

Hollywood Love Story

RADIO—Reviewed Saturday (19), 11:30 a.m. to noon. Sustaining via NBC. Producer-Editor, Van Woodward; director, Fred Weihe; writer, Earl Hamner; cast, Lyle Sudrow, Elaine Ross, Jane Webb, Alexander Scourby.

Hollywood Love Story is interesting for several reasons. One is that it is a typical example of NBC's new low-budget radio programming policy. Another is that, as such, it indicates that competent writing and direction, fused with a good concept, can turn out excellent fare even with depreciated budgets. Thus this stanza, also directed at the female listener on Saturday mornings, actually turned out to be of a quality equal to or surpassing the average nighttime light dramatic program.

Each week's show is built around the doings of some Hollywood people known to the narrator of the program, a magazine columnist. They need not be film celebrities, necessarily, altho in this particular chapter the major characters were an ambitious starlet, her cameraman boy friend, an understanding script girl, plus the usual prototyped director and producer. Also, typical film lot sound effects.

The story itself has been told many times in many ways. Starlet, hungry for quick success, disregards advice of cameraman boy friend and, by flashing the old personality, induces producer to put her into part every female in Hollywood wants. Boy friend is appointed chief cameraman on film. He purposely uses weird angles to upset starlet. So she forgets pretty face and actually acts, out of pique. Picture is smash success, but in meantime cameraman discovers he really loves loyal, understanding script girl.

Adroit direction by Fred Weihe of the Earl Hamner script made this a well-balanced, rapid-paced airer. Alex Scourby's narration as the columnist tied the scenes together neatly, and bridged the time and scene changes smoothly. Producer Van Woodward's editing job resulted in able use of effects, and solid projection of characterization.

Considering that the price tag on this show is something under \$2,000, it would certainly seem a good buy. Bankroller who could use an opus of this type even could transplant it to an evening time slot without needing to be ashamed of it in the least. Point it proves is that radio still can be a potent story-telling medium without having costs multiplied by use of big-name stars.

Sam Chase.

Tugboat Race

TELEVISION—Reviewed Saturday (19), 1-1:30 p.m. EST. Sponsored by Mack Gratiot Company (Chevrolet dealers), thru Campbell-Ewald Agency, via WWJ-TV, Detroit. Producer-director, Robert Ritter. Narrator, Dave Zimmerman.

This unique international competition, first run a year ago, offers exceptional video interest in strictly amateur sport. A dozen entries from the Atlantic, Canada and Great Lakes areas—all, by rule, commercial working tugs—ran the four-mile upstream course on the Detroit River. Intensity of popular interest was evidenced by estimates ranging from a quarter to half a million for the crowds that lined the Canadian and American shores to watch an event tied in with the Motor City's 250th Birthday Festival.

Audio coverage was excellent, with suspense well maintained as the tugs were started, and reports of the early close field came to the narrator by radio-telephone, from a reporter aboard a tug. Meanwhile the atmosphere was appropriately set by sweeping views of the crowds and the finish line. Authority was given to the commentary by a veteran mariner who stood by Dave Zimmerman.

But the first half was seriously marred by static video coverage despite two cameras, one in the reviewing stand and one on the upper deck of a docked steamer, both near the finish line. Adequate coverage of a straight-line event of this caliber required a camera for the start, and there was a wonderful spot to shoot from—from the high bridge about midway on the course. Skillful handling of the zoomar and cameras for the last third went far to make up for this lack of coverage, but there was difficulty picking up beyond about a mile distant.

The close finish was wonderfully handled. There was a dramatic mid-course sweep by one tug across the bows of several others

Television—Radio Reviews

The Danny Webb Show

TELEVISION—Reviewed Saturday (19), 11:30-12 noon EST. Sponsored by Monarch-Saphin in conjunction with Philco via WPIX. Placed direct. Director, Pete Molnar. Assistant director, Freddy Bartholomew. Produced by Arthur MacArthur. Written by Alex Gerber. Starring Danny Webb.

Kiddie programs over TV are a rough producing assignment, generally bringing forth a flock of youngsters who are cute chiefly to their parents. This venture over WPIX, however, has more substance. For tho it is a kiddie show, it is held together by a script and by a central character. The latter, comedian Danny Webb, is cast as a "retread"—an ex-army man called back to military life. He finds the new army composed of youngsters—actually children—who are much brighter and competent than himself. As an aged Sad Sack, he is cuffed and pushed around by diminutive corporals and sergeants.

