

# U.S. STARS (SI), FRONDIZI (NO)

## Argentine Festival Asides

Britain's Prince Philip, in the course of his Argentine tour, spent Sunday (25) here bolstering the British Fest effort. He appeared at an afternoon polo match between two teams of Argentine all-stars, but didn't show at the evening screening of the official British entry, "Whistle Down the Wind". . . "Whistle," incidentally, did not enchant many members of the Latin press, who used that old fest cliché: "Not of festival calibre."

A local report has it that Allied Artists, which will distribute Samuel Bronston's upcoming "55 Days at Peking," in the States lost the Latin American rights to the Rank Organization . . . Italo actress Georgia Moll, here with the Italo delegation, is currently making her home in New York while she "observes" at the Actors Studio. Hopes to pass her exam and become a fullfledged member . . . Unifrance's Robert Cravenne returns to Paris directly from B.A., with no N.Y. stopover planned . . . French novelist Christiane Rochefort, who supervises the visiting press people at the annual Cannes Fest, went from Mar Del Plata to Mexico City to see Luis Bunuel and scan likely Mex product for the Riviera Fete . . . French star Jean Paul Belmondo had crowds hanging around his hotel all day, every day. His influence is quite apparent here. A number of new Argentine actors are Belmondo lookalikes, and young Argentine directors have obviously memorized every scene from Belmondo's "A Bout de Souffle" (it was "Breathless" in the States).

Janet Leigh's last-minute cancellation left the U.S. delegation without one female name . . . Vets of the three previous Mar Del Plata Fest say this was the best organized of the lot . . . Director Leopoldo Torre Nilsson asked some friends to a special midnight screening of his latest film, "70 Times 7," but requested that the event be kept quiet since he didn't want a crowd. It was kept so quiet, in fact, that the theatre where the screening was to be held did not know about it. No screening. Torre Nilsson was in for only two days as he is in the midst of shooting his current picture in Buenos Aires. An Italo-Argentine coproduction, it stars Alida Valli and Paul Guers and bears the tentative title, "Homage in the Afternoon."

Most surprising was the reception given the official French entry, Francois Truffaut's "Jules and Jim," at its screening Monday (26). night. The local audience was obviously bored stiff by the stylish, satiric comedy and gave it only perfunctory applause. One of the problems may have been the Spanish subtitles, which never quite kept pace with the literarily complex dialog and narration . . . Truffaut and his wife went from here to Rio, for a French film week there, and then on to New York for another seven-day visit . . . The reception of "Jules and Jim" was especially frustrating to the French since they had brought in the largest delegation at the fest, and that costs a pretty peso . . . And speaking of pesos, the Yank delegation's extra-curricular spending was severely curtailed by the fact that local banks, when they reopened after the bank holiday, refused to change dollars for pesos—something about not wanting to water down the local currency, which is like closing the barn door after the horse has been stolen.

The locals constantly bombarded Yank director Delmer Daves with questions about when he is going to make his next western. He has no idea . . . Allied Artists International's pub director Charlie Garrett hosted a special screening of "El Cid" Wednesday (28) morning and a lunch afterwards for Latin American press people . . . An otherwise lethargic Argentine rodeo put on for fest visitors was enlivened when a dedicated Italo starlet got up on one of the horses, for photos. The horse reared, and the shapely doll was almost frightened out of her wits and her bikini. (Doesn't everyone wear a bikini to a rodeo?)

Director Robert Rossen was given a rather rough time in a local tv interview. The questions were but loaded, i.e., "Why is it Hollywood doesn't make good films anymore?" He parried them effectively and with good humor, but afterwards expressed surprise at the whole approach of the interview.

Hugo Fregonese started shooting "A Very Long Moment" in B.A. Monday (2). The Argentine-born but Rome-based director has Elsa Daniel as his star. It's an Argentine-Italo coproduction and will use locales in New York and Rome, in addition to B.A. . . . Miss Daniel hopes to be in the States for the opening this spring of "Hand in the Trap," a Torre Nilsson film . . . "La Dolce Vita" reportedly was sold for the huge sum of \$25,000 in the Chilean market. Grossed in neighborhood of \$100,000 in rentals . . . Chilean distrib Oswaldo Barzelatto reports he bought "Thunder in the Leaves," starring Argentine sexpot Isabel Sarli, for \$800 and earned \$18,000.

One of the major surprises to visiting Yanks is the apparent rule that every Argentine pic must have at least one nude and/or bedroom scene.

