

The Egg and I

TELEVISION—Reviewed Friday (7), 12-12:15 p.m. EDT. Sustaining via CBS-TV. Producer, Montgomery Ford. Director, Jud Gage. Script, Manya Starr. Cast: Patricia Kirkland, John Craven, Doris Rich and Richard Knox.

A best-seller and later a film, *The Egg and I* makes its transition to TV with the Grade A label predominant. The daytime strip is gentle, humorous and heart-warming without descending to the soggy, maudish, sentimental vacuities exhibited by some of the detergent dramas televised.

The episode caught delineated the depression of heroine Betty MacDonald because of the immense task of creating order in the chaotic farmhouse the city-bred couple recently acquired. The inexperienced bride, however, quickly revived in spirits after an injection of home-spun philosophy from visiting Ma Kettle. She had been thru it all and knew the answers.

Although the pacing of the show was slow and the situation was not productive of any heavy, hammy drama, fragrant with atar of ersatz, scripter Manya Starr can take bows for her craftsmanship. She had many positive things to say and said them well and entertainingly.

The strip has been cast superlatively in all its roles. Patricia Kirkland is a likeable and confused Betty, John Craven, a convincing and patient Jim. One of the chief delights was the acting of Doris Rich. This legit veteran blends into her part like foliage into a countryside. Perceptive video casting directors should find many more parts for a trouper of her range.

The program undeniably rates attention from sponsors. It should get and hold an audience.

Leon Morse.

Colgate Comedy Hour (Jackie Gleason)

TELEVISION—Reviewed Sunday (2), 8-9 p.m., EDT, via NBC-TV. Sponsored by Colgate-Palmolive-Peet via Sherman & Marquette. Producer-director, Jack Hurdle. Production supervisor, Sam Fuller. Writers, Joe Bigelow, Arnold Horowitz, Arnie Rosen, Coleman Jacoby, Jackie Gleason. Cast: Jackie Gleason, Rose Marie, Johnny Johnston, Esther Junger Dancers. Musical director: Al Goodman.

The *Comedy Hour* field generals have executed an interesting maneuver. Having gotten the show way up there in the rating sweepstakes, and built an apparently loyal following thru the simple device of spending about \$60,000 per week (everything over 30G picked up by NBC) for talent-production all last year, they have now trimmed the nut more than half, yet manage to bang over a show with the same impact as the '50-'51 winner. This is done by retaining the format (fast-paced and solid song-dance-comedies) intact, but using less expensive and fewer performers.

Gleason, of course, is the basic ingredient which enabled them to get away with it on this return preem. The comic's work on the Du Mont *Cavalcade of Stars* and *Life of Reilly* is paying off, for he showed as one of the most versatile all-round funsters in television. This you develop only by working the medium, long, hard and steady.

In his *Day in the Park* bit he approached a classic performance, actually Chaplinesque in many spots. Tho his Reginald Van Gleason routine was somewhat overboard on the slapstick side, virtually a Berlesque, he demonstrated in the course of it a solid flair for the rougher school of buffoonery. His emceeing, dueting with Rose Marie, and entire job was polished and sharp.

Rose Marie and Johnny Johnston are both, at the moment, middle-rank performers, tho Johnston, again due to the vast amount of video work he's been getting (plus his Broadway *Tree Grows in Brooklyn* activity) is shaping up fast as a top-notch song-and-dance man. His *I Get Ideas*, abetted by neat lighting and production was a show stop. Rose Marie's turn was considerably hurt by poor choice of songs, neither *Cryin' My Heart Out for You* nor *Razz-Ma-Tazz* showing her to particularly good advantage. Appeal of her seat, hard-punching style is limited anyway.

The Esther Junger Dancers lend a neat, class touch to the proceedings, particularly in handling material built around top Broadway musical-comedy items. Al Goodman's music is probably the most underrated and possibly one of the

Bob Hawk Show

RADIO—Reviewed Monday (3), 10-10:30 p.m., EDT. Sponsored by R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company via the Columbia Broadcasting System. Inquisitor, Bob Hawk. Guests: several miscellaneous persons looking for money. Music, Irving Miller and orchestra.

Bob Hawk, the guy who found that giving away little things like a few thousand dollars can be entertainment for the multitudes, burst on the radio scene this week bubbling over with a summer's collection of energy and several years' collection of gags. Yes sirree, the old quiz master really had his audience swinging, especially when one of the quizzed figured out that Ohio was the only State in the Union that didn't contain a letter from the word "Lemac" (that's the sponsor spelled backwards) for \$3,250 worth.

