

October 18, 1955

October 15, 1955

Mike Todd, Louella Parsons and Jimmy McHugh planned for Eddie and Debbie Fisher (tomorrow night) grew like Topsy. First scheduled for Todd's house. Joe Schenck's place was next pressed into service to handle the crowd. And then, the Crystal Room. . . . By tomorrow night, the Coliseum? . . . Fisher played to 10,000 kids in Kansas City's Auditorium Wed. . . . Joe Schenck, by the way, was on "Around the World in 80 Days" set until midnight, Wednesday. . . . Miles White's written a theme song for "80 Days": "Nearer Mike Todd To Thee." Ouch! . . .

October 16, 1955

New York, Oct. 16. — Several new entries, notably at the Music Hall, Rivoli and State, are hitting big figures on Broadway. "Oklahoma" is heading for a bit over \$36,000 its first four days, covering 10 performances at the Rivoli. The Todd-AO pic is virtually capacity every performance excepting a hurriedly announced matinee preem day, last Thursday. Management eliminated 78 seats in the first three front rows starting with matinees Saturday, feeling they were too close to the screen.

October 17, 1955

COLGATE VARIETY HOUR
(Sun., 8-9 p.m., KRCA-NBC)

Power-packed with names and the music of Rodgers & Hammerstein, last night's Variety Hour was one of the young season's best from Hollywood.

Sprawled across the bare stage of Hollywood Bowl, program more than made up in qualitative entertainment and fast movement what it lacked in production dress. Martin & Lewis bolstered the list of top talent associated with R&H musicals and thereby the show may have topped, in the ratings, its "Toast of the Town" rival. Stars of the Todd-AO "Oklahoma," Gordon MacRae and Shirley Jones, were delightfully musical and shared the plaudits of 15,000 Bowl auditors with Jan Clayton, singing brightly; Will Rogers, Jr., in a humorous monolog; Yul Brynner, paying high tribute to R&H; Bambi Lynn and Rod Alexander, in a graceful interpretive dance; Gene Nelson, riding in on hossback and spinning rope and the mixed chorus of 44 voices from Oklahoma City U.

It was a tribute to "Oklahoma" that Rodgers & Hammerstein and Mike Todd, too, must have enjoyed along with the millions at the sets, and a cut-in was made to NY for an interview with Hammerstein by Bob Paige, making his debut as a Variety Hour emcee an impressive one. In all seriousness Lewis conducted the orch of 52 in an R&H overture but couldn't suppress the urge to take a pratfall after Martin gave a soothing version of "Enchanted Evening."

To close out the Bowl festivities (and the big shell could have been packed with payees for such a musical treat) the entire cast joined in a rousing "Oklahoma" with the sitters joining in. Co-producers Max Siegel and Robert Finkel rate a bow for this staging, and the music of Frank DeVol was inspiring. Script by Don Johnson and Alfred Von Ronkel was well tailored to the light mood of the musical.

Helm.

Todd Buys Rights To '80' Porter Tunes

Entire musical rights to Cole Porter's score from the 1946 Broadway musical, "Around the World in 80 Days," have been purchased by Michael Todd for possible use in his Todd-AO production of the Jules Verne Classic.

Col U's Highest Honor to Rodgers, Hammerstein

New York, Oct. 18. — Columbia Univ's highest alumni award, the Alexander Hamilton Medal, will be conferred upon Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein 2d early in 1956.

Award marks the first time Columbia has honored any of its showbiz alumni.

Rodgers was a member of the class of 1923. Hammerstein was graduated in 1916.

Award, presented "for distinguished service and accomplishment in any field of human endeavor," has in the past gone to such alumni as the late Nicholas Murray Butler, Maj. Gen. William (Wild Bill) Donovan, Wellington Koo and NY Times publisher Arthur Hays Sulzberger.

Oklahoma Opening Prompts Change in 'Cinerama' Ads

New York, Oct. 18.—Despite denials by Stanley Warner that the opening of "Oklahoma" in the Todd-AO process has any relation to Cinerama, a noticeable change has taken place in the ad copy for "Cinerama Holiday" at the Warner Theatre here.

"Holiday" ads in the Sunday newspapers headlined "Still Champ"! The text read: "Today Cinerama remains the only real new wonder of the entertainment world . . . only Cinerama puts you in the pictures!"

In past SW has tended to dismiss the competition of Todd-AO, noting, for example, that "we're in a different kind of business. They're in the picture business. We're in the Cinerama business." It was stressed Cinerama planned to do nothing different when "Oklahoma" opened. The new ad campaign, however, appears to indicate that SW is showing some concern about the competition.