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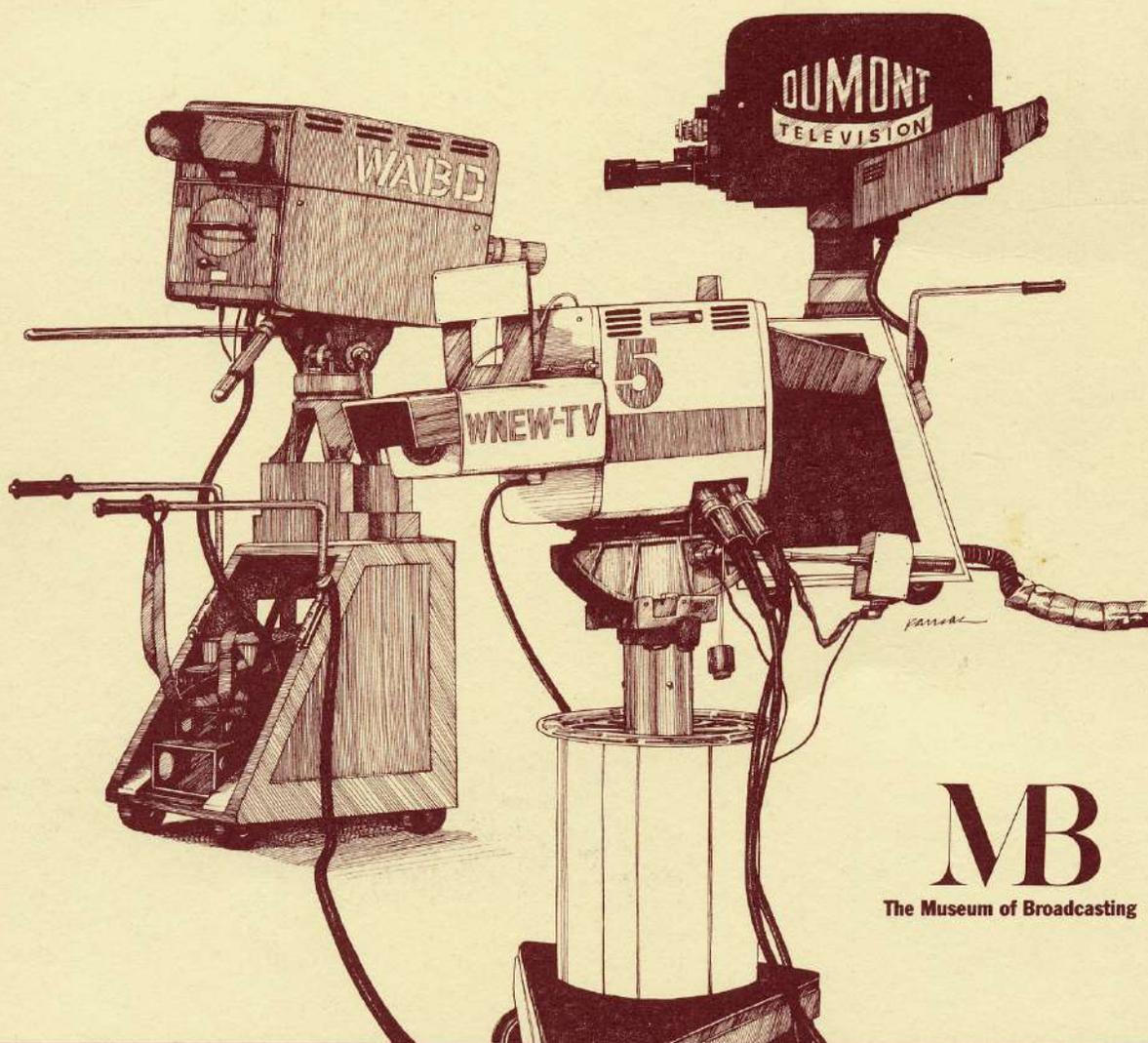
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1939-W2XVT = (ANT-PASSIC)

# METROMEDIA AND THE DU MONT LEGACY

JUNE 8 - SEPTEMBER 20



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**METROMEDIA  
AND THE  
DU MONT LEGACY:  
W2XWV • WABD  
WNEW-TV**

## AN INTRODUCTION

The Museum of Broadcasting's exhibition METROMEDIA AND THE DU MONT LEGACY looks at the crossroads where the past and future of alternatives in network broadcasting meet. During the early years of commercial television, the Du Mont Network used its limited resources to pioneer many programming ideas and formats that are now staples of contemporary broadcasting. Since the demise of the Du Mont Network in 1955, Metromedia, the inheritor of Du Mont's flagship station in New York, has preserved the original style. Both eras, as seen in New York City on WABD and WNEW-TV, represent the important tradition of independent broadcasting.

