

Pix Biz Graph: Pre-War \$2-\$3,000,000 Smash Grossers Now Do \$3-\$5,000,000

For the five years preceding Pearl Harbor gross rentals on picture...

On top returns of the larger companies, gross releases of the distributors are now running from \$2,000,000 to \$4,000,000 and beyond...

Back in 1941 the more outstanding big picture at the box office was running from \$2,000,000 to \$3,000,000...

A medium picture today does from \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000, whereas five years back the figures averaged from \$1,000,000 to \$1,500,000...

Distributors in the lower-budget gear are often hitting up to as much as \$2,000,000 and \$3,000,000 per picture...

While rentals back to the distributors are reaching record proportions, it is also pointed out in trade circles that costs have also gone hand-in-hand with these increases...

BRYAN FOY ALSO YENS OWN INDIE PRODUCTION

Bryan Foy, in New York on business, says that with his pact with 20th-Fox expires next October he'll produce on his own...

Yet producer has been with 20th for five years and for 14 years before that was with Warner Bros. where he was known as 'Doll Face'...

Metro's 40G and Korda's 400G for 2 Story Buys

In a pre-publication deal inked last week, Metro purchased a new novel, 'The Betrayal,' by a lady book, for \$40,000...

Another important story buy during the week was Alexander Korda's purchase of Daphne du Maurier's best-seller, 'The King's General'...

Korda will film the story in the spring of 1947...

Not In the Title Role?

Hollywood, March 26. 'The Rocky' production of 'The Petty' is back again, this time as a musical, aimed for Frank Sinatra in the lead...

Film will be based on RKO's release of 'Vivacious Lady,' a decade ago...

Mustang Mellers

Totaling Up To \$20,000,000 in Oats

High-budget westerns are getting the heaviest play in Hollywood history this year, with more than \$20,000,000 bracketed for production of super-saddlers...

Other expensive pictures of the western scene are 'California,' at Paramount; 'My Darling Clementine' at 20th-Fox; 'Ramrod' and 'The Fugitive' at Enterprise; 'Cheyenne,' 'Calmly Jane' and 'Treasure of the Sierra Madre' at Warner; 'The Sign of the Cross' and 'Wyoming' and 'The Plainsman' and the 'Lone Star' at Republic.

Pioneertown Corp., recently acquired by 17 members of the film business, near 13,000 acres of desert land, near Palm Springs...

Backing the idea with coin are Roy Rogers, Philo J. Harvey, Dick Curtis, Russ Hayden, Tim Sawyer, Bob Nolan, Carl Parr, Lloyd Perryman, Pat Brady, Ken Carson, Shug Fisher, Frank McDonald, Thomas Carr, Ralph Sanford, Tom London, Marvin Grigsby and Jerry Stanley.

ABE LYMAN'S INDIE PIC WITH HIMSELF IN IT

Bandleader Abe Lyman won't give up his baton despite the fact he's turning film exec with the formation of a new firm tagged Lyman-Dule Enterprises...

Lyman and Dule go back to the Coast today (Wednesday).

Taylor-Stanwyck Pitch 'For English Vacation'

Hollywood, March 26. Barbara Stanwyck and Robert Taylor are mulling the idea of appearing in British-made picture...

Taylor may do a film at Metro's London studio while Miss Stanwyck is dealing with Warners for an English assignment.

LOSING IDENTITY

PROZ. S. DEPT'S

Washington, March 26. Storm clouds for picture flying in the State and Commerce Departments, with strong indications that the film units of both are due for a kick downstairs...

Insiders here say this is the sort of thing that MPA and Eric Johnston were designed for, and that the sooner they get on the job to reverse the trend, the better.

Here is the lineup, still unannounced.

1. A confidential memorandum is circulating in the Department of Commerce, explaining that the Motion Picture Unit, under Nathan D. Golden, is to lose its independent status and shove into a new 'General Products Division'...

2. Quietly under way in the State Dept. is a move to reorganize the Commercial Policy Division, headed by Winthrop Brown. Commercial Policy does not operate on a commodity basis, but on a geographical basis. (Continued from page 24)

Par's 'Girl' No Longer A Dream as \$60,000 Prod. Cost Recouped

Paramount last week had given the entire \$60,000 it put up to finance the picture out of its own pocket on Broadway. Pic company came out of even as of Saturday, March 9...

Show, starring Betty Field, is currently in its 13th week at the Coronado Y. It opened last Dec. 14 and the payoff of the production unit wasn't anticipated for another five weeks or so.

