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FAST.

In 1964, the National General Corporation was looking for equipment that would give them positive control over box office sales plus complete and accurate sales data. The name they invented for the system was FAST (Fool-proof Auditing and Sale of Tickets).

National Cash Register developed a new type of register for them; up to seven prices could be locked into the machine. Depression of one key (there is one for each pre-set price) recorded the sale. If one or all prices changed, it was a simple matter to replace the old with the new.

Over a year passed before the first equipment was installed at the Fox Northridge Theatre in California on January 12, 1966. The latest version is now known as the NCR Automatic Ticket Register. The system keeps an accurate total of the dollar business done and a unit count of each type of ticket sold - it is impossible to tamper with these figures. The register also prints its information on a daily "report of business" form for the home office in less than five minutes. It used to take approximately twenty to thirty minutes to write by hand. Each transaction is printed on the detail journal tape inside the machine. This, too, is sent to headquarters. Here then is the control and information that National General needed.

There are other benefits to the system in addition to its control features. When one key is depressed, the price of the admission ticket adds into the "business done" total, the unit total for that particular type of ticket increases by one, and one adds to the visible resettable house counter. The latter counter lets the manager keep tabs on how many are in the theatre at any given time. At the same moment, the register prints a two-part, easy-to-separate ticket showing the company logo, type of ticket, control number, and admission price. This feature eliminates ticket inventories, and a change in price policy does not mean that tickets have to be scrapped. National General estimates that just these savings will pay for the equipment in 3 to 5 years.

The register can automatically repeat its processes from two to eleven

times. The cashier only has to depress the appropriate repeat key.

There is no slow down when coin change is needed. The register triggers the automatic and accurate operation of an NCR dispenser. All these features help one cashier issue up to 1000 tickets an hour.

The system is geared to future automation. Whenever a company desires, it can employ electronic data processing in the form of computer-printed management reports. The register's detail audit tape is printed in a language that can be read by NCR computer systems.

DESIGN, TICKETS AND OUTDOOR DRAMA

The Institute for Outdoor Drama has again produced an excellent series of new Bulletins. All are available at the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill, NC) for the price of postage.

Bulletin 15, PLANNING FOR AN OUTDOOR HISTORICAL DRAMA, is intended as a "starting place for further discussion and as a guide to the first steps in joining together the business and artistic elements necessary for such a major community undertaking. "The three-page text touches on drawing power, audiences, facility size, dramatic considerations, quality of the staff and cast, sponsors, location, and types of facilities. The Bulletin ends with two tables: a moderate-sized, first-year budget, and a "very minimum first-year" set of figures for outdoor theatre.

AMPHITHEATRE DESIGN (Bulletin 27) starts with a warning; "specific details of construction design and use patterns should be undertaken only with competent and experienced consultants at hand."

The Bulletin then reviews aesthetic and economic considerations and ends with a statement about current auditorium styles. A sample construction and equipment budget for a 1,500 seat amphitheatre is attached to the report.

Bulletin 28 contains important data on TICKET PRICE SCALES. Although it is only two pages long, it covers a surprising number of pricing problems - all keyed to outdoor theatre. The report discusses the income graph, typical break-even attendance percentages, seating capacities, and trends for top prices.

Although one always wishes that the Institute for Outdoor Drama would publish longer and more detailed reports, they have already done more than many "service" associations to help their members in the management area. The Bulletins make an important addition to the theatre administrator's library of source materials.

his firm in the past tense. Mr. Simon is president of PACKAGE PUBLICITY SERVICE not Packaged Publicity Service.

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NEWSPAPERS

Davies, Lawrence E., "Oakland Bids for Place in Arts As Its Repertory Group Opens," THE NEW YORK TIMES (September 14, 1966).

The Oakland National Repertory Theatre opened its four-play season on September 12.

Ackelmire, Bea, "In'pls. Blueprints a New Midtown Culture Centre," VARIETY (September 21, 1966), Vol. 244, No. 5:62.

The Indianapolis Capital Improvement Board produced a civic study including mention of a new culture center. It is believed that ground will be broken for it by late 1968. The study was prepared by an outside firm. (130)

Esterow, Milton, "Arts Unit Urged For U.S. Business," THE NEW YORK TIMES (September 21, 1966)

During the September 20th. meeting of the National Industrial Conference Board, David Rockefeller urged that business leaders form a Council on Business and the Arts.

Roth, Morry, "New Kick In Sticks: Culture," VARIETY (September 21, 1966), Vol. 244, No. 5:1, 62.

Mayor Daley, Chicago, issues a long-awaited program for the arts. The

plan is "detailed and specific and includes financing for the entire project." There is a detailed summary of the report, supplied to the Mayor by the firm of John Price Jones. (131)

Taubman, Howard, "Commerce Shows Welcome Change In Attitude About Cultural Patronage," THE NEW YORK TIMES (September 22, 1966).

See above: "Esterow, Milton." In this article, there is a list of the arts activities of several firms. (132)

Kupferberg, Herbert, "The Center Before Culture?" WORLD JOURNAL TRIBUNE (September 25, 1966). Section 5, page 7.

At a time when "funds are being solicited... for cultural centers in this area, the North Shore Opera cancelled its season for lack" of funds. Sold-out performances of this established company could not keep up with the debt. (133)

Morse, Tom, "Dark' & 'Luv' Prove Twofer Power, But Skillful Selling is Essential, Says Distributor Steve Gardner," VARIETY (September 28, 1966), Vol. 244, No. 6:61, 64.

A discussion of the "near-exact science" of twofer distribution - a subject which still scares many producers. (135)

Setlowe, Rick, "Frisco & Chi Share Repertory," VARIETY (September 28, 1966) Vol. 244, No 6:61, 66.

The American Conservatory Repertory Theatre will "settle in San Francisco for a year and then shift to Chicago in a three-year long shuttle program..." San Francisco headquarters is, according to director Ball, the 1400-seat Geary, Chicago is the 900-seat Civic Theatre. Ball expects either city to have built a "Beaumont" just for them by 1970. (137)

Zolotow, Sam, "Future Is Bright For Twofer Fans," THE NEW YORK TIMES (September 30, 1966).

There appear to be a record number of shows either on twofers or about to go on them this season.

"6 D. C. Arts Groups Join In Coin Drive," VARIETY (October 5, 1966), Vol. 244, No. 7:61.

"Six nonprofit performing arts organizations have banded together in United Performing Arts of Washington for a cooperative subscription drive." (138)

"Stiffer Penalties In Copyright Law Hearten Music Biz," VARIETY (October 5, 1966), Vol. 244, No. 7:1, 68.

The amendment would increase the damage due to publishers for copyright infringement, and default on royalty payments. Longer copyright life also contemplated. (139)

"Dance Directors May Finally Get Legal Protection for Their Work," VARIETY (October 12, 1966), Vol. 244, No. 8:72.

Choreography may be protected for the first time by copyright under a proposed new law voted out of the House judiciary committee. The new bill may go through at the next legislative session. Copyright methods discussed. (140)

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