Negro Beefs Loom Vs. 'Mandingo,' Malenotti-Lattuada's Upcoming Pic

Rome, Jan. 21.

Producer Maleno Malenotti and director Alberto Lattuada are deep into preparation of "Mandingo," fully aware that the film could easily kick up a storm of controversy when it is released late this year or early in 1970. They are willing to weaken some of the sharper polemic in their historical yarn about slave breeding in Louisiana a decade or so before the Civil War took place.

The subject, drawn from Kyle Onstott's two widely-read novels — "Drums" and "Mandingo" — deals with a particular Negro sect, the Mandingos, founded during the Middle Ages in Sudan and distinguished as a racial group for their physical beauty, civilized pursuits and gentleness.

Controversy will undoubtedly generate, Lattuada predicts, when the militant Negro groups in the U.S. and the new Negro nations of the Dark Continent take exception to film's eroticism and violence as 19th century survivors of the Mandingo dynasty in Sudan undergo selection and breeding.

Defends Project

Lattuada defends his project in citing historical accuracy of the basic plot. "The breeding process is humanly degrading," he noted, "but it was practiced as an economic expedient by plantation owners who found cotton a risky staple for survival."

Malenotti, who is producing in a copartner association with Dino De Laurentiis, offered the title role to Cassius Clay but the ex-boxing champ backed away because of his religious activity. Lionel Stander will play one of the major roles, with another being submitted to James Cagney, if he will come out of retirement.

After disclosing shape and scope of their project, Malenotti and Lattuada left for Brazil, where the film will be shot almost in its entirety beginning mid-March — with the exception of a few important sequences to roll in New Orleans.

Current trip to set locations and initiate minor casting in Brazil will later take them to Hollywood to fill out principal roles and subsequently to New York. In Gotham

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LAMBS BAH-RAH TO HARRY THE HERSH, 85

Harry Hershfield the 85-year-old humorist who has been Shepherd of the Lambs Club for the past three years, will receive the organization's highest accolade with a gambol-in-the-fold in his honor April 26. It's the first time that a Shepherd has been honored in this manner. Last year, Richard Rodgers received this award.

Jack Waldron, chairman of the entertainment committee, will be the collie (chairman) of the event.

'Caesar's the One'

Singer-musician Vic Caesar was tracked down after a long search by the Nixon people to perform at the new President's Inaugural Ball on Monday night (20). They located him finally at the Playboy Club in Los Angeles.

Why the eagerness to locate such a relatively obscure performer—and one who ran for the Arizona State Senate in 1966 as a Democrat, at that? Because Caesar wrote the campaign song, "Nixon's the One."

Writers Won't Nix Moscow; To Do So Would Be 'Political'

Hollywood, Jan. 21.

International Writers Guild will hold its next congress in Moscow July 3-7, this despite some misgivings initially held by Writers Guilds in Britain and the U.S. For a time, it had appeared the sessions would not be held in Russia, because of the uneasy climate created among writers in western countries by Russo invasion of Czechoslovakia last August.

IWG prexy James R. Webb, who did not attend last week's sessions in London because of flu, expressed hope next summer's meeting would be postponed. But writers decided that any change in plans would involve their org in politics—something forbidden by its constitution. Consensus was that to change a decision previously made would clearly constitute a political disapproval decision. Exec committee had voted in Yugoslavia to hold the congress in Moscow.

Thus, the congress is confirmed for Moscow, closing on July 7, date the Moscow Film Festival opens. Fest runs July 7-21. Among resolutions adopted was one concerning awards, intent of it being that writers' awards be presented at as many film festivals as is possible to arrange.

Patti Page's Toiletries Biz

Songstress Patti Page is diversifying into the perfumed toiletries business. She's formed Roma Royale Inc. to handle manufacturing and distribution.

Tom A. Taylor 2d, formerly v.p. of United Chemical Corp., is president and board chairman of the new corporation.

Map Aussie 'Disneyland'

Sydney, Jan. 21.

Aussie circus topper Stafford Bullen is blueprinting a Down Under "Disneyland" to be built some 20 miles from this city. Aside from his circus, he now operates a Lion Safari Park at Warragamba.

In addition to the "Disneyland," Bullen plans more lion parks in Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane. Reportedly, he is ready to spend $2,000,000 on the "Disneyland," which he may call Bullenland.

LBJ's Final Gift To Arts Subsidy

Washingon, Jan. 21.

Federal plans for budgeting in the arts field call for more money in fiscal 1970, as outlined by President L.B. Johnson in his budgetary swan-song, but the increases are mostly token and hard-won.

The National Foundation on the Arts is ticketed for $8,500,000, up from estimated expenditures during the current year of $8,322,000 — but much less than the $11,050,000 requested by President Johnson last year and cut by Congress. And the Corp. for Public Broadcasting is down for $20,000,000, lavish in comparison with this year's kickoff $5,000,000 appropriation. On the other hand, the authorizing legislation by Congress expires this year, and even to continue in existence — much less get $20,000,000 out of Congress — new legislation must be won. Unless a viable plan for long-range financing is arrived at by CPB

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Billy Rose's 2 Sisters Fail to Upset His Will's Massive Fund Bequest

Will of Billy Rose, showman who died in 1966 at age 66 leaving the bulk of his $35,000,000 estate to charitable Billy Rose Foundation Inc. was upheld by New York Court Of Appeals. Rose's sister Mrs. Miriam Stern had contested the will, claiming she and another sister, Mrs. Polly Gottlieb, were entitled to a larger share of the estate.

