

Carr reviews

New series axed

NBC and CBS have already cancelled seven series in a mid-season attempt to strengthen their respective prime-time schedules...

NBC has axed "Sarge," "The Funny Side," "The Good Life," "The Partners," and "The D.A." Producer Jack Webb will supply one of the new series, "Emergency," an "action drama" based on the adventures of the Los Angeles Fire Department's medical rescue team.

The other new NBC series, "Sanford and Son," is essentially a black "All in the Family," with Redd Foxx as a black junkman and Demond Wilson as his presumably militant son.

NBC has apparently conceded defeat in its attempt to wreck ABC's strong Tuesday night schedule, and will move its one strong Tuesday show, "Ironside," back to Thursday as a lead-in for Dean Cain, while "James Garner as Nichols" will be switched to 10 p.m. Tuesdays, beginning this week.

The earlier part of NBC's Tuesday programming will be filled by various specials on all kinds of subjects.

CBS, meanwhile, has discontinued production of "The Bearcats" and "The Chicago Teddy Bears."

"The Bearcats," which had occupied the 8-9 p.m. Thursday slot, will be replaced by "Me and the Chimp," (shades of "The Hathaways") a new series with Ted Bessel, and "My Three Sons," which moves from its late-night Monday slot.

"O'Hara, United States Treasury," will move its starting time back a half-hour to 8 p.m. Friday, replacing "The Chicago Teddy Bears." "The New CBS Friday Night Movies," also moves back a half-hour, and will start at 9 p.m., while the new "Don Rickles Show" takes over the 10:30 time period.

Because of Sandy Duncan's illness, "Funny Face" has been discontinued for the year (although it will return next season). Another CBS Saturday series, "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," has been moved into Duncan's slot, and "Arnie" is being switched from Monday to occupy Moore's old time period.

Filling the Monday night gap left by the switches of "Arnie" and "My Three Sons" will be "The Sonny & Cher Comedy Hour," which drew respectable ratings as a summer replacement earlier in the year.

The NBC shake-up will take effect in January (except for the Nichols-Ironside switch), while CBS says that the premiere dates of their new shows "will be announced shortly."

Thanksgiving rolls around this week, and on television that means parades and football. ABC is the only network not planning to cover the parades, but they do have the Nebraska-Oklahoma "game of the decade" slated to begin at 2:45, and at 8 p.m. the Georgia-Georgia Tech game will be broadcast.

The other two networks, however, will be competing against ABC with professional football. NBC will begin its broadcast of the Kansas City Chiefs-Detroit Lions at noon, and CBS follows at 3:30 with the Los Angeles Rams-Dallas Cowboys contest.

Among the good movies on local television this week are Orson Welles' "The Magnificent Ambersons" which will be shown this afternoon at 5:30 on Channel 28, and another Sherlock Holmes feature, "Pursuit to Algiers," on Channel 5's Tuesday late show.

Leaven Cabal

'Billy Jack' insincere

Billy Jack, the narrator of "Billy Jack" informs the audience early in that film, is a "half-breed Indian and a war hero who hated war... No one ever knew where he lived"; in fact, no one knows much of anything about Billy, except that he champions the poor and the downtrodden, frequents a "holy man" who is preparing him for a "sacred initiation ceremony," and always seems to show up in clean linen. Billy is the Batman of the flower set.

Written by Frank and Teresa Christina and directed by T. C. Frank, "Billy Jack" is about the irrational hatred an Indian "freedom school" arouses in a near-by small town. Billy, the unemotional loner who sits tall in the saddle, is the school's protector. You've seen him before. When townsmen start abusing Indian girls in an ice cream parlor, Billy suddenly appears and turns their taunts into embarrassed gulps and foot-shuffling. Later, when he takes the almost requisite beating, he strews the town square with his attackers until one of them knocks him out from behind.

It would be exaggerating to say that "Billy Jack" tells a story, but loosely it chronicles Billy's growing impatience with the townsmen's brutality. When the school's head-mistress is raped and Billy's

Indian friend murdered for romancing a white girl, Billy is finally goaded into eliminating the villains. He vows never to be taken alive, but eventually surrenders on condition that the school's continuance be guaranteed; and the head-mistress tells him "a big eastern lawyer" wants to defend him free.

Clearly the Christians are aiming at a pre-teen audience, and there's nothing wrong with this. The problem is not that "Billy Jack" is simplistic, but that it's shallow and insincere. Sincerity, in a work of art, is a function of the intensity and coherence of the artistic whole, and these words have no meaning here.

