

JUNE 1950

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IN THIS ISSUE

TELEVISER

Checklist For TV Commercials
Candid Commercials
Theatre Television

the journal



sion

Alfred Roman
855 Riverside Dr.
New York 32, N. Y.

sax852



Script of the Month
(See Page 21)

are they watching your commercial?



tell them...show them...sell them

WITH N.S.S. "SHOWMANSHIP ON FILM"

- LIVE-ACTION
FILM
- STOP-MOTION
ANIMATION
- CARTOON
ANIMATION
- SPECIAL EFFECTS
- TRICK
PHOTOGRAPHY
- FILM SLIDES

The audience-impression and sales-success of your television film commercial depends on the care, artistry and creative showmanship expended in its production. Our thirty years of service to the motion picture industry enable us to offer the unlimited imagination, technical facilities and skilled craftsmanship necessary to the production of an *outstanding* television film commercial.

Popularity surveys and the satisfaction of top advertisers, agencies and TV stations are proof that you can depend on NATIONAL SCREEN SERVICE for television film commercials that convincingly tell your message, dramatically show your story and unfailingly sell your product!

NATIONAL SCREEN SERVICE is ready to handle *your* film commercial needs, through studios in New York and Hollywood... laboratories in New York, Hollywood, Dallas and Chicago... offices in 31 cities across the country.



NATIONAL *Screen* SERVICE
PRIZE BOY OF THE INDUSTRY

1600 BROADWAY
NEW YORK 19, N.Y.

Circle 6-5700

Billions of speeding electrons set phosphors "on fire"

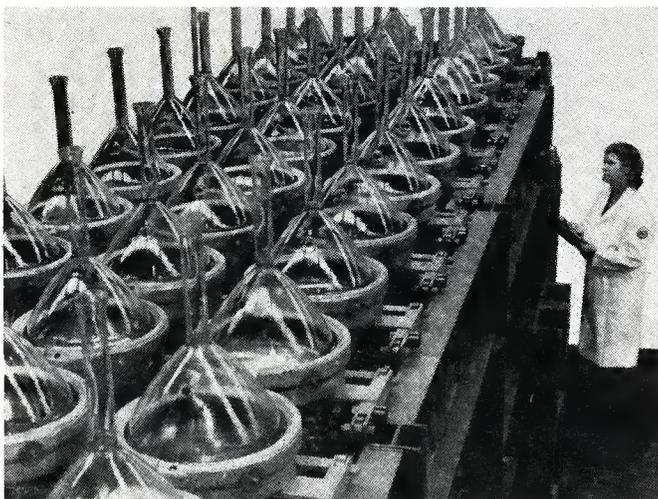
Gleaming luminescent materials, excited by an electron beam, help create television pictures

No. 5 in a series outlining high points in television history

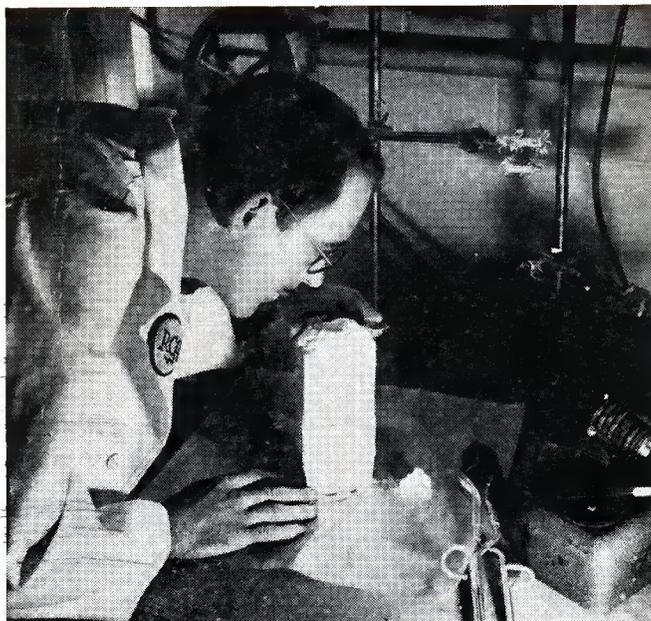
Photos from the historical collection of RCA

● "Specpure Laboratory," said a sign at RCA Laboratories, "Do Not Enter. Dust Is Our No. 1 Trouble-maker." On the floor were moistened rugs to trap shoe-borne dust. Scientists and technicians had to change to clean white clothing before entering the room.

Purpose of this meticulous housekeeping was to provide a place where no speck of dirt would handicap the work in progress. RCA scientists were studying *luminescent materials*—seeking ways to produce them in bulk, while maintaining utmost quality and purity. Not even



In a special vibration-free room, air-conditioned—and with temperature and humidity evenly controlled—tubes move at a snail's pace along this settling belt, while the luminescent coating settles on the face of the bulb in a delicate, film-like covering—a flawless surface, smooth and uniform.



This block of luminescent material, energized by ultraviolet light, provided illumination for this photograph. Luminescent materials of the highest purity are produced in bulk at RCA Tube Plant.

a speck of foreign matter could be tolerated. One part of copper in *ten million* will show up as green spots on a television screen.

Although phosphors have been known for centuries—since even sugar, salt, and diamonds have been found to have luminescent properties—little intensive research was done until scientists began seeking to perfect these glowing materials for use on the screens of television receivers. A scientist at RCA Laboratories, in the Specpure Room, was one of the first to develop the fundamentals for a way of making luminescent materials in bulk for television.

This development is one of the reasons why, at RCA Tube Plant in Lancaster, Pa., they can now be made by the tankful! Even in mass production, each "batch" has uniform characteristics. White light, of the type most suitable for creating television pictures, is produced by mixtures of luminescent materials combined in exactly the correct proportion.

Guarded at every step against any trace of contamination, these phosphors are deposited in a delicate film-like coating on the faceplates of television tubes... where they cling to the glass by a form of molecular attraction. Excited by an electron beam, they glow with a brilliant white light and thus produce the crisp black-and-white pictures we see on television.

To television, the phosphors developed by RCA scientists are as important as paint is to a painter. The face of the kinescope tube is the "canvas." A picture appears as a visible image when the electron gun acts as a "paint brush" to create patterns in the phosphors!



Radio Corporation of America

WORLD LEADER IN RADIO—FIRST IN TELEVISION

Televiser

THE JOURNAL OF TELEVISION

CHECKLIST FOR PLANNERS OF TV COMMERCIALS By Jerry Albert.....	4
PARTICIPATIONS	7
CANDID COMMERCIALS	8
OFF CAMERA By Robert E. Harris.....	9
THEATRE TELEVISION By Nathan L. Halpern.....	10
GETTING SUSPENSE INTO VIDEO DRAMAS By John Reich-Baxter.....	12
RECEIVER DISTRIBUTION	13
TELEVISER-GRAPH	14
TELEVISION DIRECTOR By Bill Hobin.....	16
MUSIC'S PLACE IN TELEVISION By Fred Waring.....	17
ADVANCING TELEVISION TECHNIQUE—PART II By Mordi Gassner.....	18
KGO-TV CELEBRATES FIRST ANNIVERSARY	19
FLIPPING TITLES By Jack Balch.....	20
SCRIPT OF THE MONTH "THE TOKEN" By Joseph Hergesheimer.....	21

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• No Summer Issues will be published (July and August) •

COMMONWEALTH

Currently Serving the
Nation's Leading TV Stations
Offers the Following

TV FILM PACKAGES

26 MAJOR COMPANY FEATURE PROGRAMS
with such stars as

Barbara STANWYCK	Paulette GODDARD
Robert YOUNG	Jimmy STEWART
Jimmy DURANTE	Merle OBERON
Claudette COLBERT	Melvyn DOUGLAS
Jack BENNY	Raymond MASSEY

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featuring

THE RANGE BUSTERS
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SMITH BALLEW

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with such stars as

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J. Carrol Naish	Buster Crabbe

13 MUSICAL VARIETIES

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MOREY AMSTERDAM

13 SOUND CARTOONS

250 AESOP FABLE SILENT CARTOONS

12 CHARLIE CHAPLIN COMEDIES
12½ min each

For further information and complete list, write to



COMMONWEALTH

Film and Television, Inc.
723 Seventh Avenue, New York 19, N. Y.

Train At . . .

TELEVISION WORKSHOP of New York



*America's Television
Training Center*

Summer Session — JULY 10

• • •

Write for Full Details . . .

TELEVISION WORKSHOP OF N. Y.
1780 Broadway New York 19



Operating a sound projector, film shooting, developing and film editing is learned by Studio students, who must also know when to use film and film sources.



Making up television performers, with particular attention to the color response of the camera, is one of the many problems production students must master.

