

# Television—Radio Reviews

## Range Rider

**TELEVISION** — Reviewed Thursday (29) 6:30-7 p.m. Sustaining over WCBS-TV, New York. Production, Lou Gray. Supervisor, Armand Schaefer. Director, George Archambaud. Cast, Jack Mahoney, Dick Jones, Elaine Riley, Earl Hodgins, others.

This new series of cactus capers is being produced by Flying A Pictures, which is doing such a good job on the Gene Autry TV series. Although it may have been transmission or the individual set reception, production standards seemed definitely inferior to the Autry pictures. Photography values were weak, with a marked scarcity of close-ups and an overabundance of long shots, coupled with lack of clarity in film quality. But it should be repeated this may have been transmission or set reaction.

There was at least one new wrinkle, too, in this otherwise standard mesquite masterpiece. They had the hero, the Range Rider, a rather patent parallel to the Lone Ranger, and his side-kick get into a hand to hand fight with a gal, and toss her around quite some. This seems to violate the basic canons of the boss opera production; almost as radical as having the hero lose out at the end.

Maybe because she turned out to be the heroine, for whom the Rider does the daily good deed, the semi-shellacking was considered okay.

## Gunplay Galore

Another off-beat item stems from the lead's pal, played by Dick Jones, who packs an equalizer and shoots like mad with it. Jones looks like he's 16 or thereabouts (actually he's 23), but what all this bombardment will do to kid viewers is fearful. It could conceivably result in mass slaughter.

Jack Mahoney is the lead, and for the New York showing, is introducing the films in person and plugging a colt naming contest. He makes a fine appearance on the live bits, but suffers in the filmed comparison.

The plot of this show, Six Gun Party, was the stand-by yarn of the heavy trying to cop the gal's ranch. The fight scenes at the end were okay, but oddly enough, the villain never made it.

Jerry Franken.

## Dinner With Jeanette

**RADIO**—Reviewed Tuesday (27) 6:30-6:45 EST. Sustaining via WLIB, New York. Producer, scripter, director, Bert Child. Announcer, Murray Jordan. Cast: Jeanette Diamond, Ben Gitlitz and Eileen Shelly.

While WLIB's *Dinner With Jeanette* may appeal to a few Jewish dialers, the audience at which it is aimed, the situation-comedy is still far from adequate entertainment. None of the characters live, no interesting situations are created, and the result is 15 minutes of small talk that gets nowhere.

The situation, on the episode caught, seemed to concern a pitch that Polly was making for Herschel, her reluctant suitor. Jeanette came in later and delivered a few homilies on religion. But when Herschel had Polly faint in his arms, his reaction was that of a script writer trying to make jokes, not that of a person.

The top acting stint was turned in by Eileen Shelly whose voice showed a suitability for network chores. Bert Gitlitz was the yokel suitor. Jeanette Diamond sounded as if she would register, were she given more to do.

Leon Morse.

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## Songs for Sale

**RADIO**—Reviewed Friday (30), 8-9 p.m. EST. Sustaining via CBS. Producer-director, Herb Moss. Writers, Sid Reznick and Ray Allen. Emcee, Jan Murray. Music, Ray Block and ork. Vocals, Rosemary Clooney and Richard Hayes. Panel of judges, Mitch Miller, Nancy Donovan and Bob Merrill. Guest, Guy Mitchell.

This show's formula seems to have posed quite a problem. Presumably it is designed to encourage amateur songwriters and to search for new tunesmith talents as well as new songs. Apparently of the conviction that sober treatment of this theme is not the entertaining approach, the powers-that-be have encased the formula in a comedy-emcee pattern built around Jan Murray. The result is a show which neither completely succeeds in establishing the amateur song hit pursuit as the goal of the show, nor does it manage to provide a music-comedy entertainment of snap, class or distinction.

Murray, a comic who sells strong in the flesh, tends to place greater emphasis on his gags than on both his remaining functions as inquisitor and interlocuter between the songsmiths and the panel of judges. Result is that the judges' criticism generally carries no real punch or purposeful content. This in itself partially destroys a key portion of the value inherent in the show's theme.

