# 3-strip Films (CINEMIRACLE / CINERAMA) shown in Munich's "Royal-Palast"

Written by Gerhard Witte (Berlin) in winter, spring 2022



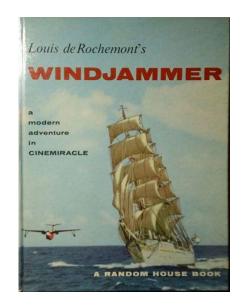
An advert from New York "VARIETY" dated 09.04.1958.

Louis de Rochemont's CINEMIRACLE movie "**Windjammer** – The Voyage of the Christian Radich" (USA, 1958) at the "Royal-Palast" – in Germany's first 3-strip venue.

# Set In Munich, Germany Los Angeles, July 8.

National Theatres has skedded Cinemiracle opening of "Windjammer" in Munich at the Royal Palace Theatre, where event will be tied in with the Munich Festival.

For first eight weeks of film's European preem, at the Coliseum Theatre, Oslo, Norway, pic ran up better than \$176,000. On the left a short article from New York "VARIETY" dated 09.07.1958. The Munich Festival (German Gymnastics Festival) took place from 20.07.1958 to 28.07.1958.



The film's hardcover documentary film book.



An announcement advert of the film from the newspaper "Münchner Merkur" dated 19.07.1958. Festive Gala premiere (German premiere) on 22.07.1958 at 08:00 p.m. The film was shown at the Munich "Royal-Palast" until 14.12.1958 – a total of 21 weeks. Text in the advert above: THE MIRACLE OF TECHNOLOGY photographed with 3 cameras. Every visitor feels involved in what is happening in the picture. The sensation from New York, Los Angeles, London now in Munich. Gala premiere under the protectorate of the Royal Norwegian Ambassador.

### Festliche Premiere in München

# **Cinemiracle bricht sich Bahn**

Gerade rechtzeitig zum Deutschen Turnfest 1958, dessen Schauplatz das 800jährige München war, zeigt die 18,80 m (im Bogen gemessen) breite Leinwand des "Royal-Palastes" von Rudolf Englberth einen Farbfilm, der in einem neuen Aufnahmeund Wiedergabe-Verfahren einer sportlichen Leistung huldigt, die jedoch bei aller Anerkennung des persönlichen Mutes stark umstritten ist. München sieht als erste deutsche Stadt den ersten Cinemiracle-Farbfilm "Windjammer", der die teils stürmische, teils bilderbuch-schöne Seereise des norwegischen Segelschulschiffes "Christian Radich" von Oslo über den Atlantik und zurück schildert.

Cinemiracle geht auf die Initiative von Elmer C. Rhoden, des Präsidenten einer großen Theaterkette in den USA, der National Theaters Inc., zurück. Louis de Rochemont, der sich vor allem durch "March of Time" einen Namen machte, wurde ausgewählt, um den ersten Cinemiracle-Film zu produzieren. Er ist heute Präsident der Cinemiracle Productions Inc. Für den Einsatz in Deutschland wurde in München die "Modern Cinema Systems — M.C.S.-Film KG." gegründet.

Das mit drei kombinierten Kameras und drei Projektoren arbeitende System erfaßt einen Blickwinkel von 146 Grad. Die 16000 kg schwere Ausrüstung wurde für die deutsche Premiere direkt von Hollywood nach München geflogen, wo Cinemiracle - Vizepräsident Latady die Installation überwachte. Die Startkosten in München werden auf 70000 DM beziffert. Es versteht sich von selbst, daß Cinemiracle nur von einer bestimmten Größenordnung an — was die Einwohnerzahl des Einsatzortes und die Platzzahl des Theaters anbelangt — rentabel ist. **R. N.**  Left an artikel taken from the German trade magazine "Filmblätter" dated July 1958.



