



If the new trend continues, new performers will have to come on singing, as does Franco Nero as Sir Lancelot in this scene from "Camelot."

Films Change Their Tune

The movies, which many people say have become bitter rather than better, are about to change their tune. No less than a dozen film musicals are now being readied for release: a major switch that began when movie-makers started hearing the sound of music on their cash registers.

Indeed, the swift and spectacular climb of "The Sound of Music" to the top of the all-time money-making list in so short a time has touched off a scramble among the major studios for musical "properties," particularly stage productions.

In fact, "Camelot," the Lerner and Loewe musical of King Arthur's time, will be released this fall, the first of a long line of upcoming films that movie-makers are now convinced are the best bets for bringing the do-re-mi into the box office.

Proof that "Sound of Music" was no fluke in quickly passing "Gone with the Wind" as the all-time money-maker is the fact that of the top six films on that list, three are fairly recent musicals: "Sound of Music," "Mary Poppins" and "My Fair Lady." (The other three: "GWTW," followed by "The Ten Commandments" and "Ben-Hur.")

New Trend

The new trend started by these three musicals' success began this past season with "Thoroughly Modern Millie," "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying" and "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," but beginning this fall the tempo will be picking up considerably.

Taking it from the top, the scoresheet reads something like this: "Camelot" — The producers are convinced that the Lerner and Loewe songs (particularly the title song, said to be President Kennedy's favorite) and the medieval setting will attract audiences even without a proven

butler. "Chitty Chitty Bing Bang" — A musical version, starring Dick Van Dyke, of a story written for children by Ian Flem-

ing, creator of the James Bond character.

Broadway Musicals

In addition, practically every recent Broadway musical that has had any kind of success has been snapped up for the films and among those now before the cameras are:

"Oliver!," based on Dickens' "Oliver Twist"; "Funny Girl," "Hello, Dolly" and "Sweet Charity," all of them with Barbra Streisand in the starring roles, and "Half a Sixpence," which will star the above-named Tommy Steele, a vibrant young singer-dancer with a seeming double-mouthful of teeth who is expected to ride the crest of the new wave of musicals.

Warner Brothers has set a ten-million-dollar budget for "The Man Who Would Be King," a musical film that as yet has no star, director or cast, and RCA Victor, in an unprecedented move for a record company, has put up the money for a film version of H. G. Wells' "The Man Who Could Work Miracles," about a clerk who suddenly gains super-human power.

But one Hollywood film-making veteran said that the real reason for the strong comeback of the musicals is that "the American film musical is really Hollywood's last line of defense against the foreign import. The worst we can do is 'good.'" (Catholic Press Features)

box-office "name" in the cast. Richard Harris will be playing King Arthur (Richard Burton did it on Broadway). Vanessa Redgrave is Queen Guinevere (Julie Andrews' part on the stage) and as Sir Lancelot, the producers have picked an Italian star named Franco Nero and are sure that the role will do for his career what it did for Robert Goulet's.

"The Happiest Millionaire" — This is a Walt Disney film that is a return to the happy-go-lucky biographical musicals popular in the 1940's. The man of the title is Anthony J. Drexel Biddle (played by Fred MacMurray), a colorful and rather eccentric believer in having a good time in staid Philadelphia in the 1910's. His collection of five alligators, his Biddle Bible classes, boxing and jujitsu matches and the romance between his daughter, Cordelia (Lesley Ann Warren) and Angler Duke (John Davidson) are woven among a dozen songs.

"Doctor Dolittle" — Rex Harrison plays an animal doctor who has mastered the secret of conversing with his animals. The film is not scheduled for release until December but an album of songs from the film is already climbing up the record charts.

"Star" — The life story of Gertrude Lawrence, a leading Broadway musical performer, is being filmed with Julie Andrews as Miss Lawrence.

"Finian's Rainbow" — A multi-million-dollar remake of the classic has been entrusted to boy-wonder director Francis Ford Coppola (on the strength of his "You're a Big Boy Now") and will feature Fred Astaire, Petula Clark and British entertainer Tommy Steele, who also steals "The Happiest Millionaire" in the role of a family

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