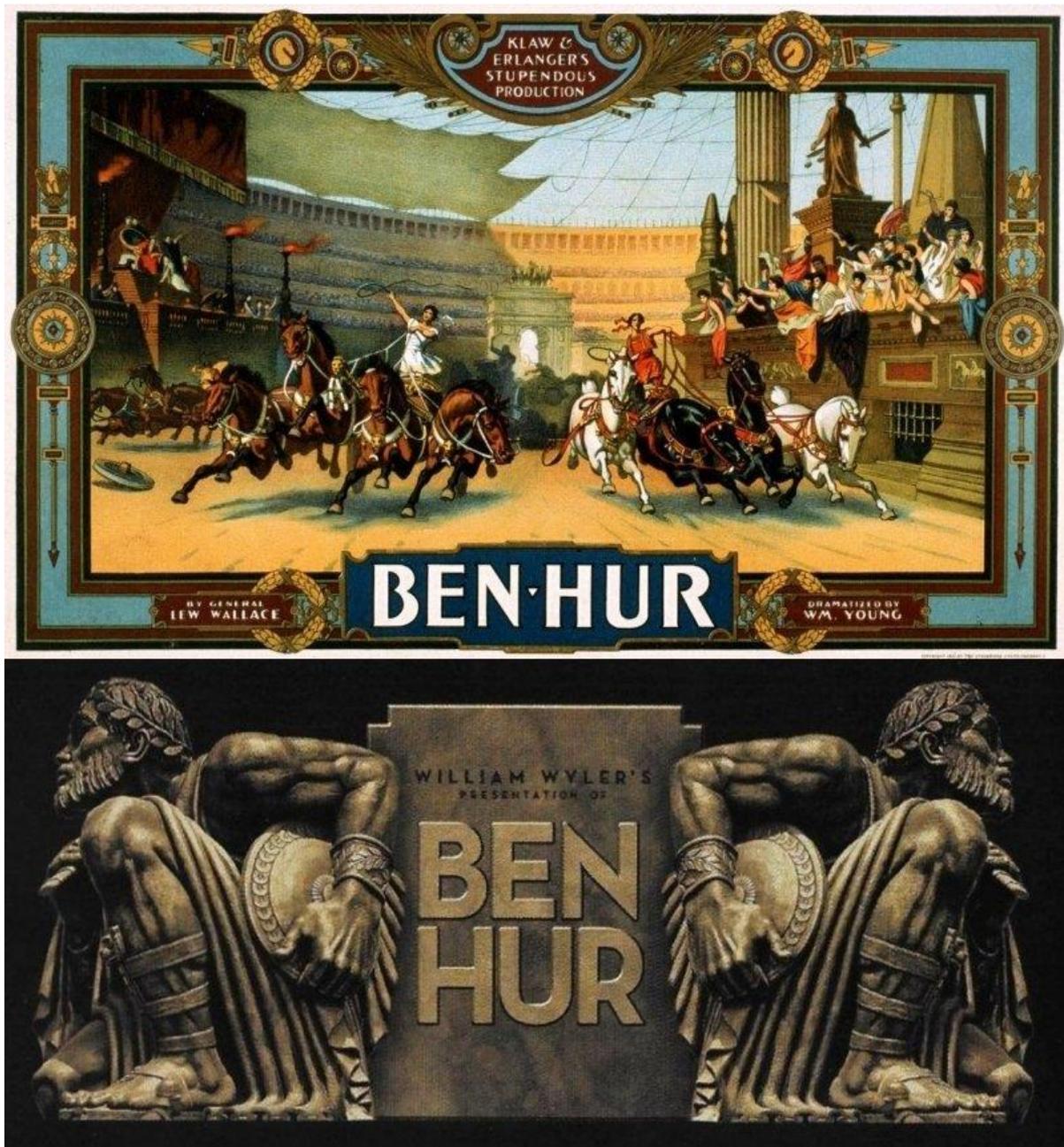


Introductory Report: William Wyler's "Ben-Hur" (ベン・ハー) and "Cinerama" (シネラマ) in Japan

Written by Gerhard Witte, Berlin (Germany) – with kind support from David Coles, Sydney (Australia).



A Success Story

"Ben-Hur" has been making literary, theatrical and cinematic history. Initially, General Lewis Wallace, the author of the novel (published in 1880) had refused to permit a stage production of his story but, finally, the old theatrical firm of Klaw & Erlanger induced Wallace to permit the use of his book – in a deal featuring a profit share for Wallace.

By 1913, his novel had already become a worldwide best-seller. In 1921, "**Ben-Hur**" again broke the front pages when A.L. Erlanger, Florenz Ziegfeld, and Charles B. Dillingham paid Henry Wallace, the author's son, \$1,000,000 for the film rights to the novel. In 1922, there was more news about "**Ben-Hur**" when M.G.M. outbid others for the silent screen rights from the Erlanger group. M.G.M. decided to risk the then unheard sum of \$4,000,000 on the silent film. In December of 1925, the silent "**Ben-Hur**" hit Broadway like a `HURricane' and again became the most sensational theatrical news of the time.

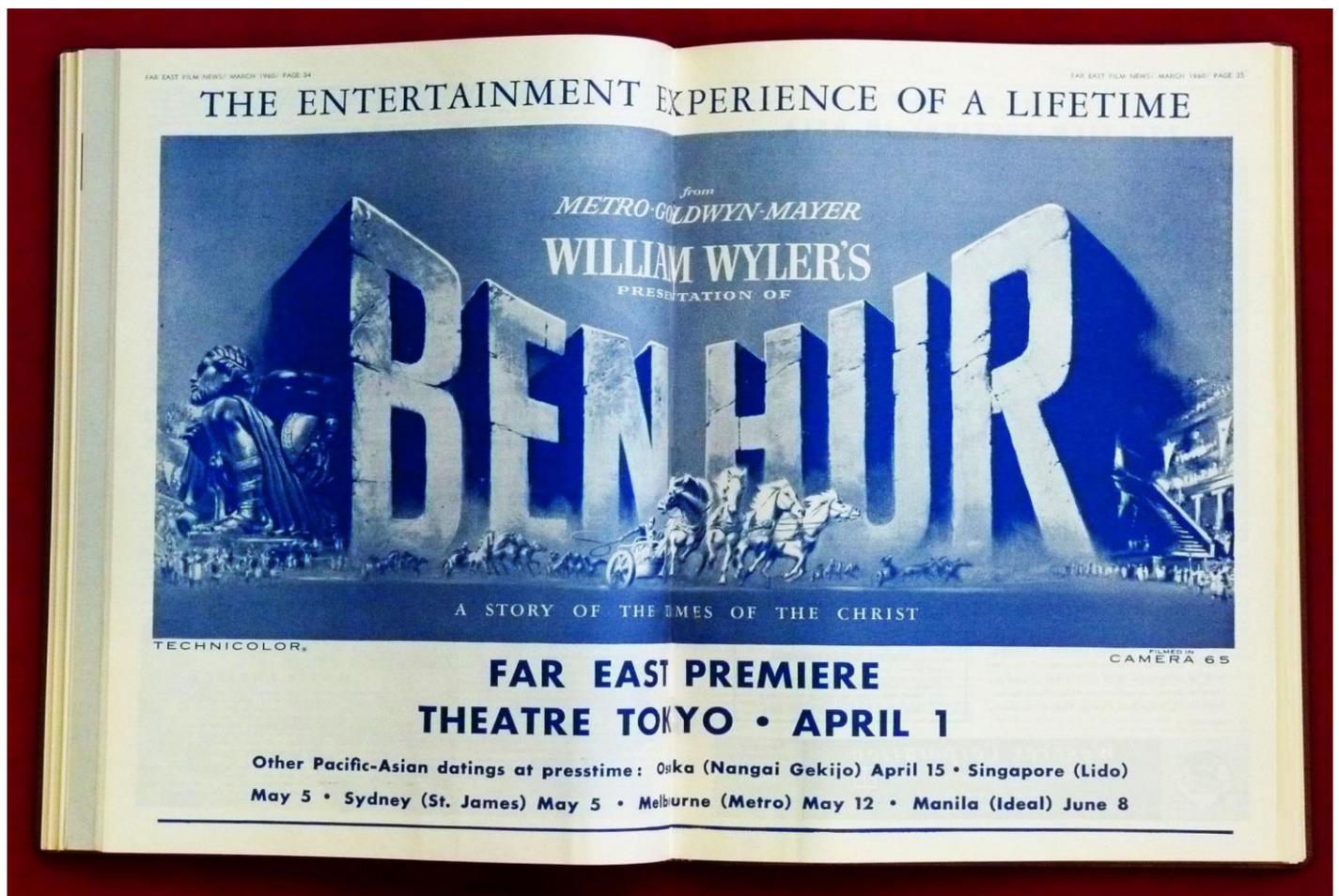
In the 1950s, M.G.M. decided to make a new version of "**Ben-Hur**". After years of preliminary planning and preparation, it had been decided by Joseph R. Vogel, at the time president of M.G.M.'s parent company Loew's, Inc., to produce "**Ben-Hur**" on a scale never before attempted in cinema history. An unprecedented budget of about \$15,000,000 had been set up.

The opening of William Wyler's movie took place at Loew's State Theatre, Broadway, on Wednesday, 18 November 1959. Earlier in the year they had reconstructed the theatre at a cost of about \$800,000 in anticipation of playing "**Ben-Hur**".

"My God, did I set all this in motion?" exclaimed General Lewis Wallace at the time when he saw the sets for the very first, comparatively simple "**Ben-Hur**" stage show. Wonder what he would say for William Wyler's epic 1959 version! At the time, the film became a worldwide box office triumph that had saved M.G.M. from impending ruin.

With this report immerse yourself into the world of widescreen film in Japan – also enjoy all the wonderful advertisements, photographs, images, posters and memorabilia you can find in the three attached PDF files.

The Movie's Premiere in Far East The Entertainment Experience of a Lifetime



A huge 2-sided premiere advert from the trade magazine "Far East Film News" dated March 1960.

