

"Cinerama Holiday"

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1956)**

Heft 1268

PDF erstellt am: **08.08.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-687676>

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**“CINERAMA HOLIDAY”
AT THE “CASINO CINEMA”
Old Compton Street, W.1.**

This is the story of the interesting film now shown in London.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE FOUR YOUNG LOVERS.

What happens when two young couples are selected by Producer Louis de Rochemont to enjoy a holiday or even honeymoon that represents the fulfillment of dreams? They've never been a hundred miles from home, nor have they ever been before a motion picture camera. Now, the ten million people who are Cinerama's audience are to be their companions. Disbelief in their luck, certainly; coupled with a thrill and an excitement that was almost unbearable — this was only a beginning.

With an idea to express — how wonderful a holiday may be — how much fun and how much true revelation and discovery were involved, the de Rochemont talent scouts had a stimulating challenge.

Two young people from the Midwest were to be picked for a European adventure that took in Switzerland's carefree playgrounds in the high snow meadows, the breathless bob-sled runs and ski-slopes, the fireside camaraderie that follows, and then Paris — the Paris of the Parisian, the Paris of the Bohemian and the Paris of the Tourist.

A Swiss couple was to have its holiday in America — a harvest festival in New England, jazz in New Orleans, gambling in Las Vegas, many of the other things that make up a European's dream of America.

John and Betty Marsh of Kansas City were selected after weeks of patient interviews and tests. John was a capable young dentist, the busy partner of his father in a thriving practice. Betty, his wife, sang in the church choir and had been taking singing lessons and drama instruction. She had modelled, too, in a Kansas City specialty shop and had a flair for clothes. Betty designed and made many of her own dresses. To embark on their once-in-a-lifetime Cinerama adventure, the Marshes said good-bye to work and careers in Kansas City. It was, to them, a vacation and a holiday. Once ended, they would return.

Fred and Beatrice Troller lived in Zurich. Both had been art students. When they married, Beatrice became a housewife. Fred's success as a commercial artist was mounting. He had done designs for the Swiss airline. An airline official recommended the Trollers to Mr. de Rochemont's scout. Tests were made of many couples. Mr. de Rochemont said that no decision was ever more difficult than deciding among the seven finalists. From their home at the foot of the majestic Alps, the huge Swissair plane carried the Trollers, bubbling with excitement and adventure, to St. Louis to meet the Marshes as they, too, took off on their adventure.

Trying to understand each other, the things they had in common and the things in which they differed, occupied their first minutes. The American idea of a short courtship drew little enthusiasm from the visitors from Switzerland. They thought it better to wait, to be sure. Marriage wasn't "like the movies". Beatrice Troller had heard about adoring and hard-

working American husbands. "Does John really do the dishes?" she asked. "Well under pressure and without enthusiasm, he'll do some of them sometimes. Doesn't Fred?"

"I should say not! That's my domain!" Beatrice answered.

That both the Trollers and the Marshes had a wonderful time is as foregone a conclusion as the fact that the Marshes didn't find Switzerland and Paris what they expected it to be and that the Trollers didn't discover an America to match their preconceptions.

Apache Indians in Arizona without war-paint, wearing dungarees and eating canned fruit, startled the Trollers. San Francisco proved a thrilling subject for the sketchbook in which Fred kept a record of personal impressions. A Vista-Dome train roaring through the canyons of Colorado gave them a magnificent sense of the difference in size and scope between America and tiny picture-book Switzerland.

The Marshes loved Switzerland, the Swiss, the Swiss idea of fun. It was fun that didn't end with the snow and ice sports, but continued to the happy hours around the dining table or before the roaring fire, singing, toasting, laughing over the day's adventures.

Paris was different, with meanings and beauties hidden behind the mists of the centuries. Awed by Napoleon's Tomb, deeply moved by a High Mass at Notre Dame, fascinated by long loaves of newly baked bread as it came out of the old ovens or enjoying



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traditional onion soup at an all-night restaurant, Paris was a series of never-ending delights. They sat with a French family and, in their home, discovered a Frenchman's and a Frenchwomen's idea of a home and family, and how it differed from an American idea. They saw the chic splendour of a Jacques Fath fashion show and the high-stepping, brightly coloured gaiety of a Paris night-club floor show.