This story pattern has obvious possibilities for gentle comedy and pathos, and Webb handles the assignment skillfully. Occasionally the story line gets onto a "junior USO" theme, which permits the unveiling of a variety show at the WPIX barracks. Webb easily drops the Sad Sack character and takes over as emcee, bringing on tap dancers, ballroom duos and singers. A good balance between story and variety is maintained. The acts, in other words, don't monopolize the show.

Monarch-Saphin, which recently made TV history with its auction sale of TV receivers, picks up the main tab, with Philco supplying some co-op money. The commercials plug the new 1951 Philco line at Monarch-Saphin stores. Additionally, there are plugs for Monarch-Saphin's air conditioning service, with considerable attention given to long-term payments on merchandise.

Budget-wise, this show stacks up as very reasonable for the sponsor. There's no large talent outlay, and there's an obvious effort on the part of producers, directors and writers to realize the most out of time and talent.

Paul Ackerman.

Reynolds on Records

RADIO—Reviewed Thursday (24), 7-7:30, CDT. Sustaining via WGN, Chicago. Producer writer and emcee, Fred Reynolds.

The revolution seems to have arrived at WGN. Reynolds on Records is a straight record show and is the first time this major operator has put a d.j. session on its best evening time. Altho it's still unsponsored, the station seems to like the idea, for Monday (24) they were to start a follow-up half hour, with Dick (Two Ton) Baker spinning records and doing some singing. Both shows are 30 minutes across the board. In addition, on Thursdays from 8 to 8:30 WGN has scheduled a record show with Pierre Andre, making 90 continuous minutes of prime evening time for d.j.'s.

Reynolds has a rather dour approach to records. He shuns the hit parade and most current hits and plays old favorites, novelties and jazz greats. His comments aren't the usual fan drivel, but go in for musical background of artists and records. It's about as intelligent an approach as you'll get to popular music, but it probably won't have the mass appeal of the "top 10" merchants' school of disk jockeying.

Jack Mabley.

to rush to an emergency call, abandoning the race. Top human interest was given in close-ups when the winning captains brought their boats in to the reviewing stand, with enthusiastic welcomes awaiting.

Camera work within the limited resources was well handled. Two minor flaws in narration point an object lesson in handling an unusual competitive or special event—persistent reference to ships as "he" (instead of "she"), and a jocular quiz-master style in dealing with personalities, at the presentation of the victors, that jarred with the unaffected heartiness and sincerity of the mariners.

Haviland F. Reves.

Let's Do It Now

RADIO—Reviewed Thursday (17), 8-8:30 p.m. EDT. Sustaining via WOR, New York. Producer, Edythe Meserand; director, Roger Bower; writer, Harold Callen. Cast: Frank Thomas Sr. and Jr., Ethel Wilson, Arthur Cole, Barry Thompson, Lillian Udvardy, others.

Let's Do It Now, a top-flight New York documentary series originated by Nadine Blakesley, is a good bet for syndication on a national basis as potent civil defense propaganda. The series has been aired over WOR for the past two months, with the station donating time and studio facilities and seven major industries contributing talent-production costs.

Seventh and last of the series, sponsored by F. R. Squibbs & Son, dramatized Manhattan's vital civil defense problem via a projected picture of New York City after an atom bomb attack. The half-hour drama was a rather unorthodox blending of satire and sermon, an incongruous duo in concept, but wholly successful in execution.

The initial 15 minutes of the slick script lampooned the smug, it-can't-happen-here attitude of many New Yorkers thru a close-up of one family, the Dingedangles. With the evident sanction of WOR's video department, Pop Dingedangle was pictured as a man obsessed with his TV set, while his scatter-brained frau indulged in prolonged buying orgies at local auction parlors. Son John, sole sane member of the family, spent his time in a vain attempt to enlist his parents in civil defense work.

Latter part of the airer traced the chaos of a bombing raid, followed by a concise run-down of prescribed civilian defense operation during an emergency. The script could have hit a snag here, since there is nothing very funny about death, even on the auction block or in a video room. Fortunately, tho, the Dingedangles were allowed to survive—a couple of bruised, battered and thoroughly wised-up characters.