Announced premieres were at the time: in Tokyo at "Theatre Tokyo" on 1st April 1960 / in Osaka at "Nangai Gekijyo" on 15th April 1960 / in Singapore at "Lido" on 5th May 1960 / in Sydney at "St. James" on 5th May 1960 / in Melbourne at "Metro" on 12th May 1960, and in Manila at "Ideal" on 8th June 1960. At the time, further negotiations were underway for bookings in Taipei, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Karachi, Lahore, Bangkok, Djakarta, Honolulu and Hongkong.



The Publicity Campaign

Images and information for this chapter are mainly taken from the trade magazine "Far East Film News" dated October 1959 and March 1960.

M.G.M. Vice President Seymour Mayer arrived in Tokyo in late October 1959 to coordinate a preselling campaign for "**Ben-Hur**". In the upper image he is shown (4th from right) with the company's executive sales & administrative personnel. From left to right: Isao Hasegawa (Nagoya); Seishi Kasai (Sapporo); Teruyoshi Yoshitake (Fukuoka); Joseph Visi (Chief of Administration, Tokyo Head Office); Francisco Rodriguez (M.G.M. Japan Sales Manager); Seymour Mayer (M.G.M. Vice President); Bernard Blair (Japan General Manager); Yoshinori Sumita (Osaka) and Seihachi Okada (Kantō).

Image below left: Kei Nagashima [special Japan Ad-Pub (Advertising and Publicity) Assistant]; Sensaku Sasaki (M.G.M. Osaka Publication Chief); Bernard Blair (Japan General Manager); Arthur Pincus (M.G.M. Ad-Pub Director); Francisco Rodriguez (M.G.M. Japan Sales Manager); Joseph Visi (Chief of Administration, Tokyo Head Office) and Masao Iseki (Tokyo Publicity Manger).

Image below right: Toho President Masashi Shimizu (left), and Bernard Blair (Japan General Manager) ink Tokyo and Osaka deals.

Previously, the movie's original campaign kickoff had been staged from 22 until 25 April 1959 with a Far East Conference in Tokyo presided over by Morton A. Spring (President of M.G.M. International) and M.G.M.'s Vice Presidents Maurice R. Silverstein and Seymour R. Mayer – also attended by all Asian branch managers. Late in 1959, Mayer had doubled over the territory for final policy and ad-pub polishing, followed in January 1960 by the company's Director of Advertising and Publicity, Arthur Pincus, who had coordinated the details.

Highlights of the movie's Tokyo campaign were at the time:

- A.) A serialized translation of the film's story in the 500,000-circulation entertainment newspaper named "Daily Sports".
- B.) Short novel versions in the popular youth magazines "Chūgaku ichinen" and "Kokojidai" with a total circulation of 600,000.
- C.) Two full-length book translations.
- D.) The release of EP and LP recordings from Miklos Rozsa's musical score by Nippon Columbia – at the time placed with 18 television and 48 radio stations.
- E.) A tie-up with the National Cotton Association for a special line of sport shirts.



"Ben-Hur" opened at Osaka's "Nangai Gekijyo" (南街会館) Theatre on 15.04.1960. The venue existed from 18.12.1953 until 01.02.2004 (see image on the left – the theatre shortly before its closure). It was located in the "Namba" (難波) district of Osaka's ward "Chūō-ku" (中央区), a principal shopping and tourist area. Since 2006 is located on the site a big shopping centre named "Namba Marui" (see image on the right) with an integrated cinema complex named "TOHO Cinemas (Namba)". The opening of "Ben-Hur" was devoted to a fund-raising benefit for the Canadian Academy (an international school in Kobe), and was attended by Kansai area governors, mayors and diplomats.

Arthur Pincus had hit Tokyo 16 January 1960 on a global coordination tour for promotion of the company's blockbuster. Pincus conferred with executives of the company's Tokyo office including General Manager Bernard Blair and Kei Nagashima who was appointed special Japan Ad-Pub (Advertising and Publicity) Assistant for "Ben-Hur".

The film was sold to Toho (東宝) – a well-known Japanese film, theater production, and also distribution company – for a public 1st April 1960 opening at "Theatre Tokyo" (テアトル東京) in the capital, and 15th April start at "Nangai Gekijyo" (南街会館) Theatre in Osaka. Latest information at press time had tickets pegged at top ¥800 (\$2.23), bottom ¥250 (\$0,69). At the time, Arthur Pincus was scheduled to leave Tokyo on 26th January for Manila, Singapore, Bangkok and through Europe, arriving at his New York desk in late February 1960.



Morton A. Spring, President of M.G.M. International, and Mrs. Spring were welcomed to Tokyo by a large group of Metro executives and domestic trade leaders. From left to right: Kei Nagashima (special Japan Ad-Pub Assistant); Francisco Rodriguez (M.G.M. Japan Sales Manager); Mrs. Blair and Mrs. Spring; Bernard Blair (Japan General Manager); Morton A. Spring; Joseph Visi (Chief of Administration, Tokyo Head Office); J. Masson (Head Office Auditor) and S. Osaka (Kantō Branch Manager).



A commemorate scroll was presented by Princess Takamatsu to Mr. and Mrs. Spring at the stately Korin Mansion (one of Tokyo's most beautiful buildings) in appreciation of a Charity Premiere of "Ben-Hur" at "Theatre Tokyo" on 30th March 1960. At the time, Prince Takamatsu was President of the Japan Benevolent Society (Saiseikai) – the sponsoring organization.

In a 40-day (and night) globe-girdling ending on St. Patrick's Day (Thursday, 17th March 1960) in Tokyo, M.G.M. International President Morton A. Spring had applied prestige punch to an unprecedented 11-month buildup for his company's movie "**Ben-Hur**". During a 4-day Tokyo stopover, Morton Spring had conferred with Japan General Manager Bernard Blair, and other Metro executives. He had also met with sponsors of the movie's Charity Bow at which star Charlton Heston had stage appearance on 30th March 1960.

Premiere of "Ben-Hur" in Manila, Taipei and Sydney

According information from "Far East Film News" there had been a highlight in Manila, which took place four days after the film's premiere (8th June) at "Ideal" Theatre on 12th June 1960. The entire Catholic hierarchy, headed by His Eminence Rufino Jiao Cardinal Santos, came to a benefit show sponsored by the Pope Pius II Catholic Center, accompanied by a huge assemblage of nuns, sisters, novitiates, seminarians, priests, bishops and archbishops (author's note: Cardinal Santos was a Filipino clergyman of the Roman Catholic Church and Archbishop of Manila).



Rufino Jiao Cardinal Santos had witnessed a contract signing for the release of "Ben-Hur" at the "Ideal" Theatre in Manila. From left to right: Bron Landau (M.G.M. General Manager for the Philippines); Morton A. Spring (M.G.M. International President); Rufino Jiao Cardinal Santos and Rafael Roces (owner of the "Ideal" Theatre), and rightmost Marcos Roces and Mauro Prieto who are representing the theatre.



At the time, a big welcome was given M.G.M. International President Morton A. Spring and Mrs. Spring on their arrival in Taipei on 12th March 1960. From left to right: actor Hwong Ho; Mrs. Spring; actress King Feng; Morton A. Spring; William C. Lee [Executive Secretary of the CMPC (Central Motion Picture Corporation) Reorganization Committee]; Mrs. C. S. Chang; Chow Chen Ju-shu (President of the "Shin Sheng Theater" – standing behind Mrs. Chang); C. S. Chang (M.G.M. Taipei Manager), and K. N. Chen (President of the "Tung Hai" Theatre in Taichung).

Mr. and Mrs. Spring were guests at a luncheon party shortly after their arrival hosted by GIO Director Dr. Sampson Shen (author's note: GIO = Government Information Office – I have added a small photo from "Far East Film News", dated November 1959, of Taipei's "Shin Sheng Theater" where the movie most likely had its Taiwan premiere).

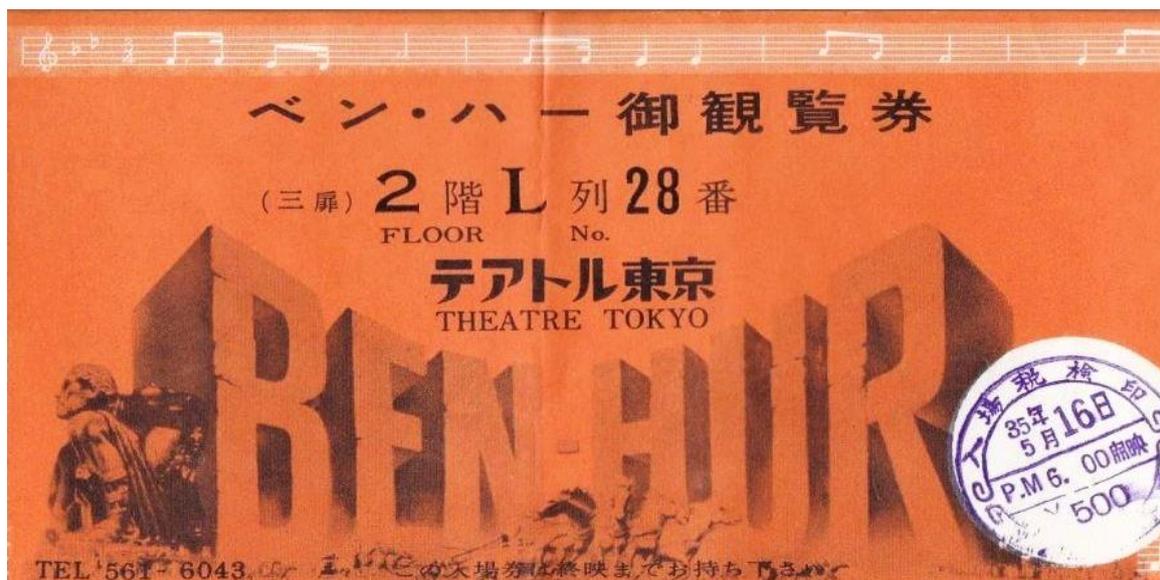
The movie's Australian premiere was set for Thursday, 5th May 1960 at the "St. James" Theatre in Sydney, with a charity bow in aid of the Royal New South Wales Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (author's note: also with Charlton Heston in attendance – see advert below). Regular evening performances were slated at 7:30 p.m. six days a week, including public holidays (at the time, Australian theatres were closed Sundays by law). Matinee screenings were planned Wednesday, Saturdays and during public holidays at 1:30 p.m.. Aussie censors had labeled "**Ben-Hur**" for General Exhibition – but with a special one-off "*unsuitable for children under 12*" proviso (author's note: the film ran at Sydney's "St. James" Theatre for 61 weeks in 35mm, and newly installed 4-track magnetic sound).



