

Television—Radio Reviews

Another Look

Brief criticism and comment re tv shows previously reviewed in detail

TV Teen Club

TELEVISION—Reviewed Saturday (9) 8-9 p.m. EDT over ABC-TV. Presented by Nash for its various divisions thru Geyer, Newell & Ganger. Producer Walter Wagenhurst. Director, Chuck Bishop. Script, Skipper Dawes Stage manager, Nat Elkitz. Announcer, Bob Sherry. Cast: Junie Keegan and Cheerleaders. Co-emcees, Paul Whiteman and Nancy Lewis.

The two alternatives open to this program are either to remain an amateur combination of hit or miss kid acts or to whip together a teen-age variety show which has enough polish, production and entertainment to rate its spot in the big time Saturday night programming picture. From its current entertainment values, the show might readily be shifted to perhaps, a Monday or Tuesday night with still better audience results.

Aside from its amusement content, the program's production needs tightening badly. An applause-meter which was always out of whack, contestants not ready for reprises and several camera fluffs did not help to project many of the positive aspects of the stanza. Of the eight acts, two were bands, but instead of slotting them in different half hours, they were skedded in the same segment. This obvious error, by making the last 30 minutes top heavy with music, smacked of careless pacing.

Competitors

Billy Tregressor, a terrible tot with the sticks in his tiny mitts, won the evening's competition by giving the skins a workout. Among his talented cohorts were a young weight lifter who seemingly could have spotted Joe Bonomo a handi-cap in spite of the fact all you saw as he made his lifts and jerks were ribs; Niles Rogers and Company, a six-piece combo which relied too much on rhythm; Jerry Hartley, amazingly adept with his puppets, and Pat Adams, a concert pianist, who took off on the inevitable *Flight of the Bumblebee*.

There are several bobby-sox entertainers used as regulars. A production number featuring Junie Keegan doing *It Might As Well Be Spring* had plenty of movement and was well done, even if it ran too long. In a search for a "groaner" *Teen Club* came up with Bob Snyder whose *Be My Love* brought combined groans of female appreciation and howls of laughter from the males. The youngster needs more individuality. The Cheerleaders, six-girl dancing unit, uses three of the females for well handled singing.

Emseeing Split

The emseeing work was split between Paul Whiteman and Nancy Lewis. Pops is ideal because of his smooth way with kids, but Miss Lewis has to learn what to do during the minor crises; in other words to ad lib. She also sings, but her *Too Young* was paced too slow for comfort. Among the other so-called attractions was a contest by aspiring teen-age-announcers. There may be some entertainment in this feature, but it won't sell cars, and, as may be guessed, there's precious little entertainment.

Nash loses no opportunity to plug like mad, but with indifferent results. Instead of firing several rounds of heavy gauge shot, the commercials scatter their messages with piddling pellets. The usual announcer-handled plug was well done. Whiteman also speled for the product and was most effective. He should be featured.

Leon Morse.

The Longines-Wittnauer Chronoscope

TELEVISION—Reviewed Monday (11), 11-11:15 p.m. Sponsored by Longines-Wittnauer Watch Company, Inc., via CBS-TV. Agency, Victor A. Bennett Company, Inc. Producer-director, Alan R. Cartoun. Cost, Frank W. Taylor and Henry Hazlitt regularly. Guest, Admiral Blandy. Announcer, Frank Knight.

The *Chronoscope* is a dignified discussion program, giving thoughtful treatment of topical themes. The format presents a panel of experts. These are Frank W. Taylor, journalist, and Henry Hazlitt, business affairs consultant. A third party, a guest, fills the panel and brings to the discussion specific

Nose for News

TELEVISION—Reviewed Monday (11), 10:45-11 p.m. EDT. Sponsored by Lathercap via WOR-TV. Produced by Sid Robbins. Cast: Fred Darwin, master of ceremonies.

The most interesting—and inexplicable—part of this show is the commercial plugging Lathercap, a shaving aid which screws onto tubes of shaving cream. Illustrating the product is a beauteous model, Jackie Joyce. Miss Joyce certainly doesn't need a shave, but she certainly attracts the male eye. C'est la vie. Anyway, she shows how Lathercap works by lathering the palm of her hand. Meanwhile, an offstage male voice tells what the product will do for the male shruubery. It's all indirect and somewhat sexy in a devious way.

