70MM

Newsletter

no. 12 . December 1990

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- More 70 MM and less violence !
- Mad World Campaign Call for action
- IMAX "Blue Planet" reviews
- Showscan 60 frames per second



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From the Editor

In the past years a lot of things have happened concerning the film industry.

Since the foundation of the "70 MM Association" in 1988, the 70 mm film has got much more attention than in the years before. And new 65 mm cameras have been developed by Todd-AO and also by Arriflex! But the interest in restoration of 70 mm films has got a great impulse by the re-issue of "Lawrence of Arabia" and you may say were followed by "Ben-Hur" and "The Ten Commandments". Spartacus is to come, and may be "It's a mad, mad, mad, mad World" as you can read on page 3!

And we hope and think more will follow; all of those in the 70 mm format!

The first intention of our Association was to bring back old 70 mm copies on the screen. But it seemed that all of them lost so much of their colour, that it was not the right way to show people how good 70 mm is, when you bring films with faded colours on the screen! So from now on our activities will mainly be to convince producers to use the 65 mm camera again and not to be satisfied with blow-ups!

An other thing is that we hope there will come an end to the kind of films with only violence in it! Where are the musicals, the large spectacles, etc. from the fifties and the sixties?

Producers and directors must not only think of a young public when they produce films but also of people over forty and fifty years; they do like a good movie with a good story!

During the screenings of "Lawrence" in the Netherlands, I saw a lot of elder people in the cinema: more than with any other film !!

Johan C.M. Wolthuis .



MAD WORLD

MAD WORLD Campaign The John Francis Plaza 2630 Adams Mill Road, NW Washington, DC 20009-2153 UPDATE 1990

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DECEMBER 3, 1990

A "THANK YOU" - AND CALL FOR ACTION

A few years ago, through the generosity of a private film collector in Los Angeles, members of the MAD WORLD Campaign were given access to something which many of us had given up for lost: 21 minutes of 70mm Cinerama print footage excised from the complete premiere edition of IT'S A MAD, MAD, MAD, MAD WORLD [See Release 32]. As an individual, my founding desire in 1982 was to exchange information and suggest a letter-writing effort to persuade United Artists to restore the film. That the Campaign would grow in its understanding and advocacy of what MAD WORLD had been in its original form was an unexpected blessing.

Sadly, the footage was never a gift to the Campaign, nor was access to this material open-ended. What it was was a limited-time offer to learn all we could about the film from these trims. After 3 years, we have — and this public note of thanks is the least we could do in return. I hope that the collector, who prefers anonymity, will make this 70mm footage available again at some future date either to the Campaign (if we believe we can learn anything more from it), MGM-Pathe Entertainment (should they decide to restore MAD WORLD, as we hope they someday will), Stanley Kramer, or perhaps a film archive. But for now, the collector has our gratitude for the knowledge gained during these last few years, and for helping the Campaign to raise awareness of the need to restore MAD WORLD.

The Campaign will now try to move ahead, but the road will be difficult. The strength of this association has always depended not upon myself or any other individual, but upon our united efforts to research and advocate the importance of this motion picture. I believe we have made a strong case for the restoration of MAD WORLD. But I also believe that suggestions and comments from everyone who truly cares about MAD WORLD are now an imperative to determine how best to continue our efforts from this point forward.

I urge you to write the Campaign as soon as possible with your ideas. Pending those letters, I wish each of you the very best for 1991.

Sincerely, Eric K. Federing Founder, MAD WORLD Campaign

MAD WORLD Update is published by the MAD WORLD Campaign, established in 1982 by Eric K. Federing. The express purpose of the MAD WORLD Campaign, an international association, is to facilitate the restoration and theatrical re-release of the 1963 film IT'S A MAD, MAD, MAD, MAD WORLD in its original 210-minute widescreen multichannel presentation.

This, the Academy Award winning edition of the film, was last known to exist in February 1964. The only available extant version is 154 minutes in length. In 1989, the MADWORLD Campagn achieved a partial reconstruction of the film on videotape for non-commercial, intormational purposes only. This 175 minute edition is not available for sair, form or commercial exhibition. Individuals interested in a private screening of this work in progress should direct all requests to the Campaign in Wishington, D.C.

The MAD WORLD Campaign accepts no monies in any form at any time for any reason.

MOVIE REVIEW

'Blue Planet' at IMAX... Up Close and Dist

Filmed from a space shuttle, the startling views of Earth convey ideas as powerful as their images.

