

laurels. "We are not sitting back; we are not complacent. It's a funny thing about success. When you get a little in your mouth, you kind of want to have more and more of it, so we are plunging ahead," said NBC Entertainment President Brandon Tartikoff.

For the first time, Tartikoff said, NBC's 10 p.m. shows "are about the best group of 10 p.m. programs, in terms of quality, in terms of audience they deliver and in terms of gross rating." He felt the addition of NBC's new nighttime soap, *Berrenger's*, would also enhance that block of programs.

But the real launching pad for NBC's success, he continued, is the strength in the beginning of prime time. When "you look across the board in the 8 p.m. NYT positions all the way from *TV Bloopers to Knight Rider*, we really do have footholds in the beginning of the night." With the exception of Friday night, he said, "we are either first or just a hair behind going into the 9 p.m. NYT position."

He also talked about some of the new shows NBC is adding:

*Berrenger's*, which premiered Jan. 5, is getting favorable comments from viewers and the press, Tartikoff said. The program, which airs Saturdays at 10 p.m. NYT, received a 20 share the first week and in recent overnights from three markets, its ratings were up in two of the three markets, he said.

But, said Tartikoff, "If the ratings [for *Berrenger's*] don't hold up, it'll go the way of a lot of shows that do not hold up. The second option is that if *Berrenger's* is a show that attracts enough audience Saturday night, NBC might move it inside the week next season."

He also revealed details for a number of proposed back-up series. A show called *Code Name: Foxfire* will premiere on Jan. 27 at 8-10 p.m. NYT as a movie and then convert to a series: It has not been placed on the schedule, he said. "We really think this is our trump card in our pocket to use when we want to use it, not to rush it on the air."

*Best Times*, he added, could be compared to *St. Elsewhere* and *Hill Street Blues*. Some time in the week of March 27, he said, NBC will place the show for a six-week tryout. "The time periods we're looking at are Monday at 8 p.m. NYT or Wednesday at 8 p.m. NYT or possibly Friday at 8 p.m. NYT." The network is also looking at another show, called *TV Parts*, Tartikoff said. It will be placed on the schedule in late March or April.

Tartikoff announced NBC has a commitment from Steven Spielberg for 44 episodes for fall 1985 of a half-hour action anthology, *Steven Spielberg's Amazing Stories*. He said the network didn't know when they would use it. "We look at this as our wild card and wherever we put it, we know we're going to open big. I mean we're talking huge." It might be used in a 9 p.m. or 8 p.m. time period, he added. He promised to have four half-hours to present at the May NBC affiliates meeting. In addition, NBC has a commitment with Stephen Cannell to develop a one-hour drama. Tartikoff said it's going to be a mystery-type show. The pilot will be shot in March and will be previewed during

the affiliates meeting.

Tartikoff disclosed NBC's plans to air a two-hour pilot starring Robert Blake as an inner-city priest; *Father of Hell Town* will air on March 6 behind *Highway to Heaven*, a time period he said Blake requested. Another pilot, *Private Sessions*, stars Mike Farrell of *M\*A\*S\*H* as a therapist in New York. Still another show under consideration is *Half Nelson*, a light-hearted show about a 5-foot-4-inch detective.

NBC's plans for future comedy series were discussed by Warren Littlefield, vice president for comedies. "I am sure you all remember we weren't always as successful with our comedies as we are today." The structure of the network's comedy lineup has been in place since last fall, Littlefield commented, but NBC is dedicated to "improving it." The network's next challenge, he continued, is Saturday night.

Littlefield revealed that *It's Your Move* is being shifted to 9:30 p.m. Saturdays, starting Jan. 26. He also mentioned *Spencer*, which is off the schedule due to a conflict between the production company and the star. If those problems work out, he said, "we may have *Spencer* back."