Straight discussion periods featuring Miss Blakesley and Dr. Marcus Kogel, New York commissioner of hospitals, were spotted before and after the drama. During the latter session Dr. Kogel presented some chilling statistics on current hospital facilities, estimating that a minimum of 150,000 hospital beds would be needed in case of a bombing. Present maximum accommodations are 50,000.

June Bundy.

Tele Kid Quiz

TELEVISION—Reviewed Monday (21), 5:30-6 p.m., EDT. Sustaining via WOR-TV, New York. Produced by Walter Schwimmer Productions. Directed by Jerry Freedman. Emcees, Bruce Eliot and Dan McCullough.

This new five-days-a-week quiz show entry, aimed primarily at the kid market with a fat eye for parent participation, varies but slightly from the traditional formulae developed for this type presentation. The few differences lie (1) in setting an age limit for the participants at between four and eight and, (2) in making use of two-way telephone conversations set off against a still photo of the quizzed kid to open the participation to the home audience.

The pattern for show has the moderators, Dan McCullough and Bruce Eliot, regularly alternating telephone and studio contestants. They use a teaser question leading to a master puzzler, the latter obviously intended for baby geniuses or encyclopedic parents judging from the pippins popped on this opening-day session.

Loosely Paced

The show is rather loosely paced and presents little opportunity for other than routine camera work. The visual qualities of the show will have to depend to a great extent on whatever charm a kid can exert on the watcher. McCullough and Eliot are an amiable pair of hosts and inquisitors, with McCullough proving a downright fatherly type in the handy manner in which he dealt with the studio contestant, a hale and quite obviously uncomfortable trio.

This first of the series didn't have the two-way phone hook-up in operation, but it was promised for the following day.

Hal Webman.

Jacqueline Susann's Open Door

TELEVISION—Reviewed Monday (14), 11 to 11:30 p.m. Sponsored by Sunset Appliances via WABD, New York, thru Arnold Cohen, Inc. Producer, George Scheck; director, David Lowe; writer, Beatrice Cole; announcer, Lonny Starr; cast, Jacqueline Susann and guests.

The preem of the Jacqueline Susann show on DuMont showed that the frau of CBS producer Irving Mansfield has the capabilities to make this stanza an interesting one. Purpose of the show is to try to open the door to a job for people with capabilities who have had difficulties getting themselves located. Indicative of Miss Susann's charm is the fact that she did not permit the show to descend to a saccharine, tear-jerking level when there was ample chance to do just such a thing.

Two of her guests, for instance, were a gal in a wheelchair who desired a steno post, and a spry 84-year-old gal who'd been a receptionist. To Miss Susann's credit, the discussions with these people, while done with warmth and understanding, also retained an element of humor and informality which tended to sell these people on their potential worth as employees, rather than because of sob stories. Third door-opening was sought for a lad who wanted a production job with a newspaper, ad agency or magazine because his gal was getting tired of waiting for him.

Production understandably was a mite rough on this initial outing. Camera was particularly remiss in not noting the wheel chair in which the steno was sitting, since Miss Susann made no direct reference to the gal's infirmity.

Lonny Starr's splicing for RCA Victor TV sets at Sunset Stores was real sincere. However, he prefaced his first pitch with a comment that the product actually doesn't need selling, then raised his voice a mess of decibels when he launched into the actual plug.

Regular feature on the show will be appearance of a guest celeb who will tell how tough it was to get doors open for himself once. On this stanza, it was Ken Murray, who brought along Laurie Anders, his cowgal. Murray recounted his woe when Blackouts caught a fat panning after its Stem opening, but had little to contribute about his troubles early in his career. He and Miss Anders mouthed Wide Open Spaces along with a playing of her platter, done in duo with Arthur Godfrey.

Time for Ernie

TELEVISION—Reviewed Friday (25), 3:15-3:30 p.m. EST. Sustaining over NBC-TV. Producer-writer, Ernie Kovacs; director, Joe Behar. Cast: Kovacs and unbilled instrumental trio.

This five-a-week show originates over WPTZ, Philadelphia. Earlier in the year it was tried out over the network briefly and is now being given another whirl. It's a mad, zany type of offering, presenting a lunatic type of comedy. The props are nutty, the lines are nutty. The comedy value, however, seems very uneven. Kovacs is apparently attempting such an unusual brand of hoke that he gives the impression of straining too greatly for effect.

