

N. Y. SKEDS GO OUT WINDOW

Outlets Won't Return as Set

Resetting of receivers may be cause of delay—WCBW wants new equipment

NEW YORK, March 23.—Not one of the three New York scanners will be back on the air on their originally announced sked. DuMont's WABD is airing pix from 8 to 9 p.m., across the board, but that's just scanning service to keep its license. Actual date for live segs (as tabbed last week in *The Billboard*) is April 15. CBS's WCBW was skeded to be back on the air March 25, but at the last minute canceled its obligations and the new opening date is a matter for 20th floor decidish. Original plans were not to use the Vanderbilt Avenue studios but to air remotes for the re-opening week, but plenty is said to have held back the change-over to the new channel. Fact that most receivers in the metropolitan area are still to be reset may be one of the reasons. Another reason is said to be that WCBW has decided not to come back with the same equipment it was using before to escape the charge that it was deliberately scanning sub-normal pix.

Altho NBC has said that its WNBT will be back airing in April, facts are that the earliest official date on NBC engineers logs is May 5 and the slide-rule boys are willing to admit that even May 5 is a shooting date, not an actuality. NBC's reason, altho not officially given, is that it also plans to come back with plenty of image orthicons and orthicons rather than iconoscopes in the cameras and it wants to prove just how good black-and-white picture transmission and reception can be.

B&W Vs. Color Basis

Fact is that trade realizes that b&w and color battle will be fought also on the basis of actual pix being delivered into the home and stations returning to the air will have to deliver a good constant signal—or else.

Same reason that is holding up return of stations to air is holding back tours of NBC and CBS. In the case of the former, equipment is only now coming "off-the-line." In the case of Columbia, something has to be done to reduce the time that's necessary to "set" the receiver over which the "test audiences" see the programs. Time, according to editors, who happened to be in the room ahead of the group invited to a showing, runs from a minimum of 15 minutes to as long as a half hour.

On the resetting of home receivers thus far less than 10 per cent can receive the new channels, except Channel Five which is old Channel Four. Resetting must be speeded up, which is a toughie since there isn't a large group of trained television servicemen available. So it won't be only DuMont that won't hold to its sked.

WNBT Has Signed Up Over 2 Hours

NEW YORK, March 23.—Altho not ready to release facts or figures on the percentage of commercial time it will have signed, sealed and delivered when WNBT returns to the air, NBC has already signed up more than two hours of time. Indication that the trend towards follow-the-

TELEVISION REVIEWS

Balaban & Katz

Reviewed Wednesday (20), 3:15 to 4:30 p.m. Style—Variety and drama. Sustaining on WBKB, Chicago.

WBKB's first show reviewed since the station went back on the air after frequency change, proved program staff had not allowed grass to grow during the hiatus. The program was far above those put on nights about six months ago and certainly above quality of practically all other programs aired during afternoons. Only faults were those in the engineering field which resulted in one camera blanking out completely at one time and dark spots at other times in the pix picked up by the same camera.

One of the best performers we have ever seen before the video camera contributed the entertainment high spot of the seg. Dorothy Shay, singer currently appearing in the Empire Room of Chi's Palmer House, accounted for the part of the program deserving the preceding praise. With her songs about Tennessee hillbilly life (a bit risqué for home consumption), a gal who gets shoved around by her lover, etc., Miss Shay provided plenty of entertainment. The way in which she "sold" her songs, with just the right amount of body movement and subtle facial expression changes, gave her that added something that combined with her well-modulated voice to make her a top video performer.

Other highlight in the program was the presentation of an original eight-minute video drama written by Jerry Walker and directed by Beulah Zachary. Titled *Well, Goodnight*, the drama had a cast of only two: Brighton Lewis and Mary La Roche of *Laffing Room Only*. Because it sketched, in mood-indicating highly dramatic form, a good night routine between a girl and a boy and because it used a small cast that could be easily handled without expensive sets, it was excellent video material. If writers would spend more time writing simple dramatic programs for video, stations and advertisers would never have to worry about the expected high cost of video. And if other video directors would use techniques exemplified by Miss Zachary's use of a shot of the boy's and girl's hands moving closer and further apart on a porch rail, there need never be worry about a requirement of mass casts and elaborate sets to tell stories.

Also on the program was an interview of Harry Wagstaff Gribble, co-producer of *Anna Lucasta*, and a narrated biz illustrating changes in women's fashions since the early 1920's. Gribble was interviewed by Harriet Hester on one of her regular *Tea Time* shows. Altho the interview was interesting enough, from a video production point of view most notable was the way in which the introductory titles were superimposed on a shot of a tea pot from which Miss Hester was pouring tea.

master is still very strong at ad agencies is fact that five 15 per-centers requested figures on news programs following announcement that Esso would sponsor news segs on station.