And then the two couples met again in New York, to see Cinerama for the first time and to bring to an end a holiday that the couples can never hope to duplicate.

Their future? The Trollers wanted to see more of America, particularly Mexico. Fred wanted to finish his sketch book as a kind of free-wheeling diary of the visit. Then back to Zurich, to pick up where he left off.

John and Betty Marsh hurried home to Kansas City. Both said they wanted another holiday in Europe, to see it all over again, and to look for the things they had missed the first time. But first, John said, his career was dentistry. "I can work all day as a dentist without getting tired," he said. "But in front of those lights, the microphones and the camera I get worn out."

There is a belief in the East that no experience is ever complete until it is understood. The Trollers and the Marshes are thrilled that millions of people will see "Cinerama Holiday", and that they can live their adventures over again with them.

THE PRODUCTION STORY.

Producing a picture like "Cinerama Holiday" forced on Mr. de Rochemont and his organization an elaborate planning and experimental procedure that was not unlike running an army. Co-ordinating an European production unit with the American counterpart, getting information from headquarters to the directors of the two units, making quick decisions by transatlantic phone as unforeseen circumstances developed, became the daily routine. Endless experiments with the Cinerama camera, such as mounting it on a bobsled or in the nose of a jet fighter, swinging it around an ice rink at great speed in the patterns of a Viennese waltz, went on and on. Constantly, the question: Will it work?

On one of the very coldest days of the coldest French winter in years, Mr. de Rochemont recalls that they started shooting in Paris by spending 13 hours photographing Napoleon's tomb beneath the dome of Les Invalides. Usually the arc lights and the 10 kilowatt incandescents would raise the temperature of almost any indoor location, but not in Les Invalides. The next day, everyone had colds.

In the Louvre, the curators were worried about the possibility that the heat generated by the Cinerama lights might endanger the delicate surfaces of The Mona Lisa and some of the other of the world's great paintings. "Here", they said, "we have what you might call a greenhouse. We raise great works of art, gently nursing them along through the centuries." Twice, Mr. de Rochemont and his crew were welcomed as they returned for additional shots.

In order to photograph the famous floor show at the Lido night-club, Mr. de Rochemont's staff had to start lighting after the night-club closed its doors, that is, after 4 o'clock in the morning. Furthermore, the rehearsing and the actual shooting — one of the longest and most spectacular of the whole picture — had to be completed before the cabaret opened at 5 o'clock the next afternoon. It was a hard day for the chorus girls who had another show that evening. The Students' Ball took place in the City Hall of the 18th Arrondissement, which was redecorated for the occasion by a committee from the Cité Universitaire. After the students had worked all day, the Fire Commissioner arrived and quickly made the decision that the very imaginative decore was a fire hazard. Three revisions had to be made before the ball got under way. But once they got started, the students soon forgot there was a camera in their midst. They drank champagne, sang and danced through the night completely oblivious of lights, microphones and the three eyes of Cinerama. Several times, glasses champagne were found secreted in the housing of the camera for safekeeping.

When the de Rochemont crew shot High Mass at Notre Dame, it had to be the actual ceremony in all its solemnity. There were no rehearsals, no interruptions, and no retakes. A big portion of Notre Dame, which is larger than St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, had to be lighted and photographed. The enormous Cinerama camera had to move in and out of the ceremony, almost like a celebrant. Microphones were everywhere. A great bank of lights drew 8,000 amps of current from 16 generators. Not a mistake could be made; not a mistake was made.

Three days were allotted for the ice show. Then

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the skaters, more than a hundred in the company, had to leave for Copenhagen. The forecast for the three crucial days was: Snow! Despite the forecast, the famous St. Moritz sun rose over the mountains, and the sky remained blue for the entire period of shooting. But with a temperature of 10° below zero, the musicians did their best to play — the clarinetist with thick sheepskin gloves, the cornetist saying his metal mouthpiece was so cold that his lips stuck to it. The ice at the famous Suvrette House rink was frozen so hard the skaters found it did strange tricks to their routines. But the sequence was completed.