Opening routine, for instance, has Kovacs discussing music and records—the different speeds, different types of music, etc. He then illustrates how records can be made so they may be found in a dark room without trouble. Long-hair disks, for instance, have attached to them a good growth of human shrubbery. A hot disk sizzles when placed in water. A later bit has a guest conductor leading a symphony thru the 1812 Overture. The conductor, of course, is Kovacs, and in place of a baton he uses a bat, a broom, chairs, tables, etc. But on the program caught, this attempt at comedy just didn't come off.

However, the program should get a fair try. Kovacs is attempting to do something different and may hit onto an idea. Meanwhile, it would seem to be a low-cost job, productionwise.

The instrumental trio did one tune, performing well.

Paul Ackerman.

It's Up to You

TELEVISION—Reviewed Saturday (19), 5:30-6 p.m. EDT. Presented by CBS-TV in co-operation with the American Red Cross. Produced by Sig Mickelson, CBS director of public affairs. Director, Francis Buss. Script, Josephine Lyons. Announcer, Peter Thomas. Cast: Joan Bennett, Red Cross volunteer teams.

While this public service series is being presented to demonstrate first-aid technique during an atomic attack or other defense emergency, the lessons to be learned from the live demonstrations could easily be applied to everyday accidents. First-aid technique for treating burns, severe bleeding or a bone fracture can never be demonstrated too often, and television is the near-perfect medium for such a public service undertaking. Any video series that can possibly teach the public not to be afraid of emergencies is an important and vital service at this or any time.

The current Columbia Broadcasting System-TV series follows the same format of a name performer handling the bridges between live first-aid technique demonstrations and includes a plus in using dramatic film strips to introduce the event which caused the specific first-aid emergency. Trouble, however, was in some mishaps in switching from narrator Joan Bennett to the demonstration teams and the film strips. Fact is, the entire show gave the impression of having had too little rehearsal. Miss Bennett was too obviously reading from flip cards and not quite certain of the directorial signals. That all this can be easily corrected is also obvious.

Lacking, too, tho probably because of money problems, was a follow-up to the video demonstrations. If it were possible to offer a booklet which contained sketches and instruction similar to those aired, the lessons taught on this series would never be forgotten. In any case, the demonstration teams deserve much credit for their thespian talents. Materials used for first aid were real—handkerchiefs, newspapers, debris—not spit and polish materials out of sanitary little kits.

Joe Martin.

Hawthorne Here Tonight

TELEVISION—Reviewed Monday (21), 7-7:30 p.m. PDT. Sustaining via KTSN, Hollywood. Cast: Jim Hawthorne. Guests: Frank Fontaine, Stan Kenton and Sarah Vaughan. Producer, Cecil Barker. Director, Bob Adams. Music, Richard Auranid.

Hawthorne's gone straight. Not all the way, but just enough to make him commercially appealing to the sponsor seeking to reach viewers in general. Comic has developed a unique brand of screwball humor and during his years on local radio and TV has created a loyal, tho somewhat limited, following. He deserves credit for so ably watering down his zaniness to handle an otherwise routine talent-hunt show. Altho there's nothing new about the show's format, it has proved its salability, and that's all station is interested in at this time.

Hawthorne's showbiz guests (this week, Frank Fontaine, Stan Kenton and Sarah Vaughan) introduce talented tyros they believe deserve a TV break. Studio audience picks the winner, who receives a set of professional photos plus a week's run at the Thunderbird Hotel, Las Vegas, Nev. Thanks to touches of the Hawthorne style, show is lifted out of the run-of-the-mill talent hunt seg into an interesting, and at times, chuckle-spurring half hour.

This one won't go unpeddled for long.

Lee Zhitto.

Cactus Collins

RADIO—Reviewed Monday (21) 5-5:30 p.m. EDT. Sustaining via WNEW, New York. Producer, Dick Pack. Director, Jack Kuney. Writer, Bill Kayland. Emcee, Al Collins.

Tongue in cool cheek, Al (Jazz-bo) Collins teed off as a Broadway buckaroo of the platter prairie Monday (21) with a batch of folk disks and a line of satirical sage brush lingo. It's a right smart idea and should pan out nicely once "Cactus" Collins gets in the full swing of his difficult assignment. Right now, tho, he's riding a somewhat shaky fence between corn and condescension.

The former Salt Lake City deejay, a comparatively recent addition to WNEW, has clicked big

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