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330 TOMPKINS AVE.
STATEN ISLAND 4, N. Y.
Tel. GIBraltar 7-6800

Cir. (D 291,962) (S 354,354)

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Theater Boom Puzzles Broadway Showmen

By Associated Press

NEW YORK, Dec. 31.—There's no business like show business on Broadway right now.

The Great White Way is booming like nothing seen in many a year—with people even storming the box offices of the film houses, with or without stage shows.

Show people themselves, delighted as they are by the clink of coin, can't figure it out. Even third-rate movies are doing business, said one puzzled theater man.

Among the famous showplaces which really hit a bonanza the past few days were the Paramount and Criterion on Times Square, and the renowned Radio City Music Hall in Rockefeller Center.

Since last Wednesday when the Paramount opened a rock 'n' roll stage show featuring Alan Freed, the theater has had people—mostly teen-agers—lined up for blocks waiting to get in.

Yesterday came the real payoff. Youngsters began gathering at 5 a. m. There were thousands on hand by door-opening time of 8:30 a. m. and at noon an estimated 11,000 were strung out in a line snaking around blocks of Times

Square sidewalks.

It was the longest line in Paramount's history.

One hundred police were called out to help preserve the lineup and Forty-third street, at one side of the theater, was closed to vehicles most of the day.

The theater finally quit showing its feature film, "It's Great to Be Young," a movie about teen-agers and starring John Mills and Cecil Parker. It ran almost continuous stage shows to satisfy the Freed fans.

When the last performance ended early today, the theater had handled 13,500 customers at \$2.50 a seat.

Crowds weren't so great this morning, but near pandemonium was expected tonight on account of the New Year's Eve celebration.

At the Criterion, now showing "The Ten Commandments," adults seeking tickets for the morning performance yesterday broke out of line and stormed the box office. Hundreds had to be turned away from the day's performances.

The Radio City Music Hall, featuring the film "Salonara" and its traditional Christmas pageant on the stage, appeared headed for a record seven-day box office take of \$225,000.

Apparently the only unhappy people in the area were some store operators. The waiting show crowds were so great, said one businessman, that other people couldn't even window shop—much less get in the stores.