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## NEWS - COMMENT - POSSIBILITIES

The TV programming "turmoil," the usual seasonal ulcer period (with those final option times coming up), is compounded by a succession of deliberate sounding-board leaks, trade rumors started by the opposition, and nervous agency and network people who frown at the wrong time. Witness, two examples: 1) The Big Surprise; supposedly cancelled by the sponsors; no, it's been renewed by one, but not by the other; no, both sponsors have now cancelled the show. 2) The Joseph Cotten Show - On Trial; it's been cancelled; no, it has not, since option renewal time is May 1 and improved ratings give renewed optimism. (In the case of the latter, the change in title to get Joseph Cotten's name into the newspaper logs materially increased the viewing audience. Proof is that although he had originally been set to star as an actor in only ten of the films which have been completed, he will now star in three more films being prepared for this season's series. Cotten is host and narrator for all films.)

.....The other side of the coin in considering program upheavals in getting set for fall schedules is that some packagers and producers have miscalculated in leaking info on new sales to trade publications, since not all tentative agreements become production contracts and a smile in Hollywood can be a frown in New York. There are more high class pilots involving major names with standard cliché story lines being proposed today than this time a year ago. Although some of the big, expensive packages being proposed by the nets seem to be grabbed up as soon as they are offered there are also plenty of "medium" bankrollers whose agencies are still shopping for low-priced quality packages -- \$30,000-35,000 half-hour films series instead of the \$40,000-50,000 beauties that will never get off the ground. While it's pretty tough to have quality in the low price range these days, if you start with your budget at the low level you have room for an acceptable increase, whereas the high level stuff gets out of sight, with the agency and the sponsor screaming bloody murder.

NTA's newly announced George Jessel's Music Hall, a 39-film half-hour series to be produced by Jessel, will get much of its material from NTA's extensive library of short subjects. Jessel will recall the golden days of show business and then present films of famous variety and musical acts doing their turns. These will be films that are currently in NTA's library as part of its "Jest for Laughs", "Show Business," and "Change of Pace" packages, among others. The films are mainly eight to ten minutes long as currently offered.....ABC has detoured its Rock 'n' Roll Revue with Alan Freed, originally scheduled for an April 12 airing, and instead will present it on Saturday, May 4, 7:30-8pm EDT, as a one-timer.....ABC will present a three-week live music series on Sunday evenings to take up part of the slack after Omnibus departs on March 31 and the new Mike Wallace series debuts on April 28. The Sunday, 10-10:30pm spot will have Milton Cross as host of All About Music, with calypso on April 7, country music on April 14 and jazz on April 21. Ed Nugent will produce, with Bernard Dougall as writer and Jack Sameth directing.

An adult Western, according to one producer, is a film series that can be sold in prime evening time for its network showings, but still has enough blood and thunder for the kids when it goes into syndication.....The new Studio Cne system of using two different production units to bring in its live productions (Herbert Brodtkin and Gordon Duff) has now spread to Climax!, with Ralph Nelson named to alternate as producer with incumbent Edgar Petersen. Each producer will handle a group of seven consecutive properties. Peterson has currently scheduled properties thru June 27 and no date has been announced for Nelson's first productions, although his new post starts officially on April 1.....Despite the inroads of film series, live drama programs continue to make the majority of notices in critical columns. Trade reviewers and highlight listings do full justice to the half-hour and hour films, but when it comes to the extended critical reviews, live programs win the nod. The intense, "theatrical" feeling engendered in live performances attracts the critics. The reviews have a delayed action with far-reaching influence beyond mere sponsor notice. Does any one believe that some of the winners of "Emmy" and other awards ever would have been considered if it weren't for the rave critical notices some of them received in newspapers the day after performances? Of course, awards may not keep programs on the air, but they certainly raise talent fees.

Westinghouse Broadcasting Co. is moving Rod MacLeish out his Boston station news post to Washington, to head the new WBC Washington news bureau. MacLeish will act as national correspondent for WBC radio and television stations (WBZ-TV, Boston; KDKA-TV, Pittsburgh; KYW-TV, Cleveland, and KPIX, San Francisco). The new bureau starts operations April 1.....NBC's Project 20 has two new one-hour film archive projects in the works for next fall viewing, both emphasizing America's recent past. One will be "The Innocent Years" (1900-1914) and the other, "Back in the Thirties" (1929-1939). Henry Salomon, head of Project 20, will produce both and will write the scripts in association with Richard Hanser. Robert Russell Bennett will compose orchestral scores based on popular songs of the times, and Alexander Scourby will be the narrator.

AGENCIES AND ACCOUNTS: Procter & Gamble Co named Grey Advertising Agency, Inc (NY) to handle its Pin-It home permanent, formerly handled by Benton & Bowles, Inc. Both agencies handle several P & G products.

PEOPLE GOING PLACES: Al Hollander appointed program director of WABC-TV(NY), succeeding George Rice who has transferred to KGO-TV(San Fran) another ABC-owned station. Hollander has been mgr of radio-TV with Edward Kletter Associates, Inc(NY)... ....Robert Adams joined ABC-TV as exec producer for the Hollywood program dept, responsible for the development of new live and film properties.....NBC-TV program dept made the following promotions and appointments for its nighttime programs: John N. Calley, former general program executive, named manager, program services. Alvin Cooperman, Perry Cross and Joseph Cunneff named directors for TV net nighttime programs, each responsible for program administration for specific nights of the week; Cooperman for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday; Cross for Saturday and Sunday, and Cunneff for Monday and Tuesday. Each was formerly a program supervisor. In daytime programming, the following appointments were made: Carl Lindemann, Jr., named director, daytime programs for the TV net. William V. Sargent appointed director, Today-Home-Tonight programs. General programming appointments include: William Hammerstein, formerly a producer, named director, program submissions. Ross Donaldson, formerly manager of writing services, named manager of program submissions. David W. Tebet, formerly a general program executive, named manager, special programs.