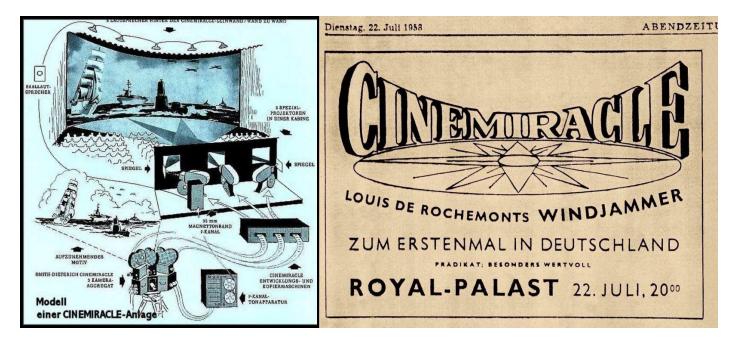
Festive premiere in Munich Cinemiracle breaks new ground

Just in time for the 1958 German Gymnastics Festival (author's note: from July 20th to 28th), the setting of which was the 800-year-old city of Munich, the 18.80 metre (measured in arc) wide screen of Rudolf Englberth's "Royal Palast" is showing a color film that, after a new recording and reproduction process, pays homage to an achievement that is highly controversial despite its ultimate recognition of personal courage.

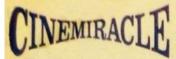
Munich is the first German city to view "**Windjammer**", the first Cinemiracle color film, which tells the tale of the sometimes stormy, sometimes picture-perfect sea voyage of the Norwegian sailing school ship "Christian Radich" from Oslo across the Atlantic and back.

Cinemiracle was started on the initiative of Elmer C. Rhoden, president of National Theatres, Inc., a large theater chain in

the United States. Louis de Rochemont, who is best known for "**March of Time**", was selected to produce the first Cinemiracle film. He is now the president of Cinemiracle Productions, Inc. For deployment of the system in Germany, "**Modern Cinema Systems - M.C.S.-Film KG**." was founded in Munich. The system, which operates using three combined cameras and three projectors, covers a viewing angle of 146 degrees. For the German premiere, the 16,000 kg of equipment was flown directly from Hollywood to Munich, where Cinemiracle vice president "Latady" oversaw the installation. The startup costs in Munich are estimated to be 70,000 DM. It goes without saying that Cinemiracle is only profitable if the population of the location and the number of seats in the theatre exceed a certain order of magnitude. (R.N.)



Left: the model of a Cinemiracle system and right: an advert taken from the Munich "Abendzeitung" dated 22.07.1958. "Windjammer" in CINEMIRACLE ... for the first time in Germany.



The biggest event in show business! Blockbusting excitement in the biggest and most advanced screen process ever. Packed them in for 29 weeks in Oslo, 23 weeks in Essen, 23 weeks in Stuttgart, 21 weeks in Munich, 19 weeks in Hamburg, 18 weeks in Caracas. Still playing in Stockholm after 90 weeks, in Berlin after 32 weeks and Copenhagen after 32 weeks. Foreign distribution by

Cinemiracle International, Inc., a subsidiary of National Theatres & Television, Inc.



Left an information



CINEMIRACLE's Perfected Projection System.



Above another article (from "Münchner Merkur" dated 19.07.1958) about the forthcoming premiere. The single CINEMIRACLE 35mm film frame (cinematic image) has 6 perforation holes in height – not only 4, as it is the case with the standard 35mm film.

#### The article above: A New Movie Miracle

On Tuesday, July 22, at 8:00 p.m., the first CINEMIRACLE film "Windjammer", produced by Louis de Rochemont, will premiere in Germany at the "Royal-Palast" with a festive Gala event. As part of a feature film plot, the film shows a sailing ship voyage across the Atlantic.

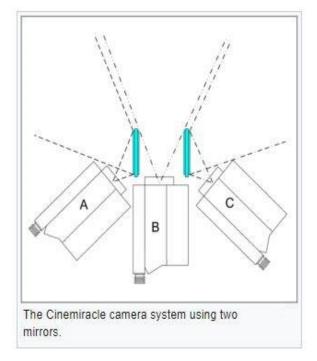
CINEMIRACLE is the first cinematic recording process that uses mirror reflections in order to project an image at a triple angle of 146 degrees horizontally and 55 degrees vertically – exactly as it can be perceived by the human eye. During the film's shooting, three standard 35mm films run in a camera [author's note: here, the individual cinematic image (film frame) is bigger – it has 6 perforation holes in the height], during playback the picture is projected onto a screen that is almost 20 metres wide and 8.50 metres high (author's note: measured along the curve) in the "Royal-Palast" using three electronically controlled projection machines. The stereo sound comes from seven loudspeaker-combinations (author's note: from seven separate audio channels and multiple loudspeaker combinations). The last authentic footage of the unfortunate training ship "Pamir" – before its sinking – had been captured in this film during a chance encounter between the two sailing ships on the high seas.