The contributions of the innovative engineer, Allen M. Du Mont, have been largely ignored in standard histories of American television. Du Mont was one of the rare industry leaders who excelled in creating both technology and programming for the new medium. Until now, Du Mont's television programs represent a lost continent in broadcasting, not having been seen publicly since they were originally broadcast. Perhaps the only reminders of the era are the Du Mont television sets stored in basements throughout the country.

The Du Mont Network emerged from the ownership of two commercial stations, WABD in New York and WTTG in Washington, D.C. Du Mont's television business did not evolve from an

established radio network, and therefore could not rely on a staple of recognized talent and familiar programming formulas. What Du Mont lacked in tradition and a secure financial base, however, it compensated for in free-wheeling, albeit underbudgeted, imagination.

It is remarkable how many programming concepts were pioneered by the Du Mont network. The network introduced a schedule of daytime programming, targeted specifically for women and children. THE SMALL FRY CLUB is regarded as the first successful children's show and Du Mont is credited with presenting the first network soap opera, FARAWAY HILL. Du Mont also inaugurated the first "space opera," CAPTAIN VIDEO, and developed original merchandising tie-ins for the popular serial. There has never been a more dramatic instance of counterprogramming than the astonishing success of Bishop Fulton J. Sheen against the secular comedy of Milton Berle's TEXACO STAR THEATRE on Tuesday nights. Du Mont experimented with a variety of sports programming and presented the first network coverage of professional football and basketball. Complete coverage of the Senate's Army-McCarthy hearings was Du Mont's abiding contribution to public service broadcasting.

CAVALCADE OF STARS was Du Mont's most popular entertainment series. The variety show served as a launching pad for such personalities as Jack



By  
*Ronald Simon*  
 Curator  
 Television

Carter, Jerry Lester, Larry Storch and writer Allan Sherman. CAVALCADE will primarily be remembered for providing Jackie Gleason the opportunity to develop his characters (among them The Bachelor, Reginald Van Gleason III, The Poor Soul and Joe the Bartender) and to create one of television's most enduring shows, THE HONEYMOONERS, first seen as a skit on July 22, 1950.

Lacking sufficient outlets in major markets to distribute programs, the Du Mont network disbanded in 1955 and its stations were sold to the Metropolitan Broadcasting Company. Metropolitan evolved into Metromedia and has become a leading owner of independent stations. Metromedia recognized that its owned and operated stations had to forge strong identities in their local communities before a national program service could be developed.

Metromedia's New York station WNEW-TV (changed from WABD in 1958) has reflected the cultural diversity of the great metropolis. The station has encouraged the presentation of community issues and has developed various campaigns to give citizens access to airtime. In addition, WNEW-TV produced the first news series devoted exclusively to minority interests, BLACK NEWS.

Metromedia also formed its own production company to create original programming for its stations. The company has produced a series of documentaries

in association with David Wolper and Jacques Cousteau. Metromedia has also worked in partnership with the British Broadcasting Corporation and produced several cultural specials with such institutions as the Royal Ballet and the Royal Covent Garden Opera Company.

The traditions of Du Mont and Metromedia through WNEW-TV reflect one of American television's greatest virtues, its programming diversity. Both Du Mont and its successor had to contend with established networks and found that the way to succeed was to experiment and create something different. The constraints of budget did not deter the Du Mont Network from developing innovative programming and schedules that have since been taken for granted, including the creation of a daytime schedule and the profitability of sports coverage. Experimentation and flexibility, hallmarks of the Du Mont heritage, have been sustained by Metromedia and WNEW-TV. By discovering programming gaps in the network landscape, Metromedia and WNEW-TV have developed alternative approaches.

