

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SPRING CONVENTION

HOLLYWOOD ROOSEVELT HOTEL  
HOLLYWOOD, CALIF.  
MAY 24-28, 1937

As Conventions come and go it would seem that each is more successful than the preceding. However, it can be safely stated that the recent Convention in Hollywood was by far the most successful of all that have been held by the Society on the western coast, and it is doubtful whether any other Convention has ever exceeded this one in point of interest, attendance, and participation. The number of paid registrations was greater than at all previous conventions, and the attendance at the technical sessions, from the first session on Monday morning to the last session on Friday evening, was indicative of the increasing interest of the Hollywood engineers and technicians in the activities of the Society.

The evening sessions were especially interesting and capacity audiences were attracted to each one. The gratitude and appreciation of the Society and the Board of Governors was expressed by President Wolf in his closing remarks on Friday evening to the Society officers on the West Coast, to the Board of Managers of the Pacific Coast Section, and to the officers of the Research Council of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences. One of the highlights of the week was the special Thursday evening session of the Academy Research Council, arranged through the courtesy of William Koenig, Chairman, and Nathan Levinson, Vice-Chairman of the Council. The Society is also greatly indebted to Gordon S. Mitchell, Manager of the Research Council, and the members of his staff for their excellent cooperation and generous assistance.

### TECHNICAL SESSIONS

The Convention opened at 10 A.M. on Monday (May 24th) with a brief presidential address by Mr. S. K. Wolf; several Committee reports, including the comprehensive Progress Committee's Annual Report; and two papers on applications of motion pictures.

The customary Informal Luncheon was held at noon in the Florentine Room of the Hotel, during which the members of the Society were addressed briefly by President Wolf and Major Nathan Levinson, of Warner Bros. Studios, Raymond Hatton, well known comedian, and various members of the Board of Managers of the Pacific Coast Section. An official photograph of the delegates was made on the Patio immediately following the luncheon.

The highlight of the Monday afternoon session, which dealt with studio matters, was probably the paper describing "A New Viewpoint on the Lighting of Motion Pictures," by G. Gaudio, well known cinematographer of Hollywood. In arriving at his new view-point in lighting technic, Mr. Gaudio first traced the development of the studio lighting art to show the gradual evolution of the technic into its present-day form. Other papers, as listed in the program printed on the following pages, completed a well-rounded session on the engineering problems

and developments in modern motion picture studios. The paper by L. Fermaud, describing "The London Film Studios at Denham, England" was particularly interesting in this respect.

The evening of Monday, May 24th, was devoted to an all-Technicolor program of recent feature and short subjects, including the new release *A Star Is Born*. This entire session was arranged through the courtesy of Mr. G. F. Rackett, Vice-President of Technicolor Motion Picture Corporation.

The morning of Tuesday, May 25th, was devoted to the problems of color motion pictures. Considerable interest was shown in the papers dealing with the new Agfacolor process and color-print processes. In connection with the latter presentation, by O. O. Ceccarini, a comprehensive exhibit of color-stills by various studios and leading color photographers throughout the country was on display in one of the parlors of the Hotel during the entire Convention.

The afternoon session was marked by a particularly interesting paper by H. E. A. Joachim, of Dresden, Germany, describing "Twenty Years of Development of High-Frequency Cameras." The latter part of the afternoon was devoted to a symposium on transmission meters, and provided considerable technical material on up-to-date methods of recording and measuring sound transmission characteristics.

One of the most outstanding—some would perhaps say *the* most outstanding—sessions of the Convention was the one held at the Universal Studios on the evening of Tuesday, May 25th, at which a complete demonstration was given of "How Motion Pictures Are Made." A complete description of the proceedings of the evening will be published in a forthcoming issue of the JOURNAL, but it is well at this point to register the thanks of the Society to those who worked so hard to make the evening an outstanding success. Thanks are due particularly to Mr. Charles R. Rogers, Vice-President in Charge of Production; and to Mr. Homer G. Tasker, Sound Supervisor of the Universal Studios.

About 450 or 500 delegates and their friends assembled at 8 P.M. on one of the sound stages, where they were welcomed to Universal by Mr. Val Paul, Studio Manager. Then followed a paper by Mr. Robert Presnell, Associate Producer, in which were described the methods and problems involved in preparing stories for production. With particular reference to a scene in the forthcoming picture, *One Hundred Men and a Girl*, starring Deanna Durbin, a paper by John Harkrider, Supervising Art Director (presented by Michael Fitzmaurice), discussed the problem of "Set Design from Script to Stage." An artist and an architectural member of the studio demonstrated with crayon and pencil how the preliminary sketches are made in planning the sets to conform to the ideas of the authors of the stories. Then followed a paper by Bernard Brown, Chief Music and Dubbing Mixer, on "Prescoring for Song Sequences." The procedure as described in the paper was demonstrated by an actual recording of the voice of Miss Deanna Durbin singing a song to a playback orchestral accompaniment which was later to be dubbed into the picture shot on the stage designed by the artists as described above.

Adjourning now to the projection stage, the members were treated to a complete demonstration of how motion pictures are photographed. A complete crew of cinematographers, lighting men, director, and actors (Mischa Auer and Deanna Durbin) all participated in demonstrating the procedure, to the accompaniment

of an informal description of the procedure by Mr. Tasker. When the shot was completed, the group again convened on the sound stage and saw the projection of the completed picture which had been photographed and recorded as here described. (It is hardly necessary to state, of course, that the finished scene, as projected, was not the actual one shot during this evening's session; such would have been impossible in view of the time required for processing, *etc.*)

Concluding the evening, various shots were projected to show the effects upon the "mood" of the picture of various kinds of background music, as discussed by Charles Previn, Musical Director, and to demonstrate also the manner of rough cutting and editing pictures, as described by Maurice Pivar, Supervising Editor. A particularly interesting demonstration was given by Edwin Wetzel, Dubbing Mixer, during which he went through the actual procedure of mixing a number of sound effects into a picture that was projected first with dialog only and later with the sound effects added.