Photographing the bob-sled run was quite as dangerous as it looks in "Cinerama Holiday". When the Olympic champion, who happened to be in St. Moritz, saw the heavy camera mounted in front of the sled, with Nino Bibbia, the St. Moritz Bob-Club's best driver perched precariously behind it, he walked away, shaking his head and mumbling, "I won't do it!" The enormous velocity of the run caused the film, very brittle from the cold to buckle on the first six runs. On the seventh, it worked.

Photographing the skiing sequence turned into a real winter safari. Up the magnificent, snow-covered slopes above Davos, they laboured. The best territory was discovered to be halfway down the Parsenn slope to Wolfgang, the most famous ski run in the world. The crew was miles from electricity, telephone, heating, warm food and the other accessories of civilization. Skiing looked easy to the crew. After seven accidents in five days, skiing was banned to the crew.

Adventure in America was just as interesting. In Las Vegas during one "take", three people hit the jackpot.

Three months of preparation were required for the California Zephyr sequence. A Vista-Dome railroad car was removed from service and modified to accommodate the Cinerama camera. The tinted plexiglass used in the dome was replaced with clear glass to allow colour photography. Special platforms were added to enable the camera to work inside and outside of the train. A special train schedule was fixed six weeks prior to the start of production; the entire system of three railroads was co-ordinated with that of the scheduled trains. The Cinerama trucks were routed separately to meet the train each evening.

A great many problems of co-ordination arose during the filming of the Navy jet fighter sequence. The U.S. Navy, the Grumman Aircraft Engineering Corporation and Cinerama technicians joined in working out schemes for photographing from ship-board and from the nose of a jet. The "Lake Chaplain" had a training mission to complete. The Cinerama project was not allowed to interfere with the regular schedule. Close co-operation, even in the interior scenes, was essential. While photographing below decks, the Cinerama generator was located on the hangar deck. As one flight of fighters left the ship, the generators would start and the de Rochemont crew would attempt to complete a scene before the return of the squadron.

No string of anecdotes tells the endless heartache of red tape with the Customs, posting bonds, permits and police protection for everything, Swiss government drivers over mountain roads, keeping film on dry ice in Arizona, the problems of getting a Swissair plane to fly to St. Louis and back to Zurich.

Statistics, too, fail to tell the story. There were 201 days of unit shooting; the two companies travelled 30,000 miles; four languages were employed. Some 675,000 feet of film were exposed. More than 5,000 people took part in the picture.

It was, as Mr. de Rochemont says, an adventure.

THE SONGS AND THE MUSIC.

How important is a background score to a film? In most cases it helps to create whatever feeling of atmosphere, mood, suspense, or drama a particular sequence may demand. But with Cinerama's seven-throated directional high-fidelity sound system, with a range of 15,000 cycles, twice that of the ordinary sound system, and complete control of sound direction, the music and sound become a primary factor in the total experience.

Jack Shaindlin, the musical director, faced with the problem of finding the composer who could best bring to life the spirit of fun and gaiety of "Cinerama Holiday", finally chose Morton Gould, one of America's best-known composers. The variety of his score is enormous, ranging from the infectious lilt of the "Cinerama Holiday" theme, a work that perfectly reflects the carefree happy fun of a holiday adventure, to a ballet composed especially for the skiing sequence, blending visual beauty and excitement to produce a rousing climax. With the quality of reproduction possible in the Cinerama sound system, Mr. Shaindlin, conducting a 75-piece symphony orchestra, has been able to give Mr. Gould's



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music a performance that cannot be equalled by any other recording process.

Paris is many things to many people, and in music and song all the sensations of experiencing the city itself have been expressed. The solemn dignity of a Couperin Mass is captured by the Boys' Choir of Notre Dame Cathedral. The most famous military band in Europe, the Garde Republicaine, plays "Sambre et Meuse" at the Cour d'Honneur of Les Invalides and then is heard again as we review the cadets of St. Cyr, the military school founded by Napoleon. We attend a performance of Jean-Philippe Rameau's 18th century opera-ballet, "Les Indes Galantes", and we are almost immediately transported to the 20th century to see Paris night life and listen to the modern dance rhythms of the Lido show. But Paris would be incomplete if the very quality of the streets, the people, the parks, gardens, even the walks along the river banks, was not experienced, and Mr. Gould in a charming, nostalgic waltz and in his gay promenade music has evoked all the special quality that Paris represents.