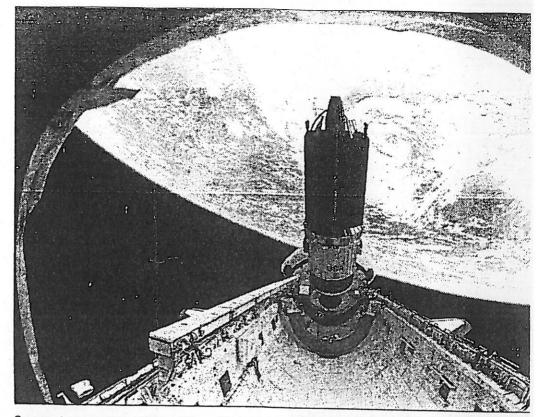
By MICHAEL WILMINGTON SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

ovies are not only art and entertainment; they're also technology. And the fechnology behind the latest IMAX film, "Blue Planet" (at the Mitsubshi IMAX Theater in Exposition Park) is so extraordinary, its impact so overwhelming, that it may knock most audiences breathless. Fortunately, "Planet" has ideas as potent as its images.

The technical breakthroughs of Cinerama and CinemaScope pale Before the showpiece shot of "Blue Planet." Taken 330 miles above the Caribbean, through the huge pilears of a space shuttle, it reveals the vast blue ball of Earth, flecked with pearly, swirling clouds, in dizzying sharp focus far, far below as. This is a deep-focus shot that hight have made Orson Welles drool, one that irresistibly recalls the visionary force of Stanley Kubrick's "2001." On the vast IMAX creen—8 stories high and 70 feet wide—it becomes overpowering.

No more so, though, than many other shots in the movie: some from the Serengeti plains and Namib deserts of Africa, the volcanic mountains of Hawaii, the streets of Paris, San Francisco and Tokyo. The whole plan of "Planet" is to show us the Earth in macrocosm and microcosm, to give us the staggering totality and then zero in on both the particular and the effects: earthquakes, glacial and climatic shifts, the fairyland topography of the clouds, lightning leaping between them.

'Not surprisingly, the theme that binds it all together, thanks to writer-editor Toni Myers, is ecological. And the implicit call for greater environmental conservation and planning doesn't feel forced on the material. Given what we see about what is happening to the planet, it's inevitable.



Scene from IMAX's "Blue Planet": a deep-focus shot that might have made Ors

From above, it sometimes seems as if war or awful pestilence were gnawing away at us. Whole sections of the Earth in decay or erosion—in ravenously deforested Madagascar, where the hills, barren, red and muddy, slide into the sea; in Brazil, where the rain forest

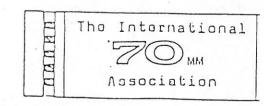
is vanishing at the rate of acres a day. Most disturbingly, we see the effects of this rampaging erosion and pollution. Astronaut James Buchli comments somberly over a side view of the ozone layer—all that protects the world's plethora of life from the airlessness and death of outer space: "Not very big. is it?"

The distant eye gives us a sobering picture. Our stewardship of Earth and its resources begins to seem reckless, chaotic and wildly self-destructive.

This melancholy theme ties together the spectacular views. Beyond the travelogues which have often been the forte of IMAX, "Blue Planet" becomes a plea for a rational stewardship of our world—and a deep-focus hymn to its beauty and variety. It doesn't go too far—less perhaps because, ironically enough, one of its principal sponsors was the Lockheed Corp., than because of the sheer magnitude of the logistics involved. But the images eloquently speak for themselves.

"Blue Planet," will alternate with two other excellent IMAX movies, "Chronos" and "Grand Canyon." Many of its makersMyers, produce son, principal d principal cinem Douglas (assiste ers, space shuttl old IMAX hand; this film they'r themselves. And

If you've nev film—and parer vised that "Blu rated: family) is ly suitable for that youngsters see—this is alr one with which tion: (213) 744-2



Colors of the 'Blue Planet' From Space Are Brown, Gray

By JACK MATHEWS TIMES STAFF WRITER

he film is called "Blue Planet," but when it is finished. the colors likely to make the greatest impression on viewers are brown and gray-brown for the

barren expanses of erosion visible to a camera 170 miles above Earth. gray for the layer of smoke that blankets the burning Amazon rain

Eight minutes of raw footage of "Blue Planet," an IMAX work-inprogress scheduled for completion sometime next year, was shown to the news media and about 40 mesmerized elementary school children at the IMAX Theater in Exposition Park on Wednesday. On the giant screen were images of

stark beauty and of jolting starkness, a teaser for a film that is designed to demonstrate the wonders of nature and our neglect of it.

"It's called 'Blue Planet' but a better name might be 'Fragile Planet,'" said Col. James Buchli, a member of one of two shuttle flight crews who have aimed the 90-pound IMAX camera at Earth while in orbit. "From space, you understand how limited [Earth's] assets are.'