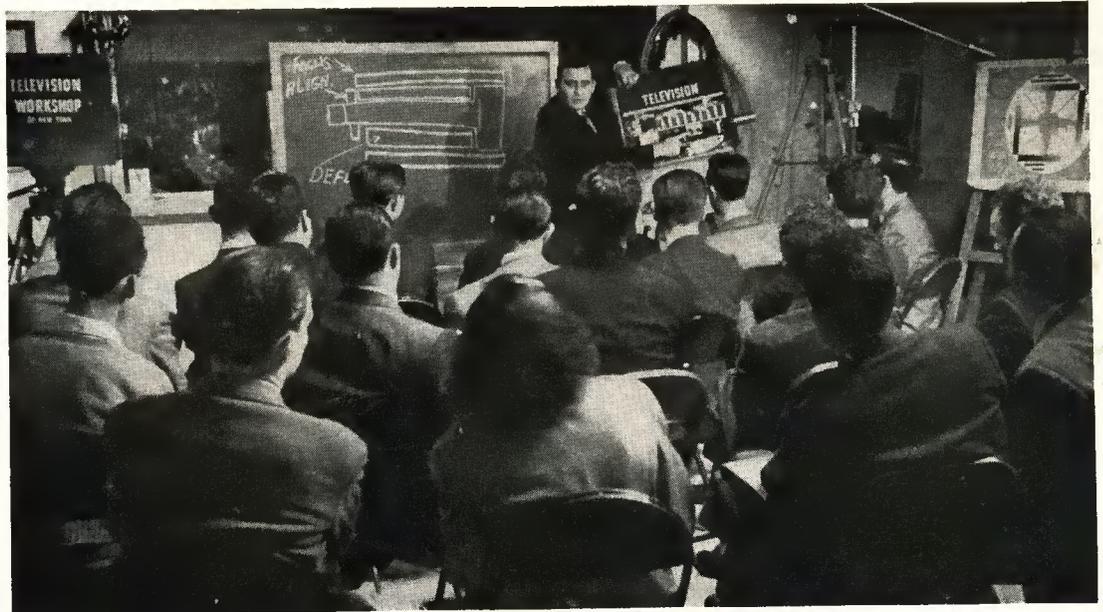
PRODUCTION TRAINING

Study Units:

	<i>Hours</i>
Basic Production	30
Studio Aspects of Production	30
Basic Directing	30
Intermediate Directing	30
Advanced Directing	30
Advanced Production	30
Music, Make-up & Costuming	30
Basic Writing for Television	30
Advanced Writing	30
Films for Television - I	30
Demonstration Lab	30
Script Lab	30
Production Labs	60
Class Production Lab	30

Total Hours 450

Students in the Studio Training Course Receiving Information about the RCA Image Orthicon Camera. Studio-classrooms are large, air-conditioned. Lectures are often combined with practical demonstrations, with each student assigned to a particular piece of equipment.



STUDIO TRAINING

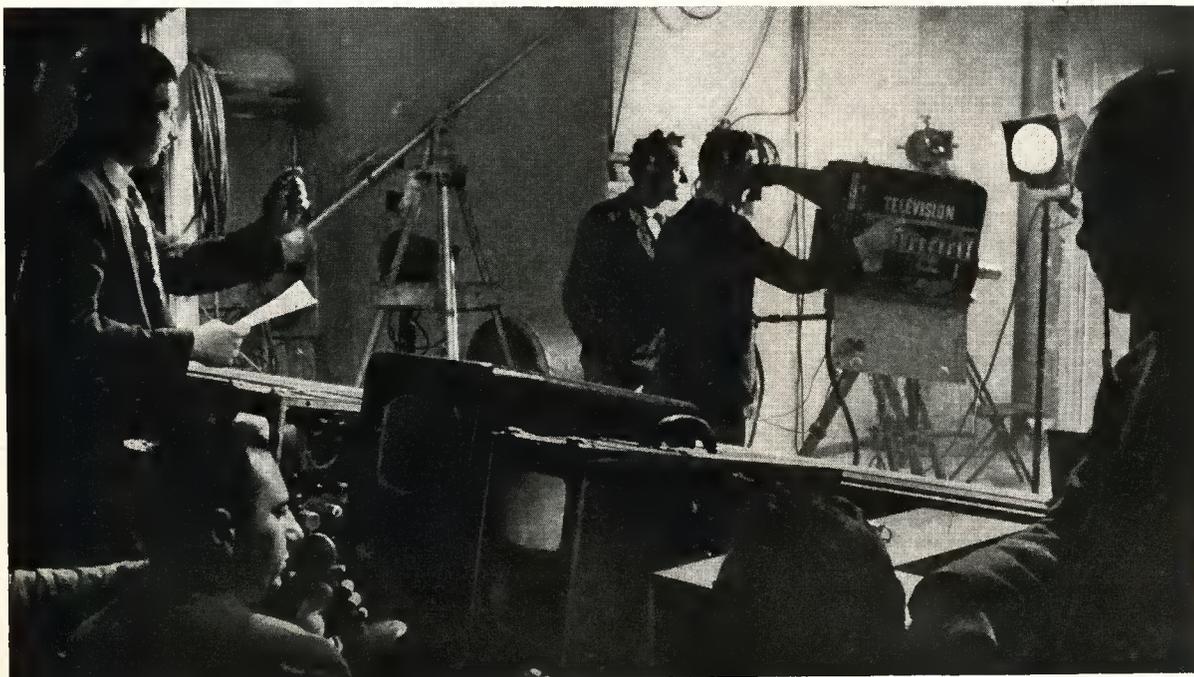
Study Units:

	<i>Hours</i>
Camera Operation—1 (Basic)	30
Camera Operation—2 (Intermediate)	30
Camera Operation—3 (Advanced)	30
Control Room Operations	30
Remotes & Special Events	30
Scenic Construction & Studio Lighting	30
Special Effects	30
Station Management & Operation	30
Film Sources & Equipment	30
Studio Practices & Procedures	15
FCC Rules & Regulations	15
Studio Practice Labs	45
Scenic Lab	30
Special Effects Lab	30
Film Lab	30
Inspection Trips to TV stations	15

Total Hours . . . 450



A Student Production



The Main Studio as Seen from the Television Workshop's Control Room

Checklist for Planners of TV Commercials

by Jerry Albert

Dir. Advertising & Public Relations
United World Films, Inc.

TELEVISION newcomers sometimes find themselves overwhelmed by the many considerations involved in planning a TV commercial. When analyzed one by one, these problems are, of course, no more difficult than those offered by other advertising media.

The following checklist of basic factors is offered as a navigation chart that may help neophytes through the sometimes confusing waters of video advertising. Experienced hands also may find it useful, as a reminder and refresher.

1. *Use of the TV medium*—Will television best solve the particular advertising problems involved, or would the money be better spent elsewhere?

If your product is used only by a specific, limited group (an extreme example might be wearers of glass eyes!), or if your distribution stresses geographic areas not effectively reached by telecasts, TV would hardly seem to be your dish. Other deterrents would be considerations of delicacy (as in the case of sanitary napkins) and problems of legality (such as those faced by liquor advertisers).

2. *Budget allocation* — TV costs vary tremendously. Approximate time charges for a single spot announcement (20 seconds to one minute) range from \$12 on a small station for Class "C" time to \$250 or more for Class "A" time on a big metropolitan outlet. Charges for a single half-hour program scale from \$50 to \$900; for an hour, from \$90 to \$1,500.

Don't fail to make provision for production as well as time costs. A one-minute film commercial may require a budget allotment of \$100 or \$1,000, depending on its contents, complexity, technical difficulties and production standards.

Typical talent and production costs for longer programs run about as follows: \$4,500-\$11,000 for a half-hour drama, \$6,000-\$15,000 for a full hour; \$8,000-\$15,000 for a half-hour variety show, \$12,000-\$25,000 for a full hour. (Yet it has also been proved possible to put on acceptable programs for less than *one-tenth* these costs!)

Weigh all items, and don't underbudget. Television is an exacting, revealing medium, and makeshift efforts show up clearly for just what they are.

This does not mean that low-budget advertisers cannot profit from TV. On the contrary, the dollar return on small video investments is sometimes amazing. Multiple-participation programs make good quality shows available at small cost. Expertly made stock film commercials for a large variety of products are offered for as little as \$10 or \$15 per showing. And it is often possible to do an effective selling job for little more than the cost of a minute's air time, using a persuasive staff announcer and a demonstration of your product in use.

3. *Sales theme* — Remember that television is an audio-visual medium. Select themes that lend themselves to exploitation by sight, sound and motion.

A can of motor oil held before a TV camera is nothing but an inert metal cylinder, however glibly its praises are sung. Find a way of *picturing* the beneficial effects of that oil in the machinery of a car . . . and you have a seeing-is-believing commercial that carries conviction.

Focus on a package of Chesterfield cigarettes. You have an attractively designed unit of paper and tobacco. Take out one cigarette and lift it to the lips of a favored performer like Arthur Godfrey, let him inhale, register satisfaction, exhale. You have a promise of smoking pleasure that makes real sense to every cigarette user who sees it.

4. *Spot or network?* — Here the vital factors are the method and spread of your product distribution, and the promotional activities of competitors which need to be equalled or outdone.

Where distribution is selective and specific, station-by-station pinpointing may be most efficient and economical. Regional or national distribution may call for some kind of network coverage.

In such highly competitive fields as cigarette promotion, keeping up with the Joneses is vital; if one uses network TV, the others probably cannot afford to do less.

5. *Program length* — Your choice between brief announcements and longer time segments will be influenced by budget limitations and the nature of the product.

A new article might best be tested by carefully selected spot announcements, whereas a well-established product can more easily support—and be benefited by—a more expensive 15-minute, half-hour or full hour show.

When public acceptance varies sharply from section to section, spot commercials tailored to local requirements might be indicated, in preference to lengthier programs which, because of their greater cost, are best suited to network airing.

Is prestige a particularly important factor? Longer time segments lend themselves more readily to prestige promotion.

6. *Frequency* — How many airings will be required to achieve the desired results, and at what intervals?

A highly speculative consideration at best, even in the abstract, this is further complicated by the practical demands of budget limitations, the type of sales theme chosen, and the previous decision as to spot vs. network TV.

However, some light is shed by Columbia University professor Harry Garret's psychological studies, which indicate almost 50% forgetfulness of a single advertising impression within two days. Repetition at five-day intervals seems to produce nearly 75% retention, for periods of a month or more.

7. *Scheduling* — At what available times of day or evening will the largest—or most appropriate—audience be reached? Simple logic counsels against promotion of pipe tobacco on a weekday afternoon, when most of the best prospects—adult males—are far away from their TV sets.

Consideration must be given to the audience draw of the programs immediately preceding and following the selected time. Coasting profitably in the wake of somebody else's high-rated show is an oft-criticized but widely used method of getting a big audience at little cost.

Programs competing for the same audience at the same time must also be considered. So far, no large advertiser has cared to risk a battle with Texaco's top-rated Tuesday evening Milton Berle show.

8. *Treatment of commercials*—Shall

they be "live" or animated? Inconclusive research on this subject to date seems to indicate a somewhat greater sales effectiveness in the use of human actors (on film or in person), rather than cartoon characters. However, retention of brand names may be more easily achieved through animated cartoons, and difficult technical details are certainly more easily demonstrated in this way.

