

**"Grand Ole Opry"**

Reviewed Saturday, 9:30-10 p.m. CWT. Style—Barn dance. Sponsor—R. J. Reynolds (Prince Albert Tobacco). Agency—William Esty. Station—WSM (Nashville) and NBC.

This program of hoary hillbilly songs, patriotic tunes and pop sentimental ballads is a 30-minute segment of a four-hour extravaganza airing each Saturday evening over this station. As an attraction for urban listeners its appeal is moot. But to outlanders this is a must program and attraction. Auditorium, where the program originates, packs in thousands of paid attendees each Saturday.

With Roy Acuff on the Coast for a film, the lead-off tune went to Pee Wee King who did the queries for *Take Me Back to Tulsa* with the Golden West Cowboys answering in song. Ford Rush, recently recovered from an operation, did *There'll Be a Lot of Happy Mothers*, written by Wallace Fowler of the show-cast, in fine fashion.

Minnie Pearl's usual comic tales of her brother and Hezzie, her boy friend, led into her vocal of *Jealous-Hearted Me*, followed by *Home In San Antonio*, a high-riding tune with Curley Williams and his Georgia Peach Pickers sending out solid. They returned later with *Columbus Stockade Blues* with blind Joe Pope at the piano, getting the plug in the featured spot.

Trudy Brown, billed as the Southern Girl with the Southern voice, interviewed soldiers in the audience, selecting interviewees at random and asking stereotyped questions. None of the gab is rehearsed. Mack McGar's furious fiddling of *Katie Hill* and a war song *The Hand Is Writing on the Wall* got a hand.

Pee Wee and the Cowboys, with Becky, Pete and Cicero handling choruses, knocked off *I Wonder Why You Said Goodbye*, and Hal Smith's *Bile Them Cabbage Down* rang down the curtain. Plugs were brief and ably handled.

Red O'Donnell.

**"Human Adventure"**

Reviewed Thursday, 8:30-9 p.m. Style—Dramatic narrative. Sustaining in co-operation with University of Chicago. Station—WOR (New York) and Mutual.

This week's program, third in the series, gives an adult approach to a subject too often treated in a juvenile way—the story of the pioneers from the East who broke the plains and made them the granary of America, later of the world.

Professor Walter Webb's script, *Conquest of the Plains*, tells the story of these pioneers in a series of vivid and exciting spoken pictures, threaded with cowboy songs and a swell incidental score. The script is a nifty, with all the drama needed and none of the customary hokum about cowboys and Injuns and the smile-when-you-say-that-pard dialog. The action moves rapidly, each scene clear and strong, ending with the ailing's host—Walter Yust, Encyclopaedia Britannica editor—bringing the story of the plains up to date.

The scenes depict a homesteader, taking him thru the first trail across the plains, battles with the Comanches, a cattleman versus farmer shooting affray and the frantic efforts of the early settlers to get the plains' scarcest commodity—water.

Yust in his summing up describes this script as a presentation "showing the battle for a new way of life" and merges this into a 1943 picture of the plains turning out planes and ammunition for the current fight for the new way of living.

If the series can hold this pace, *Human Adventure* should be well worth listening to and shouldn't be sustaining very long. Program was on CBS some time ago but got up a full head of steam.

Frank Gill.

**"Neighbors"**

Reviewed Friday, 2-2:15 p.m. Style—Vocal. Sponsor—Southern Cotton Oil Company (Snowdrift Shortening and Wesson Oil). Agency—Kenyon & Eckhardt. Station—WREC (Memphis) and Dixie Loop of CBS.

In trying to replace the Frank Crumit-Julia Sanderson show, Irene Beasley has undertaken a block-buster size order. Since the program is heard strictly by southern listeners, Miss Beasley is try-

**PROGRAM REVIEWS**

EWT Unless Otherwise Indicated

ing hard to remember the way she used to talk in Whitehaven, Tenn. The show inclines to overemphasize the *Neighbor* idea, on which it is based, being too fast-paced for real neighborliness, in the southern sense. This cannot be helped without diminishing the rather heavy load of commercials Miss Beasley has to carry.

Program caught was dedicated to George Gershwin, and Miss Beasley did some very creditable work on the tunes of *Thee I Sing* and *The Man I Love*. Her efforts with other Gershwin numbers proved that she should stay away from torch tunes.

Piano work is nicely handled by Bob Downey, who did a special arrangement of Gershwin's *I've Got Plenty of Nothing* and *Rhapsody in Blue*. Announcer Dick Stark does capable support and makes a nice foil for Miss Beasley. Program would be improved if he relieved her of more of the commercials and she stuck strictly to entertaining, which she does pleasingly. Briefer commercials would also help.

*Calling Card* idea used at the end of the show is pleasant and might be further exploited to advantage. Program is not tailored to Miss Beasley's personality, but it does have possibilities and should sell both Shortening and Wesson Oil.

