

New megaplex
METROPOLIS
Antwerp.
(22 screens)

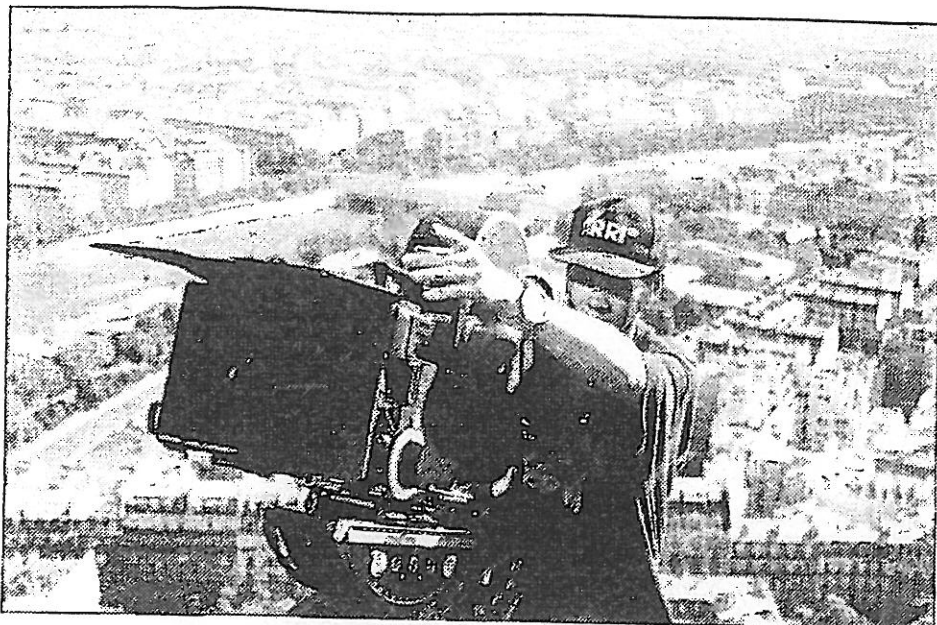
New megaplexes in Northern France

That's entertainment III released in 70mm

Arriflex 765 at work in Paris

"Why 70mm?"

IMAX and the exploitation of scale



On Location in Paris with the ARRIFLEX 765

The idea of filming in 70mm had always seemed to me to be an unattainable dream. But thanks to two prizes which I won for my short films 'Zum Greifen Nah' (Near Enough to Touch) and 'Der Fensterputzer' (The Window Cleaner) this dream became a reality. I had brightly-coloured postcards whirling around in my head. I wanted to shoot a film on the Eiffel Tower: A car lover can do nothing but watch from the Eiffel Tower as his new car is stolen and written off. For the photography I got Joachim Jung back from Hollywood; he had already photographed my short film 'Der Fensterputzer' in the wide-screen format. As first camera assistant I was able to get hold of the French-woman Sylvie Vienne who had already worked on a 3-D production with the ARRIFLEX 765. Our camera equipment consisted of a complete 765 outfit and one set of lenses (11 optics, from 30mm to 350mm). We filmed on Eastman 5297.

1st August was the start of shooting. After the first take directly in front of the Arc de Triomphe I was happy and at the same time disappointed. Maybe I had secretly been hoping that the earth would shake when you shot in 65mm. Instead shooting went as usual. The 765 looks and runs like any 35mm camera. Even the exterior of the 765 is hardly different from a 35mm camera. It even uses the same matte box. Admittedly, the camera is heavier (32 kg with film), but with the help of an additional assistant adjustments didn't take much longer than usual. Only the Magnum dolly turned out to be not stable enough for the weight and sprang back slightly when it was braked fast.

In setting the exact camera position the Mamiya director's viewfinder was a distinct help as the camera lenses could be tried out on it beforehand. As we wanted to film several shots with a very long focal length from the Eiffel Tower we used the 350mm lens with an extender. For one extremely

long shot we were even able to get acceptable results by using two Mutars, although three turned out to be too many. In my opinion an extremely long-range telephoto lens would be a good addition to the otherwise complete range of lenses.

In order not to lose the negative's high resolution, all cinema copies should be taken directly from the edited original negative. Any trick work during the duplicate process was therefore impossible. As the story necessitated subjective views through a telescope and a camera, ARRI-Austria produced camera masks which the camera assistant stuck with special adhesive directly in front of the film gate. Through the closeness to the film plane a greater sharpness of the masks was attained. A dream sequence involving cars turning around in the main actor's face was also able to be filmed directly by the camera by using old-fashioned double-exposure. By doing this we were able not only to avoid duplicates but also cut costs.

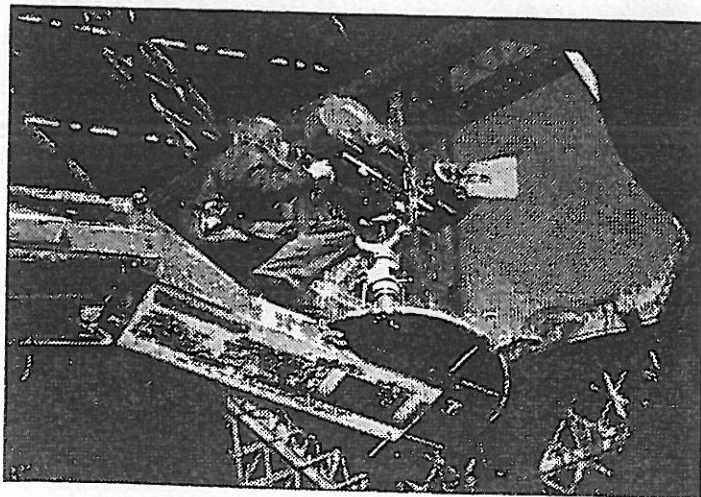
Even at 100 fps the 765 ran without a hitch. Of course it took some time before the camera reached the desired speed. But that's understandable with so much film mass. This was also the first time we heard the motor, and we suddenly realised how quiet the camera actually runs at normal speed. But the biggest surprise came when we looked at the rushes from the slow-motion sequences. These were noticeable for their image stability. They looked no different from the other shots.