Judged from the four amateur songs presented on this listening, the quality of the material at hand has improved considerably from that which was offered in the earlier days of the airer. The songs are considerably enhanced by the winning warbling of singers Rosemary Clooney and Richard Hayes as well as the sympathetic ork work of Ray Block. Miss-Clooney's glowing torch warble of the winner, *Take a Chance*, undoubtedly was a determining factor in that song's grab of top honors.

The change-of-pace factors included an offering from panel-sitter Nancy Donovan and a pair of songs by guest Guy Mitchell, who worked them with his disking compatriot, Mitch Miller, permanent member of the panel, making his radio conducting debut. The Mitchell-Miller team did their waxed hit reading of songwriter Bob Merrill's hit, *Sparrow in the Tree Top*, as one of the selections.

The show is a loosely paced affair which manages to punch out some occasional yocks and come up with some respectable musical moments. By paring Murray's over-long inquisition of the amateur writers, the show could probably squeeze another couple of songs into the hour-long proceedings to advantage and thus help create a more sincere feeling for the song-selling peg than it currently does.

Hal Webman.

## I Hear Music

**TELEVISION**—Reviewed Saturday (24), 3:30-3:45 p.m. CST. Sustaining via WBKB, Chicago. Producer, Howard Grafman. Director, Jim Harelson. Cast, Jackie Cain and Roy Kral.

If any TV show based on jazz can succeed, this one will. Karl, pianist, arranger, singer, and Miss Cain, vocalist, met and got married while both were with Charley Ventura's band. They are young and fresh looking and are working as a team around Chicago.

The show, cut to 15 minutes after the premier a week earlier showed half an hour was too long, consisted merely of singing by the pair, with Kral at the piano. They did two duets, and Miss Cain sang several solos. The show wasn't fussy—she leaned on the piano for one number, and wandered over to a sofa for another. As singers they have everything. Miss Cain has a clear, true voice for jazz, and excellent presentation. There was a touch of bop in their arrangements, but just enough to spice and not spoil.

WBKB has put them on Saturday afternoons, but probably would move them to a late evening spot if a sponsor is found.

Jack Mabley.

## WOR-TV Press Conference

**TELEVISION** — Reviewed Wednesday (28), 8:30 to 9 p.m., EST. Sustaining via WOR-TV, New York. Producer, Edythe J. Meserand; director, Roy Meredith; moderator, David Snell; panel, Leonard Ingalls, New York Herald Tribune; Daniel Noonan, Brooklyn Eagle; Edward Katcher, New York Post; Gabriel Pressman, New York World Telegram & Sun; guest, comptroller Lazarus Joseph.

This is a sort of local Meet the Press. A panel of newsmen from New York dailies each week tosses questions at some personality from this area, with the preem stanza having New York Comptroller Lazarus Joseph parrying the queries. David Snell acts as permanent moderator, and he had better wield a louder gavel on future editions. Matters had a tendency to get out of hand, with Joseph recognizing the questioners, and even questioning them individually.

How lively the show will be depends upon the panelists and the personality on the spot. The debut show had a few good moments, but for the most part it got bogged down with Joseph's speechifying. Here, too, the moderator must show more firmness in the future. The hottest question, and one which was tossed right from the start, called for Joseph to justify the 1 per cent rise asked for the city sales tax. Unfortunately, altho this question came up thruout the show, Joseph did very little to offer a specific reply.

In one instance the comptroller even went so far as to read a letter written by his predecessor, lauding the current job being done. He took a few digs at the State government, told about how difficult his own job was, said almost nothing to refute claims that the tax increase is unnecessary. He also ducked, and parried the question of what results were coming from the \$2,000,000 spent for a special committee to investigate possible economies in city government.

Altho the sales tax issue certainly is controversial and pertinent—and it was live of the station to seize upon it as a subject—it didn't make for good programming, thru no fault of WOR-TV, but because Joseph proved too pompous and unco-operative. Maybe the station will have better luck next time. There's certainly room for exploration of local topics of this nature. Camera-work was okay within the limited area offered by a panel show.

