

Newsweek

Color TV for Everybody: A Timetable
(See Business)

OCTOBER 11, 1954 20c



The Ballet's Tallchief: Native Dancer
(See The Dance)

Color Television: A Timetable

Here's the way industry leaders see the growth of color TV:

►1955—Progress. Preparations for the big production push. Anywhere from 150,000 to 400,000 sets will be marketed. Prices will remain at about \$800 or more for large-screen.

►1956—Mass Production. Perhaps 1.5 million to 2 million receivers will be sold. Prices of a good 21-inch model should come down to around \$500—if not in '56, then almost certainly in '57.

►1957—More Demand, More Production. Three million or more sets this year.

►1958—Cross-Over Point. As many, or more, color sets will be turned out as black and white. Sales may hit 5 million.

What Sets You Can Get in 1954-55

| | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| RCA | 21-inch | \$800 to \$900 |
| Zenith | No statement | No estimate |
| General Electric | 15-inch* | No estimate |
| Capehart-Farnsworth | 19-inch | Under \$1,000 |
| Westinghouse | 15-inch* | \$595 |
| | 19-inch | About \$1,000 |
| Hallicrafters | 19-inch or 21-inch | No estimate |
| Crosley | No statement | No estimate |
| Magnavox | 21-inch | No estimate |
| Admiral | 15-inch* | \$1,000 |
| | 19-inch or 21-inch | No estimate |
| Stromberg-Carlson | 15-inch* | \$495 |
| | 19-inch or 21-inch | No estimate |
| Sylvania | 15-inch* | No estimate |
| Philco | No statement | No estimate |
| CBS-Columbia | 19-inch | \$950 to \$1,100 |
| Raytheon | 19-inch | \$995 to \$1,095 |
| Motorola | 19-inch* | \$895 to \$995 |
| Stewart-Warner | 21-inch | \$795 |
| Sentinel | 21-inch | \$800 to \$900 |
| Du Mont | 19-inch | About \$1,000 |
| Emerson | 15-inch* | \$695 |
| | 21-inch | No estimate |
| Hoffman | 19-inch or 21-inch | No estimate |
| Arvin | 15-inch* | No estimate |
| | 21-inch | Under \$800 |

*Already on the market. Most 15-inch sets, however, were produced in limited quantities and primarily for experimental or demonstration purposes.

NOTE: These are tube sizes. Size of picture depends on shape of the tube and how it is masked. Generally, the picture is about 2 inches smaller. For example, Emerson's 15-inch tube yields a 12½-inch picture. RCA's 21-inch tube is expected to give a 19½-inch picture.

How Much Color You Can See

NBC Network: Colorcasts to run anywhere from one to five hours weekly.

CBS Network: Also one to five hours a week in color programs.

Du Mont Network: Due to make color debut this month.

ABC Network: No color plans.

merchandising. "In 1947 a 10-inch black-and-white set sold for \$425. Within two years a 16-inch set could be bought for less than that. The public will buy a new product. It always has."

Progress: The two companies and their subsidiaries (NBC and CBS-Columbia) are pushing ahead on two fronts—set development and programming—and pulling the rest of the industry, however reluctantly, with them. RCA last month unveiled an advanced new 21-inch tube that will be ready for market early next year. CBS-Columbia says it has a 19-inch set near the marketing stage and is working on a 22-inch tube.

The networks so far are more proficient at producing color shows than most manufacturers are at turning out color sets. That is mainly because the problems are much the same as in black-and-white TV, except, of course, that producers have to pay much closer attention to color. Intense lights make deep shades, for instance look darker (navy blue appears black), and light shades lighter.

NBC's color consultant Richard Day recalls that during the shooting of "Lady in the Dark," Ann Söthern showed up with platinum-blond hair. Day realized that on color receivers this would look like a chalk-white cap—the white would have "bloomed." After some argument, the star finally let them sprinkle finely ground charcoal in her hair. When CBS put on "Royal Family" last month, Helen Hayes, playing the flamboyant head of a theater family, was to appear with blue hair. Producer Martin Manulis firmly ruled this out; viewers would think there was something wrong with their sets.