The Royal Norwegian Ambassador in Bonn, Peter Anker, has assumed the patronage. Representatives of the State Government and the City, the diplomatic Corps and the following film artists have confirmed their appearance so far:

Liselotte Pulver, Marianne Koch, Cornell Borchers, Elma Karlowa, Ellen Schwiers, Vera Friedberg, Erika Remberg, Christiane Maibach, Kai Fischer, Toni Sailer, Peer Schmidt, Josef Meinrad, Karl Möhner, Axel von Ambesser, Peter Vogel, Gert Fröbe, Peter Kraus, Ernst Fritz Fürbringer and Hans Holt.

Television, radio and newsreels will also attend the first CINEMIRACLE premiere in Germany.





Left: a black and white 35mm cinematic image (film frame) from the left panel of "Windjammer". It is from a film scene that can be seen shortly after the film's intermission. It is 27,9 mm high with respectively 6 perforation holes on both sides. "Windjammer" was filmed and projected at 26 fps (frames per second) – image from "Philips-Kinotechnik" (issue 34) 1959. Right: The CINEMIRACLE camera system – Cinemiracle used two mirrors to give the left and right cameras the same optical center as the middle camera.



Above: the premiere advert from the newspaper "Münchner Merkur" dated 22.07.1958. Today, at 08:00 p.m., Gala premiere under the protectorate of the Royal Norwegian Ambassador. Liselotte Pulver, Marianne Koch, Cornell Borchers, Claus Biederstedt, Toni Sailer and others have promised to appear.

## First German Cinemiracle installation in Munich's "Royal-Filmpalast"

The Cinemiracle process is known for using three 35mm wide films that are running simultaneously and projected onto an oversized and highly curved screen in such a way as to produce a composite image with an aspect ratio of approximately 1:2.6. In this respect, the Cinemiracle process is similar to the Cinerama process introduced for special purposes in the USA, in which three films running simultaneously are also projected side by side onto the screen. However, while with the Cinerama process the "seam" between two adjacent images can only be insufficiently blurred when projected onto the wide screen, thus disturbing the overall impression, the Cinemiracle process has, by using special lenses and a so-called "vignetting process" (author's note: they had used three American Century projectors in Munich) developed for image reproduction, succeeded in perfecting the blurring of the dividing lines between the three films projected side by side onto the screen and thus creating an almost uniform image.

Another advantage of the Cinemiracle process over the Cinerama process is that the three-image reproduction devices do not have to be set up in three spatially separate booths, as is the case with Cinerama, but can be accommodated as special projectors in a common booth. These three projectors are set up in such a way that the centre projector projects the image in a straight line onto the central sector of the highly curved screen, while the left projector projects the image onto the right sector of the screen via a novel optical lens and mirror system and the right projector accordingly projects the image onto the left sector, such that the light beams cross. By adjusting the deflection mirrors accordingly, it is possible to place the three images next to each other in such a way that hardly any seam is visible. For the associated sound reproduction, a special magnetic sound device equipped with a seven-part magnetic sound head for scanning the 7 magnetic sound channels of the 35mm wide perforated audio tape is used. The sound in the auditorium is reproduced by five groups of loudspeakers behind the screen, several loudspeakers on the two side walls and two additional loudspeakers on the rear wall of the auditorium.

This, together with the outstanding image impression caused by the large angle of view almost completely covering the field of vision of the human eye, creates an overall effect never before achieved in film reproduction. The 35mm wide film used for image reproduction is - due to the deviating film image dimensions - projected at an increased film speed of 44.6 m/min (compared to 27.4 m/min for normal film), which means that the special projectors used for the process are equipped with film transport devices that differ from those required for normal film projection.

The Cinemiracle process was developed by Cinemiracle International, Inc., in the USA and is based mainly on patents held by the Smith-Dieterich Corporation along with National-Theatres Inc. Consequently, the equipment required for the reproduction of films according to the Cinemiracle process was also developed in the USA and the theatres previously set up for this purpose in Europe were equipped with this equipment on loan. For the exploitation of Cinemiracle films in Germany, the company Modern Cinema Systems K.G. (MCS-Film), Munich, Türkenstr. 89, was founded, which also arranged the loan of the equipment for the "Royal-Filmpalast", Munich, thus becoming the first German cinema to receive a Cinemiracle system. This system was put into operation in July 1958, after a Todd AO system had already been installed in the same theatre - the second one following Hamburg's "Savoy-Filmtheater".



