

Installation Of Cinema Radio Sound 'Jacques Brel' On Satisfies Veteran Drive-In Operator AFT's 2nd Slate

Homer Tegtmeier is an industry veteran currently observing his golden anniversary in the trade. Starting in the theatre equipment business for B. F. Shearer Co. in Seattle back in 1924, Tegtmeier pioneered in sound and projection equipment advances both as an equipment and supply dealer and as an exhibitor. Now, after 50 years, he is still pioneering in the use of improved theatre technology, having recently installed Cinema Radio in his Chief Auto Movies in Fairfield, California. Cinema Radio is the new drive-in sound system that eliminates the need for outdoor speakers and utilizes the patrons' own car radios.

The Cinema Radio installation in Fairfield was a conversion job. So satisfied was Tegtmeier with the results that he is presently installing the revolutionary system in his new Lakeport Auto Movies in Lakeport, California, which is now nearing completion for opening in late August.

"Our business has always been to sell tickets and give the public the best facilities by which they can enjoy motion pictures, audio and visual. Cinema Radio does the audio job. The secret is the reaction of people. It creates sound inside your car just like the sound inside a conventional 4 wall theatre. With the improvement in car radios today, customers like it very much," Tegtmeier stated.

If the veteran exhibitor needed any further reference as to experience and qualifications, it should be noted that he has been selling complete sound and projection systems and outdoor speakers for theatre and drive-in installations for decades. In December '31, he opened the B. F. Shearer branch office in San Francisco. Five years later, he was also operating theatres in Suisun and Fairfield in Northern California.

Tegtmeier also operated additional theatres in Watsonville, Salinas and Dinuba. With "more time than I wanted," Tegtmeier went out into the field for Heywood Wakefield, a seating company for which he continues to distribute in Northern California. Under the umbrella of Tegtmeier Associates, Inc., he presently operates his own circuit of five theatres and an equipment business from a suite of four offices in San Francisco.

The need for rewiring a drive-in as it approached the end of a second decade of operations heavily influenced Tegtmeier's decision since the Fairfield Drive-In theatre is more than 16 years old.

"Cinema Radio has solved one of the most troublesome problems confronting outdoor theatres from obsolescence and deterioration. There is no further need to replace underground speaker cable in ozoners at the highly inflated costs that prevail and which far exceed Cinema Radio installation costs," Tegtmeier stated.

Tegtmeier and his general manager, Andy Chantlas, with no interest in Cinema Radio other than the circuit's two installations, are recommending the sound system to other exhibitors both in and out of the territory and find these theatre owners seeking their opinions and suggestions with respect to their experience.

Tegtmeier is a member of the board of the Northern California unit and its prede-

cessor organization, the Pacific Coast Conference of Independent Theatre Owners (PCCITO). Tegtmeier is a charter member of Tent 32, Variety Club of San Francisco, and is also a member of the Motion Picture Pioneers.

While the Cinema Radio sound system has been "working fine" and public acceptance of the new system has been "excellent," Chantlas says that there have been a few complaints from patrons of a minor nature but "none that can't be handled intelligently by managers in aiding the customers in understanding how it works."

A few patrons, for instance, complained that their radio dial doesn't work or that they can't find the spot on the dial to tune in Cinema Radio sound. "But here again," Chantlas declared, "like the inception of buttered popcorn, these simple negatives can be overcome with a proper attitude by management and customer aid."

"Drive-ins which now have poled speaker systems must use a phase-out system for their old speakers," Chantlas observed. He suggests that all speakers be left on poles during the first month of Cinema Radio use. Management should then remove one-third of the speakers during the second month and, finally, all but the last two rows because the "public is addicted to habit." Chantlas emphasized, however, that a new drive-in is in a more fortunate position and doesn't have to educate an audience even though a competitive drive-in in the same area may have the old pole system.

System Proves A "Boon"

Chantlas describes Cinema Radio as a "boon for the drive-in operator which should have come along 20 years ago." He recommends that outdoor theatre operators who are interested in the Cinema Radio system acquaint themselves or some of their top personnel in the basics of the installation. Chantlas also praised Altec Service Co. technicians who are responsible for the installation and servicing of the Cinema radio equipment as "not only conscientious but knowledgeable."

Other Cinema Radio advantages, besides superior sound quality and economy in installation and upkeep, are the elimination of speakers, speaker posts and attendant costs resulting from pilferage, vandalism and collision damage to speaker posts.

Veteran director Alfred Hitchcock shown celebrating his 75th birthday at a recent Hollywood party with Cary Grant (star of Hitchcock's *Suspicion*, *To Catch A Thief*, and *North By Northwest*), and Jules C. Stein, founder of MCA, Inc., Universal Pictures' parent company. Hitchcock is currently preparing *Deception*, his 53rd motion picture, which begins filming for Universal later this year.



The Ely Landau Organization has acquired the screen version of *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris* as one of the four films already slated for the American Film Theatre's second season. Brel joins the three projects produced by Landau (*In Celebration*, *The Man In the Glass Booth* and *Galileo*) while negotiations for the fifth and final film for the 1974-75 season are in progress.

Landau was to have produced all five films for the second AFT season but rights to *Six Characters In Search of an Author* were not cleared, and plans for filming Arthur Miller's adaptation of Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* have been postponed.

The *Jacques Brel* film was directed by Denis Heroux from a screenplay by Eric Blau who conceived the original off-Broadway musical revue. The film, like the show, uses 26 songs but no dialogue. Ely Stone, Mort Shuman, Joe Masiell and Brel are featured.

Tegtmeier and Chantlas reported on some testimonials from patrons. They told of one local doctor who had not attended a drive-in movie for many years. After seeing a popular, well advertised movie at the Cinema Radio-equipped Chief Auto Movies, he came away saying, "I didn't know that drive-ins had this type of new sound. It was so unique and different that I thoroughly enjoyed the screen entertainment."

Many customers, they reported, said they enjoyed the new sound system because they could keep their windows closed and be engulfed by the sound. Others liked the privacy permitted with Cinema Radio, and the reception on their stereo and multi-speakered car radios. Sound buffs are most receptive to the new Cinema Radio, they pointed out, particularly with the significant improvement in car radios.

The *piece de resistance*, Tegtmeier reported, was a recent occasion on which he took another prominent West Coast drive-in exhibitor to the Chief Solano theatre "cold" and witnessed his reaction to the sound. "All he said was—I'd better convert."

Tegtmeier cited the experience of two other West Coast drive-in theatre owners who are in the vanguard with initial installations of the system and are "happy with it."

In conclusion, he predicted that there would be many more exhibitor converts to Cinema Radio as the system proved itself in operation.