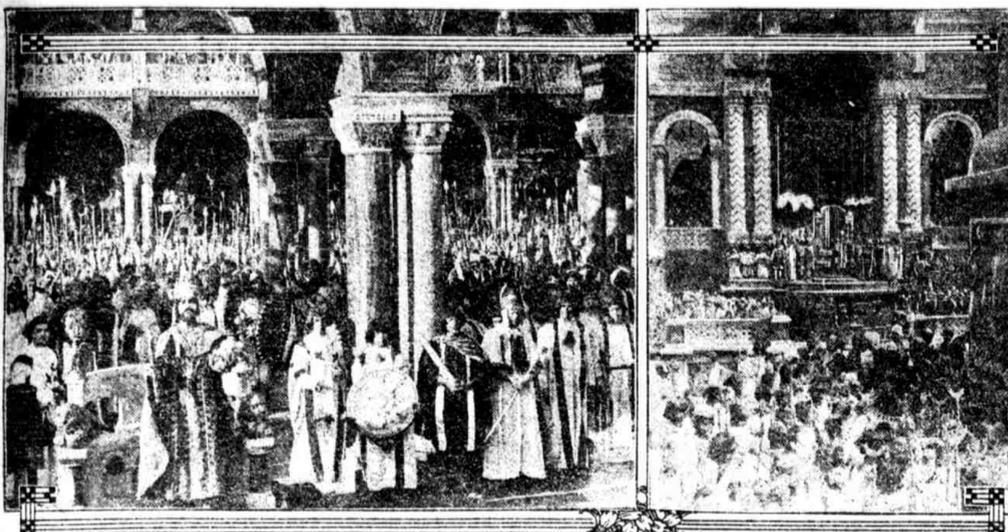


The Daily Movie Magazine

SOME OF THESE SCENES WERE CUT TO MERE FLASHES



It was a breathtaking job when they came to film 'Theodora,' the big Italian spectacle. Gorgeous sets which cost millions had to be reduced to the minimum because of the length of the film.

CLOSE-UPS of the MOVIE GAME

By HENRY M. NEELY

Cutting a Big Spectacle Is a Heartbreaking Job

THERE are many headaches in the cutting of a big spectacular film from its production length to the one in which the public sees it. I can imagine a really sincere and artistic director having the tears mightily close to his eyes when he realizes that some beautiful sequences, upon which the finest effects, nights of planning and strenuous days of marshaling, must be sacrificed and go into the "junk" that will never be seen by the public.

It is worth the sacrifice to perform a major operation upon his best-beloved child. An over big spectacle makes it necessary.

With the ordinary program picture you can usually stick fairly closely to your script. You'll overcut, of course, but most of it will be different shots of the same stuff, so that in cutting you don't really lose any of the things you loved most during production.

But a big spectacle grows larger as you go along. You get so thoroughly steeped in your atmosphere that you lose all sense of footage and you build and rebuild and take and retake as the new ideas come tumbling into your brain, suggested by the developments of the work that has gone before.

Two or three hundred million feet of film before he finished with "The Foolish Wives" (which will have a million feet before it is done with "The Two Orphans"). Fairbanks probably made ten times as much for "The Musketeers" as he did for "Theodora" shows, in its present form, the tremendous sacrifice of work and actual magnificence that had to be made to get into length for presentation.

You are conscious of this sacrifice when you see "Theodora." Just from one viewing of it, I remember three magnificent and costly cuts that are on the screen for certainly not more than five seconds each—just a mere flash—and do not again appear. Each of these cuts must have cost well into six figures, with the tremendous buildings and the mobs of people with their costumes, and accessories.

Yet these three cuts are gone. You know, as you watch it, that it was not so intended originally. You realize that these flashes are mere bits of what must have been long and carefully worked-out sequences. And you sense the headache of the director when, in the final cutting, he found he would have to let them go but inserted just these three flashes to show what he had planned to do.

There are several flashes of this kind too, in "One Arabian Night," though the sets involved are not so magnificent nor the mobs so large.

AND, by the way, have you noticed the numerical progression of these "Three Musketeers," "The Arabian Nights," "The Two Orphans," "The Foolish Wives," "The Arabian Nights," "The Arabian Nights" and "The Arabian Nights"?

THE ruthless slashing of these big scenes is, of course, not without a very good logical reason. In the final cutting of any film there is one thing that must be kept clearly in mind. That is the thread of the story.

Every bit of action that is essential to the development of the plot along a clear and cumulative line must be retained. Every scene that is not absolutely essential to this story progression is a possible cut.

You must guard your story first, last and all the time. Your "atmosphere" is desirable, but if the story itself requires the allotted length for telling, your atmosphere has got to go. It doesn't matter how beautiful or how thrilling or how magnificent it is—the story comes first.

That, I imagine, is what happened in the cutting of "Theodora." It has an elaborate plot and the atmospheric effects which were retained had to be chosen with a view to building up and strengthening the high dramatic spots of the story. The rest had to go.