Metromedia and WNEW-TV have developed an approach to broadcasting and programming that is in the tradition of its progenitor, Allen B. Du Mont. The Du Mont Network, long considered a casualty of broadcasting's past, may now be seen in the Museum's exhibition as, perhaps, a rare glimpse into television's future.



# METROMEDIA AND THE DU MONT LEGACY: THE NEW YORK STORY W2XWV • WABD • WNEW-TV

By  
Craig and Helen Fisher

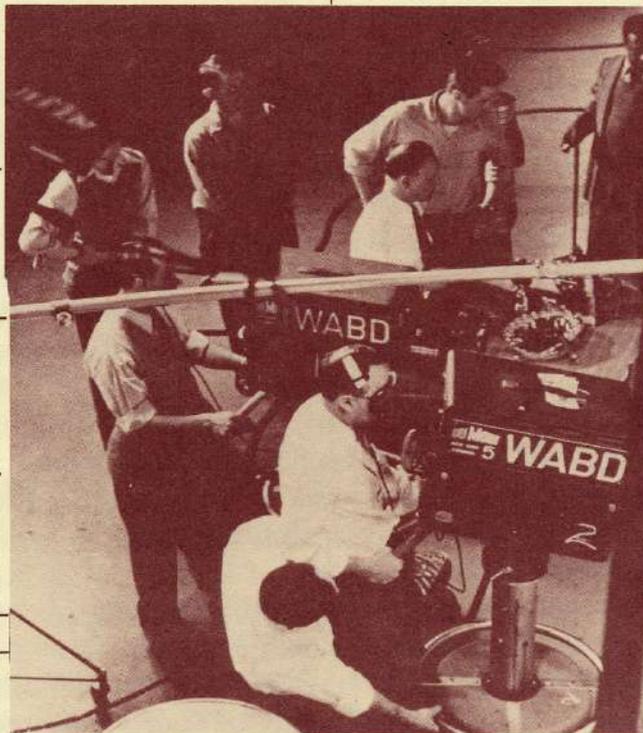
In the early nineteen-forties, a television station went on the air in New York, which was not affiliated with either NBC or CBS, the two major radio networks which were then also starting television networks. The primary reasons for the station's existence was to test the broadcast equipment and to sell the television sets manufactured by the founder of the station. This station became the most important programming source for a network, a network that did not survive. Yet this third network left the station a rich legacy. This is the story of the Du Mont Network, its successor, Metromedia, and their premier station, WNEW-TV, whose 40th Anniversary this year offers an appropriate opportunity to examine its past and present.

*...the inauguration in 1930 of scheduled sight and sound programs over W2XCD in Passaic, the very first American genuine television entertainment of record.*

*Time, Tubes & Television  
Allen B. Du Mont Laboratories*

In 1930, Dr. Allen B. Du Mont conducted experiments while working for the De Forest Radio Company as supervisor of television developments. These experiments resulted in

the first broadcast of synchronized picture and sound. Later he started an experimental laboratory in a basement garage in Upper Montclair, New Jersey,



where, with the help of three assistants, he began the developmental work that would eventually result in a cathode ray tube that was relatively inexpensive and would last for more than a thousand hours. His cathode ray tube made television possible. The beginning of the Du Mont Network, and WNEW-TV, can be traced to this time.

In 1935 The Allen B. Du Mont Laboratories were incorporated in Delaware. Du Mont continued the experimental work with cathode ray tubes and oscillographs producing them commercially, though not yet in the form of television sets. The manufacturing and marketing of sets started when the new equipment was displayed at the 1939 New York World's Fair.

Du Mont's was the first all-electronic television receiver available for sale to the public, a line of massively ornate wooden cabinets in a vaguely art deco style. Two screen sizes were available, mostly 8x10 inches, and a few sets with 20-inch diameter tubes. In 1937 Du

Wednesday-night agency specials, CAFE TELEVISION, were mixed:

*There is a decided lack of direction, and Jill Stephens couldn't seem to keep her performers in line. Jerry Lester ran roughshod over the set, garbling his and Miss Stephens' lines. Carol Dexter neatly socked across "Thou Swell" but it was a crime the way the poor lighting and camera work botched her good looks.*

