

Who Dun It?

Reviewed June 20
Sustaining Via CBS

Sundays, 4:30-5 p.m.
Estimated Talent Cost: \$3,000; producer, Robert Heller; director, Edward Downes; music conductor, Jack Miller; emcee, Bob Dixon; inspector, Santos Ortega.

Current Hooperating of the program (Sustaining) None
Average Hooperating of shows of this type (Sustaining) None
Current Hooperating of shows preceding and following (Sustaining) None
CURRENT HOOPERATING OF SHOWS ON OPPOSITION NETWORKS
ABC: "Metropolitan Auditions of the Air" 8.3
NBC: Sustaining None
MBS: "True Detective Mysteries" 7.3

Who Dun It?, billed as a "new adventure in crime detection," does have an inherent double-barreled appeal. It combines the proved draw of crime programs with the equally proved listener acceptance of moola giveaways.

Starting with this basic commercial soundness, the Columbia package producers have built a format which gives the listener quite a run for his time. This is done by offering a triple feature—not one crime, but three. Each of the three is dramatized, after which an armchair detective essays a solution which, if correct, nets a cash prize of \$50. The embryo coppers can earn an additional \$50 by identifying clues leading to the solution, and finally the three Madison Avenue gumshoes take a crack at the jackpot mystery, worth \$500 on this program.

That's the set-up, and it is admittedly a good concoction of program ideas which have previously spelled commercial success.

CBS has packed the program well with Santos Ortega playing the role of Inspector Crane, the representative of law and order who unscrambles the crimes of passion, hate, greed and everything else that makes the broadcasting cash register clink. The dramatizations are brief and well done, thereby providing considerable variety within the half hour.

How criminal can you get? Plenty, and with this three-in-one deal CBS will conceivably air every possible motivation and type of mayhem before it's over. Of course, the old saw continues to get into the script, which has such occasional asides as "even the cleverest murderer can't foresee everything." But Inspector Crane can, and we suspect he will, corral a sizable number of listeners, what with the help of Bob Dixon as genial host to the armchair crew.

Paul Ackerman.

Who's That Girl?

Reviewed Wednesday (16), 7:30-7:50 p.m. Style—Quiz. Emcee, Rita LaRoy. Sustaining over KTLA (Paramount), Hollywood.

Here's a tele quiz with possibilities, once its corn is husked. Gimnick is for home viewers to guess each week's Miss X, a masked gal who is paraded before cameras. She's supposed to be a person well known to the living room lookers—this week's mystery lady was Ann Rutherford—who provides them with hints as to her identity. While the home audience ponders who the gal may be, studio seat-warmers take turns guessing the historical characters portrayed by either emcee Rita LaRoy or one of her girls. That's where the corn begins.

Miss LaRoy tends to overdo her emcee chores. Her bit with screen character actor George Chandler, supposedly a contestant from the studio audience, was so hammed up it did little for the tele stature of either Miss LaRoy or Chandler. Particularly hard to take was a gal rigged up as Cleopatra, whom Chandler was supposed to identify.

Basic idea of identifying a well-known masked damsel packs audience



Radio and Television Program Reviews



Designates Radio Review



Designates Television Review

Hallmark Playhouse

Reviewed June 17

HALL BROS., INC.

C. E. Goodman, Gen. Sales & Advg. Mgr.

Thru Foote, Cone & Belding

Jack Hunt, Acct. Exec.

Via CBS

Thursdays, 10-10:30 p.m.

Estimated Talent Cost: \$5,250; host-narrator, James Hilton; this week's play, "Mrs. Union Station"; adaptation from a Douglas Welsh story by Milton Geiger; music, Lyn Murray; producer-director, William Gay. Cast: Elliott Lewis (Steve Applebee), Mary Jane Kraft (Helene Applebee), Frank Nelson (Harry Johnson), Mary Lansing (Myrtle Johnson), Joseph Kearns (Dave Ellis).

