

Television—Radio Reviews

Fred Waring Show

TELEVISION—Reviewed Sunday (9), 9-10 p.m. EDT. Sponsored by General Electric thru Young & Rubicam via CBS network. Producer-director, Bob Banner. Announcer, Bob Hite. Music, Fred Waring orchestra. Guest, June Havoc.

The Waring show made its fall debut and rang the bell as the model TV music show. Waring's savvy and skill paid off in a handsomely-produced, smooth-running show, with sparkle, change of pace and imagination.

The superior production glittered the more because of the fine continuity from number to number. With Waring the mixer, one scene blended effortlessly into another. An hour is a long time for a visual music show, and the entr'actes can be as important as the main scenes, a prospectus which is obviously elementary to TV-wise Waring.

The selection of numbers was variegated and interesting, with plenty of emphasis on current pops, each set in a topnotch production framework. Waring, whose stock in trade these many years has been the college songs, concert encores, religious, etc., has been very well advised in getting down to earth songwise for the TV show. Such tunes as *The Musicians*, *Out of Breath*, *Way Up in North Carolina* and *Be My Love* are smart, plain-folks programming.

A good deal of the show was given to a production of the *Gladiola Girl* scene from *Lend an Ear*, and starring, on this occasion, June Havoc. Perhaps it isn't fair to bring Carol Channing, the creator of the role, in as yardstick, but it certainly is inevitable. Miss Havoc was a far, far cry from the mad, weird, uproarious flapper delineated by Miss Channing, altho she gave a showmanly performance. The young man who played opposite Miss Havoc did a tremendous job as Larry Van Patton, stealing most of the laughs. Jerry Wexler

Hollywood Junior Circus

TELEVISION—Reviewed Saturday (8), 10:30-11 a.m., EDT, sponsored by the Hollywood Candy Company via the American Broadcasting System. Agency, Ruthraff and Ryan. Producer, Bill Hyer. Director, George Byrne. Cast: Paul Barnes, ringmaster; Buffo the Clown, Marie, Louise and Charles, acros; Bill Hughes and his talking crow; Poodles Hanneford, riding act; Zero (Max Vornstein) and Bruce Chase ork.

Intimate Big Top format which made Hollywood Junior Circus a sweetmeat for juvenile viewers last season is being continued in the present series which premed last Saturday (8). Circus and variety acts are skillfully blended in a back yard setting that brings out a strong and appealing sawdust and spangles flavor.

Permanent and key members of the cast are Paul Barnes, personable and capable as the ringmaster; Buffo the Clown, who ably fills the comedy roles and Max Bronstein, whose antics, midget size and small car are sure to keep moppet's eyes glued to the screen during the sugary commercials for the sponsoring Hollywood Candy Company.

Acts appearing in the opening stanza included Marie, Louise and Charles, capable acros; Bill Hughes and his talking crow, a novel presentation that kept the participating audience moppets enraptured, and Poodles Hanneford and his riding act. Poodles harked back to his beginning as a youth with the Lord Sanger Great London Circus and perhaps kindled the spark of the artist in the heart of many a lad or lass. Music by Bruce Chase and his ork is believable. Jim McHugh.



Paul Whiteman Revue

TELEVISION—Reviewed Sunday (9), 7-7:30 p.m. EDT. Presented by Goodyear Tires thru Young & Rubicam via ABC-TV. Producer-director, Richard Eckler. Producer for ABC-TV, Ward Byron. Staged by Bob Herget. Choreography, Frank Westbrook. Sets, James McNaughton. Costumes, Audre. Vocalizing, Ray Porter and His Singing Chorus. Arrangements, Glen Osser. Music, Paul Whiteman and his ork. Vocalists, Earl Wrightson, Frances Langford and Maureen Cannon.

The Paul Whiteman Revue, which occasionally shows flashes of becoming one of TV's better musical programs, inevitably relapses into a second grade version of its potentialities. Initial stanza of the new season, an all-Gershwin program featuring the *Rhapsody in Blue* in its entirety, should have gotten the series off on the right foot. It didn't.