*Variety*

*In the studio audience were ad agency execs gandering the first show before tackling the production problems themselves in succeeding weeks. NBC and CBS spent copious sums of money on program production before the war curtailed tele activity. At this moment Du Mont's new Wednesday spot is the first attempt to bring live talent back into the medium. Unlike NBC and CBS, which are devoting the major part of their energies to radio, Du Mont, able to concentrate wholly on television, is attempting to build acceptance for its facilities and programs by turning them over to agencies and advertisers.*

*Billboard*

In January of 1944, only Du Mont's W2XWV and WNBT (NBC) were active in New York. That month WNBT broadcast only two days a week, while W2XWV broadcast three. It is interesting to note that Du Mont produced fifteen quarter-hours of studio programming, while NBC produced none, although NBC did offer nine quarter-hours of remote programs, mainly sports. Both stations showed six quarter-hours of film that month.

On May 2, 1944, WABD received its commercial license; in December it was assigned Channel 5. That year the American Society of Television recognized W2XWV as "the station contributing most to the art of commercial television."

### DU MONT NETWORK

As WABD was being established in New York, Du Mont's sister station in Washington was also developing. Du Mont had filed for an experimental television construction permit in



March 1939. The war intervened, as did site and construction problems. Finally, in November 1946, the facilities of W3XWT were authorized to be used for commercial operations as WTTG. (ABD were Allen B. Du Mont's initials, TTG those of his closest associate, Thomas T. Goldsmith.) A study of these two sister stations reports, "The nucleus for the world's first wholly-owned television network had been formed."

1946 saw the first soap opera on network television, FARAWAY HILL, produced at WABD's Wanamaker studios. The network wasn't very big (just New York and Washington) and the series did not last very long (12 weeks), but it featured two women pursuing the same man, and the now standard, "Tune in next time to find out if..."—all at a cost of \$300 a week.

In 1947, Du Mont announced to its stockholders its intention to build the Du Mont Television Network. Du Mont had FCC applications pending for Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Cincinnati. Pittsburgh was granted; the other two never were. In 1939, Paramount had bought into the struggling Du Mont Laboratory. And although the companies were run quite independently, the FCC determined that, because Paramount had a financial interest in Du Mont, and Paramount already had licenses for television stations in Chicago and Los Angeles, granting Du Mont additional stations would violate the FCC rule that no more than five VHF stations could be licensed by one entity. Du Mont was never to have more than three owned-and-operated VHF stations in their network. This would prove to be a continuing problem in the future.

A typical day of WABD's programs might include THE CLOCK-WEATHER-NEWS at 7 am, the forerunner of TODAY; at 7:15 THE DU MONT HEALTH CLUB, followed by YOUR SCHOOL REPORTER and DU MONT KINDERGARTEN. Next was MORNING CHAPEL followed by TEleshopping WITH MARTHA MANNING, which combined buying tips with household hints and consumer information. The variety programs started early; 10 am was FRIENDSHIP CIR-

CLE followed by the STAN SHAW SHOW, which offered interviews and live musical numbers.

Television's first spot-interview show using the "Man-On-The-Street" technique was on at 12:15 pm. The announcer would take a long-cabled mike out on Madison Avenue; the camera, too heavy and bulky to move down to the street each day, would be pointed out the second-floor window. Virtually anyone who wandered past on Madison Avenue was stopped, told to look up at the camera, and asked his opinion about a current event.

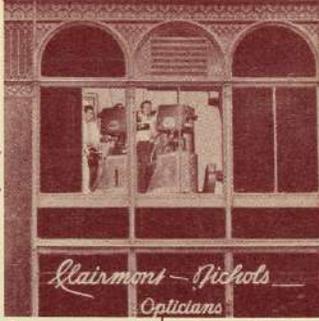
The afternoon saw more variety and interview programs, followed by NEWSWEEK VIEWS THE NEWS in which various editors chatted with personalities in the news; CAMERA HEADLINES, a 15-minute newsreel covering domestic stories; and HEARST'S INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE, for world news.