Charlton Heston (in the picture barely recognizable) at Sydney's "St. James" Theatre. Advert courtesy of David Coles.

Premiere of "Ben-Hur" (ベン・ハー) in Japan at Tokyo's "Theatre Tokyo" (テアトル東京)

A festive Charity Premiere, attended by the Emperor Hirohito and Empress Kōjun (born "Nagako"), took place at "Theatre Tokyo" on Wednesday, 30 March 1960. Charlton Heston and his wife were also present.



On the "Theatre Tokyo" ticket is written: (ベン・ハー御観覧券) Ben-Hur – viewing ticket. The stamp print on the ticket gives following information (you always have to read from right to left): Date: 16.05.35 (Shōwa 35 = 1960), performance at 6 p.m. – price: ¥500.

The Shōwa Era is the period from 1926 till 1989. The pre-1945 Shōwa Era (1926–1945) concerns the "Empire of Japan" while the post-1945 Shōwa Era (1945–1989) was a part of the "State of Japan". This is corresponding to the reign of the Shōwa Emperor, Hirohito, from 25th December 1926 until his death on 7th January 1989. The post-war Shōwa period also led to the Japanese economic boom.

In "Far East Film News", dated February 1960, is written: "Theatre Tokyo will reopen on 6th March 1960 with NCC's "Auferstehung" and "Swan Lake" after being closed six days for installation of 70mm film equipment. On 1st April "Ben-Hur" bows there." (Author's note: NCC = National Cinema Corporation).



"Ben-Hur" at "Theatre Tokyo" (テアトル東京). A first large announcement advert dated 02.03.1960 – public premiere of the epic on 01.04.1960 (4月1日). On the right an advert dated 05.03.1960. The two 35mm films: "Swan Lake" [(白鳥の湖), USSR, 1957], and "Auferstehung" [(カチューシャ物語), English title "Resurrection", West Germany, 1958] – with Horst Buchholz and Myriam Bru – were shown prior to grand Charity Premiere of "Ben-Hur" that took place on Wednesday, 30th March 1960.

The Festive Tokyo Charity Premiere for the Japan Benevolent Society (Saiseikai)

Emperor Hirohito and Empress Kōjun (born "Nagako") attended the Charity Bow of "Ben-Hur" at "Theatre Tokyo" on 30th March – the film's public premiere took place two days later, on 1st April 1960.

It was the first time that the Emperor was also accompanied by other Imperial family members to a public performance of a motion picture. Previously, in December 1955, the Emperor had already honored a performance of "Cinerama Holiday" [(シネラマ・ホリデー), USA, 1955] at Tokyo's "Imperial Theatre" by his presence. For detailed information on this subject (Cinerama) please be so kind and read the two PDF file articles that are available on the main web page "Bigger than 'Ben-Hur' – My Japan Cinerama Project":

PDF: "3-Strip Films in Japan", and PDF: "70mm Cinerama Films in Japan"



The front of the "Theatre Tokyo" was dressed for the long run of "Ben-Hur". Image left below: Emperor Hirohito at the Charity Premiere – in the foreground, escorting Their Highnesses past the reception line in the theatre lobby, is Masujiro Ohgane, director of "Theatre Tokyo Co., Ltd." – a Toho subsidiary. At left background (left to right): Bernard Blair, M.G.M.'s Japan Manager, Mrs. Lydia Heston and her husband Charlton Heston, and Masashi Shimizu – President of the Toho Company.

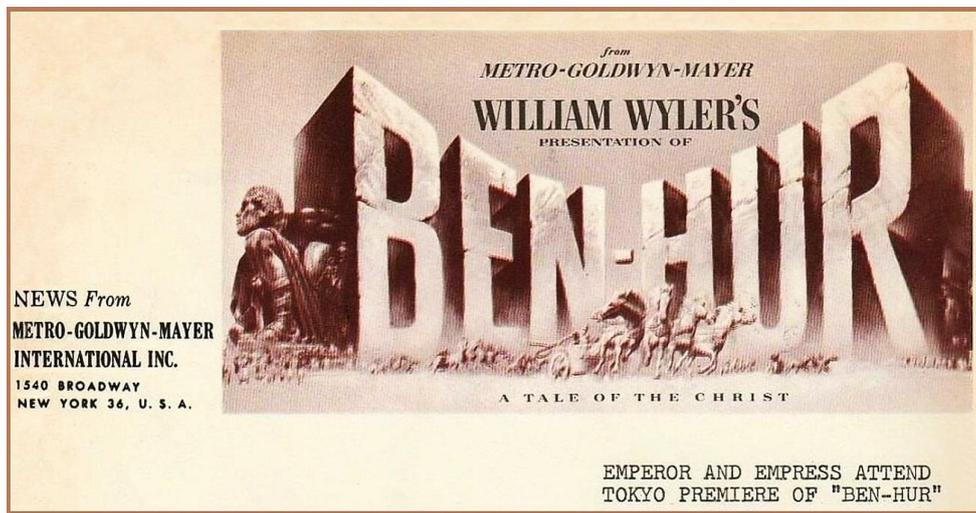
Other members of the Imperial Family at the opening were: Prince Yoshi, Prince and Princess Takamatsu [Prince Takamatsu was President of the Japan Benevolent Society (Saiseikai)], Princess Chichibu, Princess Mikasa, Mr. Hisanaga Shimazu and Mrs. Takako Shimazu (the former Princess Suga). M.G.M. brought all its Asian branch managers to Tokyo for the Charity Event. (Image and information from "Far East Film News" dated March / April 1960)

The large color image on the right: Charlton Heston and his wife Lydia travelled to Japan for the first time. They arrived in Tokyo few days before the festive Charity Premiere on 30.03.1960. At the time, Charlton Heston was already a very popular actor in Japan. The famous couple had met with celebrities in various fields, appeared on television and radio, and gave diverse interviews.

They had also visited the editorial department of the "The Heibon Weekly" (週刊平凡) magazine where they stood model for the magazine's front page (see issue dated 20.04.1960). One reports that Heston liked to have a short morning run every day. He left the hotel, and ran around the city by himself alone. This made the security staff panic.

A YouTube clip reports on the festive "Ben-Hur" Charity Premiere at "Theatre Tokyo" on 30.03.1960:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UKJwXRbJy7o>



**Information distributed by the M.G.M. press office at the time
– kindly provided by Rainer Buhr, Berlin (Germany).**

The Emperor and Empress of Japan last night shattered a tradition of centuries when they attended the premiere of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's "**Ben-Hur**" in Tokyo.

It was the first time in their country's history that the Imperial couple had ever attended together a public performance in a theatre. It was also the first time the couple had ever been on the Ginza – Japan's famous 'Fifth Avenue'. The "Theatre Tokyo", where the spectacular film opened, is on this great street. The event was front page throughout Japan.

Tokyo's newspapers hailed the event as a precedent-shattering break with age-old traditions and customs and said that the presence of their Imperial Majesties represented the highest of all honors ever bestowed on a film in Japan.

Charlton Heston, star of "**Ben-Hur**", flew to Tokyo for the occasion and was presented to Emperor Hirohito and Empress Nagako during colorful ceremonies in the lobby. Heston was introduced to the audience from the stage and received an ovation.

One newspaper, the Tokyo "Sun Shain Shimbun", put out a special extra edition. Photos of the Royal Family's arrival at the theatre covered the front page. Copies of the paper were on sale as special souvenirs by the time the audience was leaving the theatre. Copies were formally presented to their Royal Majesties.

Thousands upon thousands of Tokyo's citizens lined the streets to watch the arrival and departure of the Imperial procession. Since Tokyo's newspapers had headlined the fact that the Imperial couple would be seeing the fully lit-up Ginza for the first time in their lives, office buildings and store owners of what is Tokyo's 'Fifth Avenue' responded by keeping all lights ablaze until after the Imperial party left the theatre and returned to the palace.

M.G.M. managers from all countries of the Far East flew to Tokyo to participate in the glamorous premiere.

Other attending members of the Imperial Family were Prince and Princess Takamatsu, Prince Yoshi and the newly married Princess Suga and her husband who made their first public appearance. Also present were members of the Japanese cabinet led by Prime Minister Kishi, members of the National Diet, ambassadors representing 70 nations and a VIP list of the nation's industrial, cultural and financial leaders. The Tokyo premiere climaxed three days of major activities for Heston, whose interviews by press, radio and television were given nation-wide coverage.

The "**Ben-Hur**" premiere came as advance sale for the picture reached an amount unprecedented in Japanese history.

生涯忘れ得ぬ最高の感動
最優秀作品賞を含む12部門のアカデミー賞候補に選ばれた本年最高の映画

メトロ・ゴールドウィン・メジャー映画製作
ウィリアム・ワイラー監督

ベン・ハー

総天然色・4時間の超大型映画

前売殺到!!
(全階指定席)

4月1日 全東洋最初の独占公開

郵便予約申込受付

上映時間 4時間1日2回実行ですのどな
るべく良い座席と早目に申込み下さい。
団体鑑賞も早目に申込み下さい。

¥800 ¥600 ¥500
¥400 ¥250

上座席 (日・夜) 前座席 (日・夜) 後座席 (日・夜)

団体鑑賞受付中

M-G-M 東京
0417 9971

テアトル東京

東京都中央区新富1丁目1番地 京橋・新富劇場・地下鉄 京橋駅下車が最便

堂々4時間／生涯忘れ得ぬ最高の感動

メトロ・ゴールドウィン・メジャー映画製作
ウィリアム・ワイラー監督

ベン・ハー

総天然色 超大型映画

前売大盛況
(全階指定席)

マニッシュン舞台座席の
目撃の感動を今一度
大画面で味わいましょう。

志願者は品物を手直しする
のアカデミー賞候補に選ば
れた安全色最良の映画ノ

明4月1日全東洋最初の独占公開

〒600 5500 5500 〒400 5500
上座席 (日・夜) 前座席 (日・夜) 後座席 (日・夜)
座席の幅 30分 夜の間 6分
団体鑑賞受付 (041) 9971 (041) 9971
M-G-M 東京

郵便予約申込受付

郵便にて予約申込みの方は、下記へ返信用紙を
同封下さい。申込額をお送り致します。

東京都中央区新富1丁目1番地 京橋・新富劇場・地下鉄 京橋駅下車が最便

テアトル東京

東京都中央区新富1丁目1番地 京橋・新富劇場・地下鉄 京橋駅下車が最便

Another large announcement advert dated 19.03.1960, and on the right the movie's premiere advert dated 31.03.1960 – opening at "Theatre Tokyo" on following day (01.04.1960).