One of the most delightful musical sequences takes place in "La Ferme", in Davos, where we join a group of skiers in the evening at a cheese fondu party, and share the warmth and friendliness of the gathering by participating in the rollicking "Hop-sah-sah waltz", a number based on an old Swiss folk song. First it is sung by Ernst Berchtold and Bertely Studer, well-known European yodelling singers with the entire group joining in the chorus, and later we hear it in a modern ingenious arrangement by Mr. Gould.

Perhaps the most unusual and exciting musical sequence takes place when Fred and Beatrice, trying to find the heart and origin of American music, go to New Orleans. Here they listen to the congregation of the Second Free Mission Baptist Church sing "Down by the Riverside", watch the Jolly Bunch Social and Pleasure Club and Tuxedo Marching Band play "When the Saints Go Marching In" as they leave the Lafayette Cemetery, and finally sit in on Oscar "Papa" Celestine and the Original Tuxedo Dixieland Jazz Band as they give us an original interpretation of "Tiger Rag". Perhaps we can come no closer to what may truly be called American folk-music. All latter composer, both classical and popular, owe a great debt to the music that sprang from such jazz groups in New Orleans.

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In San Francisco, the Cinerama Sound system turned its seven microphones to ward the tiny stage of The Tin Angel and listened to Odetta Felious and Larry Mohr sing "Santy Anno", an American sea chanty that dates from the Gold Rush days. In Chinatown, it recorded an oriental orchestra performance of a century-old Chinese love song entitled "The Luminous Pearl and Magnolia". A wide variety is evident once again in the vocal music, ranging from the Dartmouth College Glee Club singing "Men of Dartmouth" and the University of New Hampshire Glee Club capturing the mood of the Deerfield Fair in "Come to the Fair", all the way to the stirring patriotic finale, "Hail to Our Land", by James Peterson and Jack Shaindlin, as sung by the United States Naval Academy Choir.

It is this combination of opera and honky-tonk, ballet and college choir, jazz band and church mass, all blended with a distinctive original music score that makes for a rich, rewarding musical experience and gives "CINERAMA HOLIDAY" its unique sense of reality, colour and vitality.

PHILATELY.

Swiss Publicity Stamps.

On the 1st of March, 1956, four publicity postage stamps will again be issued, three of them on the occasion of jubilees of national transport enterprises and the fourth for the benefit of the safety of road traffic.

For the first time, these special stamps come in the size 36 x 26 mm. The five cents stamp commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Swiss postal motor coach service which started its operation in the route from Berne to Detligen in 1906.

The ten cents stamp recalls the opening of the Simplon tunnel half a century ago, an event hardly second in importance to the piercing of the Gotthard. The 40 cents stamp is dedicated to the founding, 25 years ago of Swissair, which from a modest start has grown to be an air transport company with worldwide connections.

Being a large road transport enterprise, the Swiss PTT Administration thinks it part of its responsibility to help in the fight for accident prevention. Therefore, with the 20 cents stamp of the publicity series an attempt is made to contribute to the safety of road traffic. Details of the new stamps are given below: 5 cents. Illustration of the first postal motor coach (1906). It is designed by Bernhard Reber of Berne and is printed in three colours: grey, yellow and black.

10 cents. North gate of Simplon tunnel and Stockalper Palace. Designed by Ursula Huber-Bavier of Zug and printed in green, grey and red.

20 cents. Children on pedestrian crossing and traffic signs. Designed by Edi Hauri of Basel and printed in four colours: dark carmine, vermilion, yellow and black.

40 cents. Ancient and modern type of passenger aircraft and emblem of Swissair. Designed by Pierre Gauchat of Kussnacht. Colours: blue and red.

(Information by courtesy of Direction General of PTT.)

E.N.P.