

Just for Variety

By ARMY ARCHERD

GOOD MORNING: "Every actor should get the chance to work with Marlon Brando," volunteers Jack Nicholson, who just costarred with him in "Missouri Breaks." "He is the greatest actor. It was easy working with him and the movie will be something very unusual." Jack admits he and Warren Beatty hoped to make something unusual with "The Fortune." "I did it because that, too, was adventurous — but the 'finesse' just didn't work. I'm sad — I had the best participation I've ever had in a film on that one, also, the best part" . . . Jack is awaiting word from Brando to star in his (Nicholson's) "Moontrap," to be directed by Nicholson. "I prefer not to act," he says. What happens to hopes of Bob Evans and Bob Towne to star Nicholson in a second pic with "Chinatown" character, Harry Gittes? . . . He will do a two-scene role as a labor organizer in "The Last Tycoon." Nicholson recommended Sam Spiegel cast Henry King as — the director — in the Elia Kazan-directed epic about Hollywood . . . Cary Grant has his attorneys investigating suits vs. People mag and the Associated Press, the former for printing he has false teeth. "I want to get into court and open my mouth," said Grant. And the AP suit involves their quotes from a Red Book yarn (which Grant claims doesn't exist), saying he never loved any of his wives. The wire service yarn brought him a flood of international fone calls, sezze — none from his ex-wives. Grant recently won \$10,000 from Esquire for printing his head on a fake body, he gave the dough to charity . . . Last week, after the MGM board meet on the lot, Grant was invited by Frank Rosenfelt and Dan Melnick to visit the giant carousel set of "Logan's Run." When Grant started to leave the set, the 400 extras broke into applause. He still has no plans to return to acting.

Bing Crosby's guest on his Christmas show this year will be Fred Astaire, with whom he waxed an album in London. The Crosby clan, as usual, will also be on hand for the Yule show — this year on CBS . . . John Amos, whose contract negotiations delayed his start on "Good Times," has been out of the last two segs — because the story lines didn't involve him, we're told . . . Jimmy Komack nabbed Tony Orlando to play a Freddie Prinze look-alike guest in "Chico And The Man." How about a reciprocal visit by Freddie to Tony's show as his look-alike? . . . Raquel Welch gets a giant \$25,000 as guestar on McLean Stevenson's NBC spec on which she'll sing "I Feel Like Making Love," the tune nixed by CBS from her Cher guestint . . . Sonny and Cher's attorney's had their 23d court session with Judge Mario Clinco Friday (26) . . . Burt Reynolds, directing Mike Douglas in the latter's dramatic bow, "Gator," foned from Savannah, Ga., to report Douglas is terrif playing a Governor who would be President. Anyone we know? . . . Linda (Mrs. Sy) Weintraub wrote "The Family Tree," a half-hour sitcom with music. Motown's Berry Gordy dug it and now ABC is developing it with 'em as a series. Proud husband Sy W. retired from showbiz in 1969 after selling his "Tarzan" pix . . . Jack Carter played a burlesk comic-murderer in "Ellery Queen" last week and is an agent in this week's "Cannon" guestarring Joan Fontaine . . . Orson Welles is out of "The Big Bus," the pact didn't work out. Too bad — whatta wild role! And they had already made his pajamas . . . Anne and Kirk Douglas weekendend at the LBJ ranch where he was on an arts panel. He'll be in Houston Nov. 1 to m.c. the bow of the Summit, an \$18,000,000 entertainment-sports arena.

