

Slow start for 'House Party'

New daytime program produced by NBC and Group W turns in conservative ratings in first two weeks on the air

House Party, the new NBC-Group W daytime magazine strip, has gotten off to a slow start in the ratings, although the producers of the program and the stations carrying it say they expected as much.

Generally, the new one-hour program,



Doocy of 'House Party'

hosted by former television feature reporter Steve Doocy, has turned in ratings well below those of the shows it replaced.

In Washington, for example, where Doocy reported for WRC-TV, the show averaged a 10 share its first week on the air (Jan. 22-26). In the four weeks prior to its debut, WRC-TV averaged about a 16 share in the 9-10 a.m. time period. Last Monday, the show averaged a 12 share.

In Los Angeles, where the show also airs at 9 a.m. on KNBC-TV, the show has averaged an 8 share, about half the rating the station had in the time period the month prior to its debut. The numbers have been down to some extent in most of the metered markets.

Republic package clearances

Republic Pictures Domestic TV *Cliffhanger Serial* package of science fiction B movies featuring "Zombies of the Stratosphere" and "The Crimson Ghost" has cleared 76% of the U.S. The latest clearances include WPGH-TV Pittsburgh, KPHO-TV Phoenix, KOVR-TV Sacramento and WTTV-TV Indianapolis. "Zombies" will premiere next October, while "Crimson Ghost" will trigger in January 1991. Other feature film packages, *Premiere One* (12 titles) and *All Nite Movie*, have chalked up coverages of 82% and 41%, respectively.

In related news, Republic says its "Two Great Comedies Package" (featuring half-hour sitcoms *My World and Welcome To It* and *Get Smart*) has been picked up by KNBC-TV Los Angeles, WXYZ-TV Detroit, WXIA-TV Atlanta and WUSA-TV Washington. The package has cleared in six of the top 10 markets, and will begin next January. Also announced was a 78% clearance of the hour-long *Swimsuit Edition* as part of four quarterly "Fashion Report" specials. *Swimsuit Edition* is already airing on some stations, with Republic reporting KOMO-TV Seattle earning a 7.9 rating/21 share, while KSDK-TV St. Louis posted a 7/20 as of Jan. 24.

PBS same-night carriage

Last fall, for the first time, the Public Broadcasting Service designated 11 prime time programs for same-night, across-the-nation viewing. According to PBS there was higher than 90% same-night carriage of 10 of 11 designated programs in 90% of all markets. The aim, said PBS spokesman Stuart Kantor, is to raise program visibility with viewers, as well as with reviewers on the national level, who have, in the past, often been unable to specify program air dates for all markets.

With increased press coverage and viewership of PBS prime time likely, current and potential corporate underwriters may be encouraged by the average results for episodes aired in October and November: *Masterpiece Theatre*, 97%; *Wall Street Week*, 96%; *Washington Week*, 95%; *Nova*, 95%; *Discover: The World of Science*, 94%; *One Plus One*, 94%; *American Experience*, 93%; *Mystery!*, 92%; *Moyers: The Public Mind*, 91%; *Infinite Voyage*, 91%, and, in its first season, *Travels*, 88%.

In Detroit the show is carried by Gillette-owned WJBK-TV. The station's vice president of broadcasting, Steve Antoniotti, said: "It could be doing better in the ratings. The ratings haven't been good." But he also said WJBK-TV is prepared to let the program grow, "provided the Westinghouse and NBC stations hang in there as well." The initial commitment for the show is about 26 weeks.

House Party is still a work in progress. "We knew it would take some time to grow," said NBC Productions spokesman Gene Walsh, who said research is being done to determine which segments are more appealing to viewers. Those segments may be expanded and others scrapped, he said.

"I think some segments are working better than others," Antoniotti said. "I also think there are too many segments. They should settle down and focus on a smaller group of contributors. If that's their intention, I think we're in sync." □

Arts and Sciences, the animated anti-drug *Cartoon All-Stars to the Rescue* (BROADCASTING, Sept. 18) will be carried by CBS, ABC and NBC, at least three basic cable networks—The Disney Channel, Nickelodeon and The Black Entertainment Network—two Spanish-language broadcasters—Telemundo and Univision—and 200 independent stations, including approximately 110 Fox Broadcasting Co. affiliates. The half hour is scheduled to be simulcast Saturday, April 21 (10:30 a.m. ET and 9:30 a.m. PT). An ATAS spokesman said that the independent stations may air the program on different dates.

The unprecedented industry effort to warn children of the growing problem of substance abuse is being produced cooperatively by Walt Disney Studios, Warner Bros. Pictures, Marvel Productions, Henson Associates, Hanna-Barbera Productions, Murakami-Wolf-Swenson, DIC Enterprises, Film Roman and Bagdasarian. Cast members for the special will feature such internationally known characters as Bugs Bunny, Donald Duck, Daffy Duck, The Muppet Babies, ALF, The Chipmunks, Garfield and The Smurfs. The producer of *Cartoon All-Stars* is Buzz Potamkin, a Peabody Award-winner for *NBC Weekend*. Writing the story are Duane Poole and Tom Swale, veteran animation writers.

ATAS estimates that at least 20 million children will watch the special in the U.S., Canada and Mexico. Thirty-eight Canadian Broadcasting Company stations and 12 Canadian Public Television stations have committed to the special, with Telemundo and Univision airing dubbed versions in Mexico.

ATAS believes this to be the first time an entertainment program will be simulcast by all three broadcast networks (on 640 affiliate stations). The nonprofit organization says it also marks the first time that the major studios have allowed their copyrighted characters to appear in one program together.

In addition, 250,000 videocassettes of the program will be distributed free to schools, libraries and video stores by Disney and funded through the Academy Foundation by a grant from Ronald McDonald's Children's Charities. Eastman Kodak will donate 200,000 blank tapes to the cause. The program's production and subsequent air time are being donated by all parties involved in the project. □

Animated anti-drug special gains industry support

ABC, CBS, NBC, cable services, 200 independents sign up to carry animated anti-drug special featuring cartoon characters from number of studios

According to the Academy of Television