

New York—Day by Day

# Sky's the Limit

By Frank Farrell

The venerable Jesse Lasky came away from last night's Rivoli premiere of "Around the World in 80 Days" as dazzled as any youngster will be after a first



Frank Farrell

view of this triumphant globe-girdling on Todd-AO screen. Mr. Lasky shook his head in summing up the reaction of his generation: "I helped pioneer this field of motion pictures, but never in any wildest dreams years ago did I ever imagine there would ever be a film production with such vision and excitement as this." . . . For me in my spreading 40s, it was a joyous return to the miseries of high school wherein author Jules Verne's intrepid Phileas Fogg and his screwball valet, Passepartout were the only nouns in the vocabulary that made second-year French passable. . . . Those two jokers then lifted me mentally and almost bodily out of a Brooklyn classroom and gave me the happiest travels I've ever known, despite two subsequent realistic rounds of the earth. . . . And last night, with David Niven and the mimitable Cantinflas playing the Verne novel's characters with S. J. Perelman words, they came to life with more magnificence, more color, more daring and more fun than I can recall even during my original junket with Fogg and Passepartout. . . . Wiser heads than mine in this kind of guessing game sat around after the premiere, tossing millions to and fro as if pitching pennies—each submitting estimates of how much this film classic will gross.

Estimates ranged from sublime to heavenly. Financier Harry Gould conservatively estimated "Around the World in 80 Days" would gross \$15 million on its first run. . . . George Jessel, who had been serving as baby-sitter to Elizabeth Taylor while producer Michael Todd took bows during a spectacular after-theater party in the Capitol Hotel's Carnival Room, was understandably enraptured. The Toastmaster General estimated it would top \$20 million. . . . Mike Todd puffed his cigar, then modestly confessed we were all wrong. As a man of vision, he could see the film grossing no less than \$35 million. . . . Asked how much it had cost to make, Mike blurted: "Five million bucks—not counting this party which I still don't have the dough to pay for until I count Thursday's box-office receipts."



Carson



Todd

## Movies

# 'Around the World' A Romping Farce

By ALTON COOK.

What a dazzling frolic Mike Todd is conducting on the Rivoli screen these days! "Around the World in 80 Days" is a huge spectacle, a romping farce, a mischievous prank and nearly three hours of solid delight.

It assembles some of the world's most imposing sights and most of the world's most imposing movie stars. These notables do not merely play bit parts. They are whammed into them with a grand flourish, a gay smirk or a gracious bow.

Before letting the hilarity take over, the picture pauses for a moment to be impressive, to show off the resources of the Todd-AO photographic process. The launching of a mammoth rocket is caught in a way to awe you into a small corner of your seat. Sound engulfs you from all corners of the theater.

### Made With Imagination.

These overwhelming sound effects usually are managed with emphasis on sheer volume. All through this picture, clarity and imagination are the ingredients.

With its showoff moment out of the way, the picture slips happily into its hilarious travesty of a pompous old English club, where the foundations of the story are laid. Over a whist game, a wager is made that a man cannot circle the world in 80 days even with all the scientific progress that has been made in this remarkable year of 1872. So off goes Phileas Fogg with a carpet bag full of money.

He has a merry journey, the merriment heightened by the presence of Mexico's comic idol, Cantinflas, playing a handyman valet. While they watch a dance by the great performers of Spain, Cantinflas slips in a mad dance of his own. A moment later, he launches his hilarious version of a bull fight.

After the elaborate and ex-

otic dance ritual of a suttee in India, Cantinflas takes over and turns it into delicious nonsense. He does it again when the Indians attack in the Wild West.

He is an agile master of tomfoolery in the small laugh or the violent slapstick. Moves have been afoot for years to bring him into American movies. Now that we have him, he is sure to become the great new American star of the year.

There are only four main roles. David Niven is the intrepid traveler; Shirley MacLaine, a rescued Hindu princess; Robert Newton, a bumbling English detective, and Cantinflas. Each one is ideal.

### Movie Stars Everywhere.

In every remote corner of the globe the travelers visit, familiar movie stars pop out, playing tiny roles, usually with laughter in the offing. The game of recognition becomes a major pastime. Whatever you do, don't miss the final credits which carry on the game in cartoon whimsy.

The authorship of the script is now in litigation, but S. J. Perelman and whoever the courts decide were his helpers had some of the most inspired and endearing moments of their lives. Infectious laughter never ceases.

There is only one proper summary of "Around the World in 80 Days." Just one long, loud *Wheee-ee-ee!*

"Around the World in 80 Days," with David Niven, Cantinflas, Robert Newton, Shirley MacLaine and nearly every star in moviedom. A Michael Todd film, in Todd-AO process, directed by Michael Anderson, screenplay by S. J. Perelman, based on the novel by Jules Verne. At the Rivoli. Running time: 2 hours, 53 minutes (with intermission).