The fact is that Hawk's audience is probably the most worked up gang in radio. And this adds up to what probably would amount to one of the noisiest—if not the noisiest—shows available. The tumult, combined with Irving Miller's band fanfares and ferocious entry and exit stomps as well as Hawk's genius at building torrid pace interspersed with his well-timed throwaway gags, no doubt creates the effect of excitement and builds something akin to suspense in the audience.

Still a Topper

Hawk's really a master at this type of thing. When the ratings start pouring in, you can bet that his show will continue up there with the healthy ones.

Commercials? Well, this show actually is one big commercial. The quiz pattern is based on "Lemac." Every contestant gets a carton of—well, you name it. Then, of course, three times in the run of the show Hawk and announcer mounted the hump of the Camel and spouted. Hal Webman.

Hallmark Playhouse

RADIO—Reviewed Thursday (6), 8:30-9 p.m. EDT. Sponsored by Hall Brothers via the Columbia Broadcasting System thru Foote, Cone and Belding. Producer-Director, Bill Gay. Narrator, James Hilton. Cast: Deborah Kerr and others.

Opener for a new dramatic series spotlighted James Barrie's 50-year-old, happily sentimental comedy *Quality Street*. Emanating from Hollywood, it starred Deborah Kerr as the lady of the ringlets who loved the dashing doctor, even tho he marched off to the Napoleonic wars and apparently forgot her for 10 years. How she tried to pay him off, when he got back, by pretending to be her own niece, and how he in turn outsmarted her into eventual matrimony, are matters which make *Quality Street* a theater piece to be revived again and again.

The air adaptation was exceedingly well put together, keeping the story line clear and retaining the quaint flavor of the original Barrie lines. Format had James Hilton acting as host and setting the stage for the play, which was particularly sound, as it cleared any misunderstanding a listener might have who was not familiar with the script. Miss Kerr was fine as the fluttery little school teacher and had solid support from Whitfield Connor and the rest of the cast.

Commercials for Hallmark greeting cards were well-spaced and timed—dignified attention-getters without distracting from the interest in the story. Hook-up of Hallmark stamp on the back of greeting cards to the old quality stamp of silver and goldsmiths is a particularly happy twist.

Over-all, Hallmark's opening program stacked up as exceptionally good radio. Bob Francis.

most important factors in the over-all high quality of the show. Few conductors can cut a show with the expertness of the veteran Mr. G. Hurdle's direction, pacing and staging are top drawer and the stable of veteran writers supply always good, often sock, material.

Eddie Cantor did a walk-on at show's end, a few bits with Gleason that were so-so, and between them they put in the necessary plugs for upcoming *Hours*. Cantor, of course, is next.

While Gleason's *Hour* stood up well, the CBS *Toast of the Town* competition will continue formidable. With Oscar Hammerstein, Helen Hayes and other major presentations ahead, Colgate may find the reduced budget on *Comedy Hour* not quite sufficient to beat the Sullivan stanza as the season progresses. Joe Caida.

Capsule Comment

Hawkins Falls, Pop., 6,200 (TV). NBC, Monday (3), 4-4:15. CDT. Good acting and a faithfulness for small-town atmosphere and characters, plus some pure soap opera hoke make this "novel for television" an excellent bait for the housewives' attention.

Public Prosecutor (TV), Du Mont, Thursday (6), 9:30-10 p.m. EDT. A video version of the old radio mystery drama game, in which a group of guests are invited to test their ability as detectives, prior to solution of the crime. Gimmick was handled intelligently on this show, with an unusually relaxed panel, including Glenda Farrell, John Derek and ventriloquist Doug Anderson. Emcee Warren Hull ambled thru proceedings in perfect accord with the pleasant tempo set by his guests. (See full review in this issue.)

The Egg and I (TV), CBS-TV, Friday (7), 12-12:15 p.m. EDT. "The Egg and I" is a gentle heartwarming strip that should do well for a sponsor. Cast superlatively and well scripted and produced the program has a quality not usual in soap operas.

Aldrich Family (TV), NBC-TV, Friday (7), 9:30-10 p.m. EDT. Judging by this pious episode, there's very little "Peck's Bad Boy" left in the new Henry Aldrich. Today he's more like one of the "Rover Boys." As Henry and Homer, Henry Girard and Robert Barry are very poor substitutes for their predecessors. Over-all impression was that of a young Noel Coward pretending to be the all-American adolescent. (See full review in this issue.)

Flying Tigers (TV), Du Mont Network, Sunday (2), 12:30-1 p.m. EDT. Adventure for the kiddies with the "Flying Tigers." A cheapie but still put together with enough know-how to get the youngsters interested. Commercials too long and not imaginative enough. (See full review in this issue.)

