

August 19, 1955

Michael Todd in Today To See 'Days' Footage

Michael Todd planes into Hollywood this morning from New York and Madrid to run the rushes on his forthcoming production of Jules Verne's "Around the World in 80 Days" in Todd-AO which currently is shooting in Chinchon just outside of Madrid.

DISSA AND DATA: Gordon MacRae, who was sooo disappointed at being out on the film version of "Carousel," won't be disappointed about anything after the release of "Oklahoma!" He'll be able to write his own ticket anywhere, once he's o.o.-ed as "Curley" in this Todd-AO musical. Douglas Morrow is already at work writing an original for him and other bids are flying thick and fast. We privileged characters, lucky enough to have caught the first unveiling of this Rodgers & Hammerstein classic, have been respectfully requested to hold our reviews until later, so my lips are sealed now, except to hint out loud that this stage immortal will now become a screen immortal and that its newest development in wide-screen technique is the greatest yet!

|| "Oklahoma!" is the magic word today . . . The original "Oklahoma!" set a precedent for stage musicals. The film, unfurled like a splendid banner on MGM's Stage 2 yesterday, will set a precedent for film musicals. They'll be trying to top this one for years to come . . . Palavering with Gov. Raymond Gary of Oklahoma during the intermission we learned, ironically enough, that he liked best the shots of the countryside. But "Oklahoma!" was shot in Arizona! . . . Later, we talked to Shirley Jones, the movie "Laurie." Said she, "I'm so thrilled I'm weak" . . . Shirley drove off the lot in her Plymouth sedan. But we'll bet almost anything she'll soon be driving a Cad . . . Oscar Hammerstein told us all he was happy we all came and that he hoped the picture made us happy we came — and it sure did! . . . Other previewites were Gene Nelson & Piper Laurie, Charlotte Greenwood, Eddie Albert & Margo, Ex-Mayor Bowron || Todd-AO's next, as you know, is "Around the World in 80 Days." S. J. Perelman's script describes Noel Coward as "a superior and ineffably smug owner of an employment agency for domestic servants" . . . Coward's comment: "What he means is that I am playing a decayed aristocrat. It's type casting" . . . Also: "Todd got me to play it by showing me 'Oklahoma!' and I then and there decided that if Todd-AO could make acres of corn look so lovely it could do the same for me!" . . . Todd, be-times, is living in the 50-pounds-a-day Oliver Messel penthouse in London's Dorchester.

August 22, 1955

\$3.50 Top Scale For 'Oklahoma!' At N.Y. Rivoli

New York. — The highest - priced scale ever charged for a motion picture—\$1.75 to \$3.50—has been set for the two - a - day engagement of Rodgers & Hammerstein's "Oklahoma!" at the Rivoli starting Oct. 13.

Matinee scale, Monday through Friday, will be \$2.75 for orchestra and loges and \$1.75 for balcony. All evening and Saturday-Sunday shows will be \$3.50 for orchestra and loges, \$2.25 for balcony.

Cantinflas, Mexican star of Michael Todd's "Around the World in 80 Days," arrived here to appear in the London scenes of the picture. He was welcomed by the press at a slap-up reception in the Oliver Messel suite of the Dorchester Hotel . . . Paramount's "We're No Angels" opened at the Plaza. — **Milton Deane.**

... Bill Goetz is installing a Todd-AO system in his basement . . . Mike Todd walked out on a musical called "Away We Go!" during its New Haven tryout a few years back. Said Todd, "This is the worst show I've ever seen." So? So later it was retitled "Oklahoma!" and filmed in Todd-AO . . . Irving Kolodin's comments on Capitol's album of the "Oklahoma!" track: "There are moments when one expects a procession of Wagner's meistersinger to come on, rather than a mere group of farmhands" . . .

August 24, 1955

Merchandise Tieup Set on 'Oklahoma!'

New York. — Rodgers & Hammerstein has named the Mitchell Hamilburg Agency's merchandising division as exclusive representative for all commercial tieups on the Todd-AO film version of "Oklahoma!"

Manufacturers, tying in with the picture on apparel and home furnishings, are expected to initiate a sales operation resulting in a retail volume of \$20,000,000 for the first year, it was pointed out.

MacRae Goes Into 20th's 'Carousel'

Gordon MacRae was set by Darryl F. Zanuck yesterday to replace Frank Sinatra in the lead of 20th - Fox's "Carousel." The casting re-teams MacRae with Shirley Jones, his feminine lead in "Oklahoma!"

MacRae reports to 20th on Monday for pre-recording sessions, then flies to Booth Bay, Me., on Friday, for the three weeks of location work. Henry Ephron is producing and Henry King directing the musical.

August 30, 1955

London. — The London papers are beginning to awaken to the existence of Todd-AO. Ever since the arrival of the fabulous Mike Todd and his production unit to shoot the London scenes for "Around the World in 80 Days," the national sheets and the magazines have been falling over themselves to gain interviews with Todd, with writer S. J. Perelman or with Mexican comic Cantinflas, who already has intrigued Londoners on account of his shy charm and allergy to meeting people. The same might be said of the self-effacing Sidney Joseph Perelman, who has barricaded himself in the quiet and exclusive Brown's Hotel off Piccadilly and resolutely fights all attempts to drag him into the limelight. Location shooting on the picture starts this week in Chelsea and is followed by interiors at MGM's studios at Elstree. Meanwhile Todd is still looking for a dame to play the Indian girl and seems stuck on Sophia Loren: but she may want too much dough.