Italo director Carlo Lizzani, here for the showing of his "Gold of Rome," will probably next to "The Trial of Ciano," if all legal rights are cleared. A first draft of the script already is completed. Lizzani is the guy who directed the documentary on Red China, "Behind the Great Wall," to which Walter Reade Jr. added smells for its U.S. release . . . Viennese-born, Brazilian-based producer-distrib Albert Kanettl owns rights to Lizzani's first pic, "The Poor Lovers," for most of the English-speaking markets. Legal problems right after its Italo release has prevented "Lovers" release elsewhere until now.

Domenico Meccoli, head of the Venice Fest, goes from here to New York for prelim talks on possible U.S. entries at that August affair.

## Neglect 'Seconds' At Peril to Biz, Argues Lippert

Apropos Hollywood production cutbacks and the resultant 1963 potential "famine," producer-exhibitor Robert L. Lippert is up with a time-is-running-out comment that underlines the "second feature" paucity.

Exec links the low-budget programmer to concession profits, both for drive-ins and suburban hardtops, without which margin there could follow wholesale shutterings. The quandry, per Lippert, is that even if the low-cost pic is dubious bet for distribution, most situations must have them or face "ultimate alternative" of going dark.

## Cannes Fest Extended 2 Days to Handle Sked

Paris, April 3. Because more than 30 films are expected in competition and to avoid double features and overcrowded skeds, the 15th Cannes Film Fest has been extended for two days. It now runs from May 7 to May 23, instead winding on May 21.

All of this indicates the extreme interest in the first top film fest of the season as well as underlining the prestige and business aspects associated with Cannes. The market screenings of pix, handled by the Federation of French Film Producers, will show a goodly number of local and foreign pix this year. The Federation rents a house in town and foots the projection bills for these sales showings to buyers and exhibs at the fest.

## ARGENTINE FANS MOB FEST STARS

By VINCENT CANBY

Mar Del Plata, April 3.

While President Frondizi was being hustled off to his Elba in the River Plate, Mar Del Platians were fighting in the streets—hysterically shoving, pinching and kicking for a glimpse of Paul Newman, Jean Paul Belmondo and other less familiar film faces, here for last week's Fourth International Mar Del Plata Film Festival. Never underestimate the power of the cinema.

Despite the general lack of interest in most of the films unspooled, the fest was a success from both the Latino and Norteamericano points of view. The Argentines provided a good showcase for their current productions, and the Yanks, with star Newman as the delegation's main attraction, made up in quality what they lacked in quantity of film "names." Newman's award as best actor, however, couldn't dispell Yank disappointment that neither "The Hustler" or Robert Rossen were cited as best pic or director.

Since film people are notoriously self-centered, there was little evidence of concern among the Argentine, as well as foreign, delegates, about the political events in Buenos Aires. Mar Del Plata was, until Sunday (1), a mecca of make-believe. While a few foreign correspondents huddled around a radio in the Hotel Provincial trying to get the latest word from B.A., downstairs and across the street, from a Fiat Rent-a-Car-showroom, the raucous, English-speaking voice of Woody Woodpecker blared forth on a public address system.

On the beach, crowded as Coney Island on the 4th of July, vendors hawked "panchos" (hot dogs) and cervezas (beer) and in the main Provincial bar, local distrib deals were being made over "claritos" (a very serviceable martini concocted of a local gin). One fest authority put in a telephone call to B.A. Wednesday (28) to the Argentine Film Institute (government body which grants production credits, among other things) and was told simply, "There's nobody here but us Marines."

Jorge Taurel, Institute head, who was here to iron out final details in the proposed Argentine-Brazilian coproduction agreement, suddenly found himself out of a job, as did a number of other institute officials who departed during the night leaving no forwarding addresses. Because the coproduction agreement must be approved by both the Education and Foreign Offices, signing is now delayed until the new Argentine ministers have a chance to get acquainted.

The crisis in Buenos Aires prevented U.S. Ambassador McClintock from attending the fest's final days to add heft to the U.S. delegation which, numerically, was all but swamped by the larger French, (Continued on page 12)

## Mar Del Plata Main Prizes

The following were the major awards given at the just concluded film fest here. Though it was a generally well organized affair, there were some slipups. Delmer Daves, U.S. rep on the jury, wasn't allowed entrance at the presentation ceremonies because he didn't have a ticket.

\* Best picture: "Los Dias Contados" (Italy).  
Best director: Francois Truffaut, "Jules et Jim" (France).  
Best actor: Paul Newman, "The Hustler" (U.S.).  
Best actress: Nadezhda Rumiantseva, "The Girls" (Russia).  
Best screenplay: Rodolfo Kuhn, "Los Jovenes Viejos" (Argentina).  
Best Spanish-speaking film: "Cerca de Las Estrellas" (Close to The Stars) (Spain).  
Special prize: "The Sorrows of Lenka," (Czechoslovakia).  
Best short: "The Pen Knife" (Poland).  
The 11-man critics' jury issued a special merit award to young Argentine director Rodolfo Kuhn's first picture, "Los Jovenes Viejos" (The Old Young Ones). Film was cited as a promising effort designed to incite interest in cinematic techniques.  
The Italo animated short, "The Green Stocking," was also given a merit award for its "imagination and style."  
\* "Los Dias Contados" ("The Days Are Numbered") is a Metro-Titanus coproduction, produced by Geoffredo Lombardo, directed by Elio Petri, featuring Sabro Randone and Regina Bianchi.