The program itself? Well, Darwin shows photos which grabbed front page space in metropolitan dailies. The photogs were in some instances staffers and in others free lancers. They all had a "nose for news," as was apparently evident by their being in the right place at the right time to snap the news pictures. The photogs appear as guests on the show and discuss the circumstances attached to the pictures. Shutter speeds, exposures, film, etc.—all undoubtedly of interest to camera bugs—are matters of conversation.

Kenny Cut

Nick Kenny guested on the show and attempted to explain the news aspects of photography. Before he could finish he was cut off, owing to bad timing.

Photogs appearing on the show get some Lathercap, a subscription to *Modern Photography* and \$10 worth of equipment from the Peerless camera stores.

Methinks this program stresses too heavily the news aspect of photography. It strains to get the point over. Why not make it more general, less forced, and retain news photography as one facet of the over-all subject?

I believe Miss Joyce was due for one more appearance but couldn't make it. Paul Ackerman.

Curtain Call

TELEVISION—Reviewed Sunday (10), 10:45-11 p.m. EST. Sponsored by Regent Lighter Corporation via WOR-TV, New York. Agency Silverstein and Goldsmith. Producers, Vernon Becker and Milton Schwartz. Director, Vernon Becker. Cast: Ethel Colby and Jack Pearl.

WOR's new late-Sunday-night seg features Ethel Colby, drama critic for *The N. Y. Journal of Commerce*, in a news review of the stem theatrical scene. Format is familiar, comprising comments on local legit happenings, highlighted with a guest interview. Miss Colby has had long experience on radio, and registers as soundly at home before a TV camera.

Tee-off program guested Jack Pearl. Pearl elected to play the interview straight, and could have perked up the proceedings via the injection of a little of his familiar dialect. He let it be known that he is shortly to touch off a new radio series of his own. He will be assisted by his old straight man of *Baron Munchausen* era, Cliff Hall, as well as by Russ Emory and Mimi Benzell.

Miss Colby took the curse off the usual interview routine by singing a number of her own, *If I Were a Bell*, from *Guys and Dolls*. It came over splendidly and is a twist to be encouraged permanently on the program.

Plugs for Regent Lighters were crisp and to the point without undue interruption of a short seg. Bob Francis.

knowledge of the subject scheduled for discussion.

The guest this trip was Admiral Blandy, who outlines his views on Russia's naval strength, her aspirations and techniques, and ways and means of defeating her policy. The men held to sensible levels, presenting their points with clarity and logic.

Frank Knight, doing the commercials, was excellent. The copy emphasizes the aspects of accuracy, elegance, usage of the product by governmental observatories, and awards at world's fairs. Knight used some stills to illustrate. His presentation was dignified, in keeping with the program. Paul Ackerman.

NBC Theater

RADIO—Reviewed Sunday (10), 7:30-8:30 p.m. EST. Sustaining via NBC-AM Network, New York. Director, Ed King. Produced by Hugh Kent. Writer, Ernest Kinoy. Cast: Eva Le Gallienne, Wendell Holmes, Joan Alexander, Norman Rose, Bill Griffis, James Stevenson and Joseph Boland.

NBC Theater went back on the air Sunday (10) for a weekly summer sustaining series presented by Eva Le Gallienne. *The Disenchanted* was skedded as bow-in production, but reported scripting difficulties caused a switch to an adaptation of the old Ernest Hemingway yarn *The Short, Happy Life of Francis McComber*. The substitution wasn't too happy. The story line seemed frequently blurred and the dialog soap-operaish.

As far as the script permitted, however, it was exceedingly well-acted, and Ed King's direction gave it good pace and atmosphere. Norman Rose got across admirably the pitiful contradictions of the coward who eventually finds himself, and Joan Alexander was properly waspish and hard as the wife who finally kills him, either by accident or design. Wendell Holmes gave a fine account of himself as the he-man African big game hunter, hired to wet-nurse a rank amateur, and thereby bringing about an emotional impasse. Suitable native background was provided by Bill Griffis, James Stevenson and Joseph Boland.

It seems unfortunate in these days of hot competition, that *NBC Theater* found it necessary to go back to a real oldie, which is pretty sticky melo at best, for its summer opener. The saga of the unfortunate safari of poor Mr. McComber hardly registers up to the series' announced policy of presenting "highly dramatic plays adapted from contemporary books which face the issues of current living squarely." Bob Francis.