In the first week (1–7 April 1960) "Theatre Tokyo" had played 14 shows (plus a few extra morning showings for groups) tallying – according to checker's figures – 18,308 admissions and ¥6,419,686 in revenue. The epic ran at "Theatre Tokyo" until 13.07.1961 – that's 1 year, 3 months, 1 week and 5 days or 67 weeks (plus the day of the Charity Event). The following feature was a revival of Victor Fleming's south state epic "Gone with the Wind" [(風と共に去りぬ), USA, 1939] in 35mm – see the movie's advert in the PDF file: "[Gallery – 'Ben-Hur' and other 70mm Films in Japan](#)" that is available on the main web page "Bigger than 'Ben-Hur' – My Japan Cinerama Project".

The Charity Premiere was a screening with inconvenient breakdowns

At the time, Charlton Heston wrote a diary, which is included (excerpts of the diary) in the movie's Deluxe Blu-Ray Edition published by Turner Entertainment Co. and Warner Bros. in 2011.

"Date: Wednesday, 30 March 1960: 11:30 a.m. – tour Toho studios / 4 p.m. – visit Metro offices / 5:30 p.m. – opening "Ben-Hur" at Tokyo Theatre, attended by Emperor. Toho studios are interesting, well planned, unlike premiere, which had three film breaks due overwrought operators, quivering at Imperial presence."

Charlton Heston has also written an autobiography titled "[In the Arena](#)" (Simon & Schuster, 1995 – 592 pages / ISBN 0-684-80394-1). Here he describes the incident as follows:

"The premiere itself was meticulously planned. The theatre had been redecorated, inside and out, new projectors had been installed for the 70mm print of the film, the ushers had been specially drilled. Oddly, I could get no protocol instructions for meeting the emperor. "No foreign artist has ever been introduced to him before", they said – "Just follow his lead." The Imperial Party arrived in a black Rolls-Royce, driving up a shallow flight of steps to the theatre entrance. When they had entered the lobby, a palace official presented us. Still clueless as to protocol, Lydia and I stepped forward and bowed, whereupon the emperor nodded, then, to a constellation of flashbulbs, shook hands.

The rest of the audience was already in place. I escorted the Royals to their seats and went to the back of the theatre. By this time, having attended maybe a dozen openings of the film, I'd take part in whatever opening ceremonies were scheduled, move to the back of the house as the lights went down, watch the first reel to read the audience reaction, then slip out for dinner, coming back in time for whatever was planned after the film.

コーデン・ウィークはこれだ！映画史上に不滅の金字塔を打ち立てた世紀の巨篇！

ベンはこんな前はずれの大作です。

メトロ・ゴールドウィン・メーヤー映画提供

登々4時間
生涯忘れ得ぬ感動！

総天然色
超大型映画

ウィリアム・ワイラー監督

チャールトン・ヘストン
ハイヤ・ハラリート
ユル・カール・タンバーク

ジャック・ホーキンス
スチーブン・ボイド
製作サム・ジンバリスト

世界中の絶賛を浴びたこの映画は東京においても3年目に入り次第に盛況を極めています。一見の方は二度、二度見の方は三度観覧になる程です。未だ例無にならぬ方は速休に是非観覧下さい。

テアトル東京 当日売に良いお席がございます

団体のご用は前売が最上。ご後申し上げます。
電報の予約でお席をお取り致します。電話 (561) 8892番
(午後) 遊学2回上映 午後1時・6時開映
(午後) 全席冷房定額 250円・400円・500円・600円・800円

総天然色・超大型映画

11部門のアカデミー賞に輝く感動巨篇！

ウィリアム・ワイラー監督

7月23日迄のお切符を
只今発売しております

東京

団体申込受付中
電話(五六一)八八九二

平日昼の部に良い席がございます。
街頭で前売共午前10時より発売
の持ち直しを求め毎週土曜日に責任を
の1週間分を追加発売いたします。
(時間) 連日1時半・6時開映
(料金) 500・300・200・100・50円

完全冷房
銀座
テアトル東京

Two impressive "Theatre Tokyo"(テアトル東京) adverts during "Ben-Hur's" first screening season. Advert above dated 27.04.1961, and advert below dated 26.06.1961 with following text: (7月23日迄のお切符を) Tickets until 23.07. - but in reality, the epic was only shown until 13.07.1961.

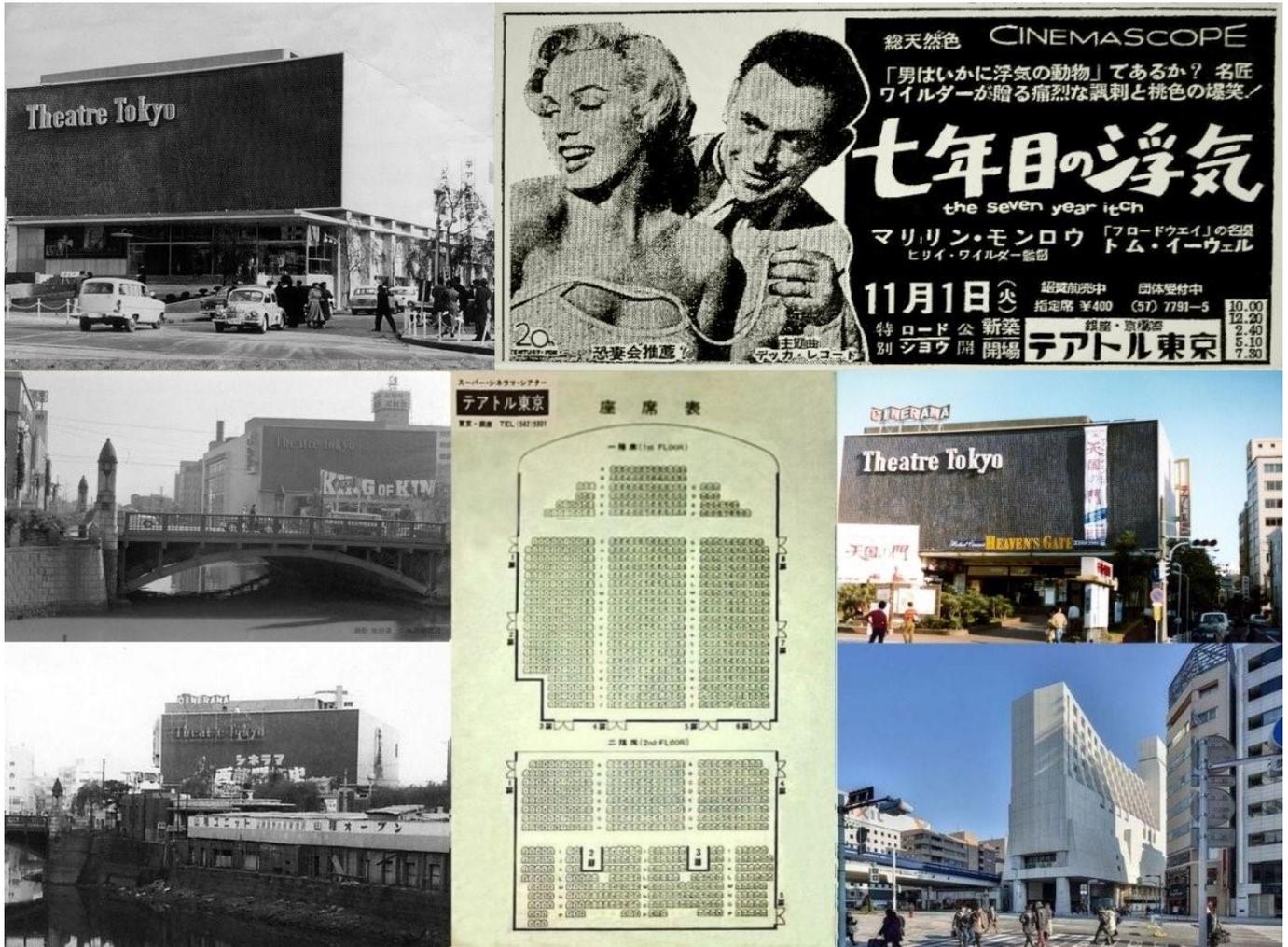
The Imperial Premiere went a little differently. The film broke three times in the first ten minutes. The audience remained silent, doubtless following the Emperor's example. He sat impassive, never stirring while the film was spliced and rethreaded.

Jim Castle, head of M.G.M. distribution for the Far East, was not impassive. On the third break, white with fury, he charged upstairs toward the projection booth, clearly bent on murder (at least). I followed, anxious to avoid an international incident, but Jim paused in mid-stride as the projection booth door opened and the Japanese projectionist staggered out, corpse-pale. "Nuthin` I can say to him will make him feel worse than he already does", Jim observed bleakly.

The rest of the screening was flawless. The projectionist, awed by the physical presence of Hirohito, the God-Emperor, had over-tightened the tension on the take-up reel.

The next day, the presidents of the projectionists' union and of the company owning the theatre, and M.G.M.'s top Japanese official, visited the Palace to present their personal apologies to the Emperor. I was told that in prewar days, they would all have felt bound to commit hari-kari (author's note: also known as "hara-kiri"). Happily, no blood was shed over our Japanese premiere."