The bright finder image also made the cameraman's job easier. The illuminated finder frame which was designed for night-time shots was sometimes too bright for the dark scenes. An adjustment possibility should be developed for it.

Contrary to all expectations, filming was unspectacular as regards working with the camera. We didn't have to forego any complicated shots, nor make any compromises on viewpoints. And even after 10 days' filming and several thousand meters of exposed negative film, we couldn't find either a speck of dust on the film gate or a scratch on the negative.

PS: The film has just been completed and will open in August 1994 as a short film in German cinemas.

Veit Helmer



THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT! III

An MGM release presented in association with Turner Entertainment Co. Produced, directed, written, edited by Bud Friedgen, Michael J. Sheridan. Executive producer, Peter Fitzgerald; additional music arranged by Marc Shaiman; music supervision, Marilee Bradford; film restoration, Cinetech; new sequences camera (Deluxe color/b&w), Howard A. Anderson III; production sound (Dolby), Dave Kelson, Bill Teague; assistant director, Ric Rondell. Reviewed at Warner Hollywood screening room, L.A., March 7, 1994. MPAA Rating: G. Running time: 113 MIN. (including overture).

Hosts: June Allyson, Cyd Charisse, Lena Horne, Howard Keel, Gene Kelly, Ann Miller, Debbie Reynolds, Mickey Rooney, Esther Williams.

It's been 20 years since the first "That's Entertainment!" proved that there was gold in the MGM vaults, and 18 years since the second installment, which might have suggested that the cupboard had long since been cleaned bare. But by searching a little further into unfamiliar corners and outtake cans, resourceful filmmakers Bud Friedgen and Michael J. Sheridan have come up with a bang-up third anthology of golden-era musical highlights that capably holds its own with its predecessors. The audience for such an undertaking, especially those who experienced the excerpted films at the time of their release, may have dwindled in the intervening two decades, but theatrical B.O. should still be good, on the way to a long life on TV, cable and video.

Metro was reportedly the only major studio to systematically save its outtakes, a policy that has paid off here in spades in some musical gems that surprisingly dwarf many sequences that ended up in pictures. Happily, along with preserving and restoring the films themselves to sparkling condition, Turner Entertainment also saved these exhilarating footnotes to film history, which many buffs will eventually want to savor repeatedly on homevid and laser.

Format is the same as before, as legendary stars from MGM's musical heyday introduce different

chapters in the story, which encompasses 62 musical numbers culled from more than 100 films. As June Allyson, Cyd Charisse, Lena Horne, Howard Keel, Ann Miller, Debbie Reynolds, Mickey Rooney and Esther Williams reminisce, mostly in genteel fashion, how it was in the glory days, filmmakers discreetly conceal that the old MGM lot on which they're photographed now belongs to Sony.

Pic steps quickly, and amusingly, through the first years of sound, neatly disguising that the Metro musical didn't really hit its stride until some years later. Then, bang, the first dynamite sequence, featuring the dazzling hooper Eleanor Powell, first in "Broadway Melody of 1938," then more spectacularly essaying "Fascinatin' Rhythm" in "Lady Be Good," with the filmmakers providing a revealing split-screen look at the finished number and behind-the-scenes footage showing how the elaborate scene was accomplished. If nothing else, this interlude will introduce quite a few viewers to Powell's protean talents.

Having edited the first two "That's Entertainment" anthologies, Friedgen and Sheridan know well how to pace and balance two hours of clips, and they put their expertise to work by following some classic material with comic relief, such as the forgotten Ross Sisters performing a grotesque contortionist number from "Broadway Rhythm."

Similarly, they manage to maintain a roughly chronological presentation while still deftly juggling solos and production numbers, color and black-and-white, the fresh and the familiar. Remarkably, feature repeats very little footage from the earlier installments, while naturally harking back to many of the same films.

Williams' stupendous and campy aquatic ballets and, perhaps especially, some of the shining moments with Fred Astaire and Judy Garland will prove particular eye-openers to new audiences.

By contrast, buffs will be drawn by the numerous outtakes, beginning with two by Reynolds, one a rendition of "You Are My Lucky Star" cut from "Singin' in the Rain," another an alternate version of "A Lady Loves" from "I Love Melvin."

Horne, who admits that "I never felt like I really belonged in Hollywood," is a big winner here, as repped by a deleted tune, "Ain't it the Truth," which she sang in a bubble bath for "Cabin in the Sky," and her electrifying "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man," shown after two versions of Ava Gardner performing the same song from "Show Boat," one in the actress's own voice (rather sweet and not bad) and one as dubbed for the finished film by Annette Warren.