Down You Go

TELEVISION—Reviewed Wednesday (13) 9-9:30 p.m. over DuMont TV Network. Producer—Louis G. Cowan. Director, Barry McKinley. Writers—Gail Compton, Jay Sheridan. Cast—Bergen Evans, Francis Coughlin, Toni Gilman, Carmelita Pope, Robert Breen. Announcer, John Mallow.

Altho it's one of the simplest of current TV panel games, *Down You Go* is also one of the most engaging. The reason is not so much the device, which is elemental and may, after a while, tend to become repetitious, but because it has an excellent moderator-emcee. Bergen Evans, and a panel of quick and perceptive people. The five of them contrive to give the show a large portion of entertainment, altho in the very nature of things, scarcely any of it is visual. Actually, this is no drawback, since the show's enjoyment is on the cerebral rather than sight side.

The gimmick is simple: A series of dashes, representing the letters in the words of a saying, title, etc., are flashed on a screen. Dr. Evans gives the panel an elusive and usually completely oblique clue—and the word clue is used in its loosest form. After each panelist asks one question in pursuit of the words, they guess as to letters which belong in the unidentified phrase. If a panelist calls a letter that doesn't belong, he or she is eliminated. There are prizes, of course, for those submitting phrases used. Viewers are tipped off as to the words sought.

Panelists are Francis Coughlin, Toni (Miss) Gilman—a particularly attractive woman, Carmelita Pope and Robert Breen. They, as well as Dr. Evans, give the show a good fast pace. Show sums up as a superior entry in its field. Jerry Franken.

Doodles Weaver Show

TELEVISION—Reviewed Saturday (9), 10 to 10:30 p.m. Sponsored on participating basis by Lysol and Etiquet Deodorant, 10 to 10:15 p.m., via NBC. Producer, Mort Werner; director, Warren Jacober. Writers, Fred Fox and Bob Quigley. Cast, Doodles Weaver, Peanuts Mann, Dick Dana, Red Marshall, Marion Colby, Milton De Lugg Trio.

This stanza is filling in the last 30 minutes regularly occupied by

Alan Young

Thursday (14) CBS-TV

Unquestionably, Alan Young remains one of the brighter young stars of television with scarcely a sign of wear after more than a year of service. His excessively pre-occupied air, his clever way of understating a laugh line, and his sympathetically clownish dumbness add up to a performer of stature who ranks with the craftsmen of comedy.

One of the skits featured him as a father whose huge brood of children stubbornly refused to recognize the fact it was Father's Day in spite of his numerous hints. It was good TV fun. The program was additionally interesting because it featured the TV debut of Nelson Eddy whose intention may be to work in the medium. Eddy always has been a competent singer, but his voice seems to have faded slightly. His performance was not helped by the distortion of the kine which made him look like he had a bad rash. But the singer's acting was first rate in a sketch with Young, and he showed a geniality and humor in his playing that should make him successful as the emcee of a daytime video stanza.

Regardless of the talk of kine's improvements, it still remains a far from acceptable way to present TV. There seems to be too much lighting, with the result that faces are washed out. And there is a disturbing continuous flicker on the grain of the kine.

The filmed Esso commercials are something for other sponsors to shoot at. The singing plug which opens the show is good listening plus succinct handling of the sales message. The middle commercial with its elaboration of the merits of the Esso service stations point up, as they should, the way the product concerns itself with the problems of motorists. Incidentally these 35mm. films make invidious comparison obvious with the shoddy kine immediately following. Leon Morse.

Meet the Press

(NBC, Sunday (10) 4-4:30 p.m.)

Could be that the average viewer was enchanted by the information unveiled during newly appointed District Court Judge (ex-Federal Communication Commissioner) Frieda Henock's appearance on *Press*. To a trade observer, anticipating some choice fireworks, the show represented one of the gaudiest omelets concocted all season. The obviously meaty educational TV question got the most fleeting kind of treatment, and that only thanks to the fact that Martha Rountree permitted *Broadcasting Editor* and *Publisher Sol*

the Sid Caesar show. Its preem, even allowing for all the usual problems confronting a debut, was something of a canine.

The show obviously is striving to be a rambling, guess-what's-next, madcap type of thing. It succeeded only in being rambling and boring. Its entertainment value was virtually nil, with most of the material being so sad as to make one sorry for all connected with the proceedings.