The reason wasn't exactly unfathomable. Handling the *Rhapsody*, the highlight of the half-hour, as if it were a Broadway presentation in its pretentiousness, did not help matters. Not only was Earl Wild featured on the piano, but the producers had to choreograph the music. This meant that Wild and Whiteman's ork, in addition to the dancers, had to be covered by the cameras. The result was that the dance patterns had no continuity, and bore no visible relation to the content of Gershwin's music, except in name. There was, however, an interesting opening shot of high-hatted clarinetists and some intriguing overhead lenswork. Wild's playing of the *Rhapsody*, incidentally, was top flight.

The vocalists were the positive side of the presentation. Earl Wrightson's resonant baritone belted home *It Ain't Necessarily So* as if he appreciated the delightful lyrics. Frances Langford delivered the *Man I Love* in a soft, dreamy, worshipful manner. One of video's more under-rated talents, pint-sized Maureen Cannon sang *I Got Rhythm* in her usual exciting, brassy style.

Show opened with Ray Porter and his chorus doing *Clap Your Hands*. Aside from their well-controlled vocalizing, the group tried to simulate the lyric in unified action. This, a good idea, flopped because their movements were erratic.

Eventually the show will have to do more with a tune than just sing it without adding some action. The show should start evolving a formula now.

The Goodyear commercials, even tho there are too many, for the most part aren't hard to take. Miss Cannon's *It's a Good Sign* is definitely on the plus side. The cut-out of the client's safety tube which contrasts its virtues with others rates a mention for intelligent pitching. Leon Morse.

Sky King

RADIO—Reviewed Tuesday (11), 5:30-5:55 p.m., EDT. Sponsored by Derby Foods thru Needham, Louis & Brorby via Mutual Broadcasting System. Producer, Alan Fishburn. Director, Chris Ford. Organist, Hal Turner. Announcer, Pierre Andre. Cast: Earl Nightingale, Beryl Vaughan, Jack Bivans and Cliff Sanbier.

Sky King is a combination aviator, sleuth, cow puncher and streamlined knight errant. The show has the stuff to excite junior listeners morally and intellectually, and purge their frustrations. The technical jargon used is beyond the lay listener, and more twists are packed into a half-hour adventure story than the normal adult can take.

On airing which marked show's return from summer vacation, King and his three young stooges were chasing cattle rustlers in the deep Southwest. The twist was that the animals were being sneaked over the border by glider. By the time he had trapped the culprits, King, with frigid aplomb, had shot a gun from a villain's hand, knocked him out, pulled a disguise, solved the mystery and saved a crashing glider by hooking it on to his plane's tow-line in midair.

There were two straight pitches for Peter Pan peanut butter between acts. Keeping on the technical side, they emphasized that the stuff is only 60 seconds old when the jar is opened because it was jet sealed. Gene Plotnik.

CAPSULE COMMENT

Theater Guild on the Air (Radio) NBC, Sunday (9), 8:30-9:30 p.m. EDT.

Program teed off with an excellent adaptation of *The Heiress*. Exceptionally well-played by Betty Field, Cornel Wilde and Basil Rathbone. Homer Fickett's direction built smoothly to a sharp climax. The weekly dramatic series has started its seventh season on the right foot. (See full review this issue.)

Mark Trail (Radio) ABC Wednesday (12), 5:30-6 p.m. EDT.

Trail features the field-and-stream variety, clean-cut species of hero. Most of the time his predicament didn't seem nearly dangerous enough for the needed suspense. (See full review this issue.)

Sky King (Radio) Mutual, Tuesday (11), 5:30-5:55 p.m. EDT.

Has the stuff to excite junior listeners. More twists are packed into a half hour adventure story than the normal adult can take. (See full review this issue.)

Louella Parsons (Radio) ABC Sunday (9), 9:15-9:30 p.m. EDT.

Louella Parsons once again returns to the air with her gossip on life with the Hollywood mob. Last half of the program, which features an interview (Jane Wymann), gives the program a lift. Should retain its audience. See full review this issue.)

Charlie Wild, Private Detective (TV) ABC-TV Tuesday (11), 8-8:30 p.m. EDT.

If *The Case of the Sad Eyed Clam* is to prove typical of the 1951-52 adventures of Charlie Wild, the show is not likely to develop a loyal following even among ardent whodunit fans. *Clam's* plot was routine, the script hardly scintillating, and the performances unenthusiastic except for the commendable work of Rita Gam in the fem lead as Myra. (See full review this issue.)

