

VARIETY

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TV'S STILL GOT THAT 'LIVE' YEN

Cinerama and Need to Bolster B.O. May Set Pix Off on Engineering Binge

Hollywood, Nov. 4. Impact of Cinerama, as well as desire to come up with new gimmicks to stem the b.o. decline, may set the industry off on a technological binge, with studio engineering departments due to receive greater attention than heretofore. There is some thinking that "magnitude" as offered by the film screen and expanded considerably by Cinerama may be the answer to combat the "inertia" induced by television. Question of "magnitude" is not a new one for the filmers. There have been experiments in the past which for some reason, mainly the immediate need, did not jell.

Warner Bros. and 20th-Fox have in the past tested large-gauge film. WB came up with a 60m print while 20th produced a 75m one, latter process being known as "Grandeur." Both experiments were deficient technically. Whether these methods will be probed further has not been indicated.

Another aspect of technological progress would be the development of new techniques to facilitate production and cut costs. Metro production chief Dore Schary, in a speech in Detroit last week, declared that the greatest need of the industry is for new methods of film production.

"Hollywood," he said, "is using the same methods it used 20 years ago and much saving in time and money and a resultant improvement in the quality of pictures could be had if new engineering techniques were applied to the making of pictures."

Kaye's Dallas Deal A Nice Xmas Cheer At 70%; M&L's 171G

Dallas, Nov. 4. Danny Kaye deal for the State Fair Auditorium, Dallas, calls for his getting 70% of the gross up to the first \$65,000, and 80% of the take beyond that. Kaye, who will pay costs of the surrounding show, goes in Dec. 25 for 11 performances, during Cotton Bowl Week. Comic will also share costs of the musicians, stagehands and advertising. The New Year's Eve show will go at a \$6 top. It's anticipated that the date will gross a \$100,000 minimum, although the capacity is figured at \$158,000.

Deal was completed in New York this week by Charles R. Meeker, Jr., managing director of the State Fair Auditorium, with the William Morris Agency, which handles Kaye. Meeker is also expected to make preliminary explorations during his N. Y. visit for next summer's State Fair musicals.

Martin & Lewis, who played the Auditorium last month during the fair, took out \$171,700 on a deal which called for M&L to get 60% of the first \$150,000, 70% of the next \$100,000, a bonus of \$7,500 at \$250,000, and 80% over \$250,000. The final tally was \$255,239.

'Don't Bother' Knocked Out

Hollywood, Nov. 4. CBS, ABC and numerous Los Angeles stations have banned airing of the new Capitol disk release, "Don't Bother to Knock," with Helen O'Connell warbling, mixing it because it is allegedly "too risqué," and has a "vulgar double entendre."

Cap is the only waxery releasing platter of the tune, reportedly penned as tie-in publicity on the 20th-Fox pic of the same title starring Marilyn Monroe and Richard Widmark.

TV Set Output At Alltime High

Washington, Nov. 4. Due in large part to the lifting of the television freeze, production of video receivers is now at an all-time high and factory inventory at the lowest point in several years, according to the Radio-TV Manufacturers Assn. Opening of new markets, particularly Denver and Portland, Ore., and stocking up by distributors and dealers in cities where stations will soon be on the air are having their impact. Buying of sets has also been stimulated by the national elections.

Factory output during the week ending Oct. 24, according to preliminary reports received by RTMA, totaled 195,139 sets. Production during the previous week also approximated 195,000 sets. This means the industry is now operating at a capacity of nearly 10,000,000 sets a year. The highest TV production was in 1950 when approximately 7,500,000 sets were turned out.

During the first three weeks of October, factory output has exceeded 570,000 sets or more than any month this year except September (a five-week work month) when production totaled 755,000 sets and averaged 151,000 sets a week.

More Cops Assigned To Times Square Area To Speed Up Show Traffic

In a move to speed up traffic in the Broadway theatre district, the New York Police Dept. will assign 15 more men to the area, starting tonight (Wed.). Action would have been taken earlier, but no extra men were available until after the election.

Assignment of added men to the Times Square area during theatre rush hours was done at the instigation of the League of N. Y. Theatres, which had received numerous

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DANGER SIGNS IN LOW PIX QUALITY

By GEORGE ROSEN

The next few months may have an important bearing on the future status of films' stake in television. For smack in the middle of the whole "go film" sweep that's played havoc with the new medium, there have been some "stop-look-listen" warnings and apprehensions over the present quality of high-budgeted films which, unless arrested, may well start a trend back to live shows even before film has had a chance to establish itself.

There's more at stake than the TV film advocates even care to concede. Millions of dollars have been invested in production-distribution-sales companies. Among these there's already been some turbulence, including bankruptcies and mergers. That there's an increasing awareness that only the strong and well-heeled will survive is evident from the Official Films-PSI overtures to merge interests in order to give the combined operation a head start on the rest of the field.