Information about the "Theatre Tokyo" (テアトル東京)



The revered "Theatre Tokyo" was built by "Tokyo Theatres Co., Ltd." (東京テアトル株式会社), a Toho subsidiary (so named since 01.10.1955). Previously, the company's name had been "Tokyo Kogyo Co., Ltd" (東京興行株式会社) that was founded in June 1946.

The "Theatre Tokyo" had most likely been built on the site of the first "Theatre Ginza" (テアトル銀座) that became an "American Movie Theatre". The "Theatre Ginza" was built by "Tokyo Kogyo Co., Ltd" and existed since 31 December 1946. It was closed in January 1955, then demolished, and reborn at another Tokyo site in November 1955 where it existed until 31.08.1981.



Tokyo's first "Ginza Theatre" (テアトル銀座) that existed between 1946 and 1955.

"Theatre Tokyo" opened its doors on 01.11.1955. It was located in Tokyo's ward "Chūō-ku" (中央区) – in the Ginza district "1 Chome" (nearby the small Mizutanibashi park, or not far away from today's Ginza's heart – the Ginza 4 Chome intersection). The opening movie had been the American romantic comedy "**The Seven Year Itch**" [(七年目の浮気), USA, 1955] in CinemaScope (see the two small images above in the large image – the newly opened theatre left, and on the right an announcement advert of "**The Seven Year Itch**" dated 28.10.1955. Opening of the movie on 01.11.1955).

The black and white images on the left are showing the "Theatre Tokyo" at a time when Samuel Bronston's biblical epic "**King of Kings**" [(キング・オブ・キングス), USA, 1961] was shown (in 70mm) there in Winter 1961/1962, and below an image dated November 1962. In this month took place the installation of the 3-strip Cinerama system – also with a large Cinerama logo mounted on the theatre's roof – with the subsequent Japan premiere of the Western epic "**How the West Was Won**" [(西部開拓史 – Western Pioneering History), USA, 1962] on Thursday, 29 November 1962.

Previously had been shown in 70mm at this venue the movie "**Madame Sans-Gêne**" [(戦場を駆ける女), Italy / France / Spain, 1961] until 08.11.1962 (see adverts in the PDF file: "**Gallery – 'Ben-Hur' and other 70mm Films in Japan**"). Then the theater was rebuilt – also with the installation of a new deeply curved, louvered Cinerama screen with a size of 85 by 29 ft (26 by 8,8 metres).

全人類に贈る物語 / 超大型映画の集大成!!
 70mm スーパーパノラマ
 脚本: フォード・ヘンリー・ハサウェイ
 監督: ニコラス・レイ
 製作: サミュエル・ブロンストン
キング・オブ・キングス
 ジェフリー・ハンター / シオバン・マツケナ / ハード・バットフィールド
 ロン・ランデル / ビベカ・リンドフォース / フランク・スリング
 カルメン・セビラ / フリッド・バズレン / ハリー・ガーティノ
 サラ・トーン / リータ・ガム / ガイ・ロルフ
 モーリス・マーサーク / グレゴール・アスラン / ロバート・ライアン
12月15日 独占大公開
 11月24日より前売開始 (全階指定席)
 ¥800 ¥600 ¥500 ¥400 ¥300
 11月24日 11時・19時・21時
 11月25日 11時・19時・21時
 11月26日 11時・19時・21時
 11月27日 11時・19時・21時
 11月28日 11時・19時・21時
 11月29日 11時・19時・21時
 11月30日 11時・19時・21時
テアトル東京
 東京都千代田区銀座1-11★京橋★銀座★地下鉄有楽町線下車

総天然色
 HOW THE WEST WAS WON
 11月29日世紀の大公開
 M-G-Mカラー
シネラマ劇映画第1作
西部開拓史
お待たせしました 明9日前売開始
 ▶映画史上空前の西部劇巨篇 製作費77億円、撮影日数335日、出演者12000名を駆使した超巨篇で1830年から50年間の血闘と奇蹟も西部開拓の歴史を誇麗豊かに描いています。
 ▶世界最大のスクリーン登場 テアトル東京は場内も客席もサーモンピンクのスーパーシネマ劇場に改装致しました。スクリーンは天地29呎、左右85呎の世界最大となりました。
 監督: ジョン・フォード / ヘンリー・ハサウェイ / ジョージ・マーシャル
 キャロル・ベネー / ヘンリー・フォンシ / カール・マルデン
 グレゴリー・ペック / ジョージ・スチュワート / ロバート・プレストン / デビル・レイノズ
 ジュームス・スチュアート / ジョン・ウェイン / リチャード・タイドマーク
スーパースネラマ劇場 大版はOS劇場
 11月8日までの入場券を発売します (前売時間10時~7時)
 (料金) 全席定席 300円・500円・600円・800円・1000円
 (時間) 平日 11時・19時・21時 土・日・祭 10時・19時・21時
 主催: コムビニアMGM・ユード、朝日プロパティプロダクション

An announcement advert dated 17.11.1961: Japan premiere of "**King of Kings**" (キング・オブ・キングス) at "Theatre Tokyo" on 15.12.1961 – advance ticket sales from 24.11.1961.

On the right also an announcement advert dated 08.11.1962: Japan premiere of "**How the West Was Won**" (西部開拓史) at "Theatre Tokyo" (テアトル東京) on 29.11.1962 – advance ticket sales from 09.11.1962 (明9日前売開始).

With the installation of the deeply curved, louvered Cinerama screen, the number of seats (seating plan with the newly installed screen see the small image in the middle of the large image at the top) had to be reduced from initially 1,326 (another source gives 1,310) to 1,278 – 774 seats in the base level (first floor), and 504 seats in the balcony (second floor). There was no stage in front of the screen. 3-strip films were shown at "Theatre Tokyo" until 30.04.1965 – then they switched to Cinerama 70mm projection with the screening of the travelogue "**Mediterranean Holiday**" [(地中海の休日), West Germany, 1962].

The very last film shown at "Theatre Tokyo" was Michael Cimino's "**Heaven's Gate**" [(天国の門), USA, 1980] – see the small image in the middle right of the large image at the top. The movie opened in September 1981 and ran until end of October 1981. Costly large-scale renovation had been required, and it was decided to close "Theatre Tokyo" in order to make room for a new, huge building – the "Ginza Theatre Building" (銀座テアトルビル), equipped with an integrated theatre, a smaller cinema and a hotel named "Seiyo Ginza" (ホテル西洋銀座) – see the small image right below in the large image at the top.



Over the years Tokyo's appearance has completely changed. In contrast to the past, many places are today nearly unrecognizable. The black and white photo above left shows the "Theatre Tokyo" at the time of the premiere of the Cinerama movie "How the West Was Won" [(西部開拓史), USA, 1962] in November 1962 – note the large Japanese movie title (西部開拓史 – Western Pioneering History) and Cinerama (シネラマ) mounted at the front of the theatre.

Here you can still see the Kyōbashi River and the Kyōbashi bridge. Kyōbashi (京橋 capital bridge) is the name of the bridge as well as the geographical region around it. The river has been filled up, and today the Tokyo Expressway sits there where the river once ran (Expressway see image left below). The bridge isn't, of course, a bridge any longer, but only one of the four bridge pillars is still existing and reminds pedestrians of past times (see small image above right).

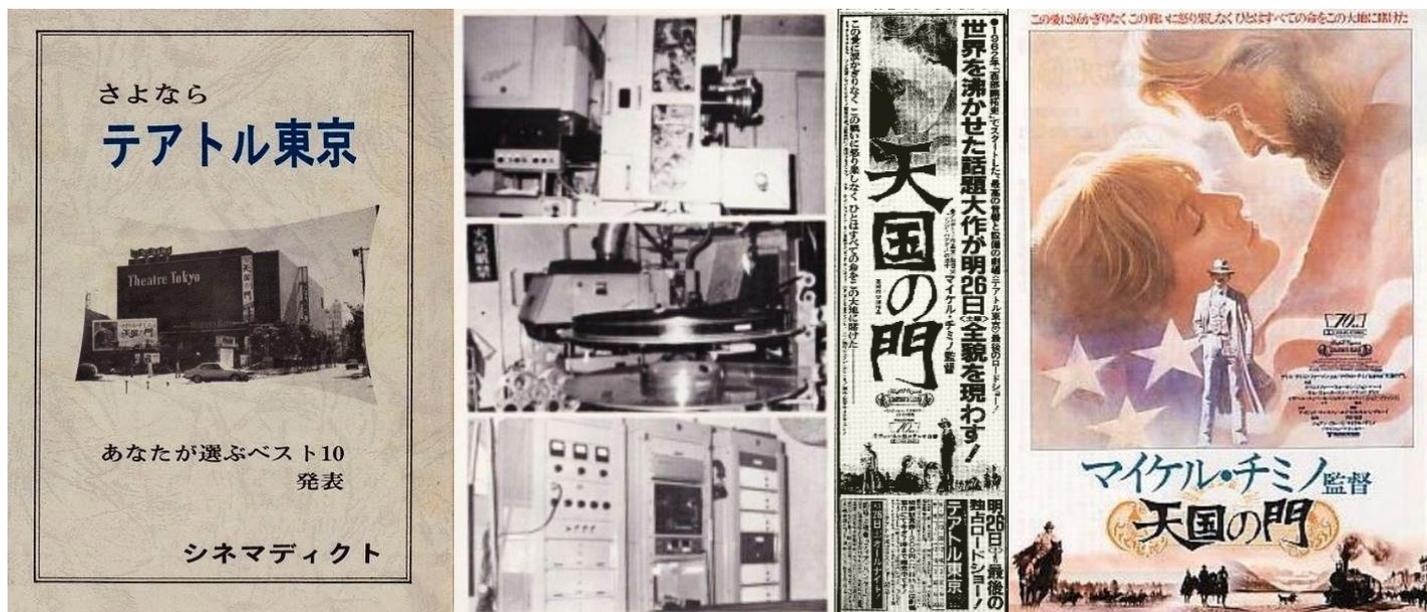
After "Theatre Tokyo's" demolition, the huge "Ginza Theatre Building" (銀座テアトルビル) was built on the site (see small image below left). Designed by the architect Kiyonori Kikutake (a prominent Japanese architect known as one of the founders of the Japanese Metabolist group) it was completed in March 1987.

