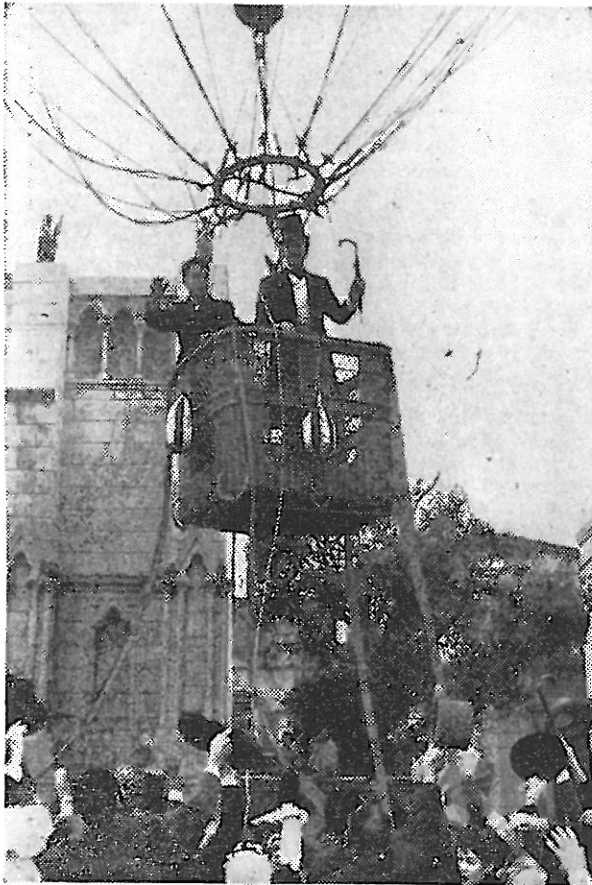


Screen: Mammoth Show



Cantinflas, left, and David Niven as they appear in a scene from the comedy, "Around the World in Eighty Days."

By BOSLEY CROWTHER

MICHAEL TODD, who has already shaken the foundations of the legitimate theatre with an onslaught of highly heterogeneous and untraditional musical shows, is apparently out to shatter the fundamental formation of the screen. That's the way it looks from his film version of "Around the World in 80 Days."

This mammoth and mad pictorial rendering of the famous old novel of Jules Verne, which was publicly unveiled last evening at the Rivoli, is a sprawling conglomeration of refined English comedy, giant-screen travel panoramas and slam-bang Keystone burlesque. It makes like a wild adventure picture and, with some forty famous actors in "bit" roles, it also takes on the characteristic of a running recognition game. It is noisy with sound effects and music. It is overwhelmingly large in the process known as Todd-AO. It runs for two hours fifty-five minutes (not counting an intermission). And it is, undeniably, quite a show.

The Cast

AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS, screen play by S. J. Perelman; based on the Jules Verne novel; directed by Michael Anderson and produced by Michael Todd. At the Rivoli.

Phileas Fogg.....	David Niven
Passepartout.....	Cantinflas
Mr. Fix.....	Robert Newton
Princess Aouda.....	Shirley MacLaine
Members of the Reform Club.....	Robert Morley
	Trevor Howard
	Finlay Currie
	Basil Sydney
	Ronald Squires

Charles Boyer	Buster Keaton
Joe E. Brown	Evelyn Keyes
Martine Carol	Beatrice Lillie
John Carradine	Peter Lorre
Charles Coburn	Edmund Lowe
Ronald Colman	Victor McLaglen
Melville Cooper	Tim McCoy
Noel Coward	A. E. Matthews
Reginald Denny	Mike Mazurki
Andy Devine	John Mills
Mariene Dietrich	Alan Mowbray
Luis Miguel Dominguin	Edward R. Murrow
Fernandel	Jack Oakie
Sir John Gielgud	George Raff
Hermione Givgold	Gilbert Roland
Jose Greco	Cesar Romero
Sir Cedric Hardwicke	Frank Sinatra
Glynis Johns	Red Skelton
	Harcourt Williams

Whether the cinema purists will immediately and gratefully concede that Mr. Todd has improved the breed of movies is something else again. The unities of content and method are not detectable in his splattered form. He and his people have commandeered the giant screen and stereophonic sound as though they were Olsen and Johnson (remember them?) turned loose in a cosmic cutting-room, with a pipe organ in one corner and all the movies ever made to toss around.

In a manner suspiciously imitative of the first Cinerama show (with which Mr. Todd had something inspirational to do), they open this film with Ed Murrow speaking a few well-chosen words and introducing a bit of the old Georges Melies silent fantasy "A Trip to the Moon." From this standard black-and-white primitive, they pull right to their wide and curved screen and a dazzling brilliant color picture of a guided missile being launched into the sky. This is explained by Mr. Murrow as an evidence of how the world does change—all of which is by way of pretty prologue to the nineteenth century fable of Mr. Verne.

The eccentric pattern, thus established, is continued expansively. There is naught but extravagant improvising in the subsequent adventures of Phileas Fogg. Once he and his comical valet, the non-deceit Passepartout, are launched on their wagered endeavor to circumnavigate the globe in eighty days, the wraps are off. Anything can happen. And many varieties of things do.

In Paris, away from the Reform Club, the travelers embark in a balloon, which lifts them above a stunning layout of rural landscapes and bird's-eye-viewed chateaux. They scoop some snow off an alp (a phony) to chill a bottle of champagne and, with fine geographical indifference, land their balloon in Spain.

This is a casual convenience which permits Mr. Todd to introduce José Greco and his troupe of Spanish dancers in some handsome flamenco stomps. It also allows the great Cantinflas, who plays the absurd Passepartout, to enact his famous burlesque of bullfighting, which he has often done in his native Mexican films. Thence the duo proceeds to a sun-drenched

Suez, where they encounter the detective, Fix, who becomes the comical nemesis of their further journeyings. And so it goes.

Time and a wish not to bore you do not permit us to catalogue the stops or the crazy variety of adventures of the travelers on their race around the world. They plunge through a studio jungle on an elephant. They behold a genuine Siamese royal barge, moving upon an ancient river. They ride ostriches through a back-lot Hong Kong. In America they fight whooping Indians from a rolling and rocking Western train (a counterpart of Cinerama's roller coaster), and, while crossing the Atlantic in a ship, they strip the old tub down

for firewood, in recollection of a Marx Brothers' film.

Let it be said for Michael Anderson, the director, that he has done a remarkable job in even keeping the picture going with so many "guests" in "bit" roles. Outside of Cantinflas and David Niven, who is excellent as the punctual Phileas Fogg, there are the late Robert Newton as Fix, the detective; Shirley MacLaine as Princess Aouda and an assortment of bit players ranging from Noel Coward as a British employment agent to Jack Oakie as the captain of the S. S. Henrietta. Even so, all and sundry play their roles honorably.

Is the whole thing too exhausting? It's a question of how much you can take. We not only took it but found it most amusing. Now—has it exhausted Mr. Todd?