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MID-WEEK SPECIAL

NEWS - COMMENT - POSSIBILITIES

CBS will present Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Cinderella" on Sunday, March 31, 8-9:30pm EST under the sponsorship of Shulton, Inc. and the Pepsi-Cola Co. Julie Andrews will star in the title role. Richard Lewine will produce the live color show in New York. Lewine is currently working with Richard Rodgers (music) and Oscar Hammerstein II (book and lyrics) on the selection of the supporting cast. Rehearsals begin in mid-February.....Playhouse 90 has scheduled a future play that is unique in many respects. It will be one of its filmed programs, the first not among the group of eight that have been scheduled for production by Columbia Pictures-Screen Gems for the CBS hour-and-a-half weekly drama program. Helen Hayes will star in the film, along with Ralph Meeker, Katy Jurado and Janice Rule. Possibly the most unusual aspect of the project is that Bernard Gerard, author of the original script, will also produce and direct the film, with Robert Sparks as exec producer. The story, tentatively titled "Carbine Webb and the Four Sisters" (that's due for a change!), deals with four Roman Catholic nuns and the hardship they encounter on a journey from San Diego through the rugged terrain of hostile Indian country of the early Southwest to their mission of St. Xavier in Tucson.

Hubbell Robinson, Jr., CBS-TV exec v.p. in charge of network programs, said last week: "Our objectives for the 'new' Studio One are to produce fresh and vigorous dramas, dynamic in concept, unhackneyed in treatment, and -- to be 'daring' in our themes, but always we will attempt to produce real stories about real people." (This, presumably, is the aim of every drama program in television -- especially the live drama programs. The "new" ingredient in the "new" Studio One product is expected from the two new alternate producers, Gordon Duff and Herbert Brodtkin, and their work with new teams of writers and other creative personnel).

NBC's new Tonight! (watch that exclamation point, it's part of the new show title) will spotlight new and undiscovered professional talent as a weekly feature. The show is looking for singers, dancers, comedians and instrumentalists who have not previously been seen on network television. The special presentations will originate in New York, Chicago or Los Angeles. Tony Ford, who is talent coordinator for the new Tonight!, will audition talent in New York (Phone, CIRCLE 7-8300, Ext. 4409). Location producers, Don Meier in Chicago (Phone, SUPERIOR 7-8300), and Furth Ullman in Hollywood (Phone, HOLLYWOOD 9-6161), will be in charge of auditions in their respective cities.....The old Tonight show will bow out on Friday, Jan 25, with an on-stage farewell party with many big name guests attending. Walk-on personalities will also include many of the entertainers who were seen on the show in repeat spots in its two-and-a-half year network history of the Steve Allen version. The Ernie Kovacs' Monday-Tuesday section ends its run on Jan 22; it started on Oct 1, last year, when Allen's Sunday night show began demanding more of his time.

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KTLA(LA) will celebrate the station's 10th anniversary with a two-hour live telecast, starting 9:30pm PST, Tuesday, Jan 22. The station transmitted its first commercial program on Jan 22, 1947.....KRCA-TV(LA), NBC's outlet, will celebrate its 8th anniversary on Jan 16 by beginning a color telecast schedule that will include 10 hours of local station programming each week, many of them filmed shows.....Just to prove it's spring somewhere this week, while most of the country is in the middle of a cold spell, KHJ-TV(LA), announced that it will debut its live Let's Play Golf series in Hollywood, sponsored by General Tires and service. Sportscaster Chick Hearn and actor-golf pro Joe Kirkwood, Jr., will headline.....KRCA-TV(LA), will bring its award-winning Faith of Our Children series back on Sun, Jan 20, but without Eleanor Powell, its former star. Instead, the new show will feature alternate stars, with Coleen Gray, Joan Vohs, Barbara Rush, Colleen Townsend and Dale Evans among those scheduled to appear so far.

One rule that seems to have been firmly established in television is that if a big name star becomes connected with a program on a regular basis, sooner or later the show will have to couple the star's name with the program title, if it wasn't done from the beginning, to take advantage of any audience pull inherent in a star's reputation. Latest program to succumb to this inexorable rule is On Trial, which will become The Joseph Cotten Show -- On Trial, effective Feb 1. Even if a program doesn't formally pick up the star's name, the publicity, promotion and conversational items about the program will highlight the star's name. It's a necessary part of the star system and is especially made necessary by the television log set-ups in many newspapers which do not list complete highlights, but use a short agate listing for every show. Most newspapers will start listing On Trial as Joseph Cotten Show in their logs and the audiences will go up in many cities.

Judy Garland and CBS may have had a disagreement over the delivery or non-delivery of a purported script for a show scheduled for Feb 25, now cancelled, but if a program plan had been approved, there still would have been the hurdles of director approval and producer approval (Miss Garland's husband Sid Luft would be exec producer), and then there would have been the question -- not mentioned in the recent disagreement -- of a live or film presentation. CBS would prefer a live program, Miss Garland may be adamant about doing it on film.....The success of the Dinah Shore and Bob Hope Shows for Chevrolet in replacing drama shows, the pattern of Climax! and Shower of Stars for Chrysler, and the attempt at the same sort of break for Lux Video Theatre this season, is being checked as a possible pattern for other regular drama shows. The reasoning is two-fold. If the pattern is for the same sponsor, it permits a shake-up in the viewing audience, as well as a time break for the production units involved. In view of the changing sponsor pattern, the variety show break gives a chance at some sponsors for an intermittent schedule while also giving relief to the regular sponsors who don't want to give away any of their identification with a particular program, but would like to stretch their advertising expenditures further, or be in a better position to absorb some of television's cost increases.

Telephone Time provided a change in current TV conversation by reporting a renewal for a second series of films, three months ahead of its April renewal date. The new agreement calls for 39 new films, with 13 repeats, for 52 weeks.....NBC's Saturday Spectacular sponsors will have the "Emmy" Award Nominations on the program on Feb 16, with the awards themselves set for March 16, both on Saturdays, 9-10:30pm EST. This year's Emmy Awards will be in 29 categories, a big drop from last year's 41.

PEOPLE GOING PLACES: Robert D. Levitt, elected president of California National Productions, Inc., NBC subsidiary. He has been v.p. and general mgr.....Adolph L. Seton upped to the new ABC post of manager, on-the-air promotion, part of the advertising and promotion dept.....Harold D. Cohen joins Ashley-Steiner, Inc., as agent and negotiator of talent contracts.....James E. Anderson named director of Midwest operations, Commercial Division, Hal Roach Studios, stationed in Chicago.