It is no longer edifying to watch hippies flash peach signs to Middle America in "Medicine Ball Caravan," it's downright painful in "Billy Jack." So too are the obligatory scenes in which folksing children pacifically defeat the police, or win over doubting adults merely by radiating goodness. And though the freedom schoolers stage some enjoyable guerrilla theater skits, it's all really beside the point.

The same is true of the Indian "rituals" that figure prominently in the film. Billy becomes a "brother to the snake" by letting a rattle snake bite him

Broadway's Harold Prince examines changing theatre

(The following is an exclusive interview with Harold Prince, generally regarded as the leading producer-director in American theatre today, reprinted by permission from The Cavalier Daily, campus newspaper of the University of Virginia.)

Since Mr. Prince began his Broadway career in 1954 at the age of 25 with "Pajama Game," his shows have included "Damn Yankees," "West Side Story," "Fiorello!," "A Funny Thing Happened On the Way to the Forum," "Fiddler on the Roof" (which is the longest running musical in Broadway history), "Cabaret," "Zorba," "Company," and "Follies."

Five times his productions have won the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for best musical of the year, seven times they have won the Antoinette Perry ("Tony") Award for best musical, and twice Mr. Prince has won the "Tony" as best director of a musical.

The interview was conducted Oct. 29 in Mr. Prince's New York City office by Cavalier Daily features editor and senior drama critic Steve Wells.)

First of all, Mr. Prince, there are a lot of people who don't know what a producer is. Could you briefly describe in your own words what you do?

Well, a producer, which is only half of the job that I do, is concerned with finding a property to present, raising the money for it, assigning the director - often if it's just an idea he has in mind he has to assign the writers - sometimes all the other creative people, i.e. the set designer, lighting designer and so on. It really depends on how much of the creative burden the director can or wants to take on himself. So it is both a businessman's job

and a creative man's job. But, as I point out, I think of myself primarily as a director.

I detect in your work a recurrent underlying theme of moral and social degradation, to a large extent in "Cabaret" and "Follies," and to a lesser extent in "Fiddler on the Roof" and "Company." Do you see this in your work?

We live in a period of moral bankruptcy from which we are emerging; that was inevitable. The very first play I directed from scratch was "She Loves Me," which was all hopeful and optimistic and filled with love. It did not succeed at the box office, though in my estimation it succeeded very well indeed on the stage, because we were entering the period which became just endless self-flagellation, a period of sort of almost shocked discovery that we were no longer going to be naive, that a pretty girl is no longer like a melody, which is what "Follies" is about, and that the country has lost its innocence. From that period now seems to be emerging a period in which "She Loves Me" would be appreciated, a period where we're searching for an ethic for moral values. I would think that since I feel that, my work will reflect it.

What are your present feelings about Broadway? If it's not dying, which I think you agree it's not, it's certainly changing.

Everything's changing, all the arts are changing. Television's forced it, films have forced it. We must provide something which is more uniquely living theatre than what we used to. They're paying fifteen bucks a head for musicals and ten bucks for straight plays and eight bucks for off-Broadway and so on. Sure, they have to get something that they can't get for free on television. But more than that, our audience, after all, is better read, more educated, more philosophically and psychologically oriented, more intellectual.

"Hair" and "Jesus Christ Superstar" are two shows which attract a youth audience, whereas most of Broadway is patronized by the middle-aged, affluent society. Now, both of these shows are based sort of on fads. Do you feel that it's necessary to capitalize on fads in order to attract a young audience to theatre?

No, because "Company" attracts a young audience and so does "Follies." "Hair" is truly innovative and has influenced everyone's work right now, I think. The same does not hold for "Jesus Christ Superstar."

What do you feel is the main thing keeping youth away from the theatre today?

A slow process of winnowing away which probably occurred when they were born. I mean, they've never been exposed to theatre, the way I was from the age of six on. So they have to come to something that their parents didn't want them on. I think that that, plus the cost, plus the formality of what theatre going was, which is certainly no longer going to be true.

In other words, I think it's becoming an informal experience. I go to theatre in blue jeans and a sweater. There are those people who lament the absence of ritual, glamour surrounding theatregoing. They may be right, but it's too late. If the theatre depended on that, or returned to that, I'm afraid it really would be in trouble.

Well, how do you feel then is the best way to attract youth?

