

October 11, 1955

'POOR HANDLING' OF PRESS AT 'OKLA.' NY PREEM 'EMBARRASSES' MIKE TODD

New York, Oct. 11—Mike Todd planned out tonight for Hollywood unexpectedly "in embarrassment" at what he considered "poor handling of the press" at the premiere of "Oklahoma," first production using the Todd-AO process. Todd had flown in especially for tonight's official premiere from Oklahoma, where he is filming scenes for "Around the World in 80 Days," second Todd-AO feature.

Reportedly topline NY film critics each received one balcony ticket for tonight's gala Rivoli event.

Todd's phone was busy today, but he let complainants know he had nothing to do with preem or press arrangements.

Withal, the Rivoli Theatre became Oklahoma territory tonight as "Okla." preemed amid massed klieg lights as thousands lined the sidewalks to ogle the first-nighters.

A surrey parade, led by Oklahoma Gov. Raymond Gary astride a white charger, rambled down Broadway carrying Oklahoma senators, congressmen and Gary's cabinet. As the governor entered the Rivoli to be greeted by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein 2d, the Oklahoma flag was raised above the theatre and a band and choir broke into the "Oklahoma" song.

Following are capsules of reviews in the three afternoon papers. The four a.m. sheets, which came out with reviews in bulldog editions last night, were unanimous in praising the picture but not all of the critics voiced enthusiasm for the bigscreen process.

World Telegram: "'Oklahoma' seems likely to become a boxoffice milestone. News about Todd-AO is less cheery than the report on 'Oklahoma' itself. Todd-AO in its present state is subject to more flickers and white scratches than other widescreen methods."

Post: "Todd-AO is very big but not sufficiently different from other widescreen processes to constitute an advantage. Compared to other processes, it has more distortion and not noticeably greater depth. The songs sound absolutely wonderful. If it weren't for them this would be a very big, but ordinary, picture . . . Zinnemann's genius probably doesn't stretch all the way across the board to musicals, too . . ."

Journal: "Terrific new movie. The technique provides notable clarity, sharpness and scope. Zinnemann has done a superb job of coordinating the music, action, dances and songs . . . Topflight entertainment . . . Shirley Jones is enchanting as Laurey."

October 12, 1955

AP Chiefs Todd Guests At 'Okla.' NY Showing

New York, Oct. 12.—Associated Press board of directors currently in annual session here will attend continuing preem screening of Rodgers & Hammerstein's "Oklahoma" tomorrow night at the Rivoli as guests of Michael Todd.

Among AP toppers who will ogle the first pic in the 65m Todd-AO process will be AP prexy and Philadelphia Bulletin publisher Robert McLean, and Norman Chandler, publisher of the L.A. Times.

October 13, 1955

New York, Oct. 13. — Although attention today naturally focused on the public opening of "Oklahoma," first in the Todd-AO process, at the Rivoli, there are several other new entries stirring plenty of excitement. "Oklahoma" was virtually a sellout on the matinee and tonight today and advance sale is big.

The "Oklahoma" launching apparently had no effect on the preem of "Trial," with stagershow, at the Music Hall, where a sock \$21,000 is in sight for the initial day. Faring great, likewise, is "The Tall Men," with a terrific \$20,000 or better on the first three days at the State.

October 14, 1955

And if Mike Todd's "Around the World in 80 Days" had a secondary title it would be "Who's Who in Show Biz."

Zinnemann Returns

Fred Zinnemann pulls in today from NY premiere of "Oklahoma," which he directed, and huddled with execs of Warner Bros. anent immediate plans for the F. R. Z. Company, which he heads and which will produce independently or the WB studios.

Winterhalter Weaves

'Around World' Score

Michael Todd has signed Hugo Winterhalter to compose and conduct score for "Around the World in 80 Days," now being filmed in Todd-AO.

Winterhalter will weave into score songs of the various countries which will serve as "World" backgrounds.

First acquisition is film rights to "El Gato Montez," Spanish bullring aria.

Ganging Up

To give Ed Sullivan something to worry about, Colgate Variety Hour has added Martin & Lewis to Sunday's star lineup in tribute to "Oklahoma" and Rodgers & Hammerstein.

Others in talent lineup are Gordon MacRae, onetime host-ess of the Colgate show; Shirley Jones, Gene Nelson, Yul Brynner, Will Rogers, Jr., Jan Clayton, Bambi Linn, Rod Alexander and 44-voice choir. Hour show will be televised from Hollywood Bowl with 20,000 tickets being distributed.

Blackton Tuning 'Days'

Jay Blackton, who conducted music for "Oklahoma" and "Guys and Dolls," has been set by Mike Todd to supervise musical sequences for "Around the World in 80 Days."