## **Technical details of Munich's system**

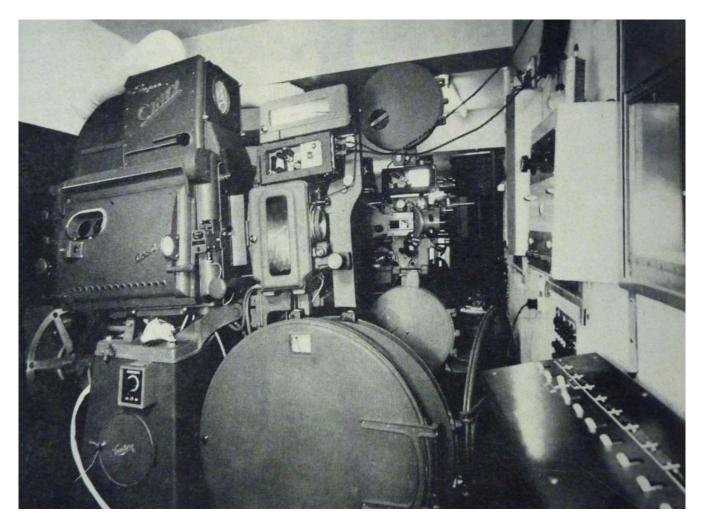


Image above: the projection room of Munich's "Royal-Palast". You can see the Century Cinemiracle projectors (Model G-1). In the foreground, one of the three "Century" projectors with fire traps arranged underneath [one Cinemiracle spool can carry around 2,400 metres (7,900 ft) of film], Ashcraft arc lights with attached cooling device, and additional RCA magnetic device. Bottom right: the control panel for operating the equipment. All images of the projection room are shot by Karl Ewald (taken from the German trade magazine "Film-Echo" dated 29.11.1958)

The Cinemiracle system installed in the "Royal-Filmpalast", Munich, has various special technical features. The projectors used are specially designed American Century machines that differ from the usual film projectors in that the two large fire protection drums are mounted below the projector mechanism. The film runs from the rear unwinding drum via the film channel from above, over corresponding deflection rollers, through the projector's film guide and is then wound up in the front drum. This arrangement makes it possible to use large diameter drums and film reels capable of recording half the program, resulting in only a single pause during the screening. American "Ashcraft lamps", which are equipped with cold-light mirrors and operate with water cooling, are used as the light source. They have rotating carbon and an electrically controlled carbon feed device. To ventilate the lamp house, a special ventilation device attached to the exhaust duct of the Ashcraft lamp is provided.

The Century projector is driven by a directly attached motor to which a so-called "interlock motor" is coupled via a rubber toothed belt. This interlock motor ensures the image-synchronous synchronisation of the three projectors. The cooling water heated by the lamp's thermal radiation is re-cooled in a special water tank equipped with a cooling coil for recycling. This water tank is placed directly behind the project-tors to avoid long supply lines.

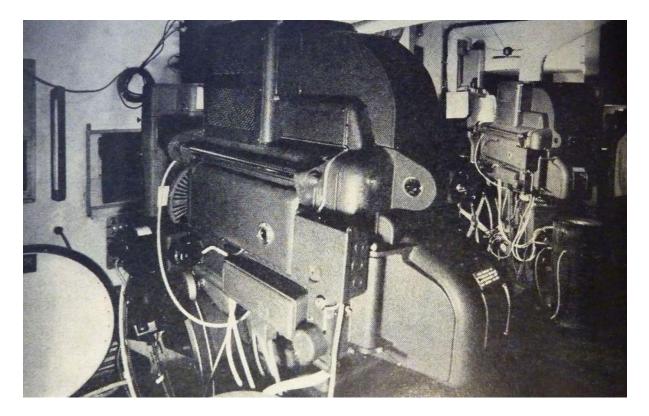


Image above: middle and right-hand "Century" projector, seen from behind. On the middle projector, you can see the drive motor and the interlock motor for ensuring image synchronisation on the left. The round tank behind the right-hand machine houses the water cooling system with cooling coil and fan. The supply reel of the middle projector is open (bottom left).

