

## Document Citation

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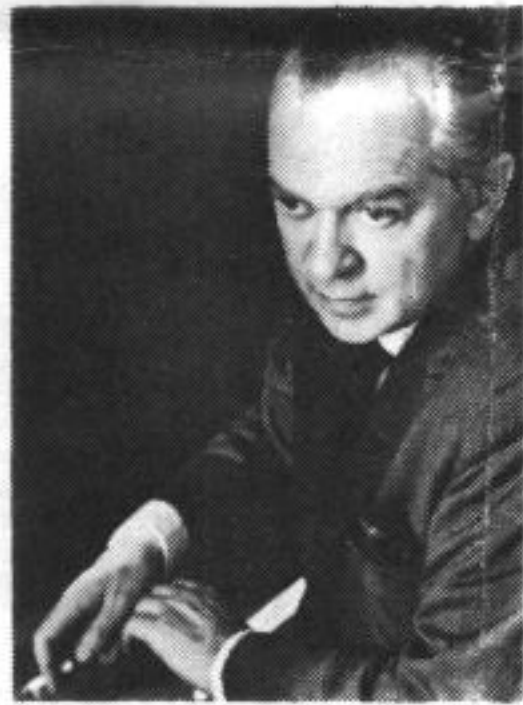
## Film of Distinction

# "King of Kings" Imposing, Reverential, Eye-Filling Spectacle

### Business Rating \$ \$ \$ \$

**Tasteful, compelling depiction of Jesus and His times. Rewarding experience for all audiences. Will rank with great motion picture successes.**

Welcome "King of Kings" to the honored list of outstanding motion picture production! Exhibitors and moviegoers throughout the world, who have been eagerly anticipating its release, will echo this praise, for Samuel Bronston's tasteful, reverent and inspirational dramatization of the birth, life and death of Jesus Christ emerges compelling and rewarding entertainment. A major piece of film making in every sense, it takes its place alongside of the industry's outstanding moneymakers, and like "Ben-Hur", "Ten Commandments" and "Spartacus," it will stand as an important contribution to the entire motion picture industry.



BRONSTON

Bronston is to be congratulated for supplying exhibitors an assured boxoffice champion, audiences a memorable theatrical experience, and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer must be applauded for backing their release with a full-scale promotion campaign that will stir up want-to-see in all the corners of the world. This mighty biblical spectacle is a tribute to the teachings and beliefs of peace on earth, and while scripter Philip Yordan occasionally allows himself certain dramatic licenses, the religious approach has been handled with the utmost of taste. And "King

of Kings" also has its moments of action-packed excitement as it unfolds its sweeping panorama of the pagan-dominated world Christ set out to convert. It is deserving of specialized roadshow treatment, and the boxoffice returns assuredly will be in the blockbuster class. When eventually placed into general release, grosses will zoom even higher. "King of Kings" commands viewing by audiences of all ages, tastes and religious beliefs.

Director Nicholas Ray has guided this gigantic project with skill and dexterity, making the battle scenes and the Crucifixion come stingingly alive with the proper amount of dramatic violence, yet never losing sight of the inspirational story he has set out to tell. With scene after scene, Ray has captured the time of Jesus' life in breathtaking Technicolor and 70mm Super Technirama, weaving a brilliant religious tapestry—the rugged terrain, the massive Temple of Judea, the recreation of the town of Nazareth, the ornate Palace of Herod Antipas, the Nativity, Jesus wandering alone in the wilderness, the Last Supper. And few will be able to forget the child-devil Salome sensuously dancing before her weakling stepfather Herod in return for John the Baptist's head; the stirring and fluid Sermon on the Mount; the thunderous battle outside of the Fortress Antonia where well-disciplined Roman legionnaires crush the abortive uprising of the Judeans led by the outlaw Barabbas; a bloody Jesus carrying his cross to Golgotha; the poignant

(Continued on Page 16)

M-G-M release of Samuel Bronston production. Screenplay by Philip Yordan. Directed by Nicholas Ray. Camera (Technicolor), Franz F. Planer, Milton Krasner, Manuel Berenguer; sets & costumes, George Wakhevitch; editor, Harold Kress; music, Miklos Rozsa. Running time, 168 mins.