Watch on YouTube a clip about the "Ginza Theatre Building" (銀座テアトルビル)
– the former location of the "Theatre Tokyo":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEe9wKpq8Fg>

But the time of this building has also passed. It was closed on 31.05.2013 and later demolished (the dismantling work of the huge building began on 25th August 2014). "Tokyo Theatres Co., Ltd." had sold the "Ginza Theatre Building" building to a Japanese entertainment and gaming conglomerate named "Konami Corporation" (コナミ株式会社) in June 2013.

For a long time, there only existed a board fencing (see small image below right) at the former location of the "Ginza Theatre Building" (銀座テアトルビル) – but meanwhile, the construction of a new "Konami Creative Center Ginza" (working name) has begun. It will enable additional life as a venue for communication between the Konami Group and its customers.



An information pamphlet that also informs about "Theatre Tokyo's" closure
(さよなら - テアトル東京) / Sayōnara (Farewell) - Theatre Tokyo.

The information pamphlet includes a page showing a view into the theatre's projection room. Here you can see a film projector (most likely a Japanese Nichion Imperial 35/70mm projector), a platter system with loaded 70mm film, and a multi-channel sound amplifier device.

On the right of the projection room pictures a small advert (dated 25.09.1981) of "Theatre Tokyo's" last official film (in 70mm) – namely Michael Cimino's "**Heaven's Gate**" [(天国の門), USA, 1980]. The movie opened on 26.09.1981 and ran until 31.10.1981. Then, after 26 years of existence, the time of this impressive cinema was unfortunately over forever. Rightmost the movie's Japanese poster.



A "Theatre Tokyo" ticket dated April 49 (Shōwa 49 = 1974)

"Ben-Hur" (ベン・ハー) at Osaka's Cinerama
 "OS Theatre" (OS 劇場)

超大型画面に未曾有の迫力で描く凄絶の戦車競走!
 生涯忘れ得ぬ映画史上最高最大の超マンモス巨篇!

カラー作品 **シネラマ** 超ステレオ音響
 スーパーシネラマ方式上映

◆チャールトン・ヘストン ◆スティーン・ボイド ◆ジャック・ホーキンス ◆ハイキ・ハラリット ◆ヒュー・グリフィス ◆マーサー・スコット
 ウィリアム・ワイラー監督 製作ヤム・ジン・リット / 脚色カール・トンブレック / 音楽エドワード・ローグ / 原簿ミゲル・コウツ
 文部省特選 / 優秀映画鑑賞会特賞 / ほが各種団体特賞多数
 メトロ・ゴールドウィン・メーヤー映画会社提供

大好評! 前売券発売中! 9月20日(全日) 西日本独占公開

世界3大スーパーシネラマ劇場(東京はテアトル東宝)

大阪梅田 **OS 劇場**

上映時間
 日曜・祝日…… 9.15
 平日…… ① 1.30 ② 6.00

御観覧料金
 観覧日 土曜・祝日
 前席 800円 1,000円
 中席 700円 800円
 後席 600円 700円
 立席 400円 500円

当日は混雑しますので
 良いお席は早めにお取り下さい。
 ●料金の会社・工場・高層ビルなどは別途を
 お取りしますので、特別料金をお断り下さい。
 全館指定席制 電話予約 随時観覧受付中
 車・特別料金ご用意

シネラマ「2001年宇宙の旅」
 数々19日限り!

永遠不滅のこの記録!
 〈堂々4時間〉
 MGM

An announcement ad dated around mid-September 1968 that informs about a rerun of "Ben-Hur".
 (超大型画面に未曾有の迫力で描く凄絶の戦車競走!)

Super large screen. In a never before seen intensity is shown a fascinating chariot race!
 (生涯忘れ得ぬ映画史上最高最大の超マンモス巨篇!)

An unforgettable movie for the whole life. So far in history the greatest, best of the mammoth works!
 (カラー作品) Produced in Color / (シネラマ) Cinerama / (超ステレオ音響) Super Stereo Sound

(スーパーシネラマ方式上映) Super Cinerama Screening

(9月20日西日本独占公開) Exclusive opening in West Japan – from 20.09.1968.

I unfortunately had no access to Osaka's newspaper archives, and thus I cannot report about exact movie premiere dates as it is the case with the "Theatre Tokyo". After a search on the internet I have fortunately spotted two "Ben-Hur" adverts (and a ticket) from Osaka's "OS Theatre" – but unfortunately not from the "Nangai Gekijyo" (南街会館) Theatre, the movie's first run theatre in Osaka.

The "Oes Movie Theater Co., Ltd." (オーエス映画劇場株式会社) was established by Ichizō Kobayashi, [founder of "Hankyu Toho Group" (阪急東宝グループ) – a Japanese business group] as a film entertainment company in 1946. In the course of the years, they have also worked on various projects such as real estate, bowling, hotels, etc., with keeping on film entertainment as a core business. In 1975, the company was renamed "OES Co., Ltd." (オーエス株式会社). Through the ever-changing demands of the present time, the company is continuously changing the structure of its business.

Osaka's "OS Theatre" (OS 劇場) opened its doors with "This is Cinerama" on 15.01.1955. The venue had, of course, a deeply curved, louvered Cinerama screen.

Have a look at the large "Ben-Hur" advert – the worldwide extremely successful film had several reissues at this cinema presented in Cinerama. You can see the Cinerama (シネラマ) logo in the advert – although "Ben-Hur" isn't an official Cinerama movie.



"Ben-Hur" at Osaka's "OS Theatre" – a ticket dated 23.09.43 (Shōwa 43 = 1968)

During my "Cinerama in Japan" researches I noticed the fact that especially in Japan they had tried to keep the programs "Cineramic" (even though the actual official Cinerama titles had dried up) when 70mm films were projected onto deeply curved Cinerama screens. This had also been true for a lot of non-Cineramic 'flat' 70mm films, such as: "**Mackenna's Gold**" [(マッケンナの黄金), USA, 1969], "**Goodbye, Mr. Chips**" [(チップス先生さようなら), USA, 1969], "**Cromwell**" [(クロムウェル), UK / USA, 1970], "**Lawrence of Arabia**" [(アラビアのロレンス), UK, 1962], "**The Bridge on the River Kwai**" [(戦場にかける橋), UK / USA, 1957] or, in this case, also "**Ben-Hur**" [(ベン・ハー), USA, 1959] – here the 1968 re-release "flat" version of the film (aspect ratio 1:2.20).

See the adverts of the movies in the PDF file: "**Gallery – 'Ben-Hur' and other 70mm Films in Japan**".

At the time, all Cinerama, Inc., wanted from the cinema owners was a fee if they used their name. Cinerama's special nature, the 3-strip projection process, had gone. The switch to 70mm Cinerama had opened the possibility to allow 'flat' 70mm prints to become a 'Cinerama presentation' – as I noted during my research, especially at Cinerama venues in Japan.



An advert dated 13.03.1970.

Opening of "**Ben-Hur**" at Osaka's "OS Theatre" on following day (14.03.1970).

Advertised in "**Cinerama**". (シネラマ)

In the advert above is written:

(シネラマの大画面に再現する不滅の名作!)

... an immortal masterpiece reproduced on the large Cinerama screen!

(ご要望に応え、EXPO 70 開幕記念ロードショー!) ... in response to the request,

the masterpiece will be presented in form of a roadshow at the opening of the EXPO 70!

(前売券発売中) ... ticket pre-sale in the offer / (全日本独占公開) ... exclusive opening in total Japan.

On the occasion of the EXPO 70 (日本万国博覧会 70) – the world's fair was held in Suita (a city located in northern Osaka Prefecture) between 15 March and 13 September 1970 – "Ben-Hur" was presented at Osaka's Cinerama "OS Theatre" (OS 劇場). The EXPO 70 had been the first 'World Exhibition' in Japan and was the first ever on the Asian continent. At this fair there was also presented the IMAX technology with the short film (17 minutes) "Tiger Child" [(虎の仔), Canada/Japan, 1970] at the Fuji Group Pavilion for the very first time.

Information about Osaka's "OS Theatre" (OS 劇場)