NBC, he said, will revitalize some older shows and will offer a few new programs. "We will make 10 comedy pilots and several spin-offs. We will continue to attract and

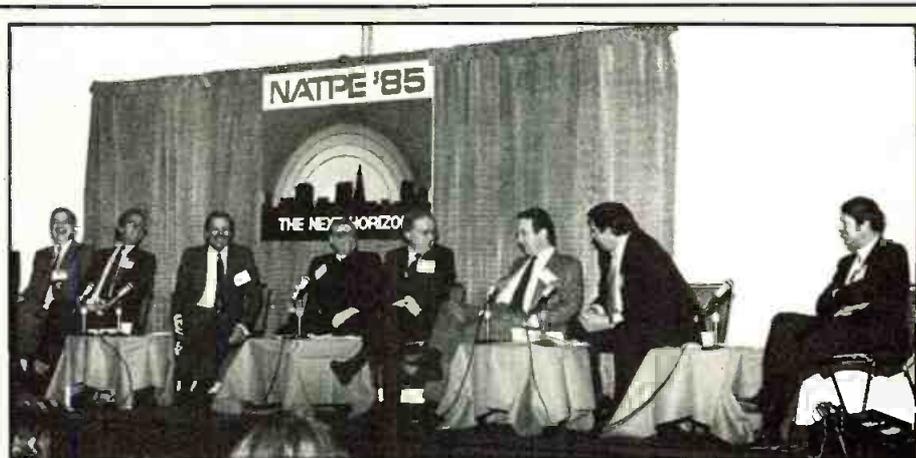
keep the best creative talent at NBC."

He listed some of the highlights of the proposed developments including a Bill Cosby spin-off. He also announced that the creators and producers of *Cheers* will be bringing a new series to NBC next fall.

On the movies and mini-series front, Tartikoff said the network would not run out of product. "I think you'll see us remain quite competitive on Sunday and Monday night, not only in January but certainly in February and even getting strong as we go into March and April.

Some of the planned mini-series include a three-hour epic on the life of Florence Nightingale, a three-hour drama called *Hitler's SS* and the network's 12-hour mini-series, *Evergreen*. Among the movies mentioned were *Romance on the Orient Express* starring Cheryl Ladd and *The Dirty Dozen, the Next Mission*. Tartikoff said the network plans to air *The Dirty Dozen* Feb. 4 against ABC's *Consenting Adults*. Next November, he said NBC will air a seven-hour series on Mussolini starring George C. Scott and a 10-hour mini-series scheduled for the February sweeps on Peter the Great.

What lies ahead in daytime programming for the network was discussed by Steve Sohmer, executive vice president, NBC Entertainment. "We are in a dominant number-one position [Saturday morning] and we are



**Co-production role playing.** What was billed as "an improvisational drama on international co-production" came off as one of NATPE's most entertaining—and even instructive—moments last week when executives playing a writer, a packager, two production company executives, a syndicator, an advertiser and a lawyer acted out the process between the creative inspiration and the final product. The protagonists (l-r): narrator Bob Bernstein of March Five, Richard Barovick of Hess Segall Guterman Petz Steiner & Barovick as the lawyer (Lee Legalese), Frank Miller of Lionheart Television International as the advertiser (Albert Advertiser), Don Taffner of D.L. Taffner/Ltd. as the syndicator (Sam Syndicator), Ron Brown of Embassy Telecommunications as one of the programmers (Aussie Bossy), Philip Jones of Great Britain's Central TV as the other programmer (Hedley Head), Guy Mazzeo of Blair Entertainment as the packager (Paddy Packager) and John Baragwanath of Ireland's Radio Telesis Eireann as the writer (Riley Riter).

The basic idea involved a mini-series (13 episodes) about an Australian diva who at one time had a liaison with a British actor. By the time the project works its way around the world it ends up a half-hour documentary on British television, with the original writer (and almost everyone else) out of it. (At one point it had become a four-hour series done in animation for CBS, provided the heroine had a pet named Garfield.)

The most lasting lessons were those offered by attorney Barovick, including admiring remarks about the California statute that compels parties to deal fairly with one another. The writer's claim to his property would have had a better chance in that state, Barovick said. He expressed marvel at what could be accomplished by "a modicum of morality in fear of lawsuits." At another he remarked: "This is a fascinating exercise for me. I'm the only one who's going to make any money out of this."