## Yank Talent Sues Mexican Gov't Firm Claiming Pic Pay Default

Los Angeles, April 3.

Veronica Lake, recently "discovered" as a cocktail waitress in N. Y. after some years of obscurity, and Zachary Scott are among five American filmites demanding \$128,747 from Nacional Financiera, S.A., Mexican government - controlled corporation, for services assertedly rendered on the motion picture, "Stronghold," filmed in Mexico in 1950.

Hearing on suit, filed last December in L. A. Superior Court and sealed to allow claimants to attach property in California owned by defendant, was held last week (27) before Judge Robert H. Patton, when it was disclosed that Sidney Barton, attorney for five plaintiffs, early this year had attached \$130,000 in San Francisco bank deposits owned by NF.

In addition to principal, suit asked 7% interest from May 18, 1951, totalling \$102,000 to date, which would bring total amount demanded to \$230,747. Plaintiffs and amount originally asked include Miss Lake, femme star of film, \$47,500; Scott, male star, \$55,000; Steve Sekely, director, \$26,000; Stanley Cortez, cameraman, \$7,000; and Wells Root, scripter, \$6,875.

Attorneys for Mexican corporation asked court to release the attachment made by Barton because, they said, coin didn't have anything to do with the production. Barton asked for a continuance to answer defense motion, with new date set for April 10. Bench ordered the sealed file opened at claimants' request. Total of \$142,375 was demanded in original suit, it was declared, but \$13,628 had already been paid.

## 'Festivals Right Of Refusal Quite Clear'—Watkins

Mar Del Plata, April 3.

Every international film fest, held under the rules of the International Federation of Film Producers Assns., has the right to reject an official entry if the fest authorities feel the pic is not up to "artistic" standards, Arthur Watkins, prexy of IFFPA, said here last week. Watkins said that the association's rules on this point "are perfectly clear."

The question was raised because Motion Picture Export Assn. execs in New York have stated that there is some confusion on this. No such thing, said Watkins, and there wasn't two years ago when Venice authorities refused to accept "Pollyanna" as the official Yank entry. MPEA is presently "reviewing" its participation in all festivals and refusing to name official entries to Cannes, Venice, Berlin and San Sebastian.

The Fourth International Mar Del Plata film fest last week provided an opportunity for Watkins to meet with fest chiefs: Domenico Meccoli, Venice; Dr. Alfred Bauer, Berlin; Ladislav Katctick, Karlovy Vary, as well as M. Fourre Corme-ray, head of France's Centre National du Film, and Robert Cravenne of Unifrance. Hosts were Ariel Cortazzo, prexy of the local affair, and Fernando Ayalla, veep.

## MPAA Board Adds Jaffe, Laub, Schimel, Picker

Leo Jaffe, Columbia; Joseph J. Laub, Buena Vista; Adolph Schimel, Universal, and Eugene Picker, United Artists, were elected new members of the board of the Motion Picture Assn. of America at a New York meeting. Eric A. Johnston, chairman, and all other incumbent directors were re-elected.

Also reelected were all members of the exec committee of the board, which comprises film company presidents and is headed by Johnston as chairman. Entire slate of officers (Johnston president) was renamed by the board.

## MAR DEL PLATA'S COST

\$250,000 Via Gambling %; French Send 25

Mar Del Plata, April 3.

Total cost of the Fourth International Film Festival at Mar Del Plata came to approximately \$250,000, with most of that tab being covered by the fest's five-peso cut on admission tickets to the local gambling casino over the 12-month period. Cost is about the same as last year.

There were about 150 foreign delegates, with the French having the largest single group (25), and the Japanese the smallest (1). Counting the Argentine delegates, plus the large Latin American press corps, total number of attendees was close to 300.

## 20th-Fox O'seas Upbeat

Silver lining in the continuity of gloom at 20th-Fox is the report on the foreign side of \$2,000,000-plus in billings in the week ended March 31. Murray Silverstone, prez of the foreign division, states it is possibly the best one-week overseas gross in the company's history, though for sure one of the best ever. Moreover, the elation was accomplished during the precise anniversary week of Spyros P. Skouras' investiture as 20th president 20 years ago.

Pix responsible for the cheer were "The Hustler," "Comancheros" and "The Innocents."