Garland's "I'm an Indian Too," lensed before she was fired from "Annie Get Your Gun," proves rather sloppy, shrill and vaguely embarrassing, but her "March of the Doagies" from "The Harvey Girls" was a giant production number to have been dropped. Another previously unseen performance, her rendition of "Mr. Monotony" shot for "Easter Parade," is a stunner, and marked the first appearance of her subsequent trademark outfit, the half-tuxedo.

But perhaps most amazing of all is the contrast of two versions of the song "Two Faced Woman." The one previously seen by the public, with Joan Crawford in "Torch Song," is a camp atrocity, with the star in hideous "tropical" makeup. The other, with a sizzling Charisse, is shown here for the first time and is great, but was cut from "The Band Wagon." As Reynolds puts it here, "It's been suggested that they may have used the wrong version."

Chronologically, the last pix excerpted are "Jailhouse Rock" and "Gigi," which neatly illustrates the musical fork in the road that appeared by the late 1950s. "Gigi" essentially marked the end of the great MGM musical as it had been known in the Arthur Freed era, and that film, and those before it, belonged to a very different world. But "That's Entertainment! III," like its predecessors, makes it a very agreeable place to visit.

Technically, film is mostly tops; with superior sound and excerpts looking great. One quibble is that, while the original aspect ratios, from the old Academy format to widescreen, are respected most of the time, on occasion the former standard 1.33 ratio is distorted to the modern 1.85. Inconsistency of this application is puzzling.

—Todd McCarthy

New megaplexes in Northern France

After Kinopolis-Brussels with 24 screens and Imax, Metropolis Antwerp with 22 screens; the Bert Group of Belgium has now started in the Northern of France. Around this time the building activities will start for a 14 screen complex with 4500 seats near Metz. Near the building site there are already a swimming pool, a tennis court and a "country club". Opening of this complex is expected to be on 1st November 1994.

Near the city of Lille the renovation started of the original castle for the 24 screen complex "Le Chateau du Cinema". The building of the new wings will start 01.09.94 and the opening of the first part of this megaplex will be around February 1995 and the entire building must be finished in September 1995.



And some weeks ago an agreement was signed between Bert/Decatron and the municipality of DIEMEN (near Amsterdam) to build a 25 screens complex with 8000 seats. The opening is planned for the end of 1995. This announcement has caused some excitement at other Dutch/Euro companies in the Netherlands who had plans to build complexes in Amsterdam, which were delayed different times by indecisions of Amsterdams expansion.

70mm Promotion Tour Los Angeles

October '94

"The International 70mm Association" will launch a "70mm promotion tour" to Los Angeles. Our goal is to tell american filmproducers and directors how enthusiastic their European counterparts are over original 70mm films such as "Oklahoma!", "Cleopatra" and "2001: a space odyssey". New 70mm films as "Far and Away", "Baraka" and "Little Buddha" from the present age attract huge audiences because of the narrative content, but also because of the stunning cinematography. People like Ron Howard and Ron Fricke are to be applauded for their decision to use 65mm. Our hope is to persuade filmmakers to use 65mm negatives in cinematography more frequently. We hope to arrange appointments with a filmproducer, a director, a cinematographer and a marketing executive in Los Angeles. Furthermore, we naturally intend to keep the local press informed about the subject. There are three major points we want to address to the filmmakers:

- * An increasing number of European cinemas is able to show 70mm prints. A decreasing number of 70mm prints is available, however. Is it because the industry thinks the audience is not aware of picture quality and only cares about sound quality?
- * Why improve the sound quality of the films alone, and not the image quality? Increasingly, the quality of prints shown in Copenhagen is awful. The local laserdisc shop in some cases presents image quality more impressive than a new 35mm print. Why is that?
- * An effort must be made to restore old 70mm films. Have any american exhibitors been asked about their interest in showing restored 70mm films?

The International 70mm Association

-, is a non profit organization with 75 dedicated members all over the Globe. A "70mm newsletter" is published 6 times a year and mailed free to all members. For more information please contact: The International 70mm Association, Katwoudehof 36, 6843 BX Arnhem, The Netherlands.

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IMAX® and the Exploitation of Scale

The Toronto based Imax Systems Corporation, founded in 1967, had their first system up and running in 1970, and reached a decisive point in their history on 7th January 1994 when it was announced that the Corporation had been taken over by the WGIM Acquisition Group, a Canadian company whose principal shareholders include the film-maker Douglas Trumbull, Cheviot Capital Advisors and Wasserstein Perella's Merchant Banking Fund. While no one is quite sure what effect the change of ownership will have on the Imax Corporation WGIM takes over an imaginative commercial operation built on very high standards of engineering, film technology and quality control. According to WGIM Doug Trumbull will join the senior management team at Imax. A film pioneer himself Trumbull was one of the four special photographic effects supervisors on "2001: A Space Odyssey" (1965) and he went on to produce the special effects for "The Andromeda Strain" (1970), "Close Encounters" (1976) and the visual effects for "Blade Runner" (1982). He also developed the 70mm 60fps Showscan process.

Clearly there are latent synergies in the new and enlarged operation, but since its inception development of the IMAX® system has never stood still. The original IMAX® 15 perf, 65/70mm 24fps horizontal "pull down" system developed by the Canadians Graeme Ferguson, Roman Kroitor, Robert Kerr and the engineer Bill Shaw was launched in the Fuji Pavilion at Expo 70, Osaka, Japan in 1970. It proved highly popular and the number of IMAX® installations throughout the world has grown steadily since that time. IMAX® has subsequently been developed to include 2-D and 3-D on flat and domed screens, a 48fps version and, soon to be launched, a sound system known as the Personal Sound Environment (PSE) capable of manoeuvring sound around the spectator's head with uncanny realism.