Advertisers are being given a tentative airing date starting with May 5, but are also being warned that equipment supplies being what they are that the May 5 date may not be kept.

Don Lee

Reviewed Monday (18), 8:30-10:30 p.m. Style—Drama, films. Sustaining on W6XAO, Hollywood.

When a video outlet swerves sharply from a pattern of mediocre telecasting and emerges with a polished production, it's a pleasant surprise. Don Lee came thru with a sleeper and did a most creditable job.

Vehicle for tonight's video airer was presentation of stage play *Not Since Eve*, produced by the Pasadena Community Playhouse. A sophisticated comedy, the drama proved a good choice for an eye-ear production, being a one-set show, yet having enough movement to maintain interest thruout the condensed and "purified" version of the play.

Technical progress achieved tonight re-emphasizes fact that limited equipment does not necessarily mean second-rate video. Camera work hit a high mark, particularly well-balanced effect achieved on long camera shots. Unique set construction enabled lensers to follow action thruout the room and into cut-away ante rooms without serious break in video action.

Frequent switch from long to close shots all but eliminated bugaboo of visual monotony which so often mars tele airers. It was obvious to experienced viewers that considerable time had been devoted to camera plotting. It was time well spent. Only negative factor production-wise was inability of lighting crew to eliminate shadows, particularly in shots calling for across-stage movement.

Usual love triangle underlined the story, with the idyllic second marriage of Cathie and Eric threatened by unwelcome competition from Enid, Eric's first bride. Lois Kimbrell, as Cathie, and Mollie Ballantine, playing Ginny, another gal losing her husband to Enid, stood out in a cast of polished professional performers.

Direction for the Playhouse was handled by John R. Kerr and Jack Woodford, assisted by Tom Armistead. Jack Stewart was in charge of production for Don Lee. Film portion of show included cartoon, *Red Cross* newsreel and short subject on private flying.

Don Lee proved tonight that good tele isn't as far off as the public and trade is sometimes lead to believe. At the same time, the station has set its own high mark at which to shoot in future months.

BBC Air Pix Back June 8

NEW YORK, March 23.—British video programs will be on the air again starting June 8, according to a report by Arthur Feldman, ABC London correspondent. British pix have been off the air since September 1, 1939, when the last program was telecast from Alexandria Palace, London. According to Feldman, a telecast of London's victory parade is likely to be the first program.

British Broadcasting Corporation tele set-up is headed by Maurice Gorham, who was appointed in February.

Present outlook for manufacture of receivers in England is slim, according to BBC in New York. BBC here has not received any official word of the resumption of video activity in England, but figures the June 8 date is probably correct.

Airborne Pitch N.S.H.; Means 0 Programwise

WASHINGTON, March 23.—Industry folks are impressed over the future application of airborne television to commercial use for spot news telecasts, despite butts in the navy's first public demonstration of the technique at Anacostia Naval Air Station Thursday (21).

Comdr. Bernard Capehart, navy pilot who directed "operation optic," told *The Billboard* that he sees great possibilities in plane telecasts to cover both sea and air disasters. He tempered his optimism, however, by citing the high cost and the complexity of air transmission as well as the hampering factor that the camera is unable to operate in darkness or fog.

At the same time, the Federal Communications Commission is moving cautiously in television, discouraging, in effect, emphasis on building up black-and-white facilities. FCC has its eyes on future color broadcasts for which industry is not yet ready. Some commissioners feel that heavy investment at the present time in black-and-white television might lead to pressure against development of color.

At the navy show, put on for some 200 newsmen, technicians and army and navy brass, planes flew over Washington and Baltimore for typical travelog shots which brought yawns from all but novice viewers. These images were clearer than might be expected for plane-to-ground video, but an excess of "flutter-sputter" was still painfully evident.

Interest picked up as the scanning planes moved over near-by target grounds to transmit views of bombing runs and strafing operations, but eye-strain increased as the operator swung the camera violently in frequent futile attempts to keep the action in range. Chief drawback to image clarity thruout the demonstration was the usual inability of the camera to bring out sufficient contrast between the scanning object and background. Other bugs, such as light streaks and dimness of pictures, were said to be engineering difficulties which could be ironed out in time.

Brig. Gen. David Sarnoff, president of Radio Corporation of America, appearing impressed by the navy "operation optic," predicted that airborne television would play an important part in navigation and scientific expeditions, and added that he could envision future television reporters "covering" fires and floods with portable cameras.

WBKB Hypos Special Events

CHICAGO, March 23.—Last week Bill Eddy, WBKB director, stated that the video station plans to have special out-of-studio features constitute about 50 per cent of programming. By that time the station hopes to have in working condition its mobile units.

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