

April 8, 1956

Report Mike Todd Near Deal to Make 'War' Film in Soviet Union

New York, April 8.—Mike Todd is reported close to a deal with the Russian government, wherein he would be the first American producer to make a film in the Soviet Union.

Todd has admitted here that if he does make a film there, it will be "War and Peace," which he originally planned to make in Yugoslavia.

In recent weeks Todd has made several trips to Europe, presumably for meetings with Russian officials, and also has had meetings with Russ officials here.

Todd is reputedly here because of serious differences with George Skouras, prexy of Magna, which have reached the point where Skouras is said to be trying to oust Todd from the Kling studios in Hollywood, where the producer is putting the finishing touches on his "Around the World In 80 Days." Kling studios is now headquarters for Todd-AO, and has equipment which the producer needs to complete "Days."

Battle with Skouras is supposedly based on Todd's refusal to spot "80 Days" in the Rivoli Theatre, which now houses the first Todd-AO production, "Oklahoma."

April 9, 1956

Mobility Now On 35M Par

Under the new technical improvements in Todd-AO, which reduce camera weight some 60 pounds and provide greater mobility, producers may now utilize the widescreen process with the same facility as regular 35m photography, according to S. A. Sanford, general manager of the motion picture production division of Todd-AO Corp.

Only extra expense involved in its use is the cost of the film itself and lab charges, he said yesterday. System has now been developed so that its 128-degree bug-eye lens is interchangeable with other lenses—including the 64-, 48- and 37-degree—on the Todd-AO camera, all lightweight. Original bug-eye lens was so heavy and cumbersome it was necessary to attach it permanently on the camera, which required a second camera and mount for the three smaller lenses.

April 25, 1956

MAGNA'S NEW 25G PROJECTION UNIT CAN HANDLE ANY PRINT OR PROCESS

New York, April 24.—The all-purpose projection unit, developed by Magna Corp. and running to an estimated \$25,000, was delivered here yesterday by Magna prexy George P. Skouras. Equipment, comprising a new compatible projector and adjustable screen, is good for prints coming in any size or any system, from Todd-AO on down.

Skouras said Magna now has 16 new cameras ready which are capable of lensing two versions of a film, one in 65m Todd-AO and the other from which to print down to CinemaScope or regular 35m.

"Oklahoma," shot in Todd-AO at 30 frames a second, can now be printed down to standard and C'Scope via a printer developed by Technicolor, Skouras said. However, while the C'Scope "cover" version will be available for showing at regular 24 frames a second speed, the printdown can be shown at 30 frames a second only.

Skouras, who last week returned from a trip to France, Italy and Germany, said he arranged for "Oklahoma" in five towns—Paris, Rome, Milan, Berlin and Dusseldorf. Due to the British tax situation, there will be no roadshows in Britain. The musical will be distributed there only in the C'Scope version and has been booked into J. Arthur Rank's Odeon Theatre, Leicester Square, London. Rank will book the pic only in houses equipped for stereophonic sound.

The entire industry should switch to Todd-AO for improved picture quality, Skouras opined, noting the widescreen system now has been completely perfected. Dr. Brian O'Brien, of American Optical, who developed Todd-AO with Mike Todd, worked out the problem of projection, so any Todd-AO print can be shown in any house, from any angle, eliminating the need for a special booth. The Magna-developed special screen is adjustable to be flat or curved. The projector can take six or four track sound, as well as optical sound.

Regarding distribution arrangements for "Oklahoma" in the U.S., Skouras said that if any deal is made it probably would be with RKO, which also has the foreign rights.

Louis de Rochemont, at Magna's behest, has made a Todd-AO short of American scenic attractions. It will be released May 25. RKO plans to make one or two Todd-AO pix, starting in the fall, and negotiations are "practically complete" for Rodgers & Hammerstein to followup "Oklahoma" with

"South Pacific" in Todd-AO. Skouras said he didn't think the standard version of "Oklahoma" would be released before another two years.

Lenses may now be attached to camera in a matter of 30 seconds, Sanford pointed out, with no limitations in shooting, due to the comparative lightness in weight of the entire unit.

Starting May 7, Technicolor lab will be able to process Todd-AO, Sanford reported. Previously, all film had to be shipped to Consolidated's lab in Fort Lee, N.J., for processing.

First to make use of the new Todd-AO is Mike Todd for a portion of his "Around the World In 80 Days." He started with the original process, but was able to draw on new technical advancement for latter part of film.