The programmes are normally between 20 and 35 minutes long; a half hour, 24fps programme uses nearly two miles of 70mm film. With the development of the 48fps variant and the potential for longer productions platter systems capable of handling much longer reels are currently under development. Meanwhile synced digital sound on disc is now available as an alternative to the original six channel analogue sound on 35mm sepomag.

The Imax Systems research, development and manufacturing operations are extensive, and have already outgrown the original plant in Oakville. They recently moved out to their new premises, known as the Technology Centre, in Sheridan Park, Mississauga, just outside

Toronto. The bland facade of the building belies the sophisticated interior, purpose built round a central, top lit, atrium which acts as a hub to the building.

As well as research and manufacturing the facilities include a tape to film transfer section, equipped with Oxbery cameras, for the computer graphics and animated footage which form such important sequences in recent Imax productions. Such sequences have been particularly effective in their space films, which have been a great success in the format since Imax cameras were first allowed aboard the NASA Space Shuttles. In keeping with their high standards of fidelity these sequences are not just fictional special effects but are based on real data acquired by NASA during other missions, and never previously visualised on film for projection to such a huge size. On a recent visit David Martindale, Advanced Imaging Specialist, Research and Development demonstrated some remarkable footage of a space flight over the surface of the moon, closing with a view of each as the flight reaches beyond the moon's horizon. Remarkable simply as a demonstration on a monitor this type of imagery promises to be stunning on screen, and all the more effective for being based on fact. It was developed in close collaboration with the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena.

The originators of IMAX® all had early practical experience in producing multi-screen programmes on a big scale for expositions. From the outset their company enjoyed a close relationship with the National Film Board of

Canada, an organisation which has no real parallel anywhere else in the world, dedicated to the development of film technologies and dissemination of information on such developments. At one time Roman Kroitor, a former student of philosophy, came under the wing of the NFB as part of an imaginative Film Board scheme to encourage people from different disciplines to experiment with film-making. In 1965 it was the Film Board which developed a thirty six channel encoding/decoding control system for a cruciform screen system for Expo '67 in Toronto, capable of showing five films simultaneously, which was a forerunner of the IMAX® system. Subsequently, between 1984 and 1985 the Board (with Isteq Ltd.) helped in the development of the first IMAX® 3-D camera rig, the development of an electronically controlled 65/70mm camera support system and other camera head equipment. One of their senior lighting cameramen, Ernie McNabb shot some of the first IMAX® programmes and assisted in the system development. Len Green and Eddie Zwaneveld, among many others from the Film Board, were critically involved in these developments. The NFB also generated the first computer graphics sequences used in IMAX® productions.

While Bill Shaw stuck rigorously to the engineering of Imax® camera and projector systems development (including the complex projector lenses with Leitz, Canada) it fell to Kroitor and Ferguson to exploit the imagery on the enormous screen, which is rarely less than 60' high. While audiences now gasp at sequences shot from helicopters, or underwater, or microscopic material shot on an optical bench it was Kroitor who first explored the composition of multiple imagery on the flat screen, a direct development from the multi-screen installations at the Toronto Exposition in 1967, which still have enormous visual impact. Graeme Ferguson, originally President of the Corporation, now concentrates on the production of the IMAX® space films, of which perhaps the most famous is "The Dream is Alive", and IMAX® is really the only system which can do full justice to space subjects. At the end of 1993 Ferguson was anxiously awaiting the outcome of the NASA mission to repair the Hubble Space Telescope, critical parts of which were being shot with an IMAX® camera locked off in the shuttle's cargo bay. In the event it proved highly successful for NASA, and IMAX®, and the programme on Hubble, "Destiny in Space", is scheduled for completion at the end of 1994.

Over the past three years IMAX® 3-D technology has been steadily developed, capitalising on the success of their first polarised light 3-D system introduced at Expo '86 in Vancouver. The original but cumbersome 3-D camera rig, using two IMAX® cameras at right angles with a beam splitter, is still available for close-up work but the Corporation has now developed an all-in-one stereo camera, with fixed interocular twin lenses to expose both images, which is much easier to use. By making shooting simpler they hope to encourage the production of more 3-D films. The parallel development of the Personal Sound Environment technique by their associ-

ated company, Sonics, ensure that the audio is as effective as the 3-D imagery. With this system the sound can be made to follow the apparent position of the 3-D image in the theatre space and is heard through stereo transducers (effectively tiny loudspeakers) located opposite the temples incorporated in a lightweight headset. The transducers supplement the ambient sound and the system is remarkably effective. It can also be used to provide personal commentaries in up to four different languages, without being overheard by the adjacent audience. It is also possible to use this system in the new Imax Solido 3-D theatres, in which 3-D images are viewed in a domed auditorium, using pictures shown with a double-headed projector and viewed through remote controlled LCD glasses.

Paul Panabaker, who was largely responsible for the highly secret development of the IMAX® Solido system at Oakville (first seen at the Fujitsu Pavilion, Expo 90, Osaka) and Michael Gibbon, now Vice President Engineering Development with responsibility for all engineering developments at Imax are based at Mississauga. Their quiet mien belies these remarkable technical achievements which have been developed under their direction and Bill Shaw's leadership.