Steve Allen Show (TV), CBS, Monday (3), 12:45-1:30 p.m. EDT. Allen's stanza lopes along in a herky-jerk fashion. He constantly seems to be working against the clock, a factor which to a great degree destroys the informal, relaxed idea set for the show.

Mohawk Showroom (TV), NBC-TV, Monday (3), 7:30-7:45 p.m. EDT. Stacks up as one of the really pleasant little musical quarter hours in television. An evenly paced session with a minimum of talk and a soundly conceived visual presentation. Roberta Quinlan makes a real homey hostess.

Bob Hawk Show (Radio), CBS, Monday (3), 10-10:30 p.m. EDT. Hawk, the old quiz master, really is a master at this type of thing. When the ratings start pouring in, you can bet that his show will be up there with the healthy ones.

"Man of the Week" (TV), CBS-TV, Sunday (2), 5:30-6 p.m. EDT.

Another discussion show which doesn't capitalize on its title in a city which should be productive of fascinating citizens. The program featured two Democrats and two Republicans belting each other round verbally. George Allen, th moderator, looks interesting, but acts as if he was along for the ride. More creative vitamins needed. (See full review in this issue.)

"Washington Report" (TV), Du Mont Network, Thursday (6), 8:15-8:30 p.m., EDT. Another discussion show in a groove well worn by its competitors, needs a fresh slant to do more than get the slopover audience. (See full review in this issue.)

"The Amos 'n' Andy Show" (TV), CBS, Thursday (6), 8:30-9 p.m., EDT.

Andy and Kingfish went into the parking lot business on this stanza, and got into really amusing hassles when latter's brother-in-law sold one of the cars while the pair were out to lunch. Filming set forth the situation well, and the acting emphasized the lovable naïvete of the characters.

Mama

TELEVISION—Reviewed Friday (7), 8-8:30 p.m., EDT. Sponsored by Maxwell House Coffee via CBS-TV, New York. Producer: Carol Irwin. Director: Ralph Nelson. Writer: Frank Gabrielson. Cast: Peggy Wood, Judson Laire, Dick Van Patten, Rosemary Rice, Robin Morgan, Ruth Gates. Music: Billy Nalle.

Mama continues as one of the best dramatic series on video. Now in its third season, the show is still fresh and full of top quality.

In the title role, Peggy Wood deserves some kind of an award for sustaining her characterization on the same high level, never substituting mere technique for genuine warmth. Altho she takes top honors, other members of the cast are equally real in their portrayals of a Norwegian-born American family at the turn of the century.

Episode reviewed revolved around papa's excursion into the public speaking field. At first reluctant to address a local dinner, he soon cottoned to the idea, and finally signed up for a correspondence school speech course. However, after-dinner speaking sessions haven't changed much since 1900, and poor papa was canceled out before he began. Consequently, the show ended with him delivering his speech to members of the family in the kitchen after the dinner.

All of this was handled with taste and the last scene was particularly well executed—touching yet restrained. Authentic old fashioned settings and props add to the over-all excellence of the series. Sponsor is Maxwell House Coffee. June Bundy.

Cavalcade of America

RADIO—Reviewed Tuesday (4), 8-8:30 p.m. EDT. Sponsored by the Du Pont Company thru Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn via the National Broadcasting Company. Producer, Harold Blackburn. Director, John Zoller. Script this show, Irv Tunick. Cast: Basil Rathbone, Alice Frost, Eda Heine-mann, Mercer McLeod, Malcolm Keen, Ronald Long, Pat O'Malley and Ross Martin.

As institutional advertising goes, *Cavalcade* is exemplary. For over a decade and half it has helped make the Du Pont name renowned and respected in radio homes thru-out the country. Kicking off the show's 17th season, *Towards a New World*, the story of Joseph Priestley, discoverer of oxygen, maintained the usual high quality of the series in every respect. Particularly to be noted was Basil Rathbone's portrayal of the modest minister-scientist, Rathbone's characterization of a kindly, stammering old sage was so apt it was hard to recall he was the same actor who has frequently portrayed the pompous Sherlock. It was fine radio thesping.

The script was most informative and perfectly paced. It showed Priestly at his earliest tinkering in a Leeds (England) brewery, his meeting with Lord Shelburne, who became his sponsor, his isolation of the element and finally Lavoisier's confirmation of his experiments. Sound effects subtly and accurately set each scene.

Two commercials were about the American Chemical Society anniversary and the idea of freedom of scientific inquiry.