Jesus Christ .....	Jeffrey Hunter
Mary .....	Siobhan McKenna
Pontius Pilate .....	Hurd Hatfield
Lucius .....	Ron Randell
Claudia .....	Viveca Lindfors
Herodias .....	Rita Gam
Mary Magdalene .....	Carmen Sevilla
Salome .....	Brigid Bazlen
Barabbas .....	Harry Guardino
Judas .....	Rip Torn
Herod Antipas .....	Frank Thring
Caiphas .....	Guy Rolfe
Nicodemus .....	Maurice Marsac
Herod .....	Gregoire Aslan
Peter .....	Royal Dano
Balthazar .....	Edric Connor
John the Baptist .....	Robert Ryan
Camel Driver .....	George Coulouris
General Pompey .....	Conrado San Martin
Joseph .....	Gerard Tichy



Herod Antipas (Frank Thring) weakling puppet ruler of Judea, holds the robe for Jesus (Jeffrey Hunter).



## 'Kings' Production Shines With Technical Brilliance

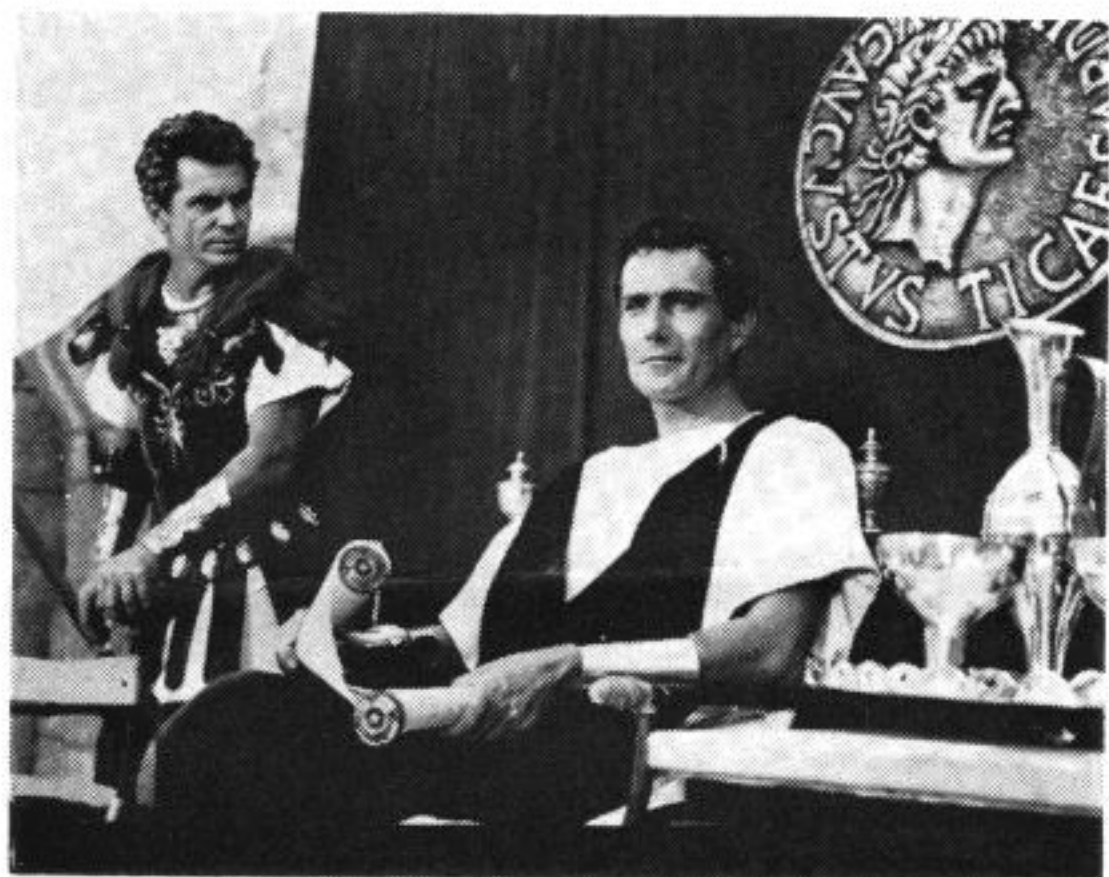
(Continued from Page 15)

Crucifixion between the two thieves. These massive scenes have not been indiscriminately tossed in simply to awe the spectator; they are Ray's inventive re-telling of the most well-known story in the world. And he displayed fine restraint in not showing the head of John the Baptist.

