

October 11, 1955

NY Critics Ignore Thursday Release on 'Okla.' Reviews

New York.—Magna Theatre Corp. claims the public world premiere of "Oklahoma!" will take place Thursday, but the New York critics are of another mind and are reviewing the picture in today's papers on the theory that the premiere took place yesterday.

Confusion arose over the so-called three-day world premiere of "Oklahoma!" under which many thousands of New Yorkers would have seen the picture at invitational showings before the reviews appeared. Some critics felt this "three-day premiere" was just a gimmick for publicity and that they should review the important picture and new process while it was news and not after four or five days of more or less public showings.

Despite the fact that there will be at least four evening showings of the picture before the "official world premiere," most film reporters have been unable to get tickets for any of the evening showings.

Raves for Film and Todd-AO

Judging by the superlatives in the reviews of four New York newspapers, "Oklahoma!" in its Todd-AO screen version is okay. The Times' Bosley Crowther says "a full-bodied 'Oklahoma!' has been brought forth in this film to match in vitality, eloquence and melody any musical this reviewer has ever seen . . . a production that magnifies and strengthens all the charm that it had upon the stage."

Daily News' Kate Cameron, giving the Rodgers & Hammerstein film four stars, said it "marked a turning point in the history of the moving picture industry . . . topnotch screen entertainment . . . everyone concerned in the production deserves to take a bow."

William Zinsser, Herald-Tribune, says, "Fortunately the movie is true to the original. If you liked 'Oklahoma!' on the stage, you'll probably enjoy this Todd's-eye view." Justin Gilbert, Daily Mirror, awards the picture "all the superlatives" and calls it "a monumental movie canvas executed by a master."

The critics were not unanimous about the Todd-AO process, although all agreed that "Oklahoma!" was an ideal choice to show off the new picture and sound method. Miss Cameron said "Todd-AO has overcome Cinema's necessity for three cameras, triple projectors and tripartite screen, and is an advancement over Cinema-Scope in that it is seen on a higher, wider and more deeply curved screen."

Crowther said "the generous expanse of screen is fetching, but the system has disconcerting flaws. The distortions of the images are striking when viewed from the seats on the sides of the orchestra or the sides and the rear of the balcony. Even from central locations, the concave shape of the screen causes it to appear arched upwards or downwards, according to whether one views it from the orchestra or the balcony."

Zinsser said "Todd-AO takes the moviegoer out of his cramped theatre

seat and onto the rolling farmland." Zinsser observed a good illusion of depth used imaginatively, but also complained of the picture curve from a balcony seat.

Gilbert thrilled to the audience participation sequences of the picture and said the new sound is so diffuse it is astounding.

October 3, 1955

Magna Theatres to Sell Another 110,000 Shares

Washington.—Magna Theatre Corp. (Todd-AO) seeks SEC registration of 110,000 shares of common to be offered to stockholders at \$5 per share at the rate of one new share for each 20 held. United Artists Theatre Circuit, which holds 38 percent of Magna common and 71 percent of its preferred directly, will act as underwriter.

Proceeds of the sale will be used to pay \$525,000 in interest due Dec. 1 on Magna's 6 percent debentures, due in 1959.

October 6, 1955

Excessive installation costs are holding up the opening of "Oklahoma!" at McVickers Theatre, Chicago.

Gregory Peck will play a bit in "Around the World in 80 Days." Not being in "80 Days" is like not saluting the flag.

Joe Pasternak's "International Revue" is MGM's answer to "Around the World in 80 Days." Takes place aboard a luxury liner that docks at 11 ports of call. Every musical star MGM can sign will be in its 11 sequences. Debbie Reynolds as the captain's daughter and Walter Pidgeon as the captain are the only two who'll appear throughout.

Todd to Shoot in Okla.

Michael Todd planes to Lawton, Okla., today to take over direction of a new location unit of his Todd-AO "Around the World in 80 Days." He will shoot a transcontinental train dash involving 400 Indians and 1600 buffalo. After making this scene, Todd flies to New York next week for the world premiere of "Oklahoma!"

October 10, 1955

Jose Greco for '80 Days'

Michael Todd has signed Jose Greco and his troupe of 25 Spanish dancers for "Around the World in 80 Days."

Mike Todd is trying to raise an additional \$1,500,000 to bankroll "Around the World in 80 Days," offering 5 percent of the gross as a bonus.

Zinnemann Partial To No Pix Process

New York, Oct. 6.—Despite the prodding of a Magna-Todd-AO publicist, director Fred Zinnemann, here for opening of "Oklahoma," insisted today that he had no allegiance to any particular process.

"It depends," he declared, citing his own black-and-white successes, "High Noon" and "From Here To Eternity."

Zinnemann opined that Todd-AO was best for stories with the scope of "Oklahoma," but felt that other yarns would be more suitable in standard black-and-white or one of the other large-screen color processes.

Zinnemann said he preferred to be flexible. Limiting film production to only one process, he added, is like "an artist working only with blue paint."