Currently Imax are rationalising both the engineering and the nomenclature of the IMAX® systems. The new IMAX® dual filmstrip 3-D camera, for example, makes use of some operating 'modules' from existing cameras, making maintenance simpler. IMAX® 3-D is projected through one double-headed projector, rather than the two projectors used in the original system.

The names of systems are being simplified, though it is worth recalling the systems which have been developed from the outset. The first, standard, IMAX® was flat screen (in practice slightly curved on the horizontal plane), which

was followed by a fish-eye version shown on a domed screen, known as Omnimax. These two systems are the mainstay of the 100+ theatres worldwide, in almost equal proportions. The first, short lived, single film 3-D system was anaglyph and introduced as an Omnimax programme in the Fujitsu Pavilion at the Tskuba Fair, in Japan in 1985. It was highly popular and seen by over 2m people during the six months of the Fair. A new polarised light 3-D two film system on the flat Imax screen was introduced at Expo 86 in Vancouver. This utilises two separate projectors for left and right images and is viewed through polarising glasses.

The most recent 3-D system, the domed IMAX® Solido, was introduced at the Fujitsu Pavilion, Expo 90, Osaka, with projection combined in one twin-headed projector. It is viewed through remote controlled LCD glasses which switch from left to right images in sync with the projection. The 48 fps system, IMAX® HD, was introduced in the Canadian Pavilion at the Seville Exposition in 1992.

To avoid confusion and strengthen the corporate image the Corporation now officially refer to all systems with the prefix IMAX®. Thus IMAX® (flat screen), IMAX® Dome (formerly Omnimax), Imax Solido and IMAX® HD (the 48 fps variant, initially applied to flat screen 2-D, but with potential for the other systems),

There was also the curious, one-off, IMAX® Magic Carpet configuration, first seen at the Osaka Expo in 1990, which uses two flat screens, with one in front and one below the audience. The seats are fixed above a glass floor and the audience can see synced movie images coming towards them and passing under their feet. It is an eerie, experience, and unlikely to be developed further. IMAX® Magic Carpet has now been permanently installed at Futuroscope, Poitiers.

The Imax System Corporation own very few

theatres, and much of the theatre development has been associated with temporary expositions, many of them in Japan, or at museums, and there are now over 100 permanent IMAX® or IMAX® Dome installations throughout the world.

Currently the only IMAX® theatre in the UK is at the National Museum of Photography, Film & Television at Bradford. It is very popular, but a long way north of the metropolis. In a move which promises to redress the balance the British Film Institute (BFI) has applied for planning permission to build an IMAX® theatre in London, on a dominant site in the middle of the bullring roundabout at the southern end of Waterloo Bridge. It offers close links with the South Bank complex, including the Museum of the Moving Image (MOMI) and the National Film Theatre but has, presently, unattractive low level access below the bridge and surrounding roads. The bullring also provides an important cross link between Waterloo station and the surrounding area.

Programming an IMAX® theatre is different from that of other single screen cinemas. Imax films are usually short, between 25-40 minutes (except for some very recent programmes, such as the documentary on the wreck of the Titanic), and one of the imperatives in the BFI design brief was "That the design must meet all the stringent technical criteria of the IMAX® system and facilitate the efficient movement of an audience of 500 people every 50 minutes".

On entering the auditorium Avery's design will provide a dramatic central staircase approach to the screen, which is just over 60' high by 80' wide. Both IMAX® (flat) and IMAX® (polarised light) 3-D programmes will be shown. The present audience numbers, subject to final design development are 538 for IMAX® 2-D, slightly reduced to 526 for IMAX® 3-D. Conventional 35mm films will be projected from a separate box on the fourth floor below the IMAX® projection box.

NEW FILM MAGAZINE

A new German film magazine has just seen the light: **Weltwunder der Kinematographie**. This magazine describes which effect the filmtechnological developments has had on the development of the moving pictures in general. The first issue contains an structural analysis of "2001- a Space Odyssey", comparing the original book by Arthur C. Clark with the film. The second article by society member Hans-Joachim Heuel describes the history of the 70mm films. It covers most of the 70mm formats, from TODD-AO to Omnimax and beyond. Finally there is an article about the rise and fall of the 3d-movie's. All articles are very good indeed, a lot of work has been spent in the research. The magazine contains lots of great shots of the covered films in their original aspect ratios. If you are able to read the German language, don't hesitate to get a copy. For copies and subscriptions write to: Weltwunder der Kinematographie, Postfach 274, D-10562 Berlin, Germany

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70MM Newsletter
Johan C. M. Wolthuis
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March 12, 1994

In answer to "Why 70MM?" you have to ask yourself: "Why do people go out to be entertained?" The answer is simple. People leave the comfort of their home to attend something they cannot experience in their home. They go to a museum to see great artifacts or paintings that they cannot see otherwise. They go to a play or concert to see and hear live performances. They go to a zoo or park to experience nature, tame or wild.

If people gather in a place to see a movie, it should be presented in the best possible way, something that cannot be experienced at home. I have seen HDTV and it is good but it is still not a two - to - three story screen!! However, with HDTV imminent, unless something special can be gotten from going to a movie, like the clear, sharp image of 70 MM, movie theaters will be history. Why go to a theater that almost has a smaller screen than you have at home? Why leave the comfort of your own home to attend something that can be experienced in your home?

So in answer to "Why 70MM?" I'd say because you cannot get that big sharp screen any where else.