There is little question that the role of the Saviour is a most challenging delineation, and Jeffrey Hunter brings it off with dignity and conviction. Made up in an inspiring likeness of Jesus, Hunter matches his visual appearance with a range of emotional deliveries encompassing confusion, dedication and an eventual inner serenity. Around him has been gathered a distinguished cast. Siobhan McKenna, the spiritually dedicated Virgin Mary; Robert Ryan, the dynamic wilderness prophet John the Baptist; Hurd Hatfield, the tyrannical and aloof Pontius Pilate; Ron Randell, the Roman captain Lucius, torn between devotion to Caesar and the teachings of Christ; Viveca Lindfors, Hatfield's disillusioned wife who turns to the friendship of Randell and the words of Jesus; Rita Gam, the pagan Herodias, mother of Salome, illicit wife of Herod Antipas; Frank Thring, the ignorant, flesh-craving, frightened Herod, puppet ruler of Judea; 16-year-old Brigid Bazlen, the wicked Salome; Carmen Sevilla, the reformed harlot Mary Magdalene; Harry Guardino, the Judean firebrand Barabbas whose place on the cross is taken by Jesus; Rip Torn, the tormented betrayer Judas; Guy Rolfe, the Roman-catering High Priest of the Temple.

The entire production sparkles with technical brilliance: the sets and costumes of Georges Wakhevitch; the lensing of Franz Planer, Milton Krasner and Manuel Berenguer; the special effects of Lee LeBlanc and Alex Weldon; the stirring score of Miklos Rozsa.

Yordan's moving screenplay begins with the Roman invasion of Judea. It then traces Christ's life from His birth in Bethlehem, through His period of wandering and teaching, His Pass-over entrance into Jerusalem, His betrayal by Judas (the latter is presented here as a man who believes Jesus will use his powers to destroy the Romans once He is their prisoner), His Crucifixion and Resurrection.



"There can only be one king" pronounces Pontius Pilate (Hurd Hatfield) despite the plea of Lucius, the Centurion (Ron Randell), at the trial of Jesus.



Roman warriors open fire on rebel invaders of their fortress.

### N. Y. Critics on 'Kings'

ARCHER WINSTEN (New York Post): "A picture of dignity, passion, and good religious feeling. In this it is much better than expected, not at all the circus-thing so often extracted from biblical epics of the past . . . Religious and doubters alike can see 'King of Kings' with a sense of time well spent viewing or re-viewing one of the world's great religious events."

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ALTON COOK (New York World Telegram-and-Sun): "'King of Kings' belongs in the great tradition of movie spectacles, Biblical or martial. The life of Jesus Christ is treated with reverence and emotion as well as panoramic sweep. Loew's State has another long-term tenant . . . The total achievement is overwhelming."

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BOSLEY CROWTHER (New York Times): "Mammoth biblical drama . . . There is a certain photographic reverence and purely pictorial eloquence in Samuel Bronston's elaborate screen biography of the Messiah . . . Peculiarly impersonal film that constructs a great deal of random action around Jesus and does very little to construct a living personality for Him . . . Mr. Hunter wears his make-up nobly and performs with simplicity and taste."

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PUAL V. BECKLEY (New York Herald Tribune): "The film leaves a strong impression of sincerity, conscientiousness and, in such matters as color, make-up and decor, considerably more evidence of taste than might be expected."

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ROSE PELSWICK (New York Journal-American): "It is a picture of spiritual and visual beauty . . . Unfolds its message against historical backgrounds that are magnificently mounted and photographed in color . . . A blend of powerful sermon, of striking tableaux that recall fine religious paintings and large-scale action episodes recreating the invasion of Judea by the Roman legions . . . An impressive production."

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KATE CAMERON (New York Daily News): "A fine, fervent admirably acted attempt at recreating Our Lord's day on earth. What is done is well done . . . Hunter crystallizes Christ by presenting Him as both human and divine."