Put things on the stage that interest young people. It's that simple. There's nothing else you can do. Things, little things, qualitative little things: make tickets available at half-price for people carrying ID cards. I have a section of seats for \$2 at "Follies," sure. But, generally, those tickets reach people who are theatre enthusiasts in the first place. So really what you have to do is simply put things on the stage that grab them. And money isn't really the problem, the reason that people choose to make it for not coming to the theatre.

Those of us in college with an interest in theatre are trying like hell to develop and nurture audience enthusiasm. Do you have any suggestions to guide us from your professional viewpoint?

No, I'm not terrifically disposed to organized education theatrically. My predilection is towards experience; in other words, doing shows, reading plays - you don't need anybody to guide you in the reading of a play. The more plays you read, the more you learn by osmosis - it's all an intuitive process. There are things to learn in the craft, and God knows I respect them as much as anyone, but mostly they are learned again by experience. The academic, the book learning process with respect to theatre is something I measure with a degree of cynicism; and as for the atmosphere of sort of self-congratulatory producing that goes on in little theatre, I think it stifles the learning process.

I really think what you have to do is do a lot and expose yourself to as many professionals as possible. Many of the colleges are now allowing as how there's

more to be learned from people who do it professionally than perhaps from academicians. That is not in any way criticizing the learning of classical theatre history, the exposure to theatrical material which gives you a foundation, a frame of reference in contemporary terms. But it does criticize the whole experience of putting on a play in a highly enclosed, protected, uncritical atmosphere.

There are several thousands of people getting drama degrees every year. Now in other professions you have businesses coming to the schools offering interviews to prospective professionals. Yet the theatre doesn't do this. Now, in college you learn the theory of acting, the theory of directing. Yet as you indicated, there is that gap between theory and experience. How do you bridge this gap?

You come to the professional theatre and work. Professional theatre doesn't mean Broadway. Mind you, I've left Broadway out of this except for now, and I'm only mentioning Broadway to clarify in case anybody suddenly decides that's what I'm saying, that the theatre exists on Broadway. I do not say that at all. But I do think that the professional theatre is what you then have to come to. I'm always looking for talented people. And in the seventeen years since I've been producing very few really potentially gifted, exciting people have passed through; I get a lot of letters, and then I meet people, and perhaps less than the number of fingers on one hand have been really valuable. And in every instance when they have been we've kept them on and they've worked here and gone on to produce or direct or whatever it is they want to do. Most people just want to be successful.

How do you feel about critics?

The same anybody in his right mind feels about them: they're necessary. Without critics we would have no audiences. Somebody has to say something to make people go to theatre. It's lamentable but accurate, more so in our country than in some others. As a matter of fact, it's very interesting that in some countries when a critic likes a play, no one goes; when he doesn't, they all go. I'm thinking particularly of Rumania, where I was this summer, in Bucharest, that's exactly how they treat their critics. But not in our country. On the other hand, we tend to praise them and give them awards at the end of their careers for their faithful service to the theatre. It's all garbage.

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Crossword Puzzle

- ACROSS: 1 Native metal, 4 Bone, 6 Iron, 7 Hurried, 11 Sharp reply, 13 Stew, 15 Man's nickname, 16 Term of endearment, 18 Parent (colloq.), 19 Printer's measure, 21 Diving bird, 22 Totals, 24 Ox of Celebes, 26 Agreement, 28 Seline, 29 Make amends, 31 Want, 33 Note of scale, 34 Walk, 36 Levantine vessel, 38 Note of scale, 40 Sluggish, 42 Harvests, 45 Man's name, 47 Antlered animal, 49 Barracuda, 50 Offspring (pl.), 52 Woody plant, 54 Babylonian deity, 55 Printer's measure, 56 Gift, 59 Note of scale, 61 Mend, 63 Moves sideways, 65 Kind of hat, 66 Man's nickname, 67 Poem. DOWN: 1 Anglo-Saxon money, 2 Soften in temper.

Answer to Saturday's Puzzle



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Advertisement for Kenwood Garrard ADC AM/FM Stereo System. Features a picture of the stereo system and a price tag of \$229. Includes details about the system components and a free bonus of 12" stereo records.

Cartoon strip by Doonesbury. Characters are talking about chocolate and a tree. One character says 'I'll run it down to about the three yard line, and then let you take it in for the touchdown, O.K.?' Another says 'I like the way "The Tree" thinks.'