Ted Johnson.

**"Let's Pretend"**

Reviewed Saturday, 11:05-11:30 a.m. Style—Fairy tales. Sponsor—Cream of Wheat Corporation. Agency—Batten, Barton, Durstine and Osborn. Station—WABC (New York) and CBS.

*Let's Pretend* takes some sort of record, being on the air 13 years before becoming commercial. During that period not even countless awards won in yearly polls could persuade an advertiser to place his cash on the line. *Cream of Wheat*, its sponsor, has bankrolled numerous shows but none have satisfied the sponsor or his sales department.

The *Cream of Wheat* delivery truck now takes the audience to the land of *Let's Pretend*, in this instance the No. 1 sub-juvenile land of them all, Cinderellaville. Nila Mack, director and producer of the series, has presented this wishful fillment tale many times and picked it as sure-fire for her first sponsored pitch.

It was good but it lacked a great deal of the imagination which these flights of childish fancy should have. Everything was solid adult fact and played that way. The Prince (Albert Aley) had his tongue in cheek all the way and his handling of the asides was heavy-handed. The rest of the cast might well be damned with "adequate" with the possible exception of Cinderella who was played by Marilyn Erskine with a little something extra on the ball.

Children love the tale of the scullery maid who married the Prince but it must be told their way and it wasn't this time. The "in-show" commercials were well handled by John Allen Wolf but the hitch-hike singing pitch at the conclusion was the typical spot announcement.

The mail-pull used on the program was a request that the audience send in the story they'd like to hear from the land of *Let's Pretend*. Joe Koehler.

**Amos 'n' Andy**

Reviewed Friday, 10-10:30 p.m. Style—Comedy. Sponsor—Lever Bros. (Rinso and Vimms Hitch-Hike). Agency—Ruthrauff & Ryan. Station—WEAF (New York) and NBC.

Radio's first and greatest blackface act came home Friday (8) a better act than when it went away. The new show-frame, a half hour of the old characters (A. and A., Fingfisher, Lightnin' and Henry Van Porter) plus a guest star, in a complete script each week instead of the quarter-hour scrip, was a solid click.

The duo faded from CBS rather than do a once-a-week half-hour session. The current sponsor apparently had a better talent contact than did the previous bank-roller.

Script was loaded with gags and garnered lusty laughs from the studio audience; first time since their Sam and Henry days that this duo worked be-

fore filled pews. It was situation comedy all the way, and even tho it was trite in spots, the timing and delivery of the Messrs. Gosden and Correll gave the show whip and wham. Their writing was also punchy. Each scene closed with a snapper.

Script, an oldie, had Andy trying to con a rich uncle into believing he was a successful husband so's to get a mention in the will.

It was an obvious plot, and just so obvious that the playing made it sparkle. Charles Coburn, the guesster, was in his glory as a reprobate of a veterinarian who permits himself to be bribed, without too much persuasion, to prescribe a pronto return home for the wealthy relative. He was shaky at the start but got into the groove when the studio audience started to laugh. Nor did Amos 'n' Andy stint the laughs they wrote for Coburn. He had the biggest belly of the show.

Commercials were neat and not gaudy while Harlow Wilcox was doing the pitch. He also did a smooth job, reminiscent of Bill Hay, on the intros and scene setting. But having the two stars get down on their knees verbally and plug for Rinso at the tag of the show was too much.

Old-timers who dialed Amos 'n' Andy by listening for their theme tune will have to remember the Bob White musical signature that identifies Rinso programs. This won't be tough, as the show is in the must class. Opposition is Bob Hawk's *Thanks for the Yanks* quiz on CBS.

Lou Frankel.

**"Chelo Flores"**

(Rio de Janeiro)

Reviewed Thursday, 9:15-9:45 p.m. (Rio time). Style—Vocal. Sponsor—Oliveira, Lima and Cia. Station—Radio Tupi (Rio).

Chelo Flores is a Mexican singer making her local air debut after a three-month engagement in the Golden Room of the Casino Copacabana.

The program in its present form may cause many listeners to switch the dial due to the many repetitious commercials. Plugs at the opening, closing and after each number left no doubt as to sponsorship and distorted what otherwise would have been good listening.

On the initial shot singer offered a well-balanced program of six Latin tunes. She has a pleasing voice, rich in quality and well suited to sentimental numbers. Delivers effectively and stacks up with the best Latin thrushes.

Musical accompaniment divided between a studio orchestra and Carolina Cardosa de Menezes at the piano.

James G. MacLean.

**Dinah Shore**

Reviewed Thursday, 9:30-10 p.m. Style—Variety. Sponsor—General Foods Corporation (Birds Eye Frosted Foods). Agency—Young & Rubicam. Station—WABC (New York) and CBS.