If part of a longer program, should

the commercials be separate entities or can they be integrated with the balance of the show? Integration produces markedly greater viewer rapport. "Martin Kane, Private Eye" accomplishes this by blending its U.S. Tobacco Company commercials into the story line, with the detective protagonist stopping momentarily into a store to buy—and praise—the sponsored products.

(Continued on next page)



FOR MUSIC IN
Television
NOW AND IN
THE FUTURE,
IT'S **BMI**

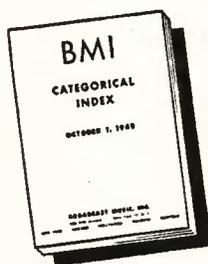
The BMI license with television stations—in effect since 1940 and for the next ten years—covers all performances both live and mechanical and whether by means of records, transcriptions, or film soundtrack.

It provides for the performance of BMI-licensed compositions without special clearance headaches.

The catalog of music licensed by BMI contains over one hundred thousand copyrighted titles ranging from folk music and be-bop to classical.

BMI offers to television film producers all the information and help they need in obtaining the right to record music on films from individual copyright proprietors.

BMI's television Service Department is headquarters for complete information on performing and other rights in the music of BMI, AMP, and the hundreds of publishers affiliated with BMI.



**MUSICAL CATEGORIES
FOR SCENE SETTINGS**

BMI has compiled a CATEGORICAL INDEX as a basic guide in setting musical scenes and providing appropriate background music for script situations. It is proving itself indispensable to TV producers and program directors everywhere.

Write to BMI's Television Service Department for your copy.

BROADCAST MUSIC, Inc.
580 FIFTH AVENUE • NEW YORK 19, N. Y.
CHICAGO • HOLLYWOOD • TORONTO • MONTREAL

"The Goldbergs" offers integration of mood rather than story, achieved by having the leading player stay in character as she offers neighborly advice on sleep and caffeine—and Sanka Coffee.

Avoid pomp and ceremony; they're alien to the TV medium. Work for intimacy and sincerity. Dave Garroway's easygoing Congoleum-Nairn commercials are near-perfect examples of this technique. Stress simplicity; limit the number of points made in any one commercial. Make use of

the attention value of *movement*, which only television affords so completely.

Other possible commercial forms worth considering are simple product demonstrations and time or weather announcements.

9. *On film or "in person"?* — Spot commercials scheduled for use in several markets are usually better filmed, thus protecting them from local variation and error. Commercials to be presented on longer network programs lend themselves to either method, ex-

cept when it is sought to integrate them with the rest of the show. In this case, film is more difficult to use (unless, of course, the whole program is on celluloid).

10. *Producing agency* — TV commercials straddle two worlds: the advertising and the theatrical. A number of ad agencies have the organization to produce successful "live" commercials on their own. None that I know of are equipped to produce complete film commercials. These must be farmed out to film-makers specializing in this field.

Contracts covering such assignments should be specific and binding, with definite penalties for non-performance. Payment and delivery dates should be clearly set forth. Film production being a sometimes uncertain matter, the advertiser should be protected against the possibility of finding himself on the air with nothing in the station film projector but good intentions.

Advertisers and their agencies can help prevent this by planning far enough in advance to allow the film producer all the time he needs to turn out a top-quality job at a profit.

11. *Script* — Everything that is to be seen and heard should be set down on paper in advance—and, perhaps, laid out on a pictorial story board for clear understanding. Words alone are not television advertising. Know in advance what the viewer will see on his screen.

12. *Costing and props* — Persons and objects to be used should be carefully selected for greatest video effectiveness. Small defects loom disconcertingly large under the concentrated scrutiny of the TV viewer.

13. *Rehearsal* — Plentiful rehearsal is the key to pace, timing, general effectiveness and avoidance of error. Rehearsal before the television cameras is expensive; adequate preliminary practice will reduce this to a minimum.

14. *Distribution* — If the film is used, decide in advance how many prints will be needed to cover all stations involved, and be sure they are distributed in time for use.

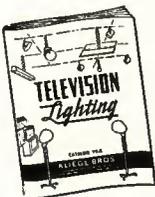
15. *Final airing or filming* — Once transmitted, the commercial cannot be retrieved. If on film, be sure it is everything you want it to be before prints are released. If "live action," the more painstaking the preparation, the less painful the post-mortems!

KLIEGL

PATCH SYSTEM

simplifies light control in Television Studios

PROVIDES efficient facilities for connecting and controlling the variety of lights used in television productions. Engineered in conjunction with studio technicians, it meets a basic need of the industry. The system has been adopted as standard practice by several major chains; permits substantial reductions in operating costs, and surpasses anything heretofore available in flexibility of lighting arrangements. It affords an adequate number of individually-fused, switch-controlled, conveniently-located light outlets . . . combined with means for "patching in" any lights or group of lights on dimming or non-dimming circuits. It services the entire studio, including ceiling and floor lights. Its many advantages will be made known to you upon request.



CATALOG TV-5

contains a description of the "patch system" and also a selection of lighting units especially designed for television purposes. Write for a copy for reference.

KLIEGL BROS

UNIVERSAL ELECTRIC STAGE LIGHTING CO., INC.

ESTABLISHED 1896

321 WEST 50th STREET
NEW YORK 19, N.Y.

PARTICIPATIONS

WE would like very much to get into television, but it is too expensive for us to experiment with."

This statement or similarly worded ones have long been the bane of TV stations when trying to sell agencies and sponsors on the medium. Convinced of the dynamic sales power of video, the smaller advertiser particularly wanted some way to ease into television.

Participations seem to be the answer. In fact, one station's sales manager credits this type of advertising with enabling his outlet to show a sizable profit this year in comparison with last year's operating deficit.

The percentage of commercial air time devoted to participation programs in New York indicates the extent to which they have grown even in this network originating city.

WJZ-TV	55%
WATV	55%
WABD	50%
WOR-TV	45%
WNBT	35%
WCBS-TV	30%
WPIX	30%

Most of the time purchased by participation advertisers is for live studio programs.

The reasons for the popularity of participations are:

Low Cost. Although costs of participations naturally increase with choice air time and expensive talent, they are nevertheless comparatively modest. For example, on "Market Melodies" a minute participation costs the sponsor \$120, decreasing with frequency. This is the same as for a regular minute daytime spot on the same station, WJZ-TV, New York. So actually, the participation advertiser is getting the talent and commercial presentation at no charges.

Live Demonstration. Live commercials permit the advertiser to fluctuate the selling price of his merchandise,

rotate items to be sold, vary sales message, etc. A live demonstration commercial when professionally handled is still considered by many as TV at its selling best.

Personal Endorsement. Wilbur Stark, producer of the very successful "Kathi Norris Show" and "Just For You", considers this the most important element of all. Most daytime women's shows are built around a certain personality or couple. Viewers obviously tune in to such a program because they like the performers. Stark therefore reasons that viewers are more receptive to hearing these personalities discuss the product than they would be to any other type of commercial. The program's star in delivering the commercial message is also giving the product a personal endorsement.

Program Identification. Participations enable the advertiser to become part of a big-name program on a modest budget. They can profitably use this program identification in various promotional and advertising campaigns. They can tie in their product with the program on counter displays, posters, cards, etc.

The smaller advertiser is not the only one benefiting from participations. Nationally prominent advertisers have used participations to supplement their fully-sponsored shows. They have found it an economical way of intensifying campaigns for a certain product, market or audience. Often large organizations, such as Gimbel Brothers' Department Store, will take an entire program period in their name. Manufacturers of merchandise sold in the stores will, however, pay for the participations. Cooperative advertising such as this is also done by chain stores and organizations having numerous dealers.

With advertisers, big and small, stations and ad agencies climbing on the band wagon, participations are obviously here to stay.

SPOTS

- OVER 100
- SPOTS ON
- THE AIR FOR
- AMERICA'S
- LARGEST
- ADVERTISERS—
- PRODUCED BY

Gray-O'Reilly

480 LEXINGTON AVE., NEW YORK
PLAZA 3-1531

TFI-TV *

TELECAST FILMS, INC. ☆

presents a series of sure-fire

HISTORICAL FILMS

all of which ring the bell for year round television showings and those starred lead the hit parade

for

JULY FOURTH

"Our Constitution"*

"Our Declaration of Independence"*

"Our Monroe Doctrine"

"Our Louisiana Purchase"

"Our Bill of Rights"*

If you aim at the largest possible audience your best insurance is to play one or a series of these films.

Running Time 18 Minutes Each

Bookings will be heavy across the country. For preferred play date we urge your early requests. Rush them to:

*Telecast Films, Inc.

☆ 112 WEST 48th ST., ☆
NEW YORK 19, N.Y.

G. W. HEDWIG

Candid Commercials



FROM the time the first small merchant asked a friend to say a few good words about his product to others, until carefully worded testimonial, advertising became a lucrative means of income for stars, public figures, and athletes. This type of advertising has carried the feeling of something bought.

Now, the candid commercial, offered in the words of unsuspecting people, completely off-guard, has brought a new way of bringing a sponsor's message to the people. In its honesty and complete believability, the

Candid Commercial is the ultimate in testimonial advertising.

How is it done? Hidden cameras, and concealed microphones catch completely unsuspecting people, recording in their own words, a product testimonial. Allen A. Funt Productions, New York, has proved that the candid commercial can be applied to products as varied as Philip Morris Cigarettes and Simmons Mattresses. The public still believes in the old adage: "seeing is believing." The candid commercial lets them see, and hear for themselves.

As an illustration of the complete believability of the current Philip Morris candid commercials on television, the Schwerin Research organization, working under actual test conditions, discovered that Philip Morris commercials scored two to three hundred percent higher than any other cigarette commercial tested.

To add interest and conviction to the Philip Morris commercials on the Candid Camera and Candid Microphone programs heard on CBS television and radio, the commercials are obtained in the same place that forms the locale of the entertainment portion of the show, and under the same conditions. Therefore, when the commercials appear they are neatly integrated with the entertainment portion of the programs.

The locale might be anything from a small shop to Macy's Department store: but wherever it is, the people who are to appear never know, until it's all over, the intensive preparations that have been made for their visit. Before their shopping trip is over they may have become the candid, unposed star of one of Allen Funt's plots, or been inveigled into trying the Philip Morris "nose-test."