I had a most interesting talk this week with Count Ignazio Thaon di Revel, who is in New York in the interests of the Italian company which produced the spectacle. He was assisted by the "compendioso" Arturo Ambrosio, and he told me how the production had grown bigger and bigger as it progressed.

It was a glorious experience that none of us will ever forget," the Count said. "Toward the end Ambrosio's health broke down and the directorial work was finished by Leopoldo A. Carlucci, who arranged Sardou's plot for the screen.

"Let me try to give you some idea of what it means to make a picture like "Theodora." On a hillside outside of Rome we had out of 100,000 square meters. We obtained from the Pope the services of Armando Banti, the Vatican architect, who designed the spectacle and to us that the more we thought about it the wider became our plans. At length we decided to produce a picture that the world should recognize as a work that could have been done only by men whose hearts were thoroughly wrapped up in it.

"The fact that "Theodora" took nearly two years to produce is evidence of the care with which everything was done. The sets were so strong and constructed that they were like a city in which we temporarily lost our individualities and became subjects of a single Roman city.

"It required 2000 artists, working for eight months, to do the building. Nearly 20,000 men were employed for a great part of the time. Our city had such a population that the Italian Government lent us three regiments of cavalry to police the mimic town on the shores of Lake Albano.

"The designs for the sets were made twice. The first sets were models, which were made for outlining the dramatic action. We used six kinds of various groups to test the harmony and dramatic values of different kinds of action. It was like playing a huge game of chess, but with an artistic triumph as the stake."

WHEN the lions were let loose in the great arena across the photographers turned their cranks in steel cages, the Count says, adding that that made it perfectly safe for them. "Michele so. But as I saw those huge beasts stalking the screen and locking their wicked chops hungrily, I decided I didn't want to be a cameraman for "Theodora," cage or no cage. No, sir. I'd rather sit here pounding a typewriter and telling you fun all about it."

Answers to Questions by Movie Fans

DOROTHY—Buck Jones is married, and has been for six years. But he is not a bachelor. There remain Eugene O'Brien, who will be a bachelor, also, and Guy Moreno and William S. Hart.

SANNIE—Edward Kimball is the father of Clara Kimball Young. He is soon to be featured in a new production, "Pearl White is not married. People who know say that she is an expert golf player. You would expect it of Pearl.

EMILY—May Collins is playing in "The Flame of Love." Frank Mayo plays opposite her. You are mistaken in the title. There is a picture called "The Shark Master," a story of the South Sea Islands, in which the same name is used. I do not recall who is playing in "The Shark Master."

MARION F.—Yes, I know I did tell you that Betty Compson was to play the role of Babette in "The Little Minister," and it's true. Also, it's true you read that Alice Calahan was to play the same part. It happens that the picture will be released by two companies. You thought you had me caught this time, didn't you?

BROTHER—That was a fine letter you wrote me. I suspected you of being a boy scout even before you told me. As Tom Mix is your favorite you will

be interested to know that he has fifty-nine zuns and that he and Buck Jones are going on a vacation together. Don't O'Brien, who will be a bachelor, also, and Guy Moreno and William S. Hart.

How I Became A Movie Star

As Told to INEZ KLUMPH

What Has Already Happened

My name is Inez Klumph, and I am a movie star. I have been in the business for several years now, and I have had a very interesting and successful career.

With the ordinary program picture you can usually stick fairly closely to your script. You'll overcut, of course, but most of it will be different shots of the same stuff, so that in cutting you don't really lose any of the things you loved most during production.

But a big spectacle grows larger as you go along. You get so thoroughly steeped in your atmosphere that you lose all sense of footage and you build and rebuild and take and retake as the new ideas come tumbling into your brain, suggested by the developments of the work that has gone before.

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MUSIC FOR MOVIES HAS GONE THROUGH COMPLETE CHANGE

By GEORGE W. VAIL

TRAGEDY with a background of rough comedy; mild-toned comedy of melodramatic facility with an undercurrent of impending calamity—to find just the right music for such mood-mixtures in the leader's words.

PARADOXICAL though it may seem, the perfect musical score is the one which is least heard. It is the music which the audience is least aware of, but which is the most essential to the picture.

While the film is making its appeal to the eye, the music is pre-paring a supplementary, but no less powerful, impression on its subconscious nature. At its best the combination is irresistible. But only when the music is used judiciously and unobtrusively, and when it is one really awakens to a consciousness of it.

At great metropolitan theatres, the musical director has the authority to eliminate dramatically through "cut-ins" and "flash-backs" when such eliminations help the music.

THE program once selected and arranged in order, we are face to face with the problem of synchronizing it exactly with the speed of the picture.

Let it be said, right here and now, that without the intelligent co-operation of the operator in the booth no music can be kept in time with the picture.

Some of our smaller theatres are still addicted to the fatal habit of "racing" the picture when the music is out of time. This is a most unfortunate procedure, apart from its pictorial evils, is ruinous to the music.

Only through the maintenance of a fixed schedule, in order to shorten the show and speed up the turnstiles. Such a procedure, apart from its pictorial evils, is ruinous to the music.