For the first time, the Lettermen have booked an opening act — and she's Playboy's singing doll Barbi Benton, who bows with 'em at Valley Forge . . . Playgirl's October centerspread, Steve Bond, is in Pine-Thomas' "Cat Murkill And The Silks" — with threads . . . Claudia Lapidus, here for brother-in-law Ted Lapidus' shoppe-opening in BevHills, stopped in Van Cleef & Arpels and made a sizeable contribution to our local economy . . . The Max Factors debuted Stephen B., a perfume by award-winning designer Stephen Burrows with a BevHills Hotel sweet-smelling soiree . . . Lisa Kirk's talk session with Dinah Shore tomorrow resulted in Kirk talking a series of her own . . . John Vivyan is making good progress in intensive care at UCLA following a heart attack . . . Howard Morris checked out of Century City Hospital after tests for a viral infection . . . Dorothy Malone was welcomed back to town with a party at the Westwood Bratskellar . . . At Gladstone's, Quincy Jones and Peggy Lipton lobster'd with Herb Alpert and Lani Hall.

Film Review

Royal Flash

(British—Period Action Comedy—DeLuxe Color)

Twentieth Century-Fox release, produced by David V. Picker, Denis O'Dell. Stars Malcolm McDowell, Alan Bates, Florinda Bolkan, Oliver Reed. Directed by Richard Lester. Screenplay, George MacDonald Fraser, based on his novel; camera (DeLuxe Color), Geoffrey Unsworth; second unit camera, Peter MacDonald; editor, John Victor Smith; music, Ken Thorne; production design, Terence Marsh; art direction, Alan Tomkins; sound, Gerry Humphreys, Simon Kaye; assistant director, Vincent Winter. Reviewed at 20th-Fox Studios, L.A., Sept. 23, 1975. MPA Rating: PG. Running time: 98 min.

Flashman	Malcolm McDowell
Rudi von Starnberg	Alan Bates
Lola Montez	Florinda Bolkan
Otto von Bismarck	Oliver Reed
Duchess Irma	Britt Ekland
Kraftstein	Lionel Jeffries
de Gautet	Tom Bell
Sapten	Jess Ackland
Hansen	Christopher Cazenove
Old Roue	Roy Kinnear
Mr. Greig	Alastair Sim
Headmaster	Michael Hordern

"Royal Flash" is a royal pain. Richard Lester's formula period comedy style, as enduring as it is not particularly endearing, achieves its customary levels of pointless, posturing, cutesy silliness. Malcolm McDowell heads the cast as author-scripter George MacDonald Fraser's bohemian Victorian military officer. David V. Picker and Denis O'Dell produced at Twickenham Studios and on German locations. Trimmed a couple of reels for the domestic market from its London version, the 20th-Fox release lacks the intangibles that put over the "Musketeer" pix, so outlook seems uneven.

McDowell, fleeing a bordello raid, falls in with Florinda Bolkan, playing Lola Montez, in turn alienating Oliver Reed's Otto von Bismarck. The latter, with accomplice Alan Bates and hit-men Lionel Jeffries and Tom Bell, force McDowell to impersonate a Prussian nobleman for purposes of marriage to duchess Britt Ekland. Complex political, sexual and survival strategies lurch the plot forward through its distressing 98 minutes.

Films like "Tom Jones," "The Paleface," "Ruggles Of Red Gap," etc. all managed somehow to combine some physical visual comedic elements along with dramaturgy that worked. "Royal Flash," however, is virtual prototype Lester: often lavish and/or bizarre sets which make dramatically tiny the people placed in them; a sight-gag situation; some broadly drawn reaction shots; some running and jumping.

It might work if Lester let it all hang out, but paradoxically, he seems reluctant to do so, and the result is nearly always overproduced, underplayed, and at best worth a smile or mild chuckle.

The players are as competent as the film allows, and their work in other films is proof of their talent. Production credits are standard. *Murf.*

Corwin, Tushinsky Get Tent 25 Veep Stripes

Bruce C. Corwin, Metropolitan Theatres Corp. prexy, and Fred Tushinsky, senior veep of sales and marketing for Super-scope, have been named vice presidents of Variety Club of Southern California Tent 25, reports prexy Milton I. Moritz. The two succeed William W. Robi and Arthur Silber, who have resigned.

Sellier Sun's Sr. Veep

Charles E. Sellier Jr., 31-year-old veep in charge of production for Sun Classic Pictures, has been named senior veepee of the company.