Sam Chase.

## Gloria Parker

**RADIO**—Reviewed Sunday (25) 10:15-10:30 p.m., EST. Sustaining via ABC, New York. Producer, Dick Charles. Writer, Ed Ettinger. Star, Gloria Parker. Musical director, Dick Ridgeley. Announcer, Ed Michael.

This 15-minute seg of Latin-American music features Gloria Parker, a musician billed as "The Little Princess of the Marimba." Miss Parker, who is evidently the Connie Haines of the conga set, received a big build-up as a "cute trick" type on the initial broadcast. In lieu of video, the announcer ran the gal thru a listing of her vital statistics—"Height? Five feet. Eyes? Brown. Weight? Eighty-eight pounds. Hair? Red, etc."

In spite of the unduly precious "princess" tag, Miss Parker registered as a competent musician with a bright mike personality. If her appearance is anywhere near comparable to the announcer's glowing description, she should do well on TV.

Musically the Latin-American ork turned in a standard nitery-type job on several south-of-the-border tunes, plus a couple of pop numbers.

The dialog sessions between Miss Parker and her announcer were mighty coy. At one point, the latter, in pseudo-hep lingo, mouthed, "Step over to that marimba, Gloria. Put your digits on the mallet and send me, honey."

June Bundy.

## The Real McKay

**TELEVISION** — Reviewed Friday (30), 7-7:30 p.m. EST. Participation sponsorship via WCBS-TV, New York. Producer-director, Ned Cramer. Cast: Jim McKay, Mac Perrin, Peggy Ann Ellis, Sandra Lee, Milt Green Quartet.

The Real McKay, a daytime TV feature since last August, has been dressed up a bit production-wise for its debut as an early-evening video program. The strictly-off-the-cuff interview technique has been toned down; there was a dance solo by ballerina Sandra Lee; a couple of pop warblings by canary Peggy Ann Ellis and a rather unfortunate sketch featuring Miss Ellis and Jim McKay himself.

In spite of the new production giggaws tho, the show still clicked best when McKay and his pianist-side-kick, Mac Perrin, joined vocal forces on *You and Your Beautiful Eyes*, complete with an out-of-focus camera gimmick on the lyric line, "Things go out of focus." McKay, who has a baby face, is an odd but appealing combination of sophistication and "just folks." He also has an interesting habit of delivering a homespun line with a knowing gleam in his eye. It's an unorthodox personality combo, which might easily attract both types of audiences—each convinced that the man is their "kind of emcee."

Perrin, McKay and Milt Green Quartet all registered well on the show, but the gals drew an unfair deal. Miss Ellis is a tall lovely with a rich singing voice and a remarkably natural quality before the camera. The blonde dancer, Sandra Lee, is graceful and petite. Apart, both girls are good looking and talented. However, when paired side by side, which they were on the show caught, the visual results were on the grotesque side, particularly since Miss Ellis was wearing heels and Miss Lee flats. From a comedy standpoint the Mutt-and-Jeff act doesn't contribute much and certainly not enough to justify robbing the show of a prime asset, a pretty girl.

June Bundy.

## The Woman in My House

Reviewed Friday (30) 1:45-2 p.m. EST. Sponsored by Manhattan Soap Company for Sweetheart Soap, thru Duane Jones, via NBC, Hollywood. Writer-Producer, Carleton E. Morse. Director, George F. Fogle. Cast, Forest Lewis, Janet Scott, Peggy Webber, Les Tremayne, Alice Reinheart, Billy Idelson. Musical Director, Paul Carson. Announcer, Charles Lyons.

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in at an unchaperoned teen-age party. It seems that the gal had been insulted by a callow admirer and her retaliation measures brought in the police. (The Billboard review of *One Man's Family*, June 10, 1933: "While at a house party the daughter, while fooling around the gun room of the host's establishment, saw fit to take a shot at a fresh young egg.") Incidentally Billy Idelson, who plays Clayton, also essayed the role of Cliff, counterpart of Clayton, on the TV-Family series. The Carter family show is slick soap opera at its practiced best. The Sweetheart Soap commercials stressed the fact that "nine out of 10 cover girls" use it. Plugs also implied that housewives could hold the same "cover girl" appeal for their husband if they'd just start washing their face with the same brand.

