud; Jack Oakie, Andy Devine, Victor McLaglen and Edmund Lowe as a ship's captain and crew; Sir Cedric Hardwicke as a Colonel Blimp type army officer; Joe E. Brown as a station master; Hermione Gingold and Glynnis

Johns as a pair of London "sportin' ladies."

Also Robert Morley, Trevor Howard, Finlay Currie, Ronald Squires and Basil Sydney as the Reform Club members and, among still others, Martine Carol, John Carradine, Charles Coburn, Melville Cooper, Reginald Denny, Luis Miguel Dominguin, Evelyn Keyes, Peter Lorre, Col. Tim McCoy, A. E. Matthews, Mike Mazurki, Alan Mowbray, Red Skelton, Harcourt Williams and, appearing in the prologue, Edward R. Murrow.

Go to the Rivoli and have yourself a wonderful time.