New York Film Festival Gets Off To A Rocky Start With 'Conversation' Screening

By ADDISON VERRILL

New York, Sept. 28 — The 13th New York Film Festival laid a mighty egg with Friday night (26) opening at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall. Despite upbeat ticket sales for the entire event, a new streamlined opening night procedure and even a break in the eight-day run of soggy weather to lift the spirits, fest was fouled in its own choice of Luchino Visconti's "Conversation Piece" as the first night attraction. It proved an unmitigated disaster, the very word stressed by the Times and Post critics.

But first the good news. With what most agree is an especially interesting slate of films this year, the festival is in no box-office difficulty. Ticket sales have been brisk and the majority of performances were sold out well before the official opening.

A happy change in the opening night procedure came this year with the streamlining of the usually interminable "welcomes" from fest officials and reps of N.Y. City government. With some bad press notices for this performance at the fest last year, Film Society of Lincoln Center prez Martin E. Segal this year opted not to participate on stage, leaving the official fest welcome to Film Society Chairman William F. May, who kept it mercifully brief.

For the first time in many years, the fest administration did not extend an invitation to the New York Mayor's office to take part in one of the city's big cultural happenings.

May's speech of welcome was brief and to the point as he introduced fest director Richard Roud after the screening of Frank Mouris' short film, "Coney."

Roud apologized that no one connected with the opening night pic was present. That situation had sparked plenty of backstairs hustling in the days immediately preceding the opening. Director Visconti was working in Europe and his health would probably not have allowed him to make the trip anyway. Topliner Burt Lancaster was off on location and Silvana Mangano would not leave hus-

band Dino De Laurentiis in L.A.

It was fortunate that none of the "Conversation Piece" principals were present. Visconti's turgid, badly postsynched (in English) and depressingly pretentious feature sparked audience giggles about a half hour into its two-hour-plus running time. The giggles swelled to roars of laughter and by the time Lancaster uttered the line, "Things have turned out far worse than I could have imagined," the house was rife with derision.

Walk-Outs

There were numerous walk-outs in the sold-out house and the film's conclusion was greeted with boos and catcalls, the likes of which haven't been heard at a fest opening night in some time.

It can be argued that any film by a director of Visconti's stature deserves a fest slot, especially one without a U.S. distrib, but the choice of "Conversation Piece" for opening night was especially poor judgment.

Festival opening was followed by the usual party at the New York State Theatre. Fest runs through Oct. 12, when Francois Truffaut's "The Story Of Adele H." closes the event.

Two Javes Signed For Disney's 'Matecumbe'

Producer Bill Anderson has signed Johnny Doran, 13, and Billy Attmore, 10, for the juve leads in Walt Disney Prods.' "Treasure Of Matecumbe." Pic stars Peter Ustinov and is directed by Vincent McEveety.

Who's Where

Hal Brown, v.p. in charge of sales and distribution for American International Television Inc., to N.Y. for meetings.

Marilyn J. Tenser, exec producer, George M. Josephs, g.s.m., Don Foster, western division manager of Crown International Pictures, to New Orleans NATO convention.

Ronald Kass, Sagittarius Entertainment prexy, in from N.Y., Montreal.

Hannah Russell, prexy of Harrison Music Corp. to N.Y., Paris, London.

Howard Keel to St. Paul to star in the revue, "Gene Kelly's Salute To Broadway."

Debbie Reynolds to Sparks engagement at the Nugget Circus Room.

Pierre Cossette in from N.Y. Robert Wagner on concertour of the southwest.

Mark Lenard in from N.Y. Ron Warmoth in from Missoula, Mont.

Al Ross to N.Y.

Philip Abbott to Detroit.

Harry Bernsen to Houston, New Orleans, N.Y., Toronto, Chi.

BernNadette Stanis to Chi.

Burray Olson to N.Y., Providence, R.I.

Richard O'Brien to Gotham.

Budd Friedman in from N.Y.



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