## WCBS in 180G Sign-Time Swap With Doug Leigh

NEW YORK, March 31.—WCBS AM-TV this week completed a barter deal with Douglas Leigh which will put its name up in lights on a Broadway spectacular on 46th Street for 52 weeks beginning tomorrow April (1). The cross-plugging agreement will give Leigh's Flamingo frozen orange juice product a heavy schedule of spots on both the radio and TV stations in return for the sign space.

Not only will the spectacular plug the outlets, but another sign will blazon the network slogan, "CBS, the star's address." In addition this sign will use animated pictures of WCBS personalities. The sign under normal conditions would cost the stations about 180G for a year's lease.

## TV Talent and Show Tips

### New Terp Team

Bud and Cece Robinson, recently at the Capitol, New York, are a pair of the freshest dancers to come around in recent months. The boy's a tall, slinky lad with a crew cut. The gal's a sprightly little blonde with a Mary Martin hairdo. They some fast and exciting j-bop jazz terps, charlestons, etc. The spirit, enthusiasm and impression of enjoying their work is contagious.

B. S.

### Sultry Silbert

Irene Silbert, one-third of the singing Berry Sisters, who handled the solos for their recordings of several small labels, is a pert brunette with a torchy, sensuous voice. Coming back to the business as a single after a layoff forced by the arrival of two children, she's a good bet for TV guest spots, and possibly a featured spot on a show later on, based on her vocal quality, sock videogenic appearance and stage presence. Has local radio experience and now is coming back via the TV route on the Coast.

S. C.

### Frieda B. Hennock

A smart switch on the current educational TV set-to between FCC Commissioner Frieda B. Hennock and the video networks might be to book Miss Hennock for a show of her own, or use her as a guest on various regular stanzas. It would certainly be good public relations for the web, and Miss Hennock should welcome the chance to expound her views on TV programming on the medium itself. The blond FCC official is extremely personable and has a way with words, particularly of the sharp ad lib variety. She could conceivably attract a sizable new group of fem listeners, via an inside-your-government probe format, a la Kefauver.

J. B.

### French Magi

Pierre Cartier, French magician, currently at the Versailles, New York, has a comedy-magic act that should draw adult as well as mopee attention, tho most of his routine is aimed at those he ribs. A slim, good-looking lad, Cartier does the customary tricks in slick fashion. But it is his comedy, timing and chatter, as he works each trick, that makes him a good potential.

B. S.

### New Show Scores

The highly successful Broadway opening of the Rodgers-Hammerstein legit, *The King and I*, could serve as the basis for any number of fine musical production pieces on those video shows which make use of music. Of particular merit for TV use are such R-H songs as *I Whistle a Happy Tune*; *Hello, Young Lovers*; *We Kiss in the Shadow* and *Shall We Dance?* The Broadway boards shortly will be bursting with musical comedy of all sorts. For musical production ideas, these are ideal sources to be tapped both for material and talent. Among those en route are *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, *Flahooley* and *Make a Wish*.

J. W.

### Art Show

A "culture for the masses" stanza might be developed into an idea titled *The Painter Meets the Critics*. Video being the sight medium it is, the show would give televiewers a chance to see the best in current art by watching their sets. Punch could be derived from discussions between top art critics and painters.

L. M.

### Powerhouse Eyes NBC-TV Pete Buy

NEW YORK, March 31.—Powerhouse candies (Walter Johnson Candy Company) is reported planning to buy Panhandle Pete on National Broadcasting Company TV. The show airs Tuesdays and Thursdays at 5:15. Powerhouse had been sponsoring *Captain Video* on DuMont, but relinquished the show when General Foods bought it five nights a week. Powerhouse has eight weeks to go on DuMont and is buying another kid show for that period. Panhandle Pete is a Jimmy Saphier package.