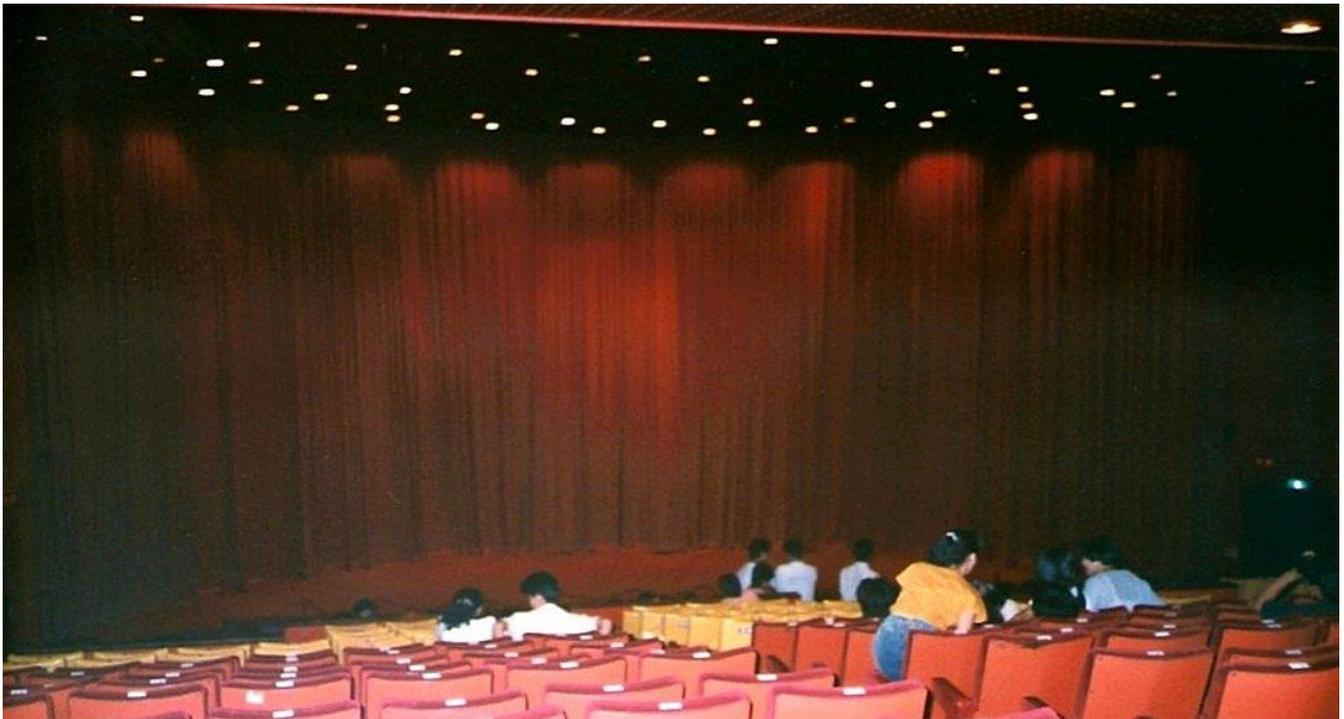


The two images below: Osaka's Cinerama (シネラマ) "OS Theatre" (OS 劇場) – left in the 1960s, and right in the 1980s. Shown were the movies "The Wonderful World of the Brothers Grimm" [(不思議な世界の物語 – A Story of a Mysterious World), USA, 1962], and on the right "Brainstorm" [(ブレインストーム), USA, 1983] – both advertised "in Cinerama", although "Brainstorm" isn't an official Cinerama movie.

At the time, Osaka's famous "OS Theatre" – located in the major commercial and business district "Umeda" (梅田) in the "Kita-ku" (北区) ward of Osaka – had been widely known as an attraction for tourists, and was partly also incorporated into the tours of sightseeing buses. It was a place where movies of the world, and also Japanese movies had been released – often with the same films in tandem with Tokyo's "Theatre Tokyo" (テアトル東京).

The venue had been first opened as "OS Movie Theatre" (OS 映画劇場), an 'International Movie Roadshow Theater', on 31.07.1947. Some sources report about the fact that this vintage "OS Movie Theatre" was later destroyed by fire.

In 1954, the theatre, now renamed "OS Theatre" (OS 劇場), was being rebuilt on the same site as a new big conventional cinema when the decision was made to alter the design and open it as a 3-strip house. The main construction works were completed at the end of the year – one speaks of 27th December 1954. Finally, Osaka's citizen could enjoy the new, big venue with the public premiere of the American travelogue **"This is Cinerama"** [(これがシネラマだ), USA, 1952] in amazing 3-strip Cinerama on Saturday, 15 January 1955.



The auditorium of Osaka's "OS Theatre" (with around 1,280 seats) in the 1980s.
(Image taken from following website: <https://blogs.yahoo.co.jp/room304zombie/35722185.html>)

After 36 years and 4 weeks of existence, the "OS Theatre" (OS 劇場) closed forever on 11.02.1991. At the very end, a 'Farewell Film Festival' was held, which lasted 17 days. Today is situated on the site an 18-story high-rise, triangular building, named "OS Building" (OS ビル). It had been completed in March 1993. Its address: 3-3 Komatsubaracho, ward: Kita-ku, Osaka, postcode 530-0018.

An interesting thing is that at some of the sidewalks of this "OS Building" you can see numerous inscriptions written on the flagstones (some even made of metal). They are reminding pedestrians of past times – that there had been two famous roadshow theatres at this place. Have a look at the 3 small images above the two "OS Theatre" (OS 劇場) images at the top (always read from right to left):

The very first "OS Movie Theatre" (OS 映画劇場) and its opening date 31.7.1947 / middle: the new Cinerama "OS Theatre" / and rightmost: the Cinerama "OS Theatre's" opening date is given as 04.01.1955 – although the public premiere of **"This is Cinerama"** [(これがシネラマだ), USA, 1952] took place with a delay, on 15.01.1955. Previously, in Tokyo, the movie premiered at "Imperial Theatre" on 05.01.1955.

There are many other sidewalk flagstones with inscriptions that give information, which films – covering the time period from 1947 (opening of the "OS Movie Theatre") to 1991 ("OS Theatre" from 1955 until 1991) – were shown at both theatres in the course of the years.

Here are some examples – the **"OS Theatre's Walk of Fame"**:



Left: two plaques made of metal (most likely copper) about the opening of the Cinerama "OS Theatre", and on the right opening dates (year and month) about following films: 1955.12 "Cinerama Holiday" (シネラマ・ホリデー) and below 1957.3 "Seven Wonders of the World" (世界の七不思議).

Image on the right: 1964.3 "The Wonderful World of the Brothers Grimm" (不思議な世界の物語) / 1965.4 "Mediterranean Holiday" (地中海の休日) / 1966.4 "Battle of the Bulge" (バルジ大作戦) and 1966.10 "Khartoum" (カーツーム).



1966.10 "Khartoum" again (カーツーム) / 1967.1 "Grand Prix" (グラン・プリ) / 1968.4 "2001: A Space Odyssey" (2001年宇宙の旅) and 1968.9 "Ben-Hur" (ベン・ハー).

The image on the right shows a plaque that informs about the 'Farewell Film Festival' that took place at "OS Theatre" from 25.1.1991 until 11.02.1991:

さよなら / フェスティバル = Sayonara (Farewell) / Festival,

2001年宇宙の旅 / 位5作品 = 2001: A Space Odyssey / 1st of 5 planned (movies),

1991.1.25 - 2.11 = from 25.1.1991 until 11.2.1991.

As already mentioned, the "OS Theatre" closed its doors forever on 11.02.1991 – the very last film that had been shown there was William Wyler's epic "**Ben-Hur**".



Some Closing Words by the Author

It was very interesting for me to take a look into Japan's film world from that time, and I am amazed that the newest film techniques from America were introduced so early. What is not to be overlooked is that the Japanese also had a preference for large, curved screens at the time. All the big Cinerama and 70mm movie hits were also shown there. "**Ben-Hur**", one of my absolute favorites, had also been a great blockbuster in Japan – with several reissues (see all the impressive adverts in the PDF file: "**Gallery – 'Ben-Hur' and other 70mm Films in Japan**").

I noticed that in all "**Ben-Hur**" adverts of the movie's first run at "Theatre Tokyo" (from 01.04.1960 until 13.07.1961) there were no hints "filmed in CAMERA 65" (M.G.M.'s own widescreen baby) or at least "70mm" – even not in the premiere adverts. All given sources inform about the fact that the venue had previously been equipped with 70mm projectors for the festive "**Ben-Hur**" Charity Premiere on 30.03.1960.

I remember that even here in Germany in the movie's premiere adverts there was at best only given the information "aufgenommen in CAMERA 65" (photographed/filmed in CAMERA 65) – otherwise in the following advertisements mostly no information anymore – but never "70mm". So, I am sure that they had used a 70mm print for "**Ben-Hur's**" Japan premiere, most likely as here in Germany where the epic premiered with anamorphic (1.25 anamorphosis) "CAMERA 65" – 70mm prints, and, of course, 6-track magnetic sound. These were projected with special anamorphic lenses* in an aspect ratio between 1: 2.5 and, of course, its preferably maximum of 1:2.76 onto the screens – that depended on the architectural conditions of the respective theaters, and, of course, the screen's horizontal masking.

* at the time manufactured by "Panavision Incorporated" located in Los Angeles.

The movie's German premiere took place at Munich's "Royal-Palast" on 14th October 1960. Further German "CAMERA 65" – 70mm openings were for example: at Stuttgart's "Atrium" Theatre on 25th November 1960, at Hamburg's "Savoy" Theatre on 15th December 1960 (season length 118 weeks), and at Berlin's "Delphi-Filmpalast am Zoo" on 20th January 1961 (a planned opening at this venue on 21st October 1960 had been cancelled).



Festive Premiere of "Ben-Hur" at Stuttgart's "Atrium" Theatre on 25.11.1960 at 7.30 p.m.

In the right premiere advert is written:

"In the Presence of Prominent Personalities from the State Government, the City Administration, the Consular Corps and Public Life."

Such a vintage German premiere print was also shown at Karlsruhe's third Todd-AO 70mm Film Festival in 2007. See: <http://www.in70mm.com/schauburg/festival/2007/index.htm>

In 1968, M.G.M. brought out a 'flat' 70mm Metrocolor version of "**Ben-Hur**" (reissue aspect ratio 1:2.20), which was promoted "**NOW IN 70MM**" around the world.

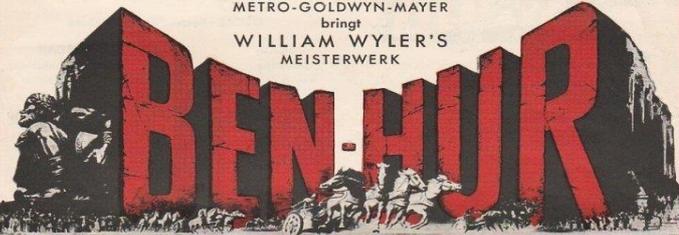
The mag/op 35mm prints of "**Ben-Hur**" were reportedly of excellent quality. A feature of these prints was thick frame lines which created an aspect ratio of approx. 1: 2.5 to allow more of the original 1: 2.76 image to be shown (they had the normal 2x1 anamorphosis). One of the movie's very first 35mm outings was at Sydney's "St. James" Theatre on 5th May 1960. The first 35mm showing in America had been at Albert Aaron's 600-seat Capitol Theatre in Charleston (West-Virginia) on 16th June 1960 (source "New York VARIETY" from that time).

Here in Germany 35mm prints first appeared with the movie's premiere at Düsseldorf's "Kristall-Palast" on 4th November 1960, at Dortmund's "Astoria" Theatre on 9th December 1960, or at Nuremberg's "Burg" Theatre on 16th December 1960 (see the three adverts further below).