All concerned tried hard, but the efforts just did not come off. Even Doodles Weaver's classic interpretation of the Indianapolis Speedway races and the horse-race call, which have been a stock in trade for well over a dozen years, did not register socko, being cut down to just a couple of bits. Attempts at sight gags generally flopped because they were too obvious or too old.

Material Sorry

Weaver is a zany who can do much better, but as with all comics, he is helpless when hoisted by his own material. His assistance from comics, Peanuts Mann, Dick Dana and Red Marshall, was likewise handicapped. Warbler Marion Colby did well with two numbers, *How About You?* and *I'm Late, I'm Late, I'm Late* and had the added advantage of a good appearance. Milton De Lugg supplied the musical background. A funny guy in his own right, he was utilized almost not at all visually.

What this show needs, is some strong skit material for the ex-burly comics, smooth integration of the music with the sketches and some fresh solo material for Weaver. In toto, a new production. The cast can't be slugged too hard off this show; they never could get it off the ground. Sam Chase.

Taishoff to move in on the questioning.

When Taishoff, one of the best informed and most knowledgeable gents in the industry, asked Miss Henock how long she thought the 209 channels the FCC proposed for educational purposes should be held, the lady hastily hid behind the skirts of the "people." When he asked her ideas on educational programing, she said: "... Oh, geography, history, and things like that."

To Taishoff's query as to why the educators and Miss Henock didn't prefer movies, for example, to TV for educational purposes, the judge-to-be said, "Why Mr. Taishoff, you know it would cost a fortune." Good TV programing is cheap, Judge?

The other newsmen, Larry Spivak, Jim Warner (*Herald Tribune*) and Frank McNaughton (*Times*) were really responsible for lousing up the show from a trader's viewpoint. Bright newspapermen all, they displayed a woeful lack of knowledge on TV. Spivak beat Miss Henock over the head on the FCC's color decision, expressing great concern over what he seemed to feel was the imminent obsolescence of the 12,500,000 TV sets now in use. McNaughton, still under the influence of his work on the Kefauver shows, wanted to know why the FCC had ducked the job of supervising wire service which transmit horse race and other betting information. Miss Henock pleaded understaff and overwork, which the trade sadly realizes is too true. Warner wanted to know Miss Henock's opinion of TV's coverage of such events as the Kefauver hearings on other media. Stimulating, said Miss H.

If Miss Rountree had had the good sense to let Taishoff take the lead on the questioning, and staged it for the other reporters to follow his cues, this could have been one of *Press's* best. As it was it was one of this generally excellent show's all-time lows. Joe Csida.

Kathi Norris Show

WNBT, New York, daily

Fem video commentators come and go, but Kathi Norris is still the top darling of the daytime participation sponsor field. In appearance the petite brunette is deceptively fragile, but she puts in a work week comparable to that of an Arthur Godfrey, with a daily hour-long TV show, plus innumerable extra-curricular promotions to plug various sponsor items.

The grind seems to agree with her, tho. At any rate, on the show caught (6) she looked even better than she did a year ago. However, the gal has developed an irritating tendency to act cute during interviews. Her chatter session with a men's fashion expert Wednesday bordered dangerously close to coyness and her breathless comments were often inaudible.

Fortunately for her sponsor appeal, Miss Norris dropped the girlish patter during the commercials and turned in a sound, sincere selling job for Drano, bobby pins, hair nets, kitchen sponges and wrinkle-resistance suits. On the last named she received a mild assist from husband-producer, Wilbur Stark, who modeled the article of clothing in question. Stark seemed like a pleasant enough fellow, but we'd like him a lot better if frau Kathi would stop calling him "sweetie." Stark just "ain't" the type. June Bundy.

Louis-Savold Fight

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the absence of razor blades and beer plugs between rounds brought a distinctly different atmosphere to the telecast.

The camera work was outstanding. The cameras caught all the action, and the large screen carried detail never seen on small screens. The expressions on both fighters were sharp and clear. Between rounds the camera once panned the crowd and other times caught the seconds working on Louis and Savold. Twice they picked up huge close-ups of Savold's bloated face and pained expression.

When Savold started going down, the crowd sensed the end and raised a tremendous fuss. There was cheering, shouting and whistling, and 20 or 30 people jumped out of their seats and waved their arms. It was completely spontaneous, almost identical to what is seen in a fight arena. The crowd quickly cleared the theater when the scrap ended. No complaints were heard.

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