"Blue Planet" is the second orbital IMAX film. The first, "The Dream Is Still Alive," has been showing in large-screen IMAX theaters for nearly five years, reportedly before more than 23 million people. But where that 37minute film was designed to bring viewers aboard a shuttle and give

them a taste of an adventure so far shared by about 200 working space travelers, "Blue Planet" will give us an astronaut's view of the Earth and the environment surrounding

Graeme Ferguson, who heads IMAX Systems Corp. and is serving as producer of "Blue Planet," said final footage for the movie will be completed during the 10-day flight scheduled for late December. The movie is being sponsored by the National Air and Space Museum at the Smithsonian Institution in conjunction with NASA and by the Lockheed Corp.

"Blue Planet," which will open sometime in 1990 at the Smithsonian's IMAX theater, will include overhead views of Hurricanes Hugo and Jerry, the changes being made in the Gulf of Mexico by the growing Mississippi Delta, the effects of urbanization along the coast of Florida, rain forest devastation in the Amazon and in Madagascar, and dozens of other natural and man-made phenomena.



In December, the Smithsonian Institution's Air and Space Museum will host the premiere of an important IMAX film, Blue Planet, Dignitaries and renowned environmentalists will attend. But, you can see it first. Blue Planet, a space film about earth, will open here in L.A. almost a month before the world premiere.

See earth as our astronauts do—from apparatine space shuttle. It if give you a new perspective on our planet. If you're concerned about our environment, you can't afford to miss this film

See Blue Planet before the nation's leaders. Attend a special preview screening on November 16 for just \$10 per person. And you'll receive a FREE 1 saw it hist. T-Shirt, Order your tokets NOW Preview tokets will not be available

Call (213) 744-2019 to charge tickets by phone Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Daily performances begin November 17.

California Museum of Science and Industry

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Motion pictures proved to be a pleasant diversion for a paying public when they were first shown at penny arcades via Thomas A. Edison's peep-show device. the Kinetoscope. That was in 1894, A year later, the Lumiere brothers of Paris expanded the possibilities of the movies enormously by projecting them on a screen. Within a few years the motion picture became not merely a novelty but a practical way of telling stories visually to an increasingly eager public. It became, eventually, an enormously powerful industry in which technology and artistry are exploited to sometimes marvelous effect.

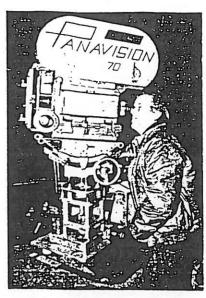
Technology and artistry are the tools of Douglas Trumbull, whose latest contribution to the movies is a striking process called Showscan.

Trumbull first gained fame as a creator of special visual effects whose work was vital to the realization of 2001: a Space Odyssey, The Andromeda Strain, Close Encounters of

the Third Kind, Star Trek: the Motion Picture and Blade Runner. He directed Silent Running and Brainstorm and founded Entertainment Effects Group (EEG), an outstanding visual effects company at Marina del Rey, California.

"One thing that has diminished movies is a lack of showman-ship." Trumbull believes. "All the other entertainment industry technologies are going crazy, but movie exhibition hasn't done a thing to make movies better. Most of the people who go to movies today have never seen Cinerama or Todd-AO. The theaters that run 70mm prints are showing, for the most part, 35mm productions that have been enlarged for 70mm projection. Also, many theaters are running 70mm on small screens with inadequate projection.

"A decision to go out to a movie means considering more than just the cost of a ticket. It must include accessibility, baby sitters, parking, and so on. It's so easy to stay home and



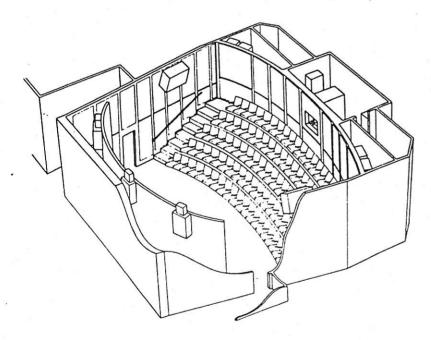
Left: Douglas
Trumbull and the
Panavision 70
camera adapted for
Showscan. Below:
Plan of a Showscan
theater.

watch TV. High resolution television is definitely coming, although it will require from 1250 to 2000 lines of resolution to even approach the quality of 35mm movies. The gap between television entertainment and theatrical films will continue to grow narrower and narrower, so to compete with TV we must create a bigger difference. It would take a hundred high resolution TV channels banked together to present our kind of quality."

