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New Type Film for 'Oklahoma' in First Showing

BY EDWIN SCHALLERT

Long heralded as newly revolutionary, the Todd-AO motion picture process, which utilizes a 65 millimeter film in contrast to the normal 35 and has a different camera and projector, had its first demonstration yesterday before a group of industry leaders and the press at MGM studio.

This is the system for photographing and projecting film, developed by the American Optical Co., and put to practical use in an experimental way by Michael Todd, the theatrical producer. It is to be employed for the production of the screen version of the Richard Rodgers-Oscar Hammerstein musical "Oklahoma!" and has Joseph M. Schenck as one of its principal sponsors.

Hammerstein Speaks

Hammerstein was the spokesman for the studio demonstration which was held on one of the sound stages. He stressed the fact that this was purely a preliminary step, designed to lift the veil from any mystery that might surround the process itself, but that it was necessarily but a partial impression of how highly effective it would prove to be with the completion of "Oklahoma!"

He introduced Dr. Brian O'Brien, head of the research staff of the optical company which developed the process, who said that some 100 technicians had helped the development, and that the aim was to remove the wall from in front of the spectator so that he might look out into a new living world, and actually seem to be part of it.

Test Shots Shown

The audience had the opportunity to see views of Venice, Italy; a Spanish bullfight and took a roller coaster ride, besides observing numerous test shots for "Oklahoma!" made under the direction of Fred Zinnemann, who will direct the production starting July 14.

Reactions were that the system was a very close approach to Cinerama without the peculiar distortions of that method. Theater men like Charles Skouras, who was present, inclined to give the system an unusually high rating.