Obviously this candid technique doesn't result in a successful commercial at every attempt. But the ratio of usable film and sound track gotten from people secretly filmed, and secret-recorded, is unusually high in the Philip Morris nose test.

In applying the candid technique in the preparation of a candid sales-training film for Simmons Mattresses, another track was taken. It proved equally effective in testing the effectiveness of an advertiser's message.

Working in the bedding department at Macy's, it was discovered, through the candid comments of customers, that the national advertising campaign of Simmons had actually created a tremendous demand for Beautyrest Mattresses.

When a customer asked for a Simmons mattress an attempt was made to sell them on some other brand. The hidden cameras and microphones recorded some amazing results. In demanding Simmons as their choice, the customers' arguments repeated almost verbatim the selling points Simmons has been making for years in their national advertising campaigns.

While it may look simple, because of the simple reality captured by the camera, getting the required material on film is more complicated than a Hollywood production. There are no scripts . . . therefore no guarantee of what will be caught on the film. The real life locations often limit the movement, so that getting the picture and the sound calls for constant experimentation to improve the candid techniques.

A crew of three is constantly on the prowl for possible locations. They carefully check physical characteristics;

LOCAL 644 I.A.T.S.E.

Affiliated with
American Federation of Labor
New York State Federation of Labor
Central Trades and Labor Council of Greater New York and Vicinity
Central Union Label Council of Greater New York

PROFESSIONAL MOTION PICTURE
CAMERAMEN IN THE EAST SINCE
THE INCEPTION OF THE INDUSTRY

FOR QUALITY OF WORKMANSHIP
Look For This Label

PHOTOGRAPHED
BY
MEMBERS OF
LOCAL 644



HAVE OUR MEMBERS SOLVE YOUR
TELEVISION LIGHTING PROBLEMS

International Photographers
of the
Motion Picture Industries,
I.A.T.S.E.

1697 BROADWAY, N.Y.C. CI 7-2091

measure noise levels; check the flow of people—and even the type of people likely to be caught off guard at that location. Once a suitable location is found and permission granted by the owner, another crew of technicians takes over.

Blinds are set up to conceal the cameras; microphones are hidden in strategic spots, and the camera crew and sound engineers move in. The crew itself might pose as electricians or other repair men so that outsiders' suspicions are not aroused. When the scene is set, Allen Funt moves in to wait for "customers."

Every statement captured in a candid commercial is covered by a release signed when it's all over, by the person secretly recorded and filmed. The percentage who are willing to sign such a release is close to 100 percent.

As might be expected, the cameras get more on the film than can be used. But while it is possible to edit such film to a great extent, special precaution is taken *not* to edit them too much, lest there be the slightest question of changing the content, or distorting the true meaning of what has been said. Very often some extraneous matter is left in: things that can offer greater proof by their candid sidelights, than a signed statement attesting to the candidness of the episode. Severe editing of a candid sequence has a tendency to destroy the natural fabric of the film.

Of great importance to an advertiser is the fact that the length of the candid commercial can be longer than average. The element of entertainment always present by the promise of the unexpected happening compels the viewers and listeners attention.

For television, most of the commercials are filmed with 16 mm single system cameras. The conversation is simultaneously recorded on a synchronized track of magnetic tape. In some cases the filming is done in 35 mm in single and double system cameras.

One thing is certain, the candid commercial has opened up a completely new path for advertisers to take in presenting a message that reaches the people for one great reason: It's believable.



By Robert E. Harris

MILTON BERLE is quite a man. You cannot appreciate how truly he is "Mister Television", unless you can penetrate his TV "Maginot Line" and catch a rehearsal of the Texaco Star Theatre.

COLORFULLY DRESSED in maroon slacks, a blue jersey, and brown suede jacket, Berle inevitably has a cigar in his mouth and a whistle strung around his neck. The whistle quickly summons attention when his verbal directions cannot be heard.

BERLE CREATES and molds the show from beginning to end. He books the talent, works closely with his writers, and is his own director. (Arthur Knorr is the producer, Eddie Kahn is the T.D.).

SITTING IN THE FIRST ROW of the studio before a TV set, Berle is able to speak through a microphone to both the performers on the stage and to the men in the control room. "Dissolve to a medium shot on camera three and pan down"; "Start from the fourth bar and play it legato"; "Kill the spot and bring up the stage lights"; "Paint those dummy cameras so that they look real".

ONE MOMENT BERLE is on the podium leading the band much to the astonishment of conductor Allen Roth, the next he is on stage demonstrating to dancer Lou Wills, Jr. how to segue into his specialty from a dancing stage entrance.

WHENEVER POSSIBLE Berle has a stand-in go through his own routines while he views proceedings from the director's chair. When actually on stage, he is able to call shots by watching another receiving set located behind the footlights. He directs with a firm hand and is easily upset by interruptions or the failure of anyone to follow directions. However, he frequently breaks the tense atmosphere prevailing in the studio with an ad lib gag.

ZANIES DEAN MARTIN and Jerry Lewis really give Uncle Milt a hard time when guesting on his show by keeping in comic character at all times. Lewis, when not making faces at himself in the stage monitor, might poke his head through the stage curtains and call out "Hey, porter, what town is this?" He'll suddenly turn to the studio assembly and say in a straight face "I suppose you're wondering why I asked you here today."

LEWIS' FAVORITE PRANK is aping Berle's serious manner of giving directions. He'll latch on to the boom mike and scream "Hey, Arthur, bring in the zoomar and dolly out the cathode ray tube". In a desperate attempt to get order, Berle said "If you don't cooperate Jerry, after the show you'll be saying the cameras missed a lot of your stuff." "Oh you said that last time, Berle" replied Lewis, "And we went over **PRETTY** big."

DEAN MARTIN, who is no slouch at ad libbing either, interrupted Lewis' antics. "Come on, Jerry. Leave Mr. Berle alone," Martin said, "after all, we can do anything but this is *his* only means of livelihood."

THEATRE TELEVISION

.... It's Relationship to Telecasting

by *Nathan L. Halpern*

*Television Consultant to Fabian Theatres
and other motion picture organizations*

WHEN radio was spreading into homes in the 1920's, sound was coming into the theatres to supplement silent films. Today, while television is making its phenomenal growth into homes, television also is coming into the theatres in the form of theatre television.

For some time the film industry has been looking for some means of harnessing the television medium to improve the variety of its product for the public. This search is motivated not so much to counter such effects as telecasting may have on theatre attendance, but by the positive desire to improve theatre attractions and win additional patrons. Theatre television has been incubated for some twenty years, long before there was any question of television impact on theatre attendance. But some of its basic equipment problems were not licked until a short time ago, thereby delaying its start until recently.

An embryo alongside television broadcasting's infant, theatre television presents some interesting aspects for those associated with the television industry. Theatre television—television on the large movie screen—is an effort to develop a new and special entertainment and information service to the public in theatres. It is based upon the belief that television can add new programs to quality film features which will increase the public interest and attraction in theatres.

Theatre television requires special television equipment in the theatres, now selling for about \$25,000 plus

installation. The television image is enlarged so that it fills the movie-size screen, the smallest screen to date being 15 x 20 feet—about 300 times larger than the screen surface of the large home receivers.

The picture and sound quality necessary for theatre television must be superior, for the public is invited to pay to see it, and the comparison is inevitable with 35 mm. Hollywood film product on the same screen. The engineering accomplishments which have made theatre television ready, are the development of an effective Schmidt optics system and superior electronic circuits for direct theatre television projection, and the development of rapid processing and superior, synchronized film recording on 35 mm. stock, all in less than 20 seconds, for the intermediate film type of theatre television.

In detail and resolution as well as in graduation of monochrome shades, theatre television already far exceeds present home television reception, but brightness is not as high as in the home. Details unintelligible on home sets are large and clear in theatre television. To cite an interesting example, during the last World Series there was noticeable on theatre screens a round object over second base looking much like a baseball whenever the home base camera at Ebbetts Field was used. This resulted from a tiny fleck on the tube of the pickup camera, not large enough to be noticeable on home sets or the network monitors, but big as a baseball to the theatre audience because of the detailed definition of theatre television. Some of the present theatre television equipment is built

for high definition, capable of receiving a television signal of 1000 scanning lines, about twice that of present home telecasting standards.

The superior quality required for theatre television necessarily means that the pickups, transmissions and interconnecting facilities will have to be of high quality in order to assure the end-result required. Thus, adequate pickup and connecting equipment and new production techniques will have to be developed specially to suit the format of a theatre program and the needs and desires of a theatre audience.

Theatre television will open up new potentials for television programming. These programs will take into consideration the basic differences between a theatre and a home audience. Where home television dwells upon informality, limited scope and restricted action, confined design and setting, and continual closeups, theatre television must fill out its theatrical format with size and scope, formal presentation, more elaborate design and setting, and greater attention to the details of medium and long shots. The theatre will not be squeezed into small unit time segments for its shows, nor will it be necessarily under the awful pressure of new and different weekly or daily performances to fill time schedules, consuming material and talent like a terrible television tapeworm.

The programs envisioned for theatre television will supplement film presentations with spontaneous and immediate attractions heretofore not possible by film. In this category are news, some sports events, special variety shows, and similar programs which

have an immediacy which films cannot attain. For example, frequent pickups of the Metropolitan Opera are not likely in home telecasting, no more than they have been in radio except for Saturday afternoons, while they may become regular features in a chain of theatres hooked together through theatre television. Telecasters are more likely to create shorter, more adaptable versions of opera for their medium, as NBC and CBS have done already. Theatres, on the other hand, are most suitable places for televised transposing of full performances of the Metropolitan Opera, Broadway plays and musicals, etc., before audiences where the theatre atmosphere and setting are more conducive to faithful enjoyment of the original production. Home television has given little indication of practical movement in their programming direction.

Theatre television, when full-blown, will originate its own shows, which will be different from telecasts into the homes. Only a few things, perhaps a few sports and news events out of the large number that take place, will interest both theatre and home television. Even in the sports arena, this may not be true if some of the current trend of sports owners away from telecasting should continue. Some events like news will not be exclusive to any medium any more than they have heretofore. In any event, it is clear that theatre television programming in the long run will be absolutely different from home television, just as films produced for the theatre have been different from films produced for home exhibition.