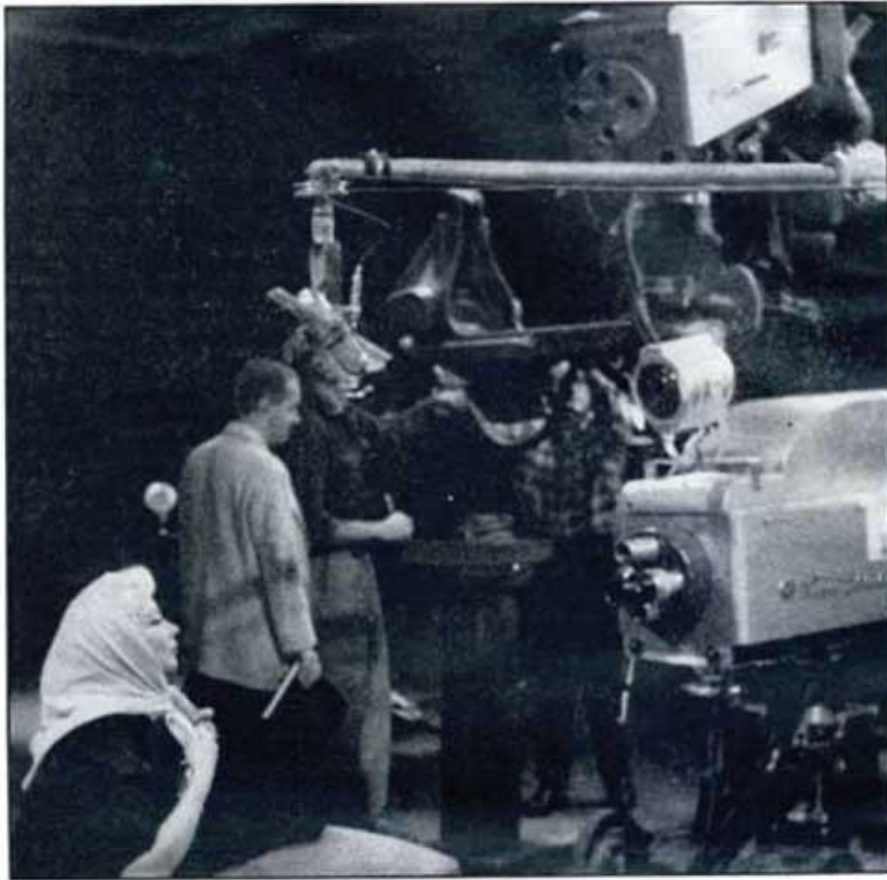
Plot Essential: Color won't make a bad show good is one thing telecasters have been learning. NBC's first big "spectacular," Betty Hutton's "Satin and Spurs" drew a unanimous and merciless panning. When CBS launched its "Shower of Stars" last week, New York Times critic Jack Gould commented: "Color may be the death of television yet . . . [the show was] both tinted and tedious."

At the present stage, producing color shows is fantastically expensive. NBC figures that the total tab for its 90-minute "spectaculars" comes to around \$250,000, or the price of a big Broadway musical. (This series, by the way, is now completely booked—\$14 million in billings.) CBS's Manulis says his shows run to two and a half times the cost of a black-and-white production. However, once a mass market is developed the networks are confident that color shows won't cost more than 10 to 20 per cent extra. Hubbell Robinson Jr., CBS's vice president for networks, estimates that three or four years from now a sponsor will have to pay \$2.54 to reach 1,000 homes with a typical half-hour colorcast. In black-and-white, the charge would be \$2.31.

Until then, most people will do their

BUSINESS

color TV viewing at dealer's showrooms, the occasional home with a color set, or (as they did when black and white was introduced) at the neighborhood pub. "Perhaps it's ironic," one TV engineer says, "that many of the first eyes to watch color TV will be blood shot."



Adding Up Color TV Now

What, exactly, is the situation today in color television? How soon will good color equipment be available in greater quantity at mass prices? What are the important obstacles to producing color sets and programs?

In short, when is color TV coming for everybody?

Not this year, certainly, nor next. Production of color sets—and the color shows to go with them—will really get rolling in '56. From then on, TV's world will spin in color.

Color sets, of course, are already available. The small screens are getting bigger. But the present sets are still expensive and, in some cases, vastly complicated.

More and more color programs are being televised, but they still add up to only a very small fraction of total air time.

Reception is excellent—"a thing of surpassing splendor," as one, perhaps over-enthusiastic, TV critic says of a recent NBC show. While the colors may sometimes overlap and occasionally aren't quite true, the days of sickly green and lobster-red complexions are over.

But as far as mass production goes, some tricky problems remain to be licked. One industry estimate has it that well over 50 per cent of all color tubes

currently being turned out are rejected. This doesn't help lower the price.

And the technical problems are complicated by competitive pressures. RCA, Zenith, CBS-Columbia, and other major manufacturers are now all working feverishly to perfect the best possible color tube. Still, some industry leaders are unhappy with results up to now. "Every time one is ready for the market, someone else comes along with something better," says Comdr. E.F. McDonald, president of Zenith. "A lot of color sets are being sold now, but every one of them is obsolete almost as soon as it is sold." Some 85 set makers are standing by, anxious to enter the color field. But few can afford to invest in a chassis that will take one kind of tube when a fresh development might outmode their sets.

One industry official ascribes present confusion to "a race for prestige between RCA and CBS, a question of who did what first." And Philco's president James H. Carmine observes sharply: "Politics and a race to stake out a patent position are pushing color before it's ready." Officials over at RCA and CBS naturally see things differently. "We don't believe in sitting pat until the absolute set has been developed," says Robert Seidel, RCA's executive vice president in charge of