Sincerely yours,



Marshall Ellenstein

Terry Ladlow
M.M.Inst.V.



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(tel: 0377-236404)

To whom it may concern
.....

We, in the United Kingdom, look forward to the enlightened approach of distributors and producers in the United States to ensure that 70mm copies are, once again, made available on a wider basis than at present. Many theatres over here have 70mm facilities and long to present films in this exciting format ensuring the public's enjoyment is maximised by the clarity, definition and sound enhancement which only can be achieved by the larger process.

Currently most theatres are denied access to 70mm prints due to the misguided belief that the public at large do not care whether they see a film in 35mm or 70mm. Where cinemas have invested in 70mm projection facilities and a larger screen, then the format is such that the public DO CARE and respond accordingly by focusing their attention on the theatre with this enhancement.

Merchant Ivory do not provide 70mm prints merely for prestige when premiering their productions. They know that the format gives a dynamism and impact which elevates the presentation to higher plateau. "Remains of the Day" and "Howards End" prove this point when it played at the Curzon Mayfair, London, in 70mm.

The film industry should be conscious of the need to provide the means to optimise product through 70mm print availability. They clearly demonstrate the high quality of production in many features we see today but are sadly neglectful of 70mm provision.

Let us consolidate the current success of cinema admission here in the U.K. particularly, by ensuring that the public are given the opportunity to enjoy the impact and clarity of 70mm. Lead us into the 21st century by improvement of picture quality through this.

We look forward with eager anticipation to your focus on this.

+++++

Terry Ladlow
March 1994

Little Buddha:

Bertolucci and Storaro Mix 35mm and 65mm for Dramatic Results

In *Little Buddha*, director Bernardo Bertolucci's ambitious 1994 release, the centuries-old story of the life of Buddha is depicted as told by a twentieth-century lama to three modern children. In order to create high contrast between the contemporary story and the lama's vivid recreation of the Buddha tale, cinematographer Vittorio Storaro, AIC, ASC, took an approach that is the very opposite of the typical motion picture flashback technique: instead of presenting Buddha in the conventional dreamy haze, he intensified the dramatic visuals of these sequences by shooting them in 65mm, and the rest of film in 35mm.

We are indebted to writer Bob Fisher for permission to quote from an article that he has prepared for *Cuts* magazine about this extraordinary project:

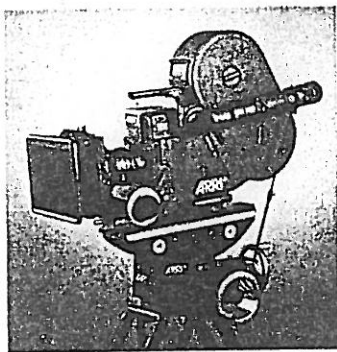
"When we first discussed making a film about the life of the Buddha, I thought of it as a project that we would undoubtedly produce in the 65mm format," Storaro recalls. "By that time, I regretted that some of my earlier films, including *Apocalypse Now*, *Lady Hawke*, *The Last Emperor* and *Tucker*, were produced in CinemaScope rather than 65mm format. The 65mm frame is much more honest with the audience in its presentation of wide-screen images."

Producer Jeremy Thomas was reluctant to film *Little Buddha* in 65mm format because he thought it would cost too much for the modest budget to absorb. Bertolucci was concerned that creative limitations would be imposed by the large format cameras and requirements for more intense light to carry the extreme depth of field. Storaro believes those perceptions

are based on memories of the state of the art as it was practiced 20 years ago. He says vast improvements in 65mm cameras and lenses, artificial lighting and ultra-sensitive modern film stocks have radically changed the state of the art.

Production was underway in Katmandu, where the cast and crew were ready to film the story of Buddha, when Storaro convinced Thomas and Bertolucci to use the 65mm format for this segment. "When I explained my idea for shooting the flashback sequences in 65mm format, Bernardo became very excited. He immediately recognized how the contrast in the quality of images would become part of the story," Storaro says.

Storaro assured Thomas that he would be able to follow the original shooting schedule, and he would require no additional lighting units, crew or time. Storaro telephoned Arriflex, Kodak, and Technicolor Labs that evening. Despite the short notice, they all agreed to cooperate.



The ARRI 765, used for 65 mm sequences in *LITTLE BUDDHA*

ate. Within a few days, three Arriflex 765 cameras with a full complement of 65mm lenses, and a supply of Eastman EXR 5293 and 5296 film in 65mm format were delivered to Katmandu. Technicolor Labs provided 35mm dailies made

from 65mm negative on a timely basis.

The camera crew had one evening to familiarize itself with loading and operating the 65mm equipment. Other than the fact that the cameras are more cumbersome and heavier than the Arri 535 cameras used to shoot the rest of *Little Buddha*, they share most main features.

ARRI

UPDATE

"A BOLDLY COLOURED

BRAVURA FAIRYTALE

...A HINT OF LEAN,
A SPLASH OF
KORDA, THE FILM
IS INFUSED WITH
A SHIMMERING
SENSUOUSNESS."

Ned Norman - EVENING STANDARD

"The 65mm frame is

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wide-screen images."

Vittorio Storaro

"KEANU REEVES
LOOKS GREAT;
A SIMPLE AND
STUNNING FILM."

OPTIONS

"When we started filming the next day, many people in the cast and crew didn't realize we had switched to 65 mm cameras," Storaro says. "We didn't make any changes in lighting, camera movement or composition. There were few limits imposed by the cameras."