In their very earliest experiments, several theatres have carried occasionally broadcast television programs as added features to their regular film programs, upon appropriate arrangements with the broadcasters and such other interests as the case required. The theatre-goers who have attended these theatre television exhibitions are mostly people without home sets who have received these television programs with interest and enthusiasm. Telecasters who have entered into these arrangements have broadened their television service to many people who otherwise would be without it. At

the same time, advertisers, television networks and stations have had their shows displayed before theatre audiences in the showmanlike splendor of large theatres with really large, quality television pictures.

While advertisers, advertising agencies, and television broadcasters are seeking added circulation, theatre television, as it continues to grow, can provide added circulation for some programs, with an audience whose attention is undivided and focussed entirely upon the screen. It is unclear how long there might be theatre television experimentation with programs originated by telecasters to the public. For some events, this kind of double-header may continue for a long time, but in other instances theatre television may develop its own programs more quickly.

Much will depend upon the rapidity of growth by the new theatre television industry. There may be some fifty theatres going into theatre television by the end of this year. But this is only 50 out of 19,000 theatres in the United States. The goal of this new medium is to become nation-wide. To this end, motion picture and other organizations undoubtedly will begin to develop programs for theatre television. The potentials are there but it remains to be seen how they will be realized.

An important difference from home telecasting is the dependence of theatre television upon direct public payment for programs through the theatre box-office, whereas home television is advertising-supported. These basically different economic foundations inevitably lead to important differences in programming and promotion to the public, and, in my opinion, insure two separate television industries for the home and for the theatre.

In still another fashion the paths of theatre television and home television may run parallel. For technical and economic reasons theatre television requires the use of radio frequencies for mobile pickup, local distribution and intercity connection of theatres. The quality of video signal will require a minimum video bandwidth on the order of 8 to 10 megacycles, with perhaps an ultimately

greater requirement in prospect. To this end, various representatives of the motion picture industry intend to participate in a public hearing scheduled by the Federal Communications Commission on the subject of allocation of air channels for theatre television.

To date, serious engineering research for theatre television channels has led to requests for frequencies on the order of 5600 to 7100 megacycles and perhaps higher. This portion of the spectrum is not used for television broadcasting, the allocated broadcast VHF and UHF frequencies being in the areas between 50 and 890 megacycles. Theatre television is interested in point to point facilities, as contrasted with telecasting's primary broadcast services. There is, therefore, no direct competition foreseeable between television broadcasting channels and theatre television for radio frequencies. A limited few STL's may be located in the high frequency bands but it does not seem likely that any disturbance of existing allocations for auxiliary telecast purposes will be occasioned by the theatre television hearings.

It appears, therefore, that in most respects, theatre television and home television will be complimentary services to the public, offering different programs on different terms. There may be some borrowing and association between the two industries for their mutual benefit. For example, just as early theatre television experiments are drawing upon home television originations, so are motion picture interests beginning to see the possible advertising values in television trailers for attractions in the theatres. This will lead to the placement of more advertising, particularly in the way of spots, on television stations by film interests, thereby underscoring some of the mutual benefits from television for both industries.

Without regard to the rate of theatre television progress, it is clear that television broadcasting will continue its phenomenal growth, while theatre television goes its own way, much as the home and theatre always have served the public separately with basically different approaches to the entertainment and information forms.

Getting Suspense Into Video Dramas

by John Reich-Baxter

MOST people have had the experience of picking up an innocent-looking book, intending to read just a few pages for relaxation before going to bed but finding themselves unable to close it until they have arrived at the last page many hours later. The elusive quality which makes them unable to lay aside the story and to forget all about it is vaguely called "suspense". Since in the television industry the corresponding inability of viewers to shift an another channel is a state highly desired by sponsors, it may be useful to understand the nature of the psychological phenomenon called "suspense".

One universal symptom of suspense seems to be a certain, not too unpleasant, contraction of the nervous system. We become tense, because the diameter of our blood vessels narrows, we are being "drawn in", we feel "close", "involved in the action," "absorbed". Undoubtedly, other circumstances being equal, a narrow winding mountain path is more suspenseful than flat fields stretching on an endless plain, and a spiral staircase more so than a large ball room. Since of our three media of visual entertainment, ours is the narrowest and most confined, it might just be that the nature of television is closer to the nature of suspense and that suspense, in turn, may be television drama's most powerful tool.

To formulate a tentative definition derived from such observations, let us call suspense "a slow, steady, inexorable progress toward an unknown end". We immediately understand why Sidney Greenstreet, the actor, has created on the screen many suspenseful characters; why the monster Frankenstein was felt to be suspenseful, why cats have always been regarded

as dramatic and suspenseful animals. Mr. Greenstreet, Frankenstein and a cat have in common that their movements are slow and deliberate; that there is about them a certain steadiness of advance unmarred by sudden jerks; that we feel so much strength in them that nothing seems to be able to stop them; and, finally, that no one can exactly foresee what they are up to.

Since many writers and directors aim to mirror in their work the fast, jerky and jagged rhythms of contemporary American living, they are prone to overlook the slow, steady inexorable progress that truly suspenseful action should make in order to involve the audience. If to an executive working in his deserted office after midnight, the door seems to open slowly and in a completely even movement, the suspense is great. If it were flung open and a character made a surprising appearance, the executive, and we with him, might feel shock, but not suspense. If the door slowly opened during office hours, there would be little suspense because the end of this action, as expected by him and by us, would be just his private secretary making a silent entrance.

If in Duvivier's excellent film "And then There Were None", the camera having previously established the presence of a cat in the castle, we see a disarranged mass of knitting wool in the middle of a room; if the camera then proceeds to creep slowly and evenly along one thread emanating from that ball; if we are thus led through several rooms and corridors at the eye level of a cat or of a close observer bending over to trace the thread; if the thread finally leads upward and the camera rises to bring

into view a dead hand and then the murder victim who was stabbed with her own knitting needle, then the writer and director have applied this definition of suspense literally to their material and through subjective camera treatment, have forced us to identify ourselves with a character in the play. This identification compels us to feel all the suspense that the creators of that visual sequence have prepared for their character. If the force shown in slow and steady motion suggests that it may be easily stopped, suspense is dispelled as surely as if the movement were abrupt, fast or jerky. It follows that movement here means not only physical motion but the whole rhythm in which the writer tells his story, the director realizes it on the screen and the actors project it through their nervous systems.

The formula of the "unknown end" is, however, not the only one by which a writer and director may combine their efforts to produce suspense. The slow, steady, inexorable progress may lead to an end known or surely anticipated by the viewer, but unknown to the characters in the drama. In the French film "Bataillon de Ceil", released here under the incongruous title "They Were not Angels" there is a long sequence showing the slow, steady and inexorable infiltration of German crack troops into a forest surrounding a lonely log cabin held by French paratroopers who have slightly relaxed their vigil the morning of the Allied invasion of Normandy. In the face of the attackers' superior numbers, the outcome is completely clear. Yet by a slow and steady series of actions contrasting the ever-approaching, inexorable Nazis—who slit the throats of the few French guards—with the happy feeling of relief and victory which the French soldiers derive from listening to their short wave set, a tremendous suspense is built in the viewer who identifies himself with the threatened characters. Likewise, children who notice the witch before Hansel and Gretel see them feel such unbearable suspense that they try to tell the characters in the play of the danger confronting them. If the slow, steady, inexorable progress is marked, the suspense may be upheld by identification with the character who naturally does not know the end even if

the viewer does. Again this formula for suspense must be applied by the writer to all the aspects of his story: it must be considered in story line, characters, action and dialogue.

When an electric storm is about to break, everybody complains that the atmosphere is "close". The outcome of a storm, at least in a large city, is known and constitutes no threat, although small children who cannot know the outcome are under much greater suspense than grownups. Yet a feeling of suspense persists and increases when the storm clouds keep drawing around above us, instead of bursting. It may be useful to observe that feeling and to imagine it from memory when writing and producing suspense stories. Undoubtedly the contraction of the nervous system which will result in an imaginative person from such a recall will make it easier for him to feel a certain excited tension which is part of suspense.

Our language, speaks of "weaving suspense" and "cutting suspense with a knife", thus suggesting that suspense has something in common with a piece of cloth. As a piece of goods is created by the movement and countermovement of the shuttle, so suspense is often created by the movement and countermovement of only two characters. The suspense created by a man pulling a gun on another man is simple and primitive, but nevertheless suspense, as anybody who has looked at a television screen will admit. It may be helpful to writers and directors to think of suspense as a cloth woven by few, perhaps at its best only by two characters. Too many complex and distracting characters mar the pattern of suspense.

No writer and director can go on interminably building suspense. At one point it will become unbearable to the nervous system of his viewers. On the whole, the older and the more sophisticated the spectator, the more suspense he can stand. If the creators of a suspense program go beyond this point the nervous system of their public will open their natural safety valve of laughter. Because this laughter, occurring in the dramaturgically wrong moment may easily ruin his work, all dramatists worth their salt lookout for that breaking point of

RECEIVER DISTRIBUTION . . .