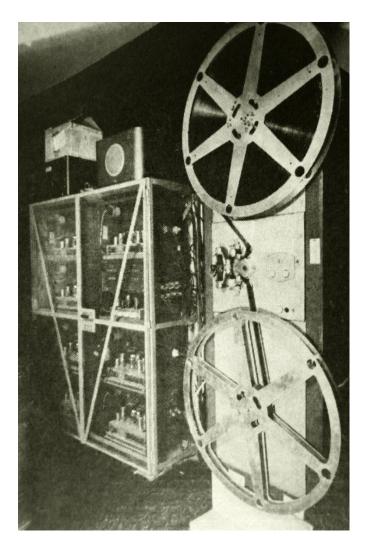


Image left: the Cinemiracle system's audio reader with a seven-part magnetic-sound head to scan the seven tracks of the 35mm wide magnetic tape, which is perforated like film at both edges. To the left of the audio recorder, which has the preamplifiers built into the lower panel, the amplifier cabinet with the RCA output amplifiers.

The sound recording of the seven-channel magnetic soundtrack is made on 35mm wide perforated magnetic tape. A seven-piece magnetic head scans the seven sound tracks in a separate audio reader.

Next to this audio reader is the amplifier rack, in which the sampled sound is amplified and fed to the corresponding loudspeaker groups via the hall controls and the power amplifiers developed and manufactured by RCA. This arrangement made it possible to keep the interference-prone cables of the sound system very short and the installation very simplified.



ORIGINALAUFNAHMEN AUS DEM CINEMIRACLE FILM

The entire system is controlled and operated from a clearly arranged control panel mounted on the cabin wall and equipped with small toggle switches for actuating the individual processes. The Century projector in the middle is also equipped with a single-channel magnetic sound unit that is used to scan an emergency magnetic sound track that can be switched to in case the tape machine malfunctions.

#### Left the German EP (PHILIPS 429 458 BE) of the film's score.

ISCO super kiptars as well as the special lenses and mirrors mentioned at the beginning, the latter for the left and right machines, are used for image projection. The power supply consists of a JOVY cinema rectifier system with a light control

choke that works according to the magnetic amplifier principle, allowing practically stepless and lossless fine adjustment of the arc lamp current. Since the Cinemiracle system has only been installed on loan for the time being, the relevant supply and connection lines had to be laid on a provisional and open basis, as the attached illustrations show. The conversion work for the reproduction of Cinemiracle films in Munich's "Royal-Filmpalast" was carried out by KINOTON GmbH., Munich, on behalf of Cinemiracle International, Inc.

On the right a German film poster at the time of the film's premiere. (Distribution: M.C.S. – Film)



Above Morton Gould's excellent "Windjammer" score presented on an expanded 2CD SET from Sepia Records (Sepia 1347/2019)





Above left: an advert from "Münchner Merkur" dated 19.09.1958 (CINEMIRACLE is already delighting visitors for 9 weeks at Munich's "Royal-Palast"). Right: Louis de Rochemont, producer of the film "Windjammer", at a press conference in Munich. Robertson Latady (right), Vice President of Cinemiracle International, Inc., came with him to Munich.

The press briefing was hosted by Rudolf Travnicek (MCS-Film). Rochemont was extremely satisfied with the screening of his film in Munich's "Royal-Palast". It was with great pleasure that he saw his film, which his son Louis de Rochemont III had directed, and he discovered details that had previously remained hidden from him. At the time, the film was already in its 13th week in Munich and was heading towards the 100,000th visitor. (Image and information taken from the German trade magazine "Filmwoche" dated October 11, 1958)



The film in its 6th week. Every visitor is being involved in what is happening in the picture. The press writes: compared to what is happening on the 20m wide and 8.50m high screen (author's note: slightly exaggerated measured along the curve), normal films look like passport photos. Everything is bursting at the seams. You can only see this CINEMIRACLE method in the "Royal-Palast". (Advert from the Munich "Abendzeitung" dated 26.08.1958)

"Windjammer" ran successfully in the "Royal-Palast" until 14.12.1958 (21 weeks) and was repeated from 16.02.1960 to 30.03.1960 (6 weeks) and from 30.05.1961 to 30.08.1961 (13 weeks).