We at Arriflex are gratified that the integration of our camera systems through the full range of professional formats can help filmmakers like Bertolucci and Storaro to realize such remarkable cinematic visions as *Little Buddha*.



CFC Enhances *Little Buddha*

The Computer Film Company (CFC) has created 38 digitally produced sequences, varying in length from 50 to 400 frames, for the latest Bernardo Bertolucci movie epic, *Little Buddha*. CFC's proprietary system claims to be the only system which can handle all the formats used in the film — a mixture of 65mm, VistaVision, and 35mm stock for release on both 70mm and 35mm prints.

A team of six operators (Nick Brooke, Paddy Eason, Roz Lowrie, Jessica Rufus, Chris Panton and Val Wardlaw) worked for three months on the project. CFC's designer/operator Val Wardlaw worked with the film's special effects director, Richard Conway, throughout the production, consulting on scenes that required digital effects. She went on location to Nepal and Pinewood Studios to ensure that material being shot would be suitable for manipulation using the company's specially designed system.

The effects center around the attempts by Mara, the lord of darkness, to tempt Siddhartha from the path to enlightenment. The scene includes such digital effects as raging storms and flying fireballs and culminates with an assault by Mara's army of flame-throwing archers. A good number of the composites required sophisticated matting techniques to combine many elements shot separately. Mara's army was created by reproducing shots of a smaller block of actors many times across the scene.

Other effects involved morphing, tracking replacement skies into shots with complex camera moves, and the enhancement of existing elements. New tools designed for *Little Buddha* include water and light effects and software to aid rotoscoping and tracking.

CFC's equipment and techniques have been developed in-house and have been used in some 300 cinema commercials and more than 35 feature films, for clients throughout the world. Recent films worked on by CFC include *Second Best* and *The Hudson Proxy*. Current projects include *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, directed by Kenneth Branagh, and a unique 3-D stereoscopic project for installation at Disneyland.

For information: The Computer Film Company, 8522 National Blvd., Los Angeles 90232, (310) 838-3456, FAX (310) 838-1713.

The 70mm Question Answered

Regarding Carlo Piaget's question about the difference between 65mm negative and 70mm print stocks (February Letters column): it's another case of if it ain't broke, don't fix it" that goes back to Dr. Brian O'Brien's development of the Todd-AO format in 1953.

Dr. O'Brien's assignment from Mike Todd was to create a "Cinerama that came out of one hole." His conclusion, the reasons for which are still a subject of debate, was a 65mm negative with an image five perforations high, relying primarily on a lens with a 128-degree field of view for photography and projected onto a deeply curved screen (including, naturally, stereo-

phonic sound). Magnetic recording and layback techniques, which had made stereophonic sound practical, had been in use in the industry for only five years, and the noise reduction techniques we have today didn't exist, requiring tracks of a certain width to acceptably reproduce sound with the full high fidelity desired.

Cinerama used six, and later even, magnetic channels on one full-coated 35mm magnetic film, running in interlock with the three projectors. During 1953, a number of regular 35mm films were shown with three-channel magnetic sound, also from an interlocked lummy. While designing the Cinema-Scope process, the engineers at 20th Century Fox felt this double-system format was impractical for the widespread magnetic stereo-only system they were developing, and discovered that by narrowing the perforations, they could get magnetic stripes containing four channels of acceptable quality sound on the 35mm print.

Dr. O'Brien also felt that having the sound on the print was a necessity (though *Oklahoma!* was premiered in interlock), and, desiring six channels of sound, saw the need for the additional 5mm for those extra tracks. This became the basic format for wide film production and exhibition with film stock, lab processors and lab and optical printers, and projectors conforming to it. The Camera 65/Ultra Panavision process merely added a 1.25x anamorphic squeeze to actually achieve a format truly compatible with Cinerama in width (at least a quarter of *How the West Was Won* was actually shot in Ultra Panavision).

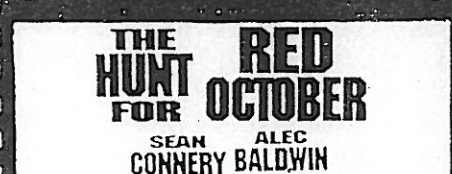
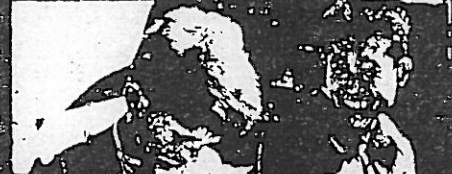
— Rick Mitchell
Los Angeles

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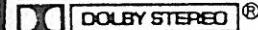
THE 70 MM FILM SEASON



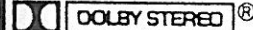
FULL 6 TRACK MAGNETIC SOUND THE ULTIMATE CINEMA EXPERIENCE

DR ZHIVAGO, (P.G.)
 Wednesday 4th May,
 1.50, 6.50 (includes intermission).
 Omar Sharif, Julie Christie,
 Rod Steiger and Alec Guinness.

FAR AND AWAY, (12)
 Wednesday 11th May,
 2.00, 5.00, 8.00.
 Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman.



THE LAST EMPEROR, (15)
 Wednesday 18th May,
 2.10, 7.40.
 John Lane.