The morning of Wednesday, May 26th, was devoted principally to acoustic and sound, one of the outstanding papers of the session being the one on "Recent Progress in Acoustics," by V. O. Knudsen. The papers on an "Improved Noise-Reduction System," by Hasbrouck, Baker, and Batsel, and on "A Device for Direct Reproduction from Variable-Density Sound Negatives," by M. J. Albersheim, aroused considerable interest among those attending the meeting.

The afternoon of Wednesday was devoted to a visit to the Studios of the Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation at Beverley Hills, during which the members were escorted throughout the lot and the various stages.

The Semi-Annual Banquet was held in the Blossom Room of the Hotel on the evening of the same day. The evening was devoted in its entirety to dining and entertainment, as it was felt that the rigors of the long technical sessions warranted dispensing with formalities on that evening.

Thursday afternoon (May 27th) was devoted to papers and presentations dealing with laboratory and projection problems. A paper by Captain J. G. Bradley, dealing with the "Changing Aspects of the Film Storage Problem," contained interesting information on experiments recently conducted with regard to the inflammability of film in storage cabinets. A paper by J. M. Nickolaus on "Toning Positive Film by Machine Methods" described the procedure followed in toning the recent feature *The Good Earth* at the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios. The session included also papers on the design of a densitometer and the measurement of density and graininess, which aroused considerable discussion, and on the application of pH control to photographic fixing baths and other solutions.

Another outstanding session of the Convention was held on the evening of Thursday at the M-G-M Studios at Culver City; namely, a meeting of the Research Council and the Technicians Branch of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, to which the members and guests of the SMPE were invited. An outstanding presentation of the evening was the paper on "The Work of the Committee on Standardization of Theater Sound Projection Equipment Characteristics," by J. K. Hilliard, Chairman of the Academy Committee. This paper described the work of the Committee in connection with the establishment of theater equipment characteristics. The evening concluded with the projection of a number of scenes from outstanding films, illustrating sound quality, special effects, and unusual photography.

The morning session of Friday, May 28th, was devoted to an apparatus symposium and miscellaneous papers on magnetic recording, the use of infrared negative, laboratory equipment, *etc.* The afternoon of Friday was devoted to a group of papers on 16-mm. and 35-mm. sound recording and reproduction, including the report of the Standards Committee, and a description of the new SMPE 16-mm. Sound Test-Film, by M. C. Batsel. A new 16-mm. sound projector was described and demonstrated effectively by E. C. Fritts and O. Sandvik and examples of very fine class A push-pull recordings were demonstrated by G. L. Dimmick.

The closing session of the Convention on Friday evening, at which Mr. Ralph R. Beal, Research Supervisor of the Radio Corporation of America, presented a description of the RCA system of television, was attended by perhaps 450 or 500 members and guests of the Society.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

As pointed out previously, the success of the Convention was due to the efforts of a large number of officers, members, and friends of the Society. Credit is due particularly to the efforts of Mr. W. C. Kunzman, *Convention Vice-President*; Mr. H. G. Tasker, *Past-President*; Mr. J. I. Crabtree, *Editorial Vice-President*; Mr. G. E. Matthews, *Chairman*, Papers Committee; Messrs. H. Griffin and J. Frank, Jr., in charge of projection facilities; Mr. W. A. Mueller, *Chairman*; and Mr. L. A. Aicholtz, *Secretary*, West Coast Local Papers Committee; to the Board of Managers of the Pacific Coast Section; Mr. K. F. Morgan, *Chairman*; Mr. G. F. Rackett, *Past Chairman* of the Section, and *Executive Vice-President* of the Society; Mr. G. A. Chambers, *Secretary-Treasurer*; and Messrs. J. O. Aalberg and H. W. Moyse, *Managers*. The officers and members of Los Angeles Local No. 150 I.A.T.S.E. are particularly to be thanked for their generous assistance in connection with the projection of all the motion pictures throughout the entire Convention session. Appreciation is also expressed to the American Society of Cinematographers for supplying a number of papers by members of their Society.

Acknowledgement for their generous assistance is also due to P. Mole, *Chairman*, Local Arrangements Committee; Mrs. K. F. Morgan and Mrs. P. Mole, *hostesses*; and Messrs. C. W. Handley, E. Huse, and G. F. Rackett, for their assistance in connection with transportation, hotel accommodations, banquet, *etc.*

Among the companies and studios that should be thanked for their coöperation in providing various facilities of the Convention, and for their great cordiality in receiving the members at the studios, are the following: National Carbon Company; International Projector Corporation; National Theater Supply Corporation; Raven Screen Company; Electrical Research Products, Inc.; Bausch & Lomb Optical Company; General Electric Company; Mole Richardson, Inc.; Enterprise Optical Company; General Electric Supply Company; and Dictaphone Products Corporation, all of which collaborated in making available the equipment used during the technical sessions. Universal Studios, M-G-M Studios, and Twentieth Century-Fox Film Studios are to be thanked for entertaining the delegates and making available the facilities of their plants. Thanks are due also to the Fox West Coast Theaters, Warner Bros. Hollywood Theater, and Pantages Theater for supplying passes to members and guests during the week of the Convention, and to Warner Bros. Studios for supplying the entertainment features for the banquet