STAGING A TELEVISION PROGRAM

CONSTRUCTING A WEARABLE HEARING AID
PORTABLE SEMI-PRO RECORDER
Staging a TELEVISION PROGRAM

Television Broadcasting is set, technically, for full-time production. It must compete with moving picture studio technique.


That jargon comes from the program director during the fever of shooting and broadcasting commercial television. He talks continuously just like old time movie directors. But in television the director uses a telephone instead of a megaphone. His orders are heard and carried out by the cameramen and stage technicians while the video and audio control men get their commands direct because they are seated below the director in the million dollar control room perched over the studio.

Broadcasting television is technically set for full time production. But the production is still limited to 15 hours a week of simple staging. Hollywood absorbed and climbed ahead of legitimate staging. Television must vie with the talking pictures and radio of 1941. It needs must take time.

Nevertheless the moment the Federal Communications Commission gave Television the go ahead, three sponsors bought time and programs on NBC. They are a watch outfit, a yarn company and an advertising agency now signed up for telecasting.
The heart of the television camera is called the "Ich." The square plate inside the tube acts as a photograph negative. Cameraman is installing tube into unit.

The camera is focused on the test pattern designed to serve the purpose of stand-ins. This is more accurate, serves special television needs and saves wear and tear on the cast. The various technicians: cameramen, light men, technical director, video man, etc., line up their controls and the camera for deflection with a peculiar chart. Sharpness is still not perfected.

Television transmitting room on the 85th floor of the Empire State Building in New York. Here, at WNBT, the sync-generator makes electronic television possible. The test pattern is broadcast half an hour before show time to give the control men and listeners an opportunity to focus their television receivers in proper manner.

The stage manager uses red crayon to mark the places for the actors to stand. This is most important in closeups, such as this one of the model exhibiting the hidden pocket, a new gimmick for milady's use worldwide.

Finished acts demand so much work to stage that television is forced to avoid creating new ones. Hence old vaudevillians, night club performers, single features and circus acts hold the television stage of today. There is practically no television drama being produced. The entertainment value of the offerings rate poorly as a steady diet. As soon as more sponsors buy time and produce their own shows the quality will improve. The situation is similar to the pioneer days of radio. It wasn't until the sponsors competed for the greater audience that production costs and entertainment valued advanced.

They shoot with three cameras, each designed to take a different angle so that the pictures may be varied. Unlike the ear, the eye demands much more variety. Besides which the quality of television pictures is constantly being compared with talkies. The three cameras are boxed from a panel in the control room from where the director may switch from one to another to live production. Of course, showings from the film studio and the mobile unit invite different problems. It's the mobile unit jobs covering prize fights and ball games that make television unique by permitting an almost unlimited audience to witness popular events the moment they occur.

At the moment, the audiences are small. Television Broadcasting stations are few and set owners in the New York area, for instance, only number 4,800. The cost of sets and their limited manufacture due to defense are holding it up. Nevertheless
This picture allows us to see the “business end” of one of the $3,000 television cameras. The upper lens is the cameraman’s direct view-finder; the lower image lens opening onto the iconoscope tube. The lights below the lens mount are for cue signals.

The camera shown is fixed on a hand-operated dolly that performs gymnastics which make a wide range of camera angles possible. A dolly man drives the cameraman around the studio and boosts him up and down. Other lifts are electrically operated.

Hat model, Nina McLoughlin, watches the television birdie. Augmenting the ceiling wattage is the floor light broad, and we don't mean Nina! Here's the focusing handle at work. Headphones permit cameraman to receive his cues and orders from the director.

Upside-down television image as seen by the cameraman through the view-finder. Nina is bottom-side-up and in reverse. A light inside the camera tells the cameraman when he is on the air. The crossed hairline is identical in all standard cameras.

The Government is doing all it can to help because they believe that advancement of television may eventually prove valuable for defense. The staff behind the scenes make the television studios look like sound stages. Sixteen technicians are used to operate cameras, booms, the Video, Audio, turntables and lights. Up at NBC, they are all men who have been with television at least nine years. Most are Amateur Photographers, one of the requisites for video jobs.

Though certain basic patents were taken out in 1884, the science of Television took until July of this year to get Government okay for commercial showings. It was not until then that equipment standards won the Nod. NBC has invested $15,000,000 in experiments to date.

Though the public has seen but few showings in the ten years of actual television, myths have mushroomed. Actors engaged for their first television jobs expect blue, purple and yellow makeup. They ask about black lipstick. This rainbow makeup was tried out during the scanning-disk days. The electronic system employs straight panchromatic makeup, suntan powder and no eye shadow. Men use no makeup except when they have extra heavy beards.

Just as radio stations broadcast sound, so television stations broadcast light. The heart of the new science is the Iconoscope, or Cathode ray tube. In the camera the Iconoscope converts light into electrical impulse. These impulses are broadcast and received by a similar Cathode ray tube in your
Every television program ends with a waving American Flag and a recording of the Star Spangled Banner. Attached to every camera is a cue sheet and a copy of the program routine. The backdrop is painted light grey.