Hollywood has pinned its hopes on films to wrest TV production control away from New York, but on the basis of what it's come up with thus far, too many are now saying: "what's all the shouting about, and what's there to fear?" For months prior to the show's preem, the TV industry looked

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Met's 59G Preem 68-Year Record

The Metropolitan Opera Assn., opening its 68th season in N. Y. next Monday (10) with Verdi's "La Forza del Destino," will garner a gross of about \$59,100, for the highest opening-night take in its history.

Take will exceed the previous high of about \$54,800 in 1950 (in Rudolf Bing's first season as general manager), and last year's ('51) first night gross of \$53,112.

Most of the 1952 opener's seats were sold out a couple of weeks ago, despite a new upped high of \$30. (Last year's opening-night upped top was \$25.) Regular top this season is \$8.

Met's ticket prices generally were raised for this season, due to

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The Bigger Half

Songsmith-publisher Frank Loesser trekked to Nashville last week to eye the country music operation. One of the alfalfa publishers greeted him with, "So, you've come to see how the other half lives." "No," Loesser answered, "the other seven-eighths."

Plan Asking Congress to Appropriate Dem-GOP Campaign Coin in Future

The All-Girl Vote

Phil Spitalny and his all-girl orch turned down a date to play Cleveland today (Wed.), even though it was enroute to their Kansas City engagement tomorrow.

Reason is that Spitalny felt voting in yesterday's election was so important he didn't want the femmes to give up their day off for balloting in N.Y.

Burley Sneaking Up on Broadway

Burlesque is gradually making a slight comeback on Broadway. The edict of the late Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia notwithstanding, the strippers and baggy-pants comics are returning to the Main Stem, from which they've been absent for more than a decade, except for the few stretches when Mike Todd put on his own brand of legit shows.

Latest to enter the burlesquerie ranks is the 500 Club (ex-Havana-Madrid), which is setting Tirza and her wine bath for a run. In addition, there will be a retinue of billed peel artists there. Just how far they will go in the shedding department remains to be seen.

The Holiday Theatre is currently on a burley format, but the strips are using wraps, so there's no conflict with the law. The name value of the peelers is utilized and there's no shedding.

There had been an attempt made to open the now defunct Iceland into a strip cafe, but deal flopped.

With the burley atmosphere moving on Broadway, it's likely to take a great deal of play away from 52d St. The Harem and French Quarter, both recent additions to Strip Street (ex-Swing St.), are going in heavily for the Minskyites.

Al Martino's '9 Out of 10 Openings Are Flops' Gets Him the Heave in Hub

Boston, Nov. 4. Crack by singer Al Martino during first show at Blinstrub's here Monday (3), that "Nine out of 10 opening nights are flops and this is one," resulted in owner Blinstrub cancelling the singer after that night's second show.

Reason for the remark is a mystery. Martino apparently was clicking at the time of the verbiage. Martino blew his top when he returned to the dressing room and Blinstrub demanded that he cancel out immediately. However, he finished the night and Ted Cole, longtime vocalist at the spot, took over Martino's chores.

As the final radio-TV paid campaign oratory on behalf of Gov. Adlai Stevenson and Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower faded off the airwaves Monday night (3), and with Demmy bitterness reaching near-fever pitch over the final burst of lavish GOP coin expended by the "I Like Ike" bankrollers, a sweeping plan was in the blueprint stage to "make things different in the future."

When Congress reconvenes in January, it now looms as a fair certainty that the nation's lawmakers will be asked to appropriate radio-television sums ranging anywhere from \$3,000,000 to \$5,000,000 for each party's Presidential candidate, in order to erase what the Democrats brand as "1952 campaign inequities." The Dems decry the fact that "the guy with the most coin gets the big TV play and the guy with the biggest TV play gets a shortcut into the White House."

On the theory that four years hence it might be the Democrats with the biggest purse-string, some alternating proposals, it's known, will be presented to Congress:

(1) To eliminate unfairness, Congress should put up an equal amount of coin for both parties, possibly \$5,000,000 for each, to permit for equal allocation of radio-TV time facilities.

(2) In lieu of this plan, set a

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Winchell Pitch for Ike Stirs 11th Hour ABC-Dem Hassle; Protest to FCC

ABC network, Walter Winchell and the Democratic National Committee found itself involved in an 11th-hour hassle on Sunday (2) over WW's telecast, with the Demmy chieftains registering a beef with the Federal Communications Commission.

Radio and tele shows by Winchell on Sunday brought a protest by DNC chairman Stephen A. Mitchell and request for equal time to answer the gabber. Mitchell charged that Winchell's script, which the politico tagged a "partisan political" endorsement of Gen. Eisenhower, went beyond the limits of commentary. Mitchell sent two wires to ABC, one calling for equal time under section 315 of the Communications Act and the other calling for time under the web's responsibility for fair treatment "in the public interest."

ABC's answer was that it airs a large number of commentators of varying political views, some of whom have opinions along the lines of Gov. Stevenson's, and thus it has a balance of editorial opinion. On that basis, it added, it wouldn't provide equal time to answer Winchell. However, it offered to carry any "reasonably length comment" Mitchell would care to make on its news pro-

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