

aggested the pact was "historic" in several aspects, including the adoption for the first time provisions for determining residuals on programs produced for advertiser-supported cable networks. Also for the first time, he said, the guild has acquired jurisdiction over programs produced for business and educational use (industrial films being one example). □

Paramount readies late night show with Arsenio Hall

Program, featuring former Fox late night host, has been pre-sold in 23 markets for January 1989 start; Fox may try to block move with suit

Paramount Domestic Television announced last week it would offer for syndication in January 1989 a one-hour late night talk/variety show with Arsenio Hall as host. The program, which will be offered in exchange for seven minutes of national spot time (stations will sell an additional seven minutes of local time), has already been pre-sold in 23 markets covering 40% of U.S. TV homes. Those sales led some observers last week to conclude the show will have the necessary 70% or more coverage usually seen as the clearance level needed to go with a barter program.

However, a possible barrier to distributing the program domestically may be raised by Fox Broadcasting Co. According to one informed FBC source, company President Jamie Kellner has indicated FBC will initiate a lawsuit to prevent Paramount from distributing the program. According to the source FBC believes it has Hall under an exclusive television contract, stemming from his stint as host of FBC's *The Late Show*, that extends for at least another year. Kellner and other FBC officials refused to comment on the matter. A spokesman for the company would say only that FBC's policy is "not to comment on contractual matters or pending litigation." Paramount officials also declined to discuss the matter, as did Hall's manager, Bob Wachs.

The potential legal dispute aside, the program has already been picked up by 11 TVX stations, the exception being WCIX(TV) Miami, an FBC affiliate which has been sold, subject to FCC approval, to CBS (see story, page 65). Eight of the other TVX stations carrying the program are Fox Broadcasting affiliates, including WTXF(TV) Philadelphia, the fourth-ranked market. FBC continues to struggle with its late night entry, *The Late Show*, which was hosted for a time by Arsenio Hall. In fact, WCIX took the program off its late-night schedule early last month to program a movie instead, which has doubled the rating for that time period.

Last week, a TVX official said the group cleared the show because the company had been singularly impressed with Hall's performance as host of FBC's *The Late Show*. But the official also said the company planned to run both the Paramount program

and *The Late Show* on those TVX stations affiliated with Fox. In Philadelphia, for example, the plan is to air *Arsenio Hall* at midnight, after *The Late Show*, said station program director Laurie Vestal. In Washington, TVX's WDCA-TV, which is not an FBC affiliate, will probably air the show at 11 p.m., said program director Kim Meaher.

Paramount is not the only company launching a new late night talk show in January. CBS also has scheduled the debut of a new talk show with *Wheel of Fortune*'s Pat Sajak as host. The network has indicated that the program will be similar in format to the *Tonight Show* starring Johnny Carson.

Paramount officials do not expect the fact that CBS, NBC and Fox will have late night talk shows on their schedules in January to



Hall

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prevent them from clearing *Arsenio Hall* on affiliate stations. They pointed last week to the pre-sale of the program to WBBM-TV Chicago, which is owned by CBS. WBBM-TV has indicated it will schedule the program at 12 midnight, after *Sajak*.

Explaining that move, WBBM-TV station manager Rod Perth said last week that "the industry has learned something from the *Tonight Show-Letterman* combination. The flow of Johnny Carson's audience into *Late Night with David Letterman* has worked very well for NBC, said Perth, indicating that WBBM-TV believes that same kind of flow can be achieved with Sajak and Hall.

Greg Meidel, senior vice president, sales and general manager, Paramount Domestic Television, said he believed that once the station roster for the show is complete, more affiliates will be on the list than independents. "We try to achieve the best clearance possible in each market," he said.

In New York, the show has been sold to MCA's WWOR-TV, and in Los Angeles, as part of a station group deal, to Chris Craft's KCOP(TV). Other Chris Craft stations acquiring the show include KBHK-TV San Francisco, former FBC affiliates, KMSP-TV Minneapolis and KPTV(TV) Portland, Ore., KUTP(TV) Phoenix and KTVX(TV) Salt Lake City. In the top 10 markets, the program has been cleared in all but Boston and Detroit, where, at press time, Paramount had yet to present the show to stations, said Meidel.

Hall's association with Paramount goes back several years to his former hosting stint on *Solid Gold*, the long running weekly music and dance show, which has since been canceled. After leaving FBC's *Late Show* last year (replaced by the short-lived *Wilton North Report*) Hall signed an open-ended film deal with Paramount. He co-stars with Eddie Murphy in the current theatrical film

Music videos still tops with MTV

The addition of regular series programming and the development of future series on MTV does not signal a withdrawal from the service's franchise programming, music videos, MTV Networks president and chief executive officer, Tom Freston, told BROADCASTING last week.

Freston said the series and movies being developed for the network should end up accounting for only roughly 20% of the cable service's schedule.

"We'll always focus on music," he stressed. Freston said the new approach was a more conscious attempt at television programming, rather than what he said has been the radio style approach MTV sometimes employs.

Among the new programming additions now planned at MTV are a morning talk and information "breakfast show" and a late night talk show, both set to debut in late 1988 to early 1989. Another program in development for MTV is a rock and roll soap opera that could debut in mid-to-late 1989.

Freston also said that MTV also has several scripts in development for movies with budgets of between \$750,000 and \$3 million. The "coming of age" and rock and roll topics of those films will be geared to MTV's young adult target audiences, although Freston added that some of the films will also attempt to go beyond what might be called traditional MTV topics. Those movies will debut in the second and third quarters of 1989.

Freston said that "for the past two-and-a-half years" MTV Networks has been looking at "six or seven opportunities" to start up another cable channel. But he added that "it is fair to say that nothing will be announced this year." One of the more probable proposed channels is a comedy network featuring stand-up comedians.

"The reason we're looking at new networks more actively than before" despite the "full plate" of channels MTVN offers now is that we're "moving closer to profitability on VH-1 and Nick at Nite."