

January 19, 1955

NEW TODD-AO PROJECTOR TO SERVICE ALL PICTURES WITHIN 35-70M RANGE

New York, Jan. 18. — A new all-purpose Todd-AO projector capable of projecting films in any width within the 35m-70m range has been developed by Magna Theatre Corp., which will distribute "Oklahoma," the first feature lensed in the Todd-AO process.

Also, the wraps have been taken off details of the Todd-AO camera, which uses 65m negative, with prints on 70m stock to accommodate six stereophonic sound tracks.

The projector, adjustable to CinemaScope with and without stereo sound, and also 3-D, was developed jointly by Dr. Brian O'Brien of American Optical Co. and ELA (the cinema department of Philips Works in Eindhoven, Holland, which manufactures the equipment).

Perfect Definition

In the Todd-AO projector, distance between the film in the gate and the projection lens doesn't vary. It is said to give perfect definition. The projector is equipped with a curved runner plate. A slight bend in the longitudinal direction gives the film greater stiffness in the transverse direction. The concave side of the runner plate faces the lens. For 70m film running 30 frames a second, instead of the customary 24 frames, the projector's speed is changed. Modification from 70m to any kind of projection is said to be almost immediate.

As for the Todd-AO camera, also designed by O'Brien together with research scientists, it weighs approximately as much as the Mitchell and is about as large, except it has a slightly larger head and wider film magazines to accommodate the 65m negative. The 70m picture frame is three and one-half times the area of the standard 35m frame. The 65m Todd-AO frame has five sprocket holes, where conventional film has four. The camera speed is stepped up.

Angle Of Coverage

Like ordinary cameras, the Todd-AO unit takes a range of lenses of different sizes. Unlike the lenses on a 35m camera, however, which vary in focal length, the Todd-AO lenses are classified according to the angle of coverage. Thus in a single camera there is a selection of four lenses covering everything from a closeup to a distant scenic or panoramic shot.

The angle of coverage of the camera lenses ranges from a wide, 128 degrees "bugeye" wide angle lens, down through 64, 48 and 37 degree lenses. All four Todd-AO lenses can be used interchangeably so the need for additional cameras for each setup seems eliminated.

January 27, 1955

Egyptian, State Loom As Local Showcases For Todd-AO 'Okla.'

The Egyptian and State theatres, local United Artist Theatre Circuit showcases in Hollywood and downtown L.A., respectively, are understood to be first choice to house "Oklahoma," initial feature to be made in the Todd-AO bigscreen process.

Final decision on the two showcases is expected to be made when the Magna Theatre Corp. board meets in NY Friday. Only theatre definitely set for "Oklahoma" is the Rivoli in NY, which gets the film's world premiere. However, the next probable opening would be a local daytime engagement at the Egyptian and State.

"Oklahoma" is expected to be ready sometime around the first week in May, although a definite timetable has not been set. Mike Todd production has finished lensing, but is still in the works otherwise for editing, scoring, etc.

Lending substance to the indications that the two local theatres will rate the Coast debut of the film is the fact that UATC is an extremely large stockholder in Magna.

De Laurentiis Already Making 'War & Peace'; Eschews Co-Prod'n Deal

Dino de Laurentiis, of the Italian film production firm of Ponti-de Laurentiis, yesterday disclosed the company's production plans for "War and Peace," commenting simultaneously on the David O. Selznick and Mike Todd contemplated versions.

The Italo film, he said, will cost between four and a half and five million dollars—and will be the most expensive film ever made in Italy. It will be shot entirely in English, with a Hollywood director and "three of the biggest stars in Hollywood." Identities were not disclosed, however. Ten American players will be in the supporting cast, he added. Film will take five months to shoot, with a second unit already at work in Finland. Lensing will be done in Finland, Yugoslavia and Italy. Running time is expected to be around three hours and 40 minutes. Film, to be shot in Vista-Vision, is expected to be ready for delivery next February or March.

Anent Todd, de Laurentiis declares Todd contacted him some time ago in regards to a co-production deal, and was told that he (de Laurentiis) could see no reason to go into a co-production deal as his company was geared to make "War" itself and had all the needed financing. All financing for film, incidentally, will be Italian.

No release has been set for the Ponti-de Laurentiis' "War And Peace," although two of company's recent pix—"Mambo" and "Ulysses"—will be released in the U.S. through Paramount.

De Laurentiis left last night for NY, thence to Rome.