Miracle heißt bekanntlich "Wunder" — Cinemiracle mithin Filmwunder. Die vollkommene Illusion der dritten Dimension dem Beschauer auf der Leinwand zu vermitteln, ist das Streben des Cinemiracle-Verfahrens. Drei synchron geschaltete Kameras nehmen auf, was später auf einer stark gebogenen Leinwand abläuft. "Windjammer" heißt der erste Cinemiracle-Film, der jetzt in München seine deutsche Premiere hatte.

As it is well known, Miracle means "Wunder" – CINEMIRACLE is therefore a film miracle (Filmwunder). The aim of the Cinemiracle process is to convey the complete illusion of the third dimension to the viewer on the screen. Three synchronously switched cameras record what later takes place on a deeply curved screen. "Windjammer" is the name of the first Cinemiracle film that now had its German premiere in Munich. (Image from the German trade magazine "Filmwoche")

> Here a YouTube clip (35 minutes, produced by David Coles in Sydney, Australia) that informs about numerous CINEMIRACLE show places in the world:

**Cinerama: CINEMIRACLE SHOWPLACES - Extended Version - YouTube** 



The very first screening of a 3-strip **CINERAMA** film in Munich, **SEVEN WONDERS OF THE WORLD** (Die sieben Weltwunder / USA, 1956), took place in the now converted "CINERAMA-City-Filmpalast", located on Sonnenstraße 12, on 23.12.1960. The cinema was inaugurated on 26.11.1959 with Paramount's "Hausboot" (Houseboat / USA, 1958). At that time, the owners of the new theatre were Walter Jonigkeit ("DELPHI" Berlin / " SAVOY" Hamburg) and Manfred Bertuch.

HOW THE WEST WAS WON (Das war der Wilde Westen / USA, 1962) opened there in CINERAMA on 12.09.1963, THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF THE BROTHERS GRIMM (Die Wunderwelt der Gebrüder Grimm / USA, 1962) on 30.04.1964.



Premiere advert "Das war der Wilde Westen" from "Münchner Merkur" dated 12.09.1963.



Premiere advert "Die Wunderwelt der Gebrüder Grimm" from "Münchner Merkur" dated 30.04.1964.



Previously, in March /April 1964 they had shown in 70mm CINERAMA (single lens process) "Eine total, total verrückte Welt" (It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World / USA, 1963). Advert from "Münchner Merkur" dated 03.04.1964.

At that time, 3 CINERAMA films were shown in Munich's "Royal-Palast"



A) SOUTH SEAS ADVENTURE (Südseezauber / USA, 1958)

An announcement advert from the newspaper "Münchner Merkur" dated 08.03.1962.



"Südseezauber" – <u>Premiere on 09.03.1962</u>. Advert from "Münchner Merkur" dated 09.03.1962.



Today, the film's last day (07.06.1962). It ran for 13 weeks at the "Royal-Palast".

## B) SEARCH FOR PARADISE (Auf der Suche nach dem Paradies / USA, 1957)



Announcement advert from the newspaper "Münchner Merkur" dated 06.06.1962. <u>Premiere on 08.06.1962</u>.

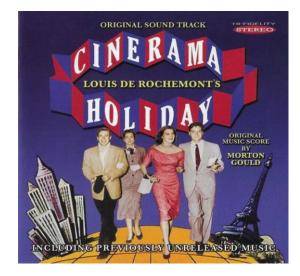


"Auf der Suche nach dem Paradies" premiere advert from "Münchner Merkur" dated 08.06.1962. The film ran until 19.07.1962 (6 weeks) – then followed on <u>20.07.1962 (Premiere)</u> Louis de Rochemont´s

## C) CINERAMA HOLIDAY (Cinerama Holiday / USA, 1955)



... that ran there until 22.08.1962 (nearly 5 weeks).



The film music by Morton Gould on a double CD (SEPIA 1247). **BONUS:** an impressive, large advert (size 38 x 51 cm) that informs about the festive inauguration (evening suit desired) of the Karlsruhe "City-Filmtheater" with "Windjammer" in 3-strip CINEMIRACLE projection on 24.05.1960. (Advert from the newspaper "Badische Neueste Nachrichten")