Dinah Shore is going to have a great show of her own—and this may be it, some day. It wasn't on the premiere and it suffered by comparison with what Dinah and Paul Whiteman did together during the summer stretch.

Program started with a Dinah build-up—"have you ever seen anything finer," etc. Then without further intro Dinah went into her song, in this case *Sunday, Monday or Always*, which she did to near-perfection. Following that she took over and introduced the guest, Ed Gardner. On the straight intro she was terrible, but as a comedy feed she warmed up and the audience began to like her. Ed (Archie) Gardner did his now standard routine with new words, and then Dinah, Ed and Harry Von Zell went into a patter commercial that ended with Archie doing a bit of poetry about Birds Eye Frosted Foods. It sells, altho the trade was a bit surprised to find the commercial punch line coming from the mouth of the guest artist.

As a prelude for Dinah's next appearance she read a serviceman's letter. Why she didn't turn red, white and blue while reading its fulsome praise of herself we wouldn't know. However, in answer to the letter she sang two oldies, *Put Your Arms Around Me*, *Honey* and *I'll*

Get By. Check two more singing socks for Dinah.

The program then went to Washington, D. C., to pick up a Mr. and Mrs. comedy spot with Roland Young and Cornelia Otis Skinner, two great performers who were bad. It might have been the material or it might have been traveling with a show during its pre-Broadway run that killed their radio chore.

Back to Hollywood for a short comedy bit with Robert Emmett Dolan, ork leader who led into a commercial, side-wise. Then Dinah's final number, *Comin' Thru the Eye*, and a bow to her arranger, Al Saxe, who deserves plenty of nods.

The hitch-hike on this program was a plug for General Foods' *Thin Man* program, which was moving to a new slot. If there must be a hike, a show plug is about the best there is.

J. K.

**"Tales of Two Cities"**

Reviewed Sunday, 8-8:30 p.m. Style—Documentary. Sustaining for New York OCD on WNYC (New York).

Furthering its program of air-selling the public on civilian defense problems, OCD has inaugurated a dramatized series of Sunday evening half-hours stressing various phases of domestic defense activities. The two cities involved in the documentary anecdotes are New York and London, the emphasis being laid on the fact that what happened there can happen here.

This needling of public consciousness to dangers of smug indifference is obviously a fine thing. All of us should have an ear cocked for the alarm bell and be ready to jump in to do our part. However, such a program as the second of the series, which was devoted to the air raid warden set-up here and in London, was more likely to lull the listener into too deep a doze to hear even a siren.

Major portion of the stretch was allotted to the scripted experiences of Rita Dusseau, who saw active service in London during the blitz and is now an air warden here. Miss Dusseau gave a graphic account of personal experiences. Unfortunately, the dramatization turned out to be as inspirational as the telephone book. The same goes also for the corny dish of underdone tripe about the activities of New York air wardens.

It seems from this chair that, if the OCD intends to do a real job along this line, such documentary evidence should be selected with an eye to real drama—to arousing sympathy, pity and even terror. *Tales of Two Cities* should be played on a trumpet. Walter Gustafson's judicious blending of sound effects couldn't make the whispy, trite dialog seem more than the bleat of a penny whistle. Narrator Mason Adams couldn't do much about it, either. To give director Ira Marlon's script all the best of it, it was enervating.

Bob Francis.

**Duffy's Tavern**

Reviewed Tuesday, 8:30-9 p.m. Style—Variety. Sponsor—Bristol-Myers (Sal Hepatica and Minit-Rub). Agency—Young & Rubicam. Station—WJZ (New York) and Blue.

Sal Hepatica and Minit-Rub returned a favorite ether bistro to the air with Ed (Fabulous Archie) Gardner once more harried by the demands of the mythical Mr. Duffy and murdering the thesaurus in his best Hell's Kitchen form. Pattern is same as heretofore. Archie emcees and manages the joint with the same type of malapropic quips. Dimwit Finnegan, *Tavern's* star customer, is back, as is also Eddie the waiter, with Charlie Cantor and Eddie Green still playing the laugh combo. The unseen and unheard Mr. Duffy crabs about the talent and, as usual, matters are enlivened by the appearance of a guest-celeb.

Freem featured visit by Veronica Lake, with fun stemming from Archie's efforts to have program's new chanter, Johnny Johnston, make her do a swoonatra. Johnny didn't succeed, but his own bary chirping was definitely off the top shelf, and he is a welcome addition to the *Duffy* gang. Paul Weston and his handboys replace Peter van Steeden in latest series and furnish creditable music background. Scripting of opener failed to make them a real part of the gang's wacky doings—an omission which should be remedied in future airings. There should be no outsiders at a *Duffy Tavern* party.

Program's outstanding newcomer, however, is Florence Halop, who won out over