Shadow of a Cloak (TV), DuMont, Wednesday (12), 9:30-10 p.m., EDT.

A cloak and dagger thriller which still must improve if it is to rate the better shows. Program still goes in too much for action without building enough characterization. Show, however, is getting better and should develop a following. (See full review this issue.)

They Stand Accused (TV), DuMont, Sunday (9), 10-11 p.m., EDT.

This is another of the dramatic shows using a court background and fictional cases which are tried. Altho such programs can be made exciting, this one is dull, unimaginative and does not capitalize on the material. Intelligent producing can, however, work wonders with the format. The commercials are ill-conceived. (See full review this issue.)

Search for Tomorrow (TV), CBS-TV, Wednesday (12), 12:30-1 p.m., EDT.

Slow-motion emoting is the chief flaw of Columbia Broadcasting System's new video soap opera, "Search for Tomorrow." The actors pause significantly after every word, in what seems to be an effort to extract every second's worth from each sentence. This technique might be rewarding with a Bernard Shaw opus, but the dialog on "Search" is far from Shavian. In fact, on the show caught, some of it would have benefited from a real speed-up performance, particularly on line pick-ups. (See full review this issue.)

The Paul Whiteman Revue (TV), ABC-TV Sunday (9) 7-7:30 p.m., EDT.

The initial show of the season of the "Paul Whiteman Revue" came a cropper because of its pretentiousness. Program offered the entire score of George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue," but its choreography was far from impressive. On the strong side, however, were its vocalists—Earl Wrightson, Frances Langford and Maureen Cannon. (See full review this issue.)

EDITORIAL

Mature Entertainment

At least two shows opening the '51-'52 television season reached a new high in mature TV entertainment programming. One was the Ed Sullivan *Toast of the Town* presentation of the Oscar Hammerstein story for Lincoln-Mercury on the Columbia Broadcasting System. The other the Ezio Pinza debut episode of the National Broadcasting Company's *All Star Revue*. (Both programs are reviewed in the Highlight Reviews section on page 2 this issue.)

Actually Sullivan's format switch to top showbusiness personality biographies represents a daring departure. There must be some question whether the audiences who regularly tuned in to the standard, tho excellent straight vaudeville presentations formerly offered on *Toast*, will find the slightly slower-paced, non-punching, high-quality kind of stanza represented by the Hammerstein saga to their taste. It is

certainly to be hoped that they will. For if the new *Toast* gets high ratings it must inevitably result in a higher standard for many other variety shows, which in the interests of playing it safe, have gotten into a deadly rut.

The Pinza *All Star* hour, too, was a far more mature entertainment stanza than last season's *Four Star Revue* regularly presented. The Durantes, Olsen & Johnsons, et al. certainly have their own high place in the video scheme of things. But if Pinza's hour clicks as it should, perhaps *All Star* will find room for a few more less frantic, smoother, more subtly entertaining sessions than are normally presented.

Reaction to these two debuts, at any rate, will be interesting to watch. If it's good, perhaps other webs and sponsors will join this small parade toward more mature entertainment on TV. Such a development would redound greatly to television's overall welfare.

Theater Guild on the Air

RADIO—Reviewed Sunday (9), 8:30-9:30 p.m. EDT. Sponsored by United States Steel via the National Broadcasting Company thru Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn. Supervised by J. Carlisle MacDonald. Producer, Armina Marshall. Director, Homer Fickett. Cast: Betty Field, Cornel Wilde, Basil Rathbone, Isobel Elson and others.

The Theater Guild on the Air resumed operations for its seventh consecutive season Sunday (9). While over the years the programs have come up with some bleak spots, Theater Guild airings hold to a rating as one of the most distinguished weekly dramatic hours in radio. *The Heiress* was an exceptionally happy choice as the opener for the new series.

Ruth and Augustus Goetz's dramatization of the Henry James novel was a solid Stem stage success several years ago. Subsequently it was made into a fine film. Its current adaptation to radio proves that it can be a success in any medium. It has closely knit drama and punch, and its characterizations can be built almost as readily by ear as with added visualization.