This show, featuring a complete little drama each week, proved to have the lightweight content which sponsors invariably believe suitable for summer listening. For the unpretentious item it was meant to be, *Mrs. Union Station*, adapted from one of the slick magazines, was just the sort of luke-warm, rosy-hued yarn one would expect to be chosen by Hilton, who leans toward the same themes and treatment of his own writing.

This particular program dealt with a marriage between a normal girl and a hobby-nut. The husband's particular madness was for model trains, and his associates were exclusively dedicated to the same foible. To say this was just a hobby for the characters depicted is vast understatement; they thought, slept and even ate model trains. A sample of conversation at the honeymoon breakfast table: "Dear, I like to read with my breakfast. Would you send out for some railroad time tables?"

The moral of this tale was not long in coming. The wife, distraught by this over-indulgence in locomotives, switches and cabooses, threatened her spouse, cajoled him and finally dumped him for her college flame. On the train with this Romeo, she suddenly discovered that he was just as fruity for model ships as hubby was for trains, leading to the inevitable happy ending, with the wife herself becoming a convert to the mania. If the readers of the slick magazines also make up the bulk of the radio listening audience, that possibly affords a reason for airing this sort of material. Unfortunately, the treatment was comparatively straight, and the humor was more suggested than broadly delineated; the result was not one of complete effectiveness. However, this was far from an unpleasant 30 minutes, if one doesn't care how he spends his half hours. Elliott Lewis and Mary Jane Kraft were properly luke-warm and rosy-hued in the lead roles.

Hallmark's commercials twice utilized quotes as take-off points from which to build up to Father's Day cards. One was from William Blake, the other from Douglas Welsh, who wrote the original magazine story from which the drama was adapted. This, no doubt, will be the only time those two writers will be coupled.

Sam Chase.

appeal. This, however, becomes lost in the foolishness that follows. It would sharpen interest in the show if home viewers were to race studio contestants in naming the unknown personality. Why water a strong show idea with pointless identification of portrayed characters? Lee Zitto.

Kirk Knight News

Reviewed Tuesday (22), 8:45-9 p.m. Style—Newscast and interview. Cast, Kirk Knight. Producer, Walt Koset. Originated on WWJ-TV, Detroit. Camera-man, Vincent Bartell. Second camera-man, Leonard Puskarich. Video controls, Webb Brookner and Stan Wolf.

The program, presented five days a week at differing times, has been on about three months, since Ted Grace left this station. It's a straight newscast using pictures from the day's news, with excellent morgue and news service resources via the station's ownership by *The Detroit News*.

One interview was used on this occasion, a rather colorless parks and recreation commissioner and a nervous but very human and competent boy about 12, talking on the National Soap Box Derby. This was good human interest, the kid's fidgeting and all registering perfectly. But one long camera scene picked up the commissioner and the boy, the former talking and looking almost full profile clear across the screen to the invisible Knight, making a distractingly incomplete scene.

Adequate Audio

The audio is very adequately done, based on Knight's two decades of experience at every job in radio. His sober-faced sincerity, given only in the opener, interviews and weather summary sign-off scenes are what really makes this show. The content was slightly unbalanced in being almost 100 per cent convention news, but the show was short of time, and part may have been cut.

Video was considerably below par. Using a placard only for the standard title is at best unimaginative editing. Too few and too long stills were used, single close-ups, including an unrecognizable John L. Lewis, were held tediously for a seemingly long news bit. The public had seen the same news photos or their equivalent in the papers hours before. A more creative effort in the visual end is necessary to make this good television. Just adding stills to good radio in this case doesn't do it.

Haviland F. Reeves.

Robert Shaw Chorale

Reviewed June 13

STANDARD BRANDS, INC.

D. B. Stetler, Advg. Dir.

Thru J. Walter Thompson Agency

L. W. Baillie, Acct. Exec.

Via NBC

Sundays, 8-8:30 p.m.