Here is the control room during a nervous moment taken during air time. Al Protzman, left, with his trained fingers on the camera switches, and program director Ernest Colling, right, watching the action on the three kinescopes and the studio through the plofilm. Control room is almost completely dark.

The top three images appear on the kinescopes in the control room. At Colling's order any one may be put on the air. Number two is being previewed and the flag is being corrected.

Miss Listener tunes in the Radio City Matinee on her home television set. The image appears on a milky glass covering the Cathode ray tube. This is reflected by a slitting mirror on the back of the set. Miss Listener's left hand is on the "Brightening Dial." Note the reflection of her hand in the mirror above. She appears to be enjoying the show.

The home set which reverses the process. That is, converting the electrical impulses back into light and forming images. The subject is shot by 525 lines of light, forming 30 frames per second as against motion pictures which is only 24 frames per second. The 525-30 are standard today.

Television studios are working intensively on developing formulas for future programs. What some of the participants may have up their sleeves is still secret. There has been nothing spectacularly creative—nothing to reflect that a great entertainment technique will be developed within the field of television itself. Rather, the program labs have been content to borrow methods of procedure from the movies, the stage and radio.

The easiest way to solve the program problem is to give television fans a little bit of everything; the video directors seem to believe. And they borrow a bit of talent and technique from here and a little bit from there and then they stir it all up with the result of obtaining a none too palatable hash for the video customers.

The potentialities of television programming are so enormous that the directors of experimental shows seem scared of their shadows. Television can be an original entertainment medium right from the start. The video art can develop its own technique—and it can be a polished, acceptable medium at the very start. The only requirement is that the holders of commercial television licenses will have to open their purse-strings for creative (Continued on page 64)
That damned little bus is ridiculous," I said. "Everyone—"

"Good morning," I answered. "Everyone—"

"Good morning," I answered. "Everyone laughs at me, and I can't stand it. We've got to keep some dignity in our profession, and it's a cinch we won't if we ride around in a car that's as conspicuous as a grapefruit on a hardboard. Get another bus—get our old one back—get a wheelbarrow—get anything—"

"Good work, Lee," Al said, handing his paper to me.

I looked at it, and sat down heavily. There was a big picture of a crowd of kids, rolling the Ajax down Foster Avenue! The city needs playgrounds,

the caption said. Things have come to a pretty pass when our children have to take their toys out on the city streets. What are you going to do about it, Mr. Mayor—and so on, with a couple of columns of the delicious whimsy newspapermen like to lay on thick when they're given a chance.

"A quarter page," Al pointed out, "and our name on the side of the car, where lots of readers will see it and be amused. An ad like that would have cost us plenty. Subtract it from the cost of the car, and you'll see we got a bargain. But you'll have to stop being so thin-skinned."

I looked at the picture again. The cop the S&F sign—the people laughing—the kids having fun—and me, running excitedly into the left side of the photograph. It wasn't a bad shot of me, really.

"Coffee and?" I shouted to the cornerman, to cover up a smile. I knew Al was looking at me and grinning, but I sort of had to give in.

I ate one doughnut before I said anything. "You know," I said, "perhaps people do get a kick out of that bus."

I stood up, and started for the cashier's desk. "Alta boy," he said, slapping me on the back as he passed. "See you in the shop!"

Staging a Television Program

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writers, imaginative directors and top-notch talent.

In matters relative to writing, directing and casting programs, broadcasting has been playing up to the stage and screen for many years. And radio has developed a program formula as a result. So, at the start, television will look to that it is potentially a more powerful and far-reaching medium than blues and movies and should, right from the start, relate to Broadway and Hollywood to a contributory rather than dominating spot. True, stage and screen personalities will be used in television programs, but their scriptability is more important than marquee prominence.

We are bound to hear from Hollywood to the effect that the cinema city is the logical contender for leadership of the nation when, as, and if nation-wide video networks are placed in operation. True, Hollywood has a loan of movie names which may regularize as well as ever the movies on the stage, or the movies they do on the television screen. But movie names won't be enough to support a bid for leadership. New York has "on call" talent and personality, not quantity, and what good is quantity if just a very small percentage can be signed when needed for a television show.

Broadcasting experience of many years has shown that there are great difficulties in obtaining talkie stars for Hollywood broadcasts when they are engaged in the stage, or for that matter, it's often hard for a star to find time away from the stage for the endless rehearsals that the actual broadcasts. But, when they're in New York, there's barely a hitch in taking on the role assignment that won't clash with other activities. We've even known of movie stars who preferred a special flight to New York (all expenses paid by the sponsor, of course) to appear on a radio program. And the same will hold true of television.

The video industry has already demonstrated its operating independence of the movie industry. While the movies may not exactly take a back seat in television ratings, they apparently will have to be content with one center aisle. It is very likely that a batch of bROADCASTERS who have their eye on television allocations will be a bit disappointed, too, in discovering that telecasting won't be dominated by the present broadcasting fraternity;