(May 1, 1950)

New York	1,300,000	Dallas*	28,900
Chicago	496,000	Oklahoma City	27,500
Los Angeles	494,000	New Orleans	26,100
Boston	368,000	Miami	24,800
Detroit	231,000	Tulsa	24,100
Cleveland	223,000	Fort Worth	23,600
Baltimore	166,000	Omaha	22,500
St. Louis	128,000	Grand Rapids	21,600
Washington	128,000	Johnstown	21,300
Cincinnati	120,000	Erie	21,100
Milwaukee	110,000	Houston	21,000
Pittsburgh	105,000	Salt Lake City	15,700
Buffalo	91,200	San Antonio	15,300
Minn.-St. Paul	88,700	Charlotte	14,600
Schenectady	78,000	Norfolk	14,000
New Haven	77,500	Utica	13,200
Columbus	66,400	Binghamton	12,400
Dayton	62,100	Birmingham	12,400
Providence	56,500	Greensboro	11,500
San Francisco	55,000	Davenport	10,400
Lancaster	44,800	Jacksonville	9,900
Syracuse	43,400	Kalamazoo	9,600
Toledo	40,000	Ames	9,100
Rochester	39,400	Huntington	8,500
Atlanta	37,500	Lansing	7,400
San Diego	37,100	Phoenix	7,000
Memphis	34,700	Bloomington	5,900
Kansas City	34,300	Albuquerque	3,100
Indianapolis	34,100		
Wilmington	32,700	Total TV Sets	5,846,000
Louisville	32,000	*Additional coverage for WBAP-TV,	
Richmond	29,100	Ft. Worth:	
Seattle	29,000	—NBC estimates	

suspense and either go temporarily off the suspense accelerator or dispel the excessive suspense themselves by comic effects. The ancient Greeks, very serious people, had their short tragedies followed by a farce; Shakespeare put comic scenes wherever the suspense, as in "Macbeth", was too hard on his audience, and good contemporary suspense plays like "Angel Street" and "Uncle Harry" have not lost but gained by temporary relief from suspense or even, like "Arsenic and Old Lace" by a skillful blend of comedy and suspense. The audience is able to accept a great deal more suspense if it is fed those stresses and strains not continually but with short inter-

vals of relief. A writer or director who is tense all the time will not be able to produce as much suspense in the aggregate as one who, like Hitchcock, mixes with his tense events ordinarily anti-climatic moments.

By creating suspense, the writer of a program puts himself under the obligation of relieving it later and of explaining to his audience the circumstances he first had to withhold from his public. The results of certain experiments with unrelieved suspense on current dramatic television shows are yet to be evaluated; but psychology tells us that, much as everybody enjoys suspense, few care to be left in that state permanently.

Televiser - Graph

Televiser-Graph is not a personal program review. It is, instead, a technical analysis of just what the viewing audience gets out of a particular program with concrete suggestions for improving the production. Our objective in presenting this new feature is the general elevation of television programming technique.

SHOW: Texaco Star Theatre
 MC OR STAR: Milton Berle
 STATION: WNBT-TV
 CHANNEL: 4
 TIME: 8 p.m.
 DATE: June 6, 1950

- 8:00 P.M. Show opened with usual Texaco Servicemen's spirited quartet. (Audience Appeal: 50 to 52)
- 8:01 P.M. *Milton Berle* in garb of June (not bashful) bride. Roundly applauded by audience. (A.A.: 25 to 60)
- 8:05 P.M. *The Marvels*: Group of seven springboard acrobats and tumblers. Good, but in awkward spot with audience not sufficiently warmed up. Held firm. (A.A.: 60)
- 8:08 P.M. *Martha Raye*: Joined by Milton Berle. Songs and dances. Berle frequently changed costumes to conform with Martha Raye's song

themes. Berle appeared in the guise of Aly Khan, a matador, as Leo Durocher and as a hotel page boy. The show steadily increased in interest by this teamwork. (A.A.: 60 to 80)

8:24 P.M. *Norman Evans*: English comic, with his hand-operated cub "Teddy" easily added to the upward trend of the show by his skillful manipulation of "Teddy" during his trumpet numbers, plus his grotesque facial expression. (A.A.: 80 to 84)

8:29 P.M. *Robert Adler*: Joined by Milton Berle, Martha Raye and others in a two family skit which terminated in a riot of action, patter and slapstick with some effect in pie throwing. An accidental high spot in the performance was reached when one of the quarreling wives stepped on a piece of slippery pie, suddenly landing firmly and definitely in a seated position on the floor. The slip was entirely unex-

pected by the performers and raised the graph rate abnormally to a high of 98. (A.A.: 84 to 98 to 80)

8:40 P.M. *Sid Stone*: Texaco commercial. Well handled, but unable to combat the result of the accidental high attained in the preceding skit. (A.A.: 80 to 64)

8:48 P.M. *Jan Bart*: Baritone. Well received, but did not appear to fit the pattern of preceding events. Nevertheless, Bart held very well in view of handicaps. (A.A.: 64)

8:51 P.M. *Milton Berle*: and cast in a "Canadian Mounty" skit. Humorous songs, dances and patter boosted the show upward for the windup (A.A. 64 to 74)

8:58 P.M. *Texaco Servicemen's Quartet*. Always holds well to curtain. (A.A.: 70)

8:59 P. M. End.

TECHNICAL NOTATIONS:

Camera Angles: Satisfactory. Closeup shot of Norman Evans slightly blurred.

Camera Operations: Alert. Some close views lacking in "The Marvels" number.

Lighting: Good overall. No special effects attempted.

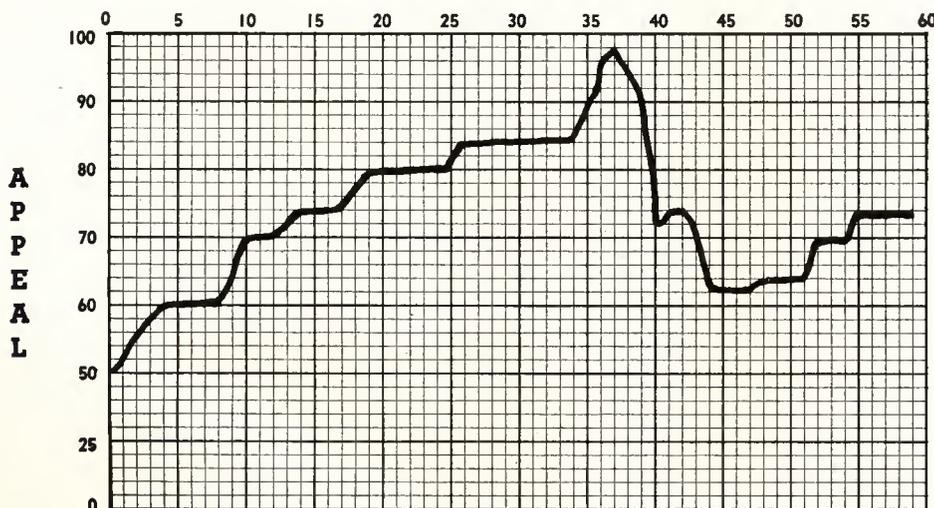
Pace: Generally fast. Naturally slow numbers seemed slower by comparison.

Audience Appeal: Very high for the first 39 minutes. Dipped from the 39 to the 47 minute. Good recovery to the close.

Technical Errors: None noticeable.

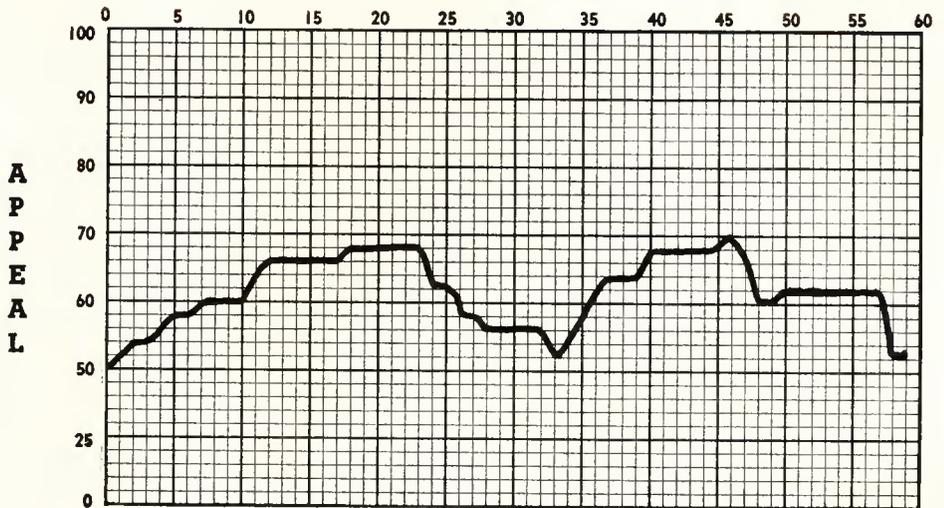
High Point: At the 37 minute. Performer's accidental fall, reached 98.

60 MINUTE GRAPH



SHOW: Toast of the Town
 MC OR STAR: Ed Sullivan
 STATION: WCBS-TV
 DATE: June 4, 1950
 TIME: 8:00 P.M.

60 MINUTE GRAPH



8:00 P.M. *Ed Sullivan*: MC appears, following dancing girls fanfare. First number presented;

Lois & Lettas: Comedy number, Jugglers, mildly humorous, but interesting. Spinning of 6 plates simultaneously; not new, but furnished fair suspense for climax of this number. (Audience Appeal: 50 to 60)

8:07 P.M. *Deep River Boys*: Good quartet harmony; microphone not placed for full advantage. Harmony by yodlers well received and materially increased upward trend of the show. (A.A. 60 to 66)

8:14 P.M. *Iva Kitchell*: Dancing comedienne, mildly humorous routine. Interest rose, then fell. Routine closed with unclimaxed finish and on her way off stage, Iva collided with Ed Sullivan. (A.A.: 66 to 68 to 62)

8:24 P.M. *Commercial*: A motion picture film heavily burdened with shots of racing cars at high speeds, thinly related to the commentators remarks, which were directed to the sponsors product. Unnecessary sag here. (A.A.: 62 to 58)

8:26 P.M. *Joe & Lott Anders*: High bar on single wheel jugglers. Well done, but not strong enough to overcome preceding sag. Slight recession in appeal. (A.A.: 58 to 56)

8:32 P.M. *Patricia Bright*: Singing comedienne. Did her best to overcome the sag, and succeeded in raising interest slightly. (A.A.: 56 to 64)

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8:38 P.M. *Pat C. Flick*: Upward trend begun by Patricia Bright was easily boosted further by Flick from his seat in the balcony. Expert delivery of his material used, was, for the most part, a repetition of Flicks previous appearances on the Toast of the Town. (A.A.: 64 to 70)

8:46: *Patti Page*: Songs. Good, but in bad spot for slow moving performance. Televiewers attention distracted by super-imposition of cotton clouds effects which smeared across Patti's face in close-up views. Lack of good pictorial taste evident here. (A.A.: 70 to 62)

8:56 P.M. *Ed Sullivan*: Always a welcome figure. Always serious, even when smiling. Introductions of known and unknown celebrities. This sequence seems to suggest "Time Killing". When used so near the close of the show, it becomes an unmistakable signal that the presentation is about over. Its the green light for dialaway. Omission of a climax is the direct cause of this

severe drop in interest at the close. Two points above the tolerance line. (A.A.: 62 to 52)

8:58 P.M. Dancing girls for closing sequence. (A.A.: 52)

8:59 P.M. End.