Gene Plotnik.

Sound track could do as well without the dubbed-in yocks.

"Your Stake in Japan" (TV), ABC via CBS Studio leased line, Friday (7), 10-11 p.m. EDT.

Using live action plus newsreel clips for flashback effects, editors of Time, Inc., did a fine job of selling Time, Inc. to viewers. Show itself had vitality and at times even some excitement. (See full review in this issue.)

"Mr. Chameleon" (Radio), CBS, Wednesday (5), 8-8:30 p.m., EDT.

The show, now in its fourth year, is rather chameleon-like itself, in that it's actually nothing but a nighttime soap opera in the camouflage of a weekly mystery series. Script, performances and production on initial fall airer were all ridiculously melodramatic and devoid of any real character or animation. (See full review in this issue.)

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Aldrich Family

TELEVISION—Reviewed Friday (7), 9:30-10 p.m., EDT. Sponsored by Campbell's Soup, thru Ward Wheelock Agency, via NBC-TV, New York. Producer-director, Lester Vall. Writers: Robert W. Soderberg and Edith Sommer, under supervision of Clifford W. Goldsmith. Cast: Henry Girard, House Jameson, Barbara Robbins, Mary Malone, Robert Barry, Peter Griffith.

The Aldrich Family video history has been one long casting problem, and the current fall series is no exception. With the exception of House Jameson as Mr. Aldrich, the cast is entirely new. Henry Girard plays Henry, Robert Barry is Homer, and Barbara Robbins, Mrs. Aldrich.

Girard and Barry are poor substitutes for Ezra Stone and Jackie Kelk. In Stone's case, of course, none of the video Henrys have ever duplicated his radio characterization. However, Girard is the most off-beat choice for the role yet. In contrast to Stone's clumsy, cracked-voice simpleton, Girard is consciously graceful, well-schooled in broad A diction tricks and very pretty-pretty facially.

Barry looks the part physically, but his Homer is more sly than silly, and self-consciously cute. Neither boy showed any sense of comedy timing on the show caught, and the over-all impression was that of a young Noel Coward pretending to be the all-American adolescent. Their lack of comedy technique was particularly noticeable in contrast to the smooth thesping of Jameson and Miss Robbins.

Skimpy plot centered about a civic "boy's day" event, with Henry and Homer taking over as judge and officer, respectively. Telegraphing its mild punches, the script had Homer arrest a client of Mr. Aldrich's for speeding and bring him before Henry for sentencing. After several cliché-ridden speeches about the American tradition of honest justice, the client paid his \$5 fine like a man.

The leaden pace was brightened considerably by Campbell's Soup's brightly animated commercials—the best thing in the show. June Bundy.

Mr. Chameleon

RADIO—Reviewed Wednesday (5) 8-8:30 p.m. EDT. Sustaining via the Columbia Broadcasting System. Producer-Writers, Frank and Anne Hummert. Cast: Karl Swenson (Mr. Chameleon), Frank Butler, others.

Mr. Chameleon is a sort of audio Lon Chaney who, in common with his lizard namesake, possesses the ability to change appearance at will, via various disguises. The show now in its fourth year, is rather chameleon-like itself, in that it's actually nothing but a night time soap opera in the camouflage of a weekly mystery series.

The unorthodox production blending isn't a happy one leaving *Mr. Chameleon* neither fish nor fowl. In the latter case, a slight change in spelling might approximate a one-word description of the show caught (5): Script, performances and production were all ridiculously melodramatic and devoid of any real character or animation.

Mr. Chameleon himself is a stuffy individual, addicted to smug clichés and an obnoxious air of confidence, which was never vindicated by any show of brilliance on the initial fall airer. In line with its sudsy overtones, the drama was over-loaded with plot, opening with a scene straight out of "John's Other Weapon."

It seemed that Philip Wilkes is calling on the love of his life, when the lady's husband is murdered. Our hero promptly albeit ungalantly, accuses the gal of committing the crime, and the maid Gertrude sides with him. Mother, however sides with daughter. Enter Chameleon.

That "master of disguise and detection" soon deducted that the dead man was something of a heel. (He kept an album of his latest amours on the dining room table). One snap shot led to another and finally Chameleon disguised as a photographer, traced one of the photos to Gertrude, whose daughter Lila had been a model before committing suicide when jilted by the murdered man.

All of which told Chameleon that Mother was guilty. She had tried to pin the crime on her daughter so Philip would reveal that he was as much of a heel as the dead husband. Spurned at the close, Philip's parting barb was, "I certainly wouldn't want a murderer for a mother-in-law." June Bundy.