Betty Field left nothing to be desired as the lass with the inferiority complex who turns tigerish when she finds she has been wooed for her money. Cornel Wilde was excellent as the young heel who gives her a run-around and then tries to get back in favor. Basil Rathbone, who created the rigidly unbending Dr. Sloper on Broadway, was back in his original stint for an equally polished performance. Isobel Elson played the fluttering aunt capably. Homer Fickett's direction was smooth and fluent, building steadily to the tale's grim climax. The background narration was exceptionally well handled by Elliot Reed.

U. S. Steel commercial followed the usual format, delivered with dignity in line with the over-all tone of the production. Theater Guild on the Air has definitely started its new season on the right foot. Bob Francis.

Mark Trail

RADIO—Reviewed Wednesday (12), 5:30-6 p.m., EDT. Sustaining via American Broadcasting Company. Packager, Rockhill Productions. Producer, William Berns. Director, Drex Hines. Script editor, Albert Aley. Music, Hank Sylvester ork. Cast: Matt Crowley, Ronnie Liss, Joyce Gordon and Jackson Beck.

Mark Trail, the kid adventure package based on the Ed Dodd comic strip, moved over to ABC earlier this month. It was previously on Mutual. Kellogg is due to resume sponsorship October 1.

Trail is of the field-and-stream variety, clean-cut species. Show caught had a big-town crook visiting his forest to recover a quarter of a million in cash taken at a bank robbery 10 years before. One of the hood's cronies had buried it there and then been bumped off. The crook designed to dupe Mark Trail into finding the treasure and then wipe him out. Wind-up had Trail saving himself from being dynamited by jumping to the center of the blast. Clever, eh?

But most of the time the crook dallied and Trail's predicament didn't seem nearly dangerous

Search for Tomorrow

TELEVISION—Reviewed Wednesday (12), 12:30-1 p.m. EDT, across-the-board. Sponsored by Procter & Gamble, via Columbia Broadcasting System-TV, New York. Producer-director, Charles Irving. Writer, Agnes Eckhardt. Cast: Cliff Hall, Sara Anderson, Bess Johnson, Philip Huston, Tom Poston, John Sylvester, others. Organist: Chester Kingsbury.

Slow-motion emoting is the chief flaw of CBS' new video soap opera, *Search for Tomorrow*. A soap series, of course, is traditionally wordy, as compared to the equally traditional "action-packed-drama" policy of Westerns. However, this package is not only wordy, it's also ponderous.

The actors pause significantly after every word, in what seems to be an effort to extract every second's worth from each sentence. This technique might be rewarding with a Bernard Shaw opus, but the dialog on *Search for Tomorrow* is far from Shavian. In fact, some of it on the show caught would have benefited from a real speed-up performance, particularly on line pick-ups.

Altho the series concerns the Barron family (father, mother, married son and 25-year-old daughter), the episode opened with a lengthy static closeup of a conversation between a lunch counter proprietor and a young doctor, a newcomer to town in search of a pianist for his newly opened civic recreation center. The counter man suggested the Barron girl, and it was obvious to any loyal soap fan that a romance would be brewing between the medic and the fem on future shows.

All in Stew

Having established the doc as a suitably tweedy hero type, pipe and all, the scripter dropped him abruptly and moved on to the Barron home, where everybody was in a stew. Unlike most radio soap operas, this show doesn't carry an opening description of past events, so it was difficult to tell the heroine from the heels at first.

Mother Barron (Bess Johnson) was in a well-bred pet over the fact that daughter (Sara Anderson) had been hanging around the aforementioned lunch counter, and the program ended on a mild note of excitement, when the latter threatened to leave home.

Acting was in the usual melo manner of daytime radio drama, altho Tom Poston managed to be remarkably natural and likeable as the counter man, Mike Reilly. Philip Huston, a collar ad type, was handicapped in his medic role by the fact that the script called for him to feed his face during the whole scene. He had an air of desperate concentration, as tho he were mentally timing each bite, so he'd be able to pick up his next line.

The demonstration commercials for Spic and Span cleanser and Joy, a liquid for dish washing, were both on film. The former plug featured a toothy young lady who praised her product with the same vigor that Jack Smith sings a song. June Bundy.

enough for the needed suspense. Nature lesson was brought in when they found eyeless fish in an underground stream. Trail explained the basic law of nature that "everything useless disappears." Does that go for everything? Gene Plotnik.