As regards developments in the film medium itself, Trumbull believes that the industry has permitted stagnation. "Some fine movies have been made, but nothing of importance has happened for some time," he said. "The great movements have been sound, color, and, more recently, Dolby sound; but since that, no major steps have been taken to really push the boundaries forward. Some of the technical improvements have led to a degraded technique by making things too easy – zooms instead of dolly shots, for example."

Showscan is not intended for showing in normal theaters but in specially designed, intimate showplaces called SuperCinemas that seat from 60 to 100 patrons. These houses are being built in many areas of the United States at Showbiz Pizza Place entertainment centers, which are owned by Brock Hotel Corporation.

The theaters are practically square and the seats are arranged on curved tiers in close proximity to the screen – which is made of a special material developed by the Stewart Filmscreen Corporation – is 17' x 34', about three times as large as the screens in



the average theater. There is no proscenium; the curved screen fills the front wall from floor to ceiling and wall to wall.

The movies are photographed on 65mm film using a height to width ratio of 1:2.21 in specially designed cameras running at 60 fps. The projection prints are on 70mm.

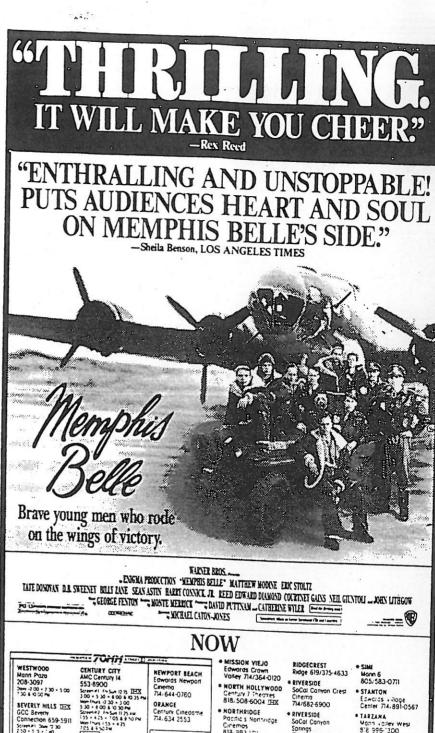
"Ever since the talkie era began it has been the rule that 24 fps is the way to make movies," Trumbull explained. "Nobody breaks the frame rate rules. We decided to test different frame rates to see how it affected photographic quality and audience response. We used encephalographs and other sceintific methods to test audience reactions through brain waves. pulse and skin responses. Our demonstration films were shot at frame rates up to 96 fps. Data analysis showed that the standard 24 fps stimulated relatively low physiological responses, but as the frame rates increased viewer responses jumped. After we passed 60 fps the intensity levelled off.

"That," Trumbull said, "is why we settled on 60. It seems to be the optimum speed at which the eye can receive information and transmit it to the brain. We think 60 fps approximates the speed at which the eye normally senses reality, and so it gives us an incredible illusion of reality.

Trumbull is quick to point out that Showscan is not a 3-D process, but that it produces a sense of depth not present in normal cinematography. His interviews with scientists taught him that stereoscopic vision is dominant only to about 10 feet from the eyes. Beyond that, other factors determine the effect of depth: linear perspective, velocities, relative sizes, atmospheric perspective, and the movement of one object in relation to others.

"Because our image is so sharp, the viewer subconsciously constructs a three-dimensional model of the world, resulting in a powerful feeling that the surface of the screen has vanished and he's looking into a deep world."

Development of the system required a great deal of special equipment. The camera was adapted from a 65mm UltraPanavision camera and geared to a constant speed of 60 fps. A newly designed 70mm projector with custom lenses includes a special lamp system that greatly increases the amount of light thrown to the screen. The sound is a separate six-track, magnetic system with a decibel range from zero to 130 - well beyond the limits of human hearing. These elements are integrated precisely to the design of the theater to heighten the sense of reality and audience participation. Speaker placement and acoustical details are identical in all Showscan theaters.



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The International



Association



The 70 MM Newsletter is published bi-monthly and sent free to the members of the 70 MM Association.

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NLG 25. - per year. Payable by Eurocheque, International Money Order or Cash to the Secretary: J.C.M. Wolthuis, Katwoudehof 36, 6843 BX Arnhem. The Netherlands.

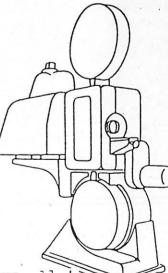
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Don't forget the

Inquiry on PHILIPS original Todd-AO projector model

EL4000/01 DP70

The Rolls-Royce of 70mm projectors



See 70 MM Newsletter no. 11