Estimated Talent Cost: \$3,000; writer, Phyllis Merrill; production director, Ezra McIntosh. Cast: 32-voice mixed chorus, directed by Robert Shaw, with piano accompaniment; choral profile of an American hero, with music by Gail Kubiz.
Current Hooperating of the program (Started June 6) None
Current Hooperating of shows of this type (Popular Music) 7.5
Current Hooperating of show preceding ("Bandwagon") 15.8
Current Hooperating of show following ("Fred Allen") 16.3
CURRENT HOOPERATING OF PROGRAMS ON OPPOSITION NETWORKS
ABC: Sustaining None
CBS: "Adventures of Sam Spade" 8.3
MBS: Sustaining None

This is not the first time that Standard Brands has ventured from the beaten path for its summer replacement. Some years ago the account aired a summer series of one-hour versions of the most popular operas, a program which gained considerable artistic success but fared poorly at radio's box office

New Adventures of the Thin Man

Reviewed June 22

PABST SALES COMPANY

Nathan Perlstein, Advg. Mgr.

Thru Warwick & Legler, Inc.

C. E. Staudinger, Acct. Exec.

Via NBC

Tuesdays, 9-9:30 p.m.

Estimated Talent Cost: \$5,500; producer-director, Himan Brown; writer, Milton Lewis; script supervisor, Dashiell Hammett; orchestra under direction of Fred Franklin. Cast: Les Tremayne (Nick Charles), Claudia Morgan (Nora Charles), Parker Fennelly (Eb).

Current Hooperating of the program (Starts June 22) None
Average Hooperating of shows of this type (Mystery Drama) 8.0
Current Hooperating of show preceding ("Date With Judy") 8.3
Current Hooperating of show following ("Fibber McGee & Molly") 16.7
CURRENT HOOPERATING OF SHOWS ON OPPOSITION NETWORKS
ABC: "America's Town Meeting" 2.8
CBS: "We, the People" (9-9:15) 8.3
Gabriel Heatter (9:15-9:30) 5.4
MBS: Sustaining None

Pabst Beer has reached into the closet, pulled out *The Thin Man*, and after dusting him off, given him a new look in the way of a non-crime series of situation comedies. The trouble was the situations just weren't humorous and the first outing of the show fell flatter

than the MacArthur boom. It wasn't the fault of Les Tremayne and Claudia Morgan, who played Mr. and Mrs. Nick Charles in the same well-worn grooves in which those parts have been portrayed in the past. Nor could Parker Fennelly be blamed after exhausting himself trying to draw laughs from the part of the Charles's rustic friend, Eb Williams. Just put it down as a good act, no script.

Bad Audience

A big mistake on the part of the sponsor was to have a studio audience present. Unlike most visiting firemen, who can be relied upon to whoop it up even for a wake, the assembled multitude sat firmly on its hands and let out only a few careless snickers two or three times, which only accentuated the sad situation. But what could you expect when the full 30 minutes were concerned with Nick Charles's 50th birthday, his refusal to admit his real age and Mrs. Charles's determination to make him quit detecting and settle down into something more routine.

A sample of the humor, which seemed as ancient as the characters themselves, had Charles announce himself, and when the other party asked if he were The Nick Charles, he came back with a bright, "Yeah, ever heard of me?" The snapper which plopped on the floor and quivered, was, "No." If the show takes on some brisk, snappy humor, it might make a go of it, since the characters need little introduction. But hot as the weather is, even the temperature can't serve as an excuse for this kind of stuff. Sam Chase.

—the Hooperatings. A like result in store for this year's replacement for the Edgar Bergen half hour, the Robert Shaw Chorale.

Even tho there can be no gainsaying the top quality of Shaw's choristers, it still remains difficult to see why, from a commercial viewpoint, a program with clearly limited audience appeal was chosen. That's especially true in view of the valuable time franchise involved on a peak listening evening.

Shaw's selections, which he introduces with unusually interesting commentary, range from American folk ballads to Bach. Each is done with the impeccable taste which characterizes his work. Opening up with a pop tune, however, might broaden the appeal. Jerry Franken-