Ein großes Ereignis verdient Ihre Aufmerksamkeit

In wenigen Wochen beginnt für unser Theater ein neuer Abschnitt in seiner Geschichte. Unsere Tradition als ein Haus bedeutender Filmereignisse erhält abermals neuen Glanz durch eine große Erstaufführung.

METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER bringt
WILLIAM WYLER'S
MEISTERWERK



Der überwältigende Ansturm der Besucher bei den wochenlang im voraus ausverkauften Premierenhäusern in anderen Ländern und Erdteilen läßt auch hier großen Andrang an der Theaterkasse erwarten.

Sichern Sie sich darum rechtzeitig Plätze!

Füllen Sie, bitte, schon heute die Bestellkarte aus und werfen Sie sie in den Sonderbriefkasten im Foyer!

Premiere Freitag, 21.10.1960 im DELPHI
— Näheres über diese Gala-Vorstellung wird noch bekanntgegeben —
Dann täglich 14.30 und 19.30 Uhr

Karten für alle Vorstellungen nach der Premiere zum Preise von DM 9.—, ab 7.1961

Beginn des offiziellen Vorverkaufs am 30.7.1960
Abholung der bestellten Karten bis spätestens 15. Jan. 1961

ACHTUNG!
Die auf nebenstehender Karte bestellten Eintrittskarten werden bis zum 19. Jan. 1961 für Sie zurückgelegt.

DIE THEATERLEITUNG

Bitte reservieren Sie mir bis zu nebenstehendem Datum
..... (Anzahl) Eintrittskarten
zur Vorstellung von BEN-HUR am um Uhr
zum Preise von je DM

Unterschrift

Anschrift

Es ist mir bekannt, daß die reservierten Karten von nebenstehendem Datum an zum freien Verkauf übernommen werden und ich bei späterer Abholung nicht mehr auf evtl. ausverkaufte Vorstellungen zurückgreifen kann.

FREIWILLIGE SELBSTKONTROLLE DER FILMWIRTSCHAFT
Prüf-Nr. 22 118-d

Freigabebescheinigung

Der Film "Ben Hur"
(MGM Camera 65 - Cinemascope-Farbfilm)

Originaltitel **BEN HUR**

Hersteller **Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures, Culver City, Calif.**

Verleiher **Cinema International Corporation GmbH, Frankfurt (Main)**

Ursprungsland **USA**

Herstellungsjahr **1959**

ist in einer Länge von **7570 m (70mm-Fassung)(221 Min.)**
zur öffentlichen Vorführung freigegeben **6056 m (35 mm-Fassung)**

an allen Tagen des Jahres
(einschließlich der gesetzlich geschützten Feiertage)

Der Film ist gemäß § 6 JSchG in der Fassung vom 27. Juli 1957 geprüft und gekennzeichnet mit

freigegeben ab 12 (zwölf) Jahren

Der Film gilt als von den obersten Landesbehörden gekennzeichnet.

Wiesbaden, 13.4./22.6./4.10.1960/
4.9.1969/5.6.1974/
29.11.1976



Prüfkostenbeitrag für Filmtheater

1. Prüfkartengebühr für Ganzwochentermine je angefangene Woche DM 0,90 / für 3 oder 4 Tage-Termine über Sonn- und Feiertage DM 0,45 / für sonstige Termine je Termin DM 0,30. 2. Jahrespauschale DM 40,—

6202 Wbn.-Bleibrich, Schloß · Ruf 6 90 71 · Fernschreiber 4-186790 · Telegramme FilmprüfWiesbaden-Bleibrich

Berlin's "Delphi-Filmpalast am Zoo" – a ticket order coupon: A BIG EVENT DESERVES YOUR ATTENTION. In a few weeks, a new chapter in the story of our theatre will begin. Our tradition as a house of major film events gets new shine due to a big premiere. The overwhelming rush of cinemagoers at in advance for weeks sold-out premiere houses in other countries and continents suggests that also here a large crowd will arrive at the box office. Make sure that you get seats in time! Please fill in the order card today, and drop it into the special mailbox in the foyer. Premiere on Friday, 20th January 1961. More details about this gala presentation will be announced - then daily at 2.30 and 7.30 pm.

On the right a "Release Certificate" published by the German Voluntary Self-Regulation Body of the Movie Industry (FSK). Original title: **"Ben Hur"**, Producer: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures, Culver City, California; Distributor: Cinema International Corporation GmbH, Frankfurt (Main); Country of Origin: USA; Year: 1959. Film length: 70mm version – 7,570 metres / 35mm version – 6,056 metres. Running time: 221 minutes. The movie is released for public presentation on all days of the year (including the legally protected holidays). It is rated 12A – for 12 years and over.

[Both information sheets were kindly provided by Rainer Buhr, Berlin (Germany)]

AB FREITAG, 4. NOVEMBER, KRISTALL-PALAST
Innenmarktplatz, Telefon 2 30 00

VORVERKAUF HEUTE ERÖFFNET

DAS GRÖSSTE WERK DER FILMGESCHICHTE 11 OSCARS!

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer
WILLIAM WYLER

BEN-HUR

Ab Samstag, 5. November

Karten zu DM 5,10, 5,10, 7,50

Dieser Film läuft bis auf weiteres nur im KRISTALL-PALAST!
Jede Vorstellung dauert 3 Stunden 30 Minuten

VORVERKAUF HEUTE ERÖFFNET

DAS GRÖSSTE WERK DER FILMGESCHICHTE 11 OSCARS!

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer
WILLIAM WYLER

BEN-HUR

Ab Freitag, 9. Dez., 19.30 Uhr
WEITER TÄGLICH 14.30 UND 19.30 UHR

Karten im Vorverkauf von 3.— bis 7.— an der Theaterkasse und Kaufhaus Althoff (Reisebüro)

astoria Hohe Str. 14-16 Ruf 33335

DIESER FILM LÄUFT AB 9. DEZEMBER BIS AUF WEITERES NUR IM „ASTORIA“

astoria Hohe Str. 14-16 Ruf 33335

JEDE VORSTELLUNG DAUERT 3 STUNDEN 30 MINUTEN!

Achtung Vorverkauf!
an der Kasse des BURG-THEATERS, Ruf 5 27 79
Karten zu DM 5,10, 5,10, 7,50

DAS GRÖSSTE WERK DER FILMGESCHICHTE 11 OSCARS!

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer
WILLIAM WYLER

BEN-HUR

CHARLTON HESTON · JACK HAWKINS
NAYA HARARET · STEPHEN BOYD
HARRIET HART · MARTIN DONOVAN · GARY SPENCER · SAM JAFFE
mit ELEANOR ROOSEVELT und SAM CHALMERS · FORTWÄHLER

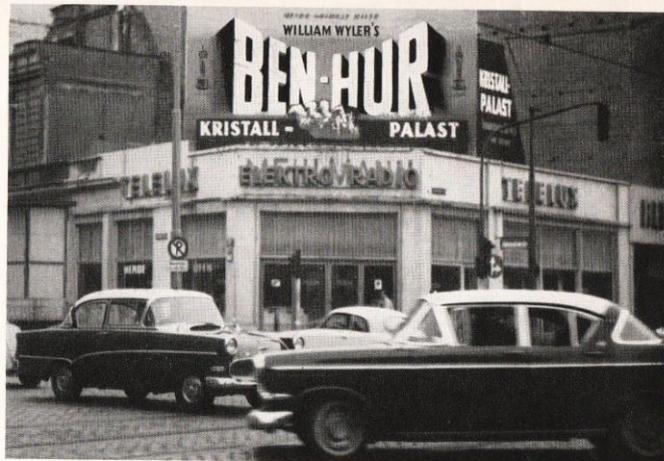
BURG

AB FREITAG, 16. DEZEMBER

Above: Advertisements at the time of "Ben-Hur's" premiere in Germany. 35mm openings at following venues: at Düsseldorf's "Kristall-Palast" on 4th November 1960, at Dortmund's "Astoria" Theatre on 9th December 1960, and at Nuremberg's "Burg" Theatre on 16th December 1960.



Schabrett-Klebung
Plakat DIN A0 quer



Großfläche im Stadtzentrum von Düsseldorf



Bemalter Bauzaun,
weithin lesbar,
Grund weiß, Buchstaben
schwarz und leuchtrot

CITY ADVERTISING IN GERMANY. Above left a billboard in Hamburg's subway: "Ben-Hur" at the "Savoy" Theatre; above right: "Ben-Hur" at Düsseldorf's "Kristall-Palast", and below an advertising on a construction fence in Munich about the movie's German premiere at the "Royal-Palast" on 14.10.1960. [Images kindly provided by Rainer Buhr, Berlin (Germany)]

Here at the report's very end I would like to express my thanks to Cinerama expert David Coles who had helped me with enthusiasm in order to produce this report.

All the images and information for this article are taken from diverse vintage trade magazines, especially from the trade magazines "Far East Film News", "Movie Marketing", "Movie / TV Marketing", from Japanese newspapers of that time, and, of course, from friends and the Internet.

Related Links:

A Japanese web page about "Theatre Tokyo":

<https://ko10008.wordpress.com/2008/11/01/ありし日のテアトル東京/>

A Japanese "70mm Film Memory Large Screen Film Collection":

<http://enjoyhobby-livedoor.blog.jp/tag/シネラマ>

A Japanese website that gives information about numerous Tokyo movie venues:

<http://www.nipponeiga.com/pia78/>

A lot of nice Japanese movie tickets:

<http://www.ne.jp/asahi/natsukashi/movie/hanken.htm>

"incinerama.com" reports about "Theatre Tokyo":

http://incinerama.com/theatre_tokyo.htm

Michael Coate's list:

"Ben-Hur's" 50th Anniversary – The Roadshow Engagements:

<http://cinematreasures.org/blog/2009/11/18/happy-50th-ben-hur>

William Wyler's monumental Epic "Ben-Hur":

http://www.in70mm.com/news/2014/ben_hur/uk/index.htm

**"Ben-Hur" and Miklos Rozsa's epic score presented
in an impressive HD picture story:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZXu81GGDIw>