Following the news were the prime-time programs. WABD's forte during the late forties was to find new, creative talent and develop inexpensive evening programs which could compete with the big-spending networks. For a few years, Du Mont was incredibly successful. Ted Bergman, then a time salesman and later Managing Director for Du Mont, recalls:

*In 1948 I sold the first full hour network show to P. Lorillard. It was THE TED MACK AMATEUR HOUR and it was on Sunday night. I believe it was seven to eight and we cleared maybe fifteen stations for it.*

(As popular as the amateurs were, the dancing Old Gold cigarette pack and matchbook were often more looked for, particularly by the male viewing audience.) As so often happened with successful Du Mont programs and performers, one of the other networks, in this case NBC, lured them away with more money the next year. But as the AMATEUR HOUR left, three new hits were developed by Du Mont.

For a half-hour, twice a week, CAPTAIN VIDEO AND HIS VIDEO RANGERS stormed the homes of America. Richard Coogan and then Al Hodge as Captain Video and young Don Hastings teamed to thwart the evil plans of Dr. Pauli, played by Hal Conklin.



The arsenals of both good and bad guys were impressive—the Cosmic Ray Vibrator, Radio Scillograph, Trisonic Compensator, the Barrier of Silence and the Cloak of Invisibility. CAPTAIN VIDEO was underbudgeted, as were all Du Mont shows: the controls of the Spaceship Galaxy were painted on, the Opticon Scilometer was a length of pipe with some spare parts stuck to it. During most of the earlier shows the Captain, using his Remote Carrier Beam, would look in on his Rangers back on earth. They looked suspiciously like cowboys, as Du Mont had bought old Western films from which sequences were lifted to pad out the half-hours. The kids didn't care; in what was probably television's first venture into mass merchandising, thousands of decoder rings and space helmets were sold, or given away as premiums by Powerhouse Candy Bars.

For adults, there were the variety shows CAVALCADE OF BANDS and CAVALCADE OF STARS. BANDS was put opposite Milton Berle on NBC, and pulled a surprisingly good rating. Every major dance band in the country appeared, with vocalists like Peggy Lee and Kitty Kallen, along with comedians, including Jackie Gleason, who was to star in the other CAVALCADE.

*The Complete Directory of Prime Time Network TV Shows* reports:

*Du Mont's answer to NBC's Texaco Star Theatre and CBS's Ed Sullivan Show was the Cavalcade of Stars. The first host was Jack Carter, who maintained a lightning pace throughout the 60 minutes. Just as he began to build a following, NBC stole him away in February 1950, to front the first hour of its "Saturday Night Revue," on the same night as "Cavalcade." His replacement was roundfaced comic Jerry Lester, who was no less manic but who remained on the show for only four months. Lester's replacement, and one of the major talents on Du Mont during the next two years, was Jackie Gleason.*

CAVALCADE OF STARS opened with a monologue by the host, followed by the main act—Burt Wheeler, Vivian Blaine, The Keene Sisters, Jane Pickens—who were then joined by Carter or Gleason for a combined skit. The



show was rounded out with old-fashioned vaudeville routines, the music of the Sammy Spear Orchestra and dancers with choreography by June Taylor. On one show, Eddie Fisher received an Award from *Billboard* magazine as the "Most Promising Young Singer." Occasionally serious drama was shown, such as John Garfield and Kim Stanley in an excerpt from "Golden Boy." But the series was of primary importance as the starting point of Gleason's personal cast of characters: the Poor Soul, Reggie van Gleason, Joe the Bartender and The Honeymooners. Gleason was eventually lured away by CBS for more money.

By the mid-fifties, the Du Mont network was facing a deteriorating situation. The FCC decided to spread VHF and UHF stations throughout major markets and smaller cities, rather than accepting Du Mont's proposal to put at least three V's (VHF stations) in every major market. At the same time, the V's were generally awarded to existing radio station owners, including NBC and CBS but not Du Mont, which did not own any radio stations. As a result, Du Mont would never be able to build a network of VHF affiliates in the major markets. Without VHF outlets in these markets Du Mont could not offer sponsors national coverage on competitive outlets; thus they did not generate the advertising revenue to produce network-quality programs. The star talent they developed was quickly lured away. Nor did Du Mont have the other benefits of a radio network: no established "name" radio talent, executives, or national sales force to move over from radio to television, no experience in networking, or really, in show business. And there were other exacerbating factors as well.