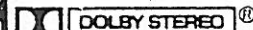


EMPIRE OF THE SUN, (P.G.)
 Wednesday 25th May,
 2.10, 7.45.
 John Malkovich, Miranda Richardson
 and Nigel Havers.



D. DAY 50th ANNIVERSARY THE LONGEST DAY, (P.G.)
 Monday 6th June,
 2.00, 7.15.
 John Wayne, Richard Todd,
 Robert Ryan and Richard Burton.

THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER, (P.G.)
 Wednesday 15th June,
 2.00, 5.00, 8.00.
 Sean Connery and Alec Baldwin.



MOVIEGOERS are getting a rare opportunity to see films bigger, sharper and louder than ever before in Bournemouth.

The MGM cinema in Westover Road is running a season of super-quality 70 millimetre prints of some of Britain's favourite movies.

Using film in their projectors which is twice normal and size and gives fantastic results, the impact is spectacular.

"It's quite breath-taking," says the cinema's projectionist, Darren Payne.

He explained how the huge frames of film produce a picture on the screen that is 10 feet wider than normal, and give much bet-

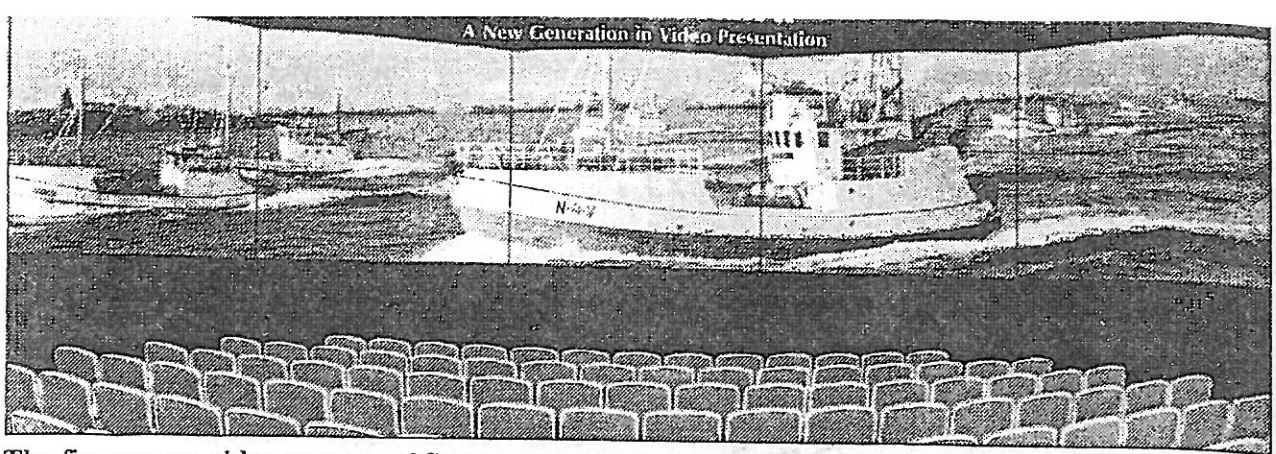
ter clarity and colour.

The big prints also have room for six separate tracks of sound, making the best home hi-fi sound like a wax cylinder gramophone.

And Bournemouth's MGM really does have the edge. It is the only cinema in the region capable of screening 70 mm prints.

General manager Roger Marley, who started his career as a rewind boy at the Paignton Picture House in 1955, has spent more than two months sorting out the season.

He said: "We thought we'd show people exactly what the cinema is capable of."



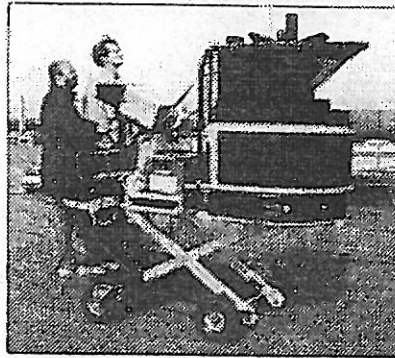
The five screen video concept of Caprino Filmcentre is suitable for prestige presentation rooms.

Norsk Hydro goes PANORAMIC

Caprino Filmcentre of Norway have developed a multiscreen video production facility that makes the excitement of widescreen presentations both practical and affordable for the commercial presentation client.

Norsk Hydro, the Norwegian Petroleum and Chemicals Giant, commissioned Caprino to produce a show to be used first at the Stavanger Off-Shore Exhibition, and then to be permanently installed at their Bergen Headquarters.

Caprino call their system "Super-Videograph". It uses five video projectors to produce a panoramic picture up to 23m (75ft) wide. They have constructed a special camera rig fitted with five BetaCamcorders, that can be dolly mounted or mount-



The Caprino 5-Betacam camera rig.

ed on a car or helicopter.

The Norsk Hydro installation is Caprino's fourth. Others are at North Cape, the Hunderfossen Theme Park and at the Norwegian Glacier Centre. They plan more productions in Britain, Spain and France.

Audio Grafisk, Electrosonic's AV Distributors in Norway, have helped with

the realisation of the showing system.

In the Norsk Hydro system an Electrosonic VCU and ES5003 are used to control and synchronise five laserdisc players. They also select language, and control the houselights and screen curtains.

The complete Norsk Hydro installation also includes standard presentation facilities, including data projection. The presentation room can therefore be used both for visitor shows on the wide screen and for business presentations.

This is an excellent example of how standard Electrosonic products can be used to simplify automatic shows, whether they be in a museum, visitors centre or business presentation room.

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