Under will, Mrs. Stern was bequeathed proceeds from $100,000 lifetime trust, Mrs. Gottlieb received $50,000 plus income from $1,000,000 trust: Joyce Mathews Rose (one of showman's former wives) received income from a $1,000,000 trust and her daughter Victoria Berlinger received income from a $100,000 trust.

WORLD'S BIGGEST GIRL ROAD SHOW CREATOR

By COL. BARNEY OLDFIELD

Burbank, Jan. 21.

Nobody ever names correctly the man who put the greatest girl show on the road. Or, correctly identifies the date of the premiere. Or, knows the name of the stars.

It wasn't Florenz Ziegfeld Jr., Earl Carroll, George White, Billy Rose, Mike Todd or A. B. Marcus.

The stars were Ellen Church, Ellis Crawford, Cornelia Peterman, Harriet Fry, Margaret Arnott, Jessie Carter, Inez Keller, and Alva Johnson. The date was May 15, 1930, and the "producer" was a man named Steve Stimpson, who now runs a travel agency here in "beautiful downtown Burbank."

Stimpson is the man who invented, and sold the idea of the "airline stewardess."

She was to serve well, but to be lampooned, loved, married, made over in song and story and book and motion picture, to have a union (which would get her rights and privileges, the latest being the OK to be married and stay on the job if her husband was sufficiently tolerant to permit an aerial gypsy in his household), to have her own special club after she retired (Clipped Wings), and to have the most tolerant employers in the world (they give her six weeks of intensive and expensive instruction to get 18 to 23 months of active service and then lose her to one or another of the many occupational hazards of the trade).

To date, in the U.S. alone, the number of girls who have been

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Boston Challenges Philly as Site For 1976 World's Fair; 9,000 Jobs at Stake

Boston, Jan. 21.

Plans for a World's Fair for Boston in 1976 were outlined last week by a group, which has been working for six years to win the event for the Hub. The fair would be billed as Expo Boston 76.

If the Hub is picked over Philadelphia, the fair would mean creation of a new community on filled land and would zoom New England's economy by some $1,500-000 in new money. Some 4,000 jobs would be made before and during Expo. In addition, there would be a massive boost in New England's tourist trade. To continue after the fair closes, and creation of some 9,000 permanent jobs.

The group, drafting the plan with the aid of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, is U.S. Bicentennial World Exposition Corp., headed by Gilbert H. Hood, chairman of the exec committee of H. P. Hood & Sons; and James I. F. Matthew, general manager. The theme, developed by Alfred Stern of New York, is "Interdependence of Man."

Theodore Schulenberg, State Commerce Commissioner, said the proposed fair would triple tourist biz and would have a profitable effect going into the '80s. But should Philadelphia be chosen, he said, this area would suffer a billion dollar loss in tourist trade.

Hood said he felt Boston has a better theme than Philadelphia. Its plan is less costly, and has several other advantages which leads him to hope it would be successful.

Gov. John A. Volpe, in a statement released by Hood's group, hailed the theme, symbol and concept. "No theme could be more suited to the times than that of the mutual well being, respect and progress of men of all races and nations. . ."

Plans call for Expo 76 to occupy about 500 acres between Columbia Point and Thompson's Island. Much of the acreage would either be rigid or floating platforms to allow development of shoreline and to spur development of new, waterborne methods of transportation. Pavilion sites would be inter-

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Soviet Subtlety

Prague, Jan. 21.

Most fascinating "game now being played behind the scenes in Moscow is called telephonitis. Soviet or pro-Soviet partisans try to avoid openly opposing or chastising "pro-Liberal" elements. Either these people are kept in public office, but with lesser influence or in pigeon-holes. Or, more and more, especially with intellectuals, newspapermen, etc., who are suspected of having foreign contacts, their telephones suddenly get sick. They do not work.

Complaints bring forth mechanics who seem puzzled by what is wrong and promise to "repair" the instruments or lines. Some day.

It's Official On Dino Exit From Sands to Riviera

Las Vegas, Jan. 21.

Dean Martin applied with the State Gaming Control Board for 10% of the Riviera Hotel, it was officially revealed here. Martin turned in his application to the local gaming office on Jan. 14. He is investing $80,000 for the 10% interest. This nominal figure would indicate a "special consideration" deal.

Gaming control board said Martin's papers were all in order and on file. His application will be acted on at the board's next meeting.

On Nov. 11 last year Review-Journal managing editor Don Digilio had a copyrighted story saying Martin was through with the Sands Hotel and would move up the Strip to the Riviera.

However, Sands Hotel impresario Jack Entratter called the R-J story "false" and said Martin had no intention of leaving the Sands, a place he has been playing for more than a decade.

Martin's attorney last month said the entertainer's contract expires April 29 with the Sands and that he would appear at the Riviera "probably in May."

Privately, Martin had told Riviera execs he was interested in playing the Riviera and buying into the plush hotel-casino. Martin owned a minor percentage in the Sands before it was purchased by Howard Hughes.

JOHN STEINBECK LEFT $1-MIL TO WIDOW

John Steinbeck, Nobel prize novelist who died in New York on Dec. 28 at age 66, left most of his $1,000,000 plus estate to his wife Elaine (whom he married in 1950 —she, his third wife, was previously wed to actor Zachary Scott).

Steinback bequeathed $50,000 each to his two sons, John and Tom.

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