TECHNICAL NOTATIONS:

Camera Angles: Well selected.
Camera Operations: Alert. Generally good.

Lighting: Good.

Pace: Generally sluggish. Lacking one or two rapid numbers.

Audience Appeal: Started well and held up for 28 minutes, then dipped badly up to the 33 minute. Good recovery to the 46 minute, followed by downward trend and bad drop after the 56 minute due to lack of closing climax.

Technical Errors:

1. Iva Kitchell's unclimaxed number and collision with MC.
2. Thinly related commercial motion picture.
3. Flicks repetition of material recently used on Toast of the Town.
4. Smearing of Patti Page's face with stiff cotton-like clouds.
5. Introduction of celebrities in place of a closing climax.

High Point: Iva Kitchell dancing 68 Pat C. Flick 70.

GRAPH KEY	
Appeal Line No. 50	Tolerance Line
Above "Appeal" Line No. 50	Safe Area
Below "Appeal" Line No. 50	Tolerance Falls Rapidly
Numerals Above Graph	Presentation by Minutes
Numerals at Left of Graph	Audience Appeal

This is the sixth in a series on the various TV positions.

Television Director

by Bill Hobin

(Director "Garroway At Large")

TIME, experience, and bitter results reveal that a major deficiency among all of us is the lack of the ability to utilize, to the best of advantage, our major tool . . . the camera.

Eliminating the fancy phrases and accepting the established format of elementary directing culled from all forms of theatrical endeavor, let's be basic about television. The camera must not be used as a mere recording device, but as a selective instrument which we use to enhance the basic ingredients of any show, namely, script, cast, sets, costuming, props and lighting effects. The director is the only person who can capsule all these ingredients into a frame and have them tell the story that they were meant to tell.

Flow and pace are primary in either of the "frame" mediums,—motion pictures or television, and this is accomplished by a combination of camera movement and editing. In television, the director is both camera director and editor, simultaneously. Consequently, he must not be mechanical in his approach, but he needs to "feel" his every shot, as it relates to the end results. Each cut, dissolve, fade or camera movement has to be an unobtrusive part of the show and not an obvious effect.

A movie educated public does not permit us to deviate from the accepted use of dissolves and cuts, though they may be unaware of the principles involved. A dissolve, used in place of a cut, is perhaps the most glaring example of "effect for effect's sake"—so evident on most television musical and variety shows. For example: a dissolve from a medium shot to a close-up of a singer is visually upsetting and has

no meaning. The purpose of a dissolve is primarily for change of scene, or to denote passage of time. It can also be used for montages or special effects.

A cut is the simplest mechanical transition we have, yet it is often the most effective because it is the least obvious, if used correctly. Once again, in the case of the singer, a cut from a medium shot to a close-up at the end of a musical phrase punctuates the music because it occurs at a natural time in the musical structure. This makes it "clean" in contrast to a dissolve, which is "sloppy" as it begins in one phrase and ends in another. Also, on a musical number, a transition from a medium shot to a close-up may be accomplished by a "dolly in" ending exactly at the expiration of a musical phrase.

Assuming the director has the use of a dolly or crane camera, and the assistance of two pedestal cameras on a variety or musical show, it is important that the total effect of flow and movement appear to emanate from one source. This means that the director must block and stage his show principally for his "mobile" camera and position his "static" cameras so that he may still intersperse his main

flow with variety shots. Many times it is advantageous to place a close-up camera immediately next to a camera on a long or medium shot so that a cut appears to be from the same viewpoint.

Executive Tasks

Having analyzed some of the aesthetic problems of the television director, it is also important that we be aware of his function as the executive-coordinator of a production unit. Although these functions differ for every situation, there are certain basic procedures that can effectively eliminate excess "pencil work" prior to the camera rehearsal. Delegation of authority to competent assistant directors and script girls in the form of actual charts outlining dates of necessary accomplishments has proven so successful that the director can be available almost all of the time for creative meetings with writers and designers. Most important is that these people be made aware of their responsibility to inform all integrated and coordinating departments exactly what is expected from them for each show. Dissemination of information regarding even the most minute detail can become a very important thing when we realize that in a major station the probable time for the creation of all effects on a half-hour musical program can run into hundreds of collective hours, considering all phases from conference with the client through painting the scenery to the final rehearsals.

Taking ourselves literally, it is obvious that in short, the Television Director must necessarily be a happy combination of aesthetics and organization. Realistically, however, we are aware that the two rarely run in juxtaposition.



Young Bill Hobin has been an NBC-TV producer-director since 1948. Prior to this he was an independent producer of experimental TV Commercials. Mr. Hobin studied screen direction under the guidance of Joseph van Sternberg, at the University of Southern California where he majored in Cinema.

Music's Place

In Television

by Fred Waring

RADIO'S favorite children—its star performers—were heard but not seen. For that reason more than any other, music became the backbone of radio entertainment. Those of us whose profession it is to produce musical shows felt pretty smug about the whole thing and, even though we could not carry on much stage movement because of the stationary microphones we were happy in this medium that put clear, balanced sound above everything else.

On the other side of the radio fence of course have been the comics, the variety performers, and the dramatic actors. For many years a majority of these fellow-workers in show business felt that not being seen was a detriment to their art. In fact I am sure you will recall the oft-repeated comment when an act failed to go over on radio, that the star had mis-fired because he "had to be seen to be appreciated".

Today every TV set owner will agree that the electronic miracle which makes it possible to see a performance in his home has added a delightful new dimension to his world of entertainment. He does not have to use his imagination any longer to know that the studio audience is laughing at a funny hat, or applauding an expertly enacted dramatic scene.

But what *is* music's place in television? Now that singers and musicians have the benefit of sight presentation, what new attraction can be offered to enhance the sounds we make? This was a very disturbing question in my mind when the prospect of a television program of our own first loomed on the horizon. I'm quite sure other per-

formers in music had the same misgivings: Music has been called the universal language and within the time of man has been a supreme emotional force, free from any baffling characteristics that might be created by strange and unfamiliar sights meeting the eye. To illustrate what I mean, take for example a beautiful song like "The Hills of Home". The composer had his own nostalgic landscape in mind, but I am sure that its lovely strains bring to the mind of every listener a picture of his own native heath. By the same token the lovesick young troubador in a foreign land who sings his song of his lady fair has a vision of feminine loveliness quite different from the American college sophomore, who hums the exact same tune in anticipation of his date for the Saturday night prom.

With this personal interpretation of music being the real basis for universal understanding, it seemed a rather dangerous undertaking to use our own arbitrary notions in designing the musical pictures that television would demand. However, we have found out an amazing thing . . . at least I call it amazing. As long as we remain faithful to the spirit and color that we find in the notes and lyrics it seems that our audience is content to accept our own idea of how a piece of music should "look". Intelligent camera work and artistic lighting effects can capture the mood of a song almost as deftly as the artist's brush. Costumes that fit the locale or the period blend smoothly into the viewers' impressions, and stage movement that keeps within the spirit of the composition gives fuller meaning to what is heard.

It is very gratifying for my Pennsylvanians and me to feel that we are helping to find a place for music in television. At first it seemed strange, but now we no longer are startled by our own words when, in considering a number, we ask "how will it look?" as well as "is it a good arrangement?" As week after week of television production goes along we feel more and more at ease working with stage directors, lighting experts, designers and choreographers. Television has opened up an exciting new world, another place in the sun for those of us who have the assignment to give the public the music they love. Instead of feeling that some means had to be contrived to fit music into television, we all now have a strong belief that music "belongs", and that television is a happy medium for our life's work.

And so I welcome this chance to express some thoughts on "music's place in television." As the title for a statement from one who is up to his neck in justifying that place, it seemed like a pretty big order. But actually it boils right down to this—music very definitely has a place in television just as solid and salutary as its place in other parts of our daily lives. Our ambition therefore is to give the best music which is available to such an organization as ours the visual interpretations it deserves.

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Advancing Television Technique

IT is commonly lamented by critics and decriers of television, both inside and outside the industry, that production techniques have failed to keep pace with technical advance. If so, what is the answer to improved programming in the future?

What are the things that make up a good television program? There are three indivisible elements — (1) THEMING, which is the program's story line, or subject treatment; (2) DIRECTION, which is the effectiveness of performers and cameras on a TV stage; (3) PERFORMANCE, which pertains to the quality of illusion created by actors in the television studio.

Television Theming

Is a show's television theming timid, conventional, shallow, tawdry and repetitious? Or is it bold, imaginative, original and inspiring? Much of a show's success or failure depends on this one important element, often neglected by today's television producers.

Current television theming suffers from three deficiencies. The first is the obsolescent assumption that only children find interest and delight in imaginative themes. The very survival of folklore and superstition belies this. Not professional poets, but the numberless myriads of unlettered humankind have kept green the race's memory of fanciful tall tales explaining the genesis and laws of nature.

Mr. I. Magination, children's program on CBS-TV, and Garroway at Large, adult fare on NBC-TV, are two good examples of imaginative telecasting. The success of these shows and the wide acclaim they have received is an indication of how responsive the public is to such material.