But it is truly astonishing what wonderful results can be accomplished when the operator is willing to meet the leader half way. Things can then be so perfectly timed that a single composition, reflecting a series of moods, may be arranged to follow the picture through a series of corresponding film episodes, thereby obviating the necessity for frequent changes from one number to another.

George Westinghouse, the director of a particular composition, confident that he will reach it just in time for the dramatic moment on the screen.

The Word "Bun" Had Only One Meaning to English Studio Man

THE Englishman's failure to understand the word "bun" is a difficulty which faces picture production in England.

Leslie Hiscott, assistant director of the picture "The Iron Tread," which is being produced in England, has just returned to the United States and has had a most interesting experience.

Hiscott made a note of the item with the result that on the following morning a particularly scrupulous sample of the confectioner's art was prominently featured among the day's "props."

Hiscott's amusement on being unexpectedly confronted with a display of cream buns was so genuine that his assistant was not slow in grasping that there had been "some mistake."

Then it was explained to him, gently but firmly, that in America there were buns and buns, and that the bun in the script was not the kind you eat.

LAUGHTER OF THE SUN A Tale of Adventure BY QUIEN SABE (Who Knows?)

THIS BEGINS THE STORY Jim Kendrick, the devil-may-care, whole-hearted, adventurous American, had just at the border town started some things, naturally, but by his familiar nickname of Old Head to the former border town, he had become a party to make a night of it in the wilderness of the Mexican line.

Well-to-do, he sets up the motley crowd of his own blood and calls on Ortega to provide some one to accept his challenge. He is a man of the Mexican line. Kendrick, takes up an old rival of his companion, takes up an old rival of his companion, takes up an old rival of his companion, takes up an old rival of his companion.

AND HERE IT CONTINUES Kendrick abruptly spilled the dice out of the cup so that they rolled on the table top. "One die, one throw, ace high," he asked curtly of Rios.

It was in the air that there would be big play, and men crowded around. Briefly, the unusual presence of Kendrick, here at Fat Ortega's, was forgotten.

"Select the lucky cube," Kendrick invited Rios. The Mexican's eyes lit up. He had never seen a man so bold as Kendrick, and he was not a man to be trifled with.

Kendrick opened vest and shirt and after a moment of fumbling drew forth a money belt that bulged and struck like a leaden bar. "Gold and United States banknotes," he announced.

Ortega himself had played for any stake. He had seen Kendrick's money belt and he had seen Kendrick's money belt and he had seen Kendrick's money belt.

Unbuttoning the pocket flaps, he began pouring forth the treasure. Kendrick looked on with a mixture of interest and amusement. He had never seen a man so bold as Kendrick, and he was not a man to be trifled with.

"You damn fool!" cried out Twisty Barlow hysterically. "Why, man, with that pile of money you could buy back into San Diego like King of the Dogs, will you pick up clean an' you know it!"

No one paid any attention to Barlow, but he after that one imprecatory outburst, recognized that he was not a man to be trifled with. He had never seen a man so bold as Kendrick, and he was not a man to be trifled with.

Rios Rios' dark face was almost Oriental in its impassibility. He did not even wink or nod or smile, but he was a man of the Mexican line. Kendrick, takes up an old rival of his companion, takes up an old rival of his companion.

Plainly Ortega was tempted. And he was a man of the Mexican line. Kendrick, takes up an old rival of his companion, takes up an old rival of his companion.

He had never seen a man so bold as Kendrick, and he was not a man to be trifled with. He had never seen a man so bold as Kendrick, and he was not a man to be trifled with.

With a flourish Jim lifted the cup to see what he had thrown. Again his utterly wretched laughter boomed out. He had never seen a man so bold as Kendrick, and he was not a man to be trifled with.

Let her roll," cried Kendrick heartily. "Never had there been a game like this at Ortega's. Men packed closer and closer, pushing and shoving, until the cup, with a quick jerk of the wrist, he turned it out on the table. It rolled, poised, settling down to the result of the throw. Kendrick's small mustache came the hint of a smile; he had turned up a six."

"The ace is six," cried Jim. He caught up the die, holding it high above his head. His eyes were bright with excitement, his cheeks were flushed, his voice rang out cheerily.

"One's all I want, senator," laughed Jim. And made his throw. When large ventures are made, in order to accomplish what the gods of chance is no myth, but a potent spirit and that she takes a firm deciding hand. At a time like this, when a man is crowded to the limit, he uses all his wits and all his strength to outwit the gods of chance.

Jim Kendrick, the devil-may-care, whole-hearted, adventurous American, had just at the border town started some things, naturally, but by his familiar nickname of Old Head to the former border town, he had become a party to make a night of it in the wilderness of the Mexican line.

Advertisement for Stanley Company of America, featuring a grid of theatre listings. Theatres include Alhambra, Great Northern, Imperial, Belmont, Cedar, Coliseum, Jumbo, Leader, Locust, Nixon, Strand, and others. Each listing includes the name of the theatre, the show being performed, and the location.