Du Mont television sets were the Cadillac of the industry. The sales slogan was "First With The Finest In Television." But GE, RCA and Westinghouse soon established high-volume, low-profit operations with which Du Mont did not successfully compete. Du Mont Labs was the main source of income underwriting the network. The profits were not sufficient to meet the network's needs. Eventually, to have working capital, it was necessary to

sell WDTV Pittsburgh. WDTV had been both the link to the western affiliates and the only money-maker of Du Mont's owned stations. Its loss was catastrophic to the network. Finally, there was Du Mont's relationship with Paramount. Paramount had an ownership position, but did not invest in Du Mont after 1939, nor did it ever fully integrate its Chicago and Los Angeles stations into the Du Mont network, or supply production expertise, star-name talent, or programs.

Because the network continued to lose money, at the annual meeting of shareholders in 1955 the company announced that the Du Mont Network was being discontinued. WABD and WTTG were spun off to a separate company, the Du Mont Broadcasting Corporation. The next year, WNEW Radio was purchased along with an FM station, which became WNEW AM and FM. In 1958, "in recognition of the fact that our expanding operations will take us into the metropolitan centers of this country," the corporate name of Du Mont was changed to Metropolitan Broadcasting; WABD changed its call letters to WNEW-TV, and Dr. Allen B. Du Mont retired as Chairman of the Board.

In January 1959, John Kluge bought out Paramount's holdings in Metropolitan, and the long association of WNEW-TV and WTTG-TV with Paramount was severed. There followed immediately a period of great growth. Kluge, Chairman of the Board and President, added several television and radio stations to the corporation, including the important outlet in Los Angeles, KTTV, as well as other media companies, among them Foster and Kleiser, the country's largest outdoor advertising company. To reflect the now diversified nature of the company, the name was changed in March 1961 from Metropolitan Broadcasting to Metro-media, Inc.



In the sixties, its days as a network station over, WNEW-TV became one of the leading independent television stations in the United States. It still produced and broadcast drama and variety programs, as well as news, public affairs, sports, and children's programs.

## DRAMA

From the 1943 broadcast of DICKENS' CHRISTMAS CAROL, called at the time "the most ambitious [television] studio production ever attempted in America," to 1983's prestigious broadcast of the adaptation of the Royal Shakespeare Company's NICHOLAS NICKLEBY, Du Mont/Metromedia has presented, individually and in concert with others, fine drama.

There were always a number of mystery dramas, including a series in 1944 called, appropriately, MYSTERY DRAMA, as well as THE MONKEY'S PAW and THE ADVENTURES OF ELLERY QUEEN. There was ROCKY KING, DETECTIVE (which, as the actor playing Rocky King became better known, changed to ROSCOE KARNS, INSIDE DETECTIVE), CHARLIE WILD, PRIVATE DETECTIVE and PLAINCLOTHESMAN.

An early two-part drama series, originally titled THE EXPERIENCES OF MEN and THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN, aired for eighteen months. It was broadcast live five days a week, two different shows a day, morning and evening,



with rehearsals scheduled an hour before the show. Actors were paid \$75 for the day; the total weekly budget was \$3,000.

During the sixties, Metromedia broadcast the BBC production of AN AGE OF KINGS, HAMLET AT ELSINORE with Christopher Plummer, and THE WARS OF THE ROSES. From Britain's ATV came A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM. In recent times, WNEW-TV has presented the Mobil Showcase series.

## MUSIC

Music has been an important ingredient in WABD/WNEW-TV's program mix since the early days. In the forties and fifties, many of the talk and women's service programs managed to include a musical number or two. In some years, nearly half the air time

was taken up with variety programs, such as CAFE TELEVISION, which became TELEVISION ROOF with Dennis James; SUNSHINE IN YOUR LIFE, produced and sponsored by Wanamaker's Department Store; and, also from the Wanamaker's studio, the elaborate weekly musical production COUNTRY TIME, with Peggy Anne Ellis.

DOORWAY TO FAME, with Johnny Olsen and then Earl Wilson, was a talent scout musical series that featured aspiring musicians and singers. It is reported that over 20,000 New Yorkers auditioned during the first year on the air. It was followed a year later by the TED MACK AMATEUR HOUR, already well known from radio, which, however, was soon lost to NBC.