Theming's second deficiency is ow-

MORDI GASSNER presents here the second installment of "Advancing Television Technique". Mr. Gassner was formerly Art Director, WPIX; Production Designer ABC-TV and CBS-TV; Designer of Broadway productions and motion pictures. He was twice awarded Guggenheim Fellowships for creative work in art.



ing to the fallacy that great themes entail great expense. Only producers ignorant of the range and economy of special effects could wilfully live in the shadow of this mistake. Important ideas can make themselves felt with utmost simplicity, and no visual treatment tied to the current mania for period detail, with all its incidental cost for elaborate construction, painting and handling, no interior decorator's setting, can hold a candle to what is inexpensively possible when special effects are fused with intelligently planned minimum scenery. A study of special effects would indoctrinate television producers with the truth that imagination costs less to televise than run-of-the-mill subjects now dulling the edge of public pleasure in television. Prosaic themes have been written in red ink a long while. It is time for more daring television theming to begin writing in black.

Theming's third deficiency is dissonance between program and commercial. Viewers squirm and hate intrusive advertising for this. Commercial copywriters are striving to key their appeals nearer the program pitch, sometimes successfully. But only an underestimation of themal material native to the sponsoring enterprise itself can account for the rarity of television theming on such material. The content of enterprise is virgin territory for television theming. The du Ponts, the Fords, General Motors,

the Mellon interests, the Chase and National City Banks, American Telephone and Telegraph and others of like scale, have not one great story to tell, but thousands. Their separate epics, still untold, match the stuff of history.

Television Direction

Television Direction requires a visual education on a par with the maturest ideas of stagecraft. The television director must be in the vanguard of those who envisage the full scope and expressive powers of our medium. He must somehow learn so to administrate technical crews and actors that they dynamically engender on video his utmost premonitions of movements of the mind made visible. Be the telecast purpose pathos or wit, fright or anger, excitement or serenity, he must be himself the instrument of that purpose and by dint of his knowledge and personal art of suasion, as much as by his authority, keep his technical and performing agents equally instrumental of that purpose.

Television directors, as a class, should acquire a multiple schizophrenia, the better to split their visual powers five ways at once, for guiding the business of actors, of audio-video control men and of three separately moving cameras. Radio can hardly qualify the candidate for an art mainly visual. Theatre directors minus motion picture experience find the strategy of camera position and motion

a wearing drain on their flair for stage business. It takes experience, time, flexibility, a capacity to unlearn habits born of rigid sightlines.

Humdrum telecast purpose must not deaden the qualified television director's determination to complete his education in every art contributory to television: the visual arts, the literary and the musical and the technical. Where others in our age must be specialists, the television director must be the "whole man". He must throb with initiative intent to induce and express telecast purpose on a superior level. He, more than anyone except the designer, can educate the upper echelons of television production to a clearer sense than they now show of what wonderful things television can do.

A qualified television director must be able to command the order, path, tempo and intensity of the viewer's attention at each moment of fluent imagery. To control picture interest in flux, he must make sensible choices of visual effects; he must conceive the actions of his performers in keeping with the style of his staging. He needs to know the harmonics and counterpoint of pictorial arrangement so as to anticipate and recognize expressive framing on camera. He must know what lighting can do—the response factors of the orthicons to intensity levels and color, and how light can simplify dramatically even the most complex of subjects. Camera choice, camera motion, must be motivated for him; now for subjective identification with performers, now for the felt and seen rhythm of the lens, itself a dancer in space.

A television director must be skilled in merging film with his live takes. He must have a wide acquaintance with sources and kinds of such material, and choose wisely what is suited to his program. Special effects, too, offer him cuts in cost, in time, in hazard. They introduce surprise, bewilderment, awe, shock, the sense of strangeness or abnormality, or simple elemental beauty. While he need not know how each effect is achieved, the television director ought to know what is possible and how to judge the product of a specialists' labors.

(Continued on page 20)

KGO-TV Celebrates

First Anniversary

FROM 5,000 to 60,000 television receivers . . . from 5 to 30 hours of sponsored time—those, very briefly, are the two most significant developments during the first year in the life of KGO-TV, the ABC-owned station serving the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Area.

Last month—May 5th to be exact—marked the station's first anniversary, and the occasion called forth some interesting calculations by the station management.

Second of the now three TV stations to begin operations in San Francisco, ABC's fledgling first took to the air on a meager 12 to 13 hours-per-week, only an average of five hours of which were commercial. The some 5,000 TV sets then in use in the area didn't exactly make sponsors want to stand in line and bid for programs or time.

Thus, one of KGO-TV's first jobs was to create some public excitement about television—a task that was approached with top sports programming (Oakland Acorns home games, local wrestling and boxing) and such other programs as the Academy Award winning "Crusade in Europe", Hopalong Cassidy and Hoffman Hayride (which went on to win a local television Academy Award).

But the television set buying lethargy in the Bay Area did not really get blasted until September of 1949 when KGO-TV, Tide Water Associated Oil and Stanford University teamed up to telecast *all* of Stanford's home football games.

Football is especially dear to the hearts of Bay Area dwellers and the combination of football and television broke the logjam on TV set sales. By the time the Stanford-UC classic (The Big Game) rolled around set ownership was crowding the 30,000 mark

and San Francisco-Oakland was gradually being tabbed as a fairly respectable market by TV advertisers.

Immediately following the regular football season, KGO-TV added a block of ice hockey games (San Francisco Shamrocks) to its Saturday night offerings and lined up the East-West football classic for December 31st.

Meanwhile such shows as General Mills' "Lone Ranger" and Goodyear's "Paul Whiteman Revue" came into the station's schedule, setting the stage for a brisk first quarter sales splurge in 1950.

This subsequent sales activity by the station's sales department was capped by the signing of 13 locally sponsored hours within the first 10 days of March.

KGO-TV's current schedule is a far cry from that of a year ago. The average programming week now runs to approximately 35 hours with 30 of those hours riding over sponsors' banners. Afternoon programming is established and offered Tuesday through Friday—and on Saturdays when the Oakland baseball team is holding forth in the Emeryville park.

Not the least of recent additions has been a package of film classics (Pygmalion, A Star is Born, Jamaica Inn, etc.) sponsored by Hale's Appliance Stores and General Electric Supply Corporation. These Monday night feature film presentations are directly responsible for a lot of new antennae on Bay Area roofs.

And now that TV set ownership, as reported by the Northern California Electrical Bureau, has reached the 60,000 mark, KGO-TV looks forward to its second year of operations with considerable more optimism than existed a year ago. As with most television operations, the first year was the hardest.



Flipping Titles . . . with Jack Balch

Jack Balch a writer-director-producer of all types of television shows, was drama editor and critic of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch (the Pulitzer paper) for four years. He has published a novel, "Lamps at High Noon," and a play of his, "Me The Sleeper," was produced in New York last year.

MOSS HART'S "Answer Yes Or No," half-hour program Sunday nights on NBC, has hit the public-interest jackpot. The formula is simple. It invites people to guess which way the other fellow might jump in an—uh—unusual situation.

For instance of the way this redhot formula works, Hart recently suggested to the round and firm and fully packed (this is not an adv.) Mrs. Quentin Reynolds that she imagine herself in the water at a crowded beach and that her bathing suit has come off and got lost. Where from the water will she eventually decide to come out? Where her husband and a group of their most intimate friends are, or further up at a spot inhabited only by a mob of total strangers, hmmm?

Before her answer was made public, the guests did some advance guessing. Arlene Francis (the little devil!) guessed La Reynolds would come out all over. Hart (the moderator) laughed but vetoed this answer within the rules. Hiram Sherman, a very smart fellow who's a very good actor too, guessed she'd come out among the strangers just for the stories it would give her to tell all season while dining away from the home tables. Reynolds himself (jiggers, da innocent husband!) guessed she'd come out where he was. Only Sherman guessed right.

Sometimes the questions are not up to the—shall we say—intellectual levels indicated above, as when Sherman was asked whether he'd accept a free trip around the world if he were obliged to eat salmon at each and every meal. "Of course he wouldn't," everybody chorus'd, and of course everybody was right. So watch the questions, Hart, they shouldn't smell from herring. And that way the show will last a long time and will be very funny and you'll always have something every week to bring home to the Kitty.

* * *

FRANK SINATRA proved a solid personal hit on the second Bob Hope NBC show. Scoring every time he appeared (which would suggest that he should have a program of his own), he was particularly effective in a takeoff with Hope on the Hope-Crosby movies, "The Road to Singapore," "The Road to Morocco," etc. The takeoff, entitled "The Road to Frigidaire," had our favorite thin man wearing a pipe in his mouth, big ears alongside his head, and a "boo-boo-boo" in his tonsils. He groaned good too . . . Hope's gag-writers were all busy along the usual lines: "The reason my nose turns up like that . . . It happened at a taffee pull . . . the lights went out."

* * *

BRIEFER MENTIONS: Everett Sloane, in a Joe Liss original "Sammelweiss," about the discoverer of puerperal (or childbed) fever, was brilliant for Philco recently. This was a repeat for Sloane, who was just as brilliant in an earlier show as Vincent Van Gogh . . .

Wyllis Cooper, director-producer of "Stage 13," CBS on Wednesday nights, is a good man and true at creating horror. But a recent opus of his on werewolves of Hungary, who are the (quote) "Undead" (unquote), was not horrible enough for three guys at the bar where I sometimes hang up. "Let's turn to the wrestlers, who are much more horrible," they said. But the bartender held out for "Stage 13." Turned out he was from Hungary: "And I never miss a chance to find out what's going on in the old country."

(Continued from page 19)

Television Performance

Television performance is the readiest of all television skills to enter upon the promised future scope and power of the medium. Actors of cultivated ability abound. In New York alone there are some seven or eight thousand of them, seldom employed. Few have experience or training in the special needs of television performance; but minor adjustments of technique and attitude are within the power of many. Many of today's TV actors have resources far beyond the present demands on their qualifications for television performance.

Thousands of players have done their stints of stock, coping bravely and often successfully with incredible lacks of production wherewithal to show off their artistry. Many, and this season more than ever before, are happily witnessing and playing in the mushrooming hundreds of Little Theatres producing on arena stages. Though few have had the opportunity, most of them long to partake of repertory group production. The hazards of improvisational performance based on habitual type-casting would frighten few, provided that time and familiarity with fellow-players were afforded in proportion to tasks assigned. Impromptu television would be a happy game for many.

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