

February 1, 1955

## Todd's 'War & Peace,' Rolling In September, to Run 4 Hours

Producer Mike Todd, with the backing of Joseph M. Schenck, plunged into the "War and Peace" production race yesterday with the announcement that, in association with Fred Zinnemann and writer Robert Sherwood, he expects to

## 5-Cent-Per-Seat Todd-AO License

License fee to be charged for showing films in the Todd-AO process will be five cents per seat, based on total seating capacity of houses playing the pictures, it was learned yesterday from Joseph M. Schenck, chairman of the board of Magna Theatre Corp., which soon will distribute the first Todd-AO film, Rodgers & Hammerstein's "Oklahoma!" This plan is tentative, however, according to Schenck.

Schenck and Mike Todd said approximately \$4,000,000 had been spent to date on perfecting the new process.

In view of the per-seat license fee, no Todd-AO charge has been applied to "Oklahoma!"

have the Tolstoy classic ready for release in Todd-AO by late 1956 or early 1957. Announcement of the projected \$7,500,000 production with a running time of approximately four hours, came less than a week after Italian producer Dino DeLaurentiis disclosed his company now has a second unit filming background footage in Finland for his VistaVision version slated for Paramount release in February, 1956.

With David Selznick also having thrown his hat into the "WGP" ring,

Todd said that he, Zinnemann and Sherwood will go ahead with the film regardless of who else makes it, and he denied he had considered a co-production deal with DeLaurentiis last year.

According to Sherwood, a shooting script for "WGP" will be ready in September, with cameras slated to turn then. Current plans call for interiors to be shot in London and exteriors in Yugoslavia, where DeLaurentiis also plans to shoot. Todd said the Yugoslav government has agreed to provide as many soldiers as will be needed without cost to the film company, and he anticipates the use of between 20 and 30 thousand in some scenes. Todd said that, though no one has been signed for a part in the film, a number of American and English actors are under consideration.

Joseph M. Schenck, chairman of Magna Theatre Corp., owner of the Todd-AO process, who is behind the "WGP" financing, said Todd is taking a calculated risk and there are certain difficulties that may require ironing out, but Schenck said he feels the picture should be made now.

February 7, 1955

National Theatres business in the second quarter of the current fiscal year is offsetting the drop in the first quarter by showing a rebound of 12 percent in estimated profits before federal taxes, on a 4.2 percent jump in gross, president

Elmer C. Rhoden told stockholders yesterday at the company's annual meeting. Figures are based on the first seven weeks of the second quarter and Rhoden said he believes the improvement will continue through the final six weeks in view of big films booked.

NT has completed its divestiture of 105 theatres under the consent decree and now is in a position to embark on a program of expanding its earnings, Rhoden said. The program calls for investment in additional theatres and allied phases of the amusement industry; stimulating attendance through advertising, sales research and experimentation; liquidation of unproductive properties, both theatres and real estate, and introduction of new techniques in screen presentation such as the Todd-AO process which will debut with "Oklahoma!" Through its 4 percent stock interest in Magna Theatre Corp., NT participates in the "Oklahoma!" profits during the first 10 years of the film's release. The circuit now is negotiating for installation of Todd-AO equipment in its key spots and expects to be able to show the picture in the final quarter of its fiscal year.

## MGM, Para. May Join In Italian 'War and Peace'

New York.—Negotiations looking toward possible joint financing of Ponti-De Laurentiis' "War and Peace" by MGM and Paramount were held here late last week between Carlo Ponti, Dino De Laurentiis and representatives of the two companies. Deal would call for MGM and Paramount each to contribute over \$1,000,000 in financing and divide world distribution.

February 14, 1955

## Six Theatres In UA Circuit First To Get 'Oklahoma'

Six theatres in the United Artists circuit stand to be the first to get "Oklahoma!" in the new Todd-AO process, it is disclosed in the prospectus covering the 400,121 new shares of UA Theatre Circuit common stock offered for sale at \$17 a share. Orders for the six Todd-AO equipments already have been placed by the circuit.

The prospectus also reveals that in the deal licensing Rodgers & Hammerstein to produce "Oklahoma!" in the Todd-AO process, Magna Theatre Corp., in which the UA circuit is majority stockholder, has first call on any other Rodgers & Hammerstein properties, new or already created, that may be offered for filming for five years after release of "Oklahoma!" The license from Todd-AO calls for a royalty of 5 cents per person viewing a picture in the U.S. and Canada and generally at the rate of 3 1/2 percent of the gross abroad.

Magna's deal to distribute "Oklahoma!" runs for 10 years, with a further three-year option. Distribution will be handled at cost, with Magna getting the majority percentage of net profits after costs.

Theatres in the UA circuit now total about 350, with 21 operated directly. Among leading partnerships are Rowley United Theatres, 136 houses; Metropolitan Playhouses, 98, and United California Theatres, 98.

Improved conditions are reflected in the circuit's net profit of \$22,010 for September, 1954, compared with a loss of \$252,284 for the fiscal year ended Aug. 31 and a profit of \$26,540 for the previous year.

February 18, 1955

## Todd Wins Skirmish Over 'War & Peace'

New York.—Preliminary skirmishing between Mike Todd and Ponti-De Laurentiis over production of "War and Peace" broke out on several new fronts yesterday, with the Yugoslav government coming to the aid of Todd.

In an official statement from the Yugoslav consulate here it was announced Todd has the sole and exclusive right to use the Yugoslav army in the film production of the Tolstoy classic. Karla Duhar, speaking for the Yugoslavs, said they are indignant over the "irresponsible and misleading statements" made by the Ponti-De Laurentiis group. According to Miss Duhar, De Laurentiis was told in Belgrade that a commitment had been made with Todd and that his application for use of the Yugoslav army would not be considered unless and until Todd decided to abandon the project.

At the same time it was learned that Paramount will make an announcement today that the company will participate in the financing and certain distribution of Ponti-De Laurentiis' "War and Peace." MGM still holds first registration on the title, which might keep Paramount from releasing the picture in this country.