Par contracted with the Playwrights Co., producer of the show, to pay the entire production cost, estimated at \$200,000. It actually went \$12,000 beyond that, however, the Playwrights putting up the extra. Deal for the film rights called for \$100,000 plus production (in two \$50,000 jumps) plus 10% of the weekly New York gross...

SKOURAS, SILVERSTONE SKIPPED TO ENGLAND

Clyde Skouras, 20th-Fox press left New York by plane for England last night (22) for a tour accompanied by foreign head Murray Close. They'll huddle with British officials on interests on a Feb. 20th matters. Skouras is on the board of Gaumont-British Picture Corp., which also confab on G-B business.

Shows will be back in New York in about a month, with Silverstone to remain abroad. Kite longer.

Possible Loss or Curtailment Of British Market Cues Immediate

Need to Cut U.S. Pix Costs—Mayer

Point-Killer

Bryan Foy arrived in New York for the weekend all set to tell Perry Como to get himself some new leads for his second picture at 20th-Fox, 'That's My Man.' Foy, who's producing, said he thought Como looked 'slightly below par' in 'Doll Face.'

How can I tell him? Foy moaned Monday (25) when Como turned up on a list of the country's 10 best dressed men, just published.

Exhibs Squawk Milland's Radio Shots KO to B.O.

Heavy schedule of appearances by Ray Milland on major air shows since the Academy Award March 7 has brought on exhibitor squawks. Five ether shots, plus 10% in many small houses of the Milland pic, has exhibs fearsome that the Oscar-winner is being allowed by Paramount to sell himself out as far as the public is concerned.

Plat exhibs following the awards dinner in Hollywood, Milland did guest appearances with Jack Benny, Louella Parsons, Theatre Guild of the Air, Information Please and Fred Allen. In addition, he has been getting heavy market billing as an Oscar-holder on any product that subsequent-runners could get out of the vaults in local Paramount exchanges.

Exhib feeling is that Milland is being 'overused' by being so available. As one New Jersey exhibitor expressed it: 'Every time you've turned the dial, there's a couple (Continued on page 3)

ROBINSON-LESSER ALSO IN INDIE SWEEPSTAKES

Hollywood, March 26. Edward G. Robinson and Sol Lesser have formed an independent production company known as Film Producers, Inc. Robinson is star and Lesser to exec produce. Art will make one film annually for this new firm which will deal with any other picture commitments, now will Lesser's chores overtake his own Sol Lesser productions. No release for new company yet.

Plat exhibs enter the market for best sellers and hit plays. One book is to be closed for within a week. Production expected to start by midsummer.

2 Star Productions In April for Harry Cohn

Columbia Pictures pres. Harry Cohn and Mrs. Cohn (Joan Perry) are looking forward to their second child next month. Cohn's 'Story of Al Jolson' also seems an April marking a double-billed starter for the film exec. The Cohns will produce take a N. Y. holiday after both books.

GINGER OK'S 10TH SCRIPT

Hollywood, March 26. Ginger Rogers has finally accepted the writing of a sequel to 'The Gibson Girl' which RKO prepared for her after she rejected initial Paramount scripts.

Sequel may be now being written with shooting aimed for July.

Metro will have production costs considerably, following huddles between Louis B. Mayer and various producers...

All films are making money now, he pointed out, but he predicts the time will come when expenditures overvalued profits.

No wage cuts at Metro will take place should there be depression, Mayer flatly stated, but he expects production costs to be cut so that the future can be safeguarded against any possible profit slashes.

Present costs must not continue unchecked, he said. Mayer stressed, explaining that cuts are necessary because of danger of losing the British film market currently rated at \$87,000,000 annual income for U. S. films. The loss will very likely be the same if the British market does not go through, in addition to which the Brits share at this time do not have the money to send over for American pictures to keep the U. S. take at high figure.

Mayer pointed out that hefty piece of the \$87,000,000 goes into Metro's coffers.

LOUIS NOVINS NAMED EXEC AIDE TO BALABAN

Louis Novins, former lawyer and assistant to Balaban, has been named to build executive manpower, has taken over administrative duties under Balaban, who was formerly in the hands of Robert H. O'Brien.

O'Brien a few weeks ago was upped to secretary general of Massachusetts, who was brought into Paramount recently in line with policy of Balaban. O'Brien has been building executive manpower, has taken over administrative duties under Balaban, who was formerly in the hands of Robert H. O'Brien.

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