

# Reviewing Stand

By Archer Winsten

## 'Around World in 80 Days' at Rivoli

"Around the World in 80 Days," at the Rivoli, is a productive scoop of no mean, Michael Todd proportions.

That he has engaged and used an endless belt of major stars, most of them in momentary roles, that he has utilized the vast curvatures of the Todd-AO process to encompass scenic and human wonders of the whole world, and that he has thrown all this together with a fine, noisy explosion of showmanship, all these are only to be expected. The magic ingredient is S. J. Perelman, the humorist of elegance slightly awry, who has been persuaded to write the script.

Jules Verne long ago set up the adventure, which has all the suspense and travelogue ingredients possible: Will Phileas Fogg make it, and what will he see on the way? But this would have contained little that does not grace Cinerama's far-flung, sight-seeing and sound-hearing tours. The Perelman touch lightens the whole enterprise until it floats off as gaily as the balloon dancing over Paris, with David Niven and Cantinflas dangling below. It keeps the thing amusing with periodical returns to a long string of Anglicisms, running from tea in the jungle, or anywhere else, to various proverbs by which the British have traditionally hoisted and maintained themselves on top of the nationality pile.

To put it another way, you nearly always feel a little embarrassed when a super-spectacle of the movies makes its frontal attack. What if it fails, what if it knocks you unconscious, what if the damned screen splits or the noise makes someone actively sick? There must be a point where sheer force engenders resistance, and then it's just you against the picture dedicated to overwhelming you. "Around the World in 80 Days" totally avoids this situation by means of the Perelman approach. The more super it becomes, the more you are inclined to go with the gag, enjoying it both for the jest and the intrinsic quality.

### Breath-Taking Scenes

Some of the scenes are breath-taking. The first is the take-off, on Todd AO, of an American rocket. This is part of an Edward Murrow introduction which brings back the Melies footage from about 1900, reproducing Verne's "Journey to the Moon."

The second time this reviewer drew a sharper than ordinary breath was when Robert Morley warbled his lines as a governor of the robbed Bank of England.

Running quickly down the list of notable moments—other people can easily cite their quite different favorites—I find Noel Coward as manager of an employment agency, John Gielgud as a downhearted man's man, Luis Miguel Dominguin as a bull-fighter in Chinchon, Spain, (not to mention Cantinflas as the same in the same place), Jose Greco's table-dancing, Sir Cedric Hardwicke as a British officer facing early hardships in India, and Beatrice Lillie leading a Salvation Army group in the streets of London.

Among those who make the whole trip, or almost all of it, David Niven is letter-perfect as "the most punctual man alive," Cantinflas is remarkably ingratiating as his valet, Passepartout, and the late Robert Newton as the far-traveling detective uses his overacting to good effect. The decorative Shirley MacLaine has little to do, and she does it beautifully.

For the rest, the many famous names of stage, screen, theater, TV and whatnot, they all supply

little starts of recognition at the very least, and sometimes more. There are so many of them that you never know whom you'll meet next. And at the same time, what with the rapid changes of scene, even more rapid changes of condition in Niven's race against time and the wagers, and obstacles provided fresh at every stopping point, there is never the slightest let-down.

This is a three-hour entertainment so cannily packed with all brands of entertainment that you

## 'Around the World In 80 Days'

MOVIE METER  
POOR • FAIR • GOOD • EXCELLENT

Michael Todd production. Directed by Michael Anderson. Screen play by S. J. Perelman, not to mention James W. Poe, and possibly John Farrow. Novel by Jules Verne. The cast: David Niven, Cantinflas, Robert Newton, Shirley MacLaine, Ed Murrow, Charles Boyer, Joe E. Brown, Martine Carol, John Carradine, Charles Coburn, Ronald Colman, Melville Cooper, Noel Coward, Finlay Currie, Reginald Denny, Andy Devine, Marlene Dietrich, Luis Miguel Dominguin, Fernandel, Sir John Gielgud, Hermione Gingold, Jose Greco, Sir Cedric Hardwicke, Trevor Howard, Glynis Johns, Buster Keaton, Evelyn Keyes, Beatrice Lillie, Peter Lorre, Edmund Lowe, Victor McLaglen, Col. Tim McCoy, A. E. Matthews, Mike Mazurki, John Mills, Alan Mowbray, Robert Morley, Jack Oakie, George Raft, Gilbert Roland, Cesar Romero, Frank Sinatra, Red Skelton, Ronald Squires, Basil Sydney and Harcourt Williams.

never tire of it. And if the quantity itself should threaten to surfeit, there's always that Perelman tongue, cheek, and wit to lend wings to the journey. This is not a film to compare with any other, being simply a bubble of delight blown the whole way around the world without breaking it.