

'FAIR LADY' PLANS TO CLOSE JULY 7

Show Will Have Set Record of 2,621 Performances

By SAM ZOLOTOW

July 7 was announced yesterday as the closing date for "My Fair Lady," which has been entertaining theatregoers here since March 15, 1956.

When the Alan Jay Lerner-Frederick Loewe musical, derived from Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion," vacates the Broadway Theatre, it will have achieved a record engagement of 2,621 performances for a musical.

"Oklahoma!" was the previous record holder in the song and dance division with 2,212 performances. On Broadway's honor roll, only two other plays established longer runs than "My Fair Lady"—"Life With Father" (3,224) and "Tobacco Road" (3,182).

Through Richard Maney, archivist for Herman Levin, producer of "My Fair Lady," comes the information that more than 3,500,000 customers will have paid about \$20,000,000 to see the show, directed by the late Moss Hart.

In addition to that revenue, those concerned with the offering will share in the proceeds from the film sale. Warner Brothers paid \$5,500,000 in cash for the screen rights plus 47½ per cent of the film's gross receipts over \$20,000,000.

Five per cent of the distributor's gross will go to Mr. Shaw's estate, which already has been enriched by \$1,800,000 from world wide stage presentations.

The Columbia Broadcasting System, sole backer of the stage offering with an investment of \$360,000, has earned profits of \$3,000,000, not counting those accruing from the album or the screen rights. An official observer said the total profits thus far, excluding the film's proceeds, should exceed \$10,000,000.

Meanwhile, London's edition of the musical may be forced to discontinue its run as the result of a threatened strike by musicians that would stop all West End shows. Unless the wage dispute is settled, the date the walkout will start is to be decided today.

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'Affair' to Open Oct. 3

Voluntary concessions from persons involved in "The Affair" will make it possible for Ronald Millar's dramatization of C. P. Snow's novel to open at the intimate Henry Miller's on Oct. 3.

The procedure entered into this season by the Dramatists Guild and the League of New York Theatres, although not widely practiced by the industry, provides for cuts over a certain period from key people, but not from the theatre owner or scenic designer.

In the case of "The Affair," Gilbert Miller, owner of Henry Miller's, has lowered his rental fee for the entire run because the attraction employs a cast of twenty-one and five sets, designed by Eldon Elder.

Besides Mr. Snow, Mr. Millar (adapter) and Mr. Elder, lower remuneration for a period of seventeen weeks also has been accepted by John Fernald, director, and some of the major performers, not signed yet.

Despite the economical measures, it will take twenty-one weeks of capacity business at \$33,000 a week to recover the production cost of \$125,000. The attraction will be introduced by Bonard Productions and Henry Sherek. The pre-Broadway tour starts Sept. 3 in Boston. A week and a half of previews will precede the local première.

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New Behrman Play

Broadway was agog over a report that S. N. Behrman might have another play, besides "Lord Pengo," on the boards next season. Investigation brought to light that the author has such a play on tap, temporarily entitled "But for Charlie," which concerns a philanthropist, his large foundation, and the man who operates it.

It would have gone into the Morosco in November under the joint auspices of Robert Whitehead and Roger L. Stevens had Elia Kazan been available as the director. But he is tied up with a film commitment in addition to his duties as co-producing director with Mr. Whitehead of the Lincoln Center's Vivian Beaumont Theatre, opening in April, 1964.

Mr. Kazan is expected to squeeze in the staging during the 1963-64 term. However, he has been telling inquirers that he is too busy with the formation of the Vivian Beaumont's repertory company to undertake any outside assignments other than the impending screen project.

"Lord Pengo" has been announced to open here Oct. 31. Heading the cast are Charles Boyer and Agnes Moorehead.

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Stage Directors to Meet

The final meeting in the series conducted by the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers to gain recognition from the League of New York Theatres is expected to take place on June 4. This was learned yesterday from one of the negotiators, who said a draft of the agreement was in preparation. The society had threatened to call a strike on Wednesday if recognition was not granted.

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Theatre Notes

"All American," starring Ray Bolger, closes Saturday night at the Winter Garden after a ten-week stand. . . . Jean Shepherd has resigned from the incoming revival of "Brigadoon." His role was taken over by Farley Granger. . . . Frederick Brisson is joining forces with Roger L. Stevens to present Garson Kanin's play, "Come on Strong,"

starring Carroll Baker and Van Johnson. . . . Joey Heatherton has been engaged for a featured role in "Step on a Crack." . . . James Earl Jones returns to the role he created in "The Blacks" tonight. . . . "If Five Years" will be withdrawn on Sunday night.