A decade later television, and WNEW-TV, had become more sophisticated. The FESTIVAL OF THE PERFORMING ARTS series, produced by David Susskind with Metromedia, included such artists as Pablo Casals, Isaac Stern, Rudolph Serkin, Yehudi Menuhin; actors Paul Scofield, Cyril Ritchard, Jason Robards; baritones George London and Cesare Siepi. Jack Gould in *The New York Times* wrote of WNEW-TV that it was "a fascinating illustration of how it is possible to be part of a commercial business and also gain a formidable reputation as a purveyor of outstanding culture in prime evening time..."

In the seventies Metromedia presented the first live telecast of a European opera by satellite, Johann Strauss' DIE FLEDERMAUS, and the Royal Ballet production of THE SLEEPING BEAUTY, each in cooperation with the BBC.

In 1980, Beverly Sills on WNEW-TV hosted London's Covent Garden production of THE TALES OF HOFFMANN. Her original appearance on WABD was in OPERA CAMEOS twenty-five years earlier. The OPERA CAMEOS series was first aired in 1943.

WABD/WNEW-TV has always had a particular affinity for the Big Bands and jazz musicians. The CAVALCADE OF BANDS series was the culmination of the "pick-up" groups that had been appearing throughout the forties. STAR TIME followed, with Benny Goodman and his Sextet and Frances Langford as regulars.

Over the years a parade of jazz greats appeared on WABD/WNEW-TV, including Ellington, Basie, Kenton, Garner, Herman, Brubeck, James, and the Dorsey Brothers, and, in association with other producers, Ella Fitzgerald and Lena Horne.

During the Korean War, Du Mont produced a military variety program, STARS ON PARADE, starring Don Russell and Bobby Sherwood and featuring Perry Como, June Valli, Sarah Vaughan, Errol Garner, the "Glenn Miller Army/Air Force Band," and GUIDE RIGHT—TO AN AIR FORCE CAREER with Mel Tormé and Charlie Barnett. For a different sound there was Lombardo, Welk and the King Family; for the younger set, Dick Clark and a series of Murray the K specials.

### NEWS & DOCUMENTARY

During the war, viewers were kept informed with the weekly series THE FACES OF WAR with Sam Cuff. Documentaries included a salute to the American Legion. As early as 1947, business news was part of the schedule with BACHE FINANCIAL REPORT. National and international news programs were broadcast daily in the late forties. 1950-51 saw THE HERALD TRIBUNE NEWS in the early evening. Two years later WABD's coverage of Secretary of State Dean Acheson's Korean War Address received wide press acclaim and awards from *Look* magazine and Sylvania. Mike Wallace entered the New York scene in the mid-fifties with MIKE WALLACE AND THE NEWS and a late-night interview series, NIGHT BEAT.

Documentary subjects of this time included Cuba, Russia, the ballet, the Holocaust, Chopin, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, space, Communism, an American turncoat in the Korean War, television, and the worlds of Winston Churchill, Joe Louis and Eleanor Roosevelt.

In 1964 WNEW-TV produced MY CHILDHOOD, an unusual dual biography of two outstanding Americans from totally dissimilar backgrounds: Hubert Humphrey, the Senator from Minnesota, and James Baldwin, the brilliant Black author who wrote so bitterly of the times. It was awarded an Emmy "for selection of a significant subject, unique in

approach and treatment." Also aired was David Susskind's series DECISIONS: THE CONFLICTS OF HARRY S. TRUMAN, the first time a former President participated in a television program telling his own story.

In 1967 WNEW-TV started THE TEN O'CLOCK NEWS. Within a month it was reporting on the largest anti-war rally in the U.S., 100,000 strong; later in the year, on the Six Day War, the first heart transplant and race riots in 127 cities across America. However, most of the stories covered were of local interest and hard-hitting, with Mike Wallace and, later, Gabe Pressman and others. In the late seventies and eighties there was an added dimension—WNEW-TV reporters were in El Salvador and Argentina, Russia, Ireland and the Middle East.

In the year before he was killed, Robert Kennedy visited the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, and with a group of community leaders developed the idea of a television series about that neighborhood. They approached the network and independent stations in New York; WNEW-TV agreed to produce and air the series. Begun in 1968, INSIDE BEDFORD-STUYVESANT was



the first series produced for and about a minority community. Two years later this developed into BLACK NEWS, the first news/public affairs series on television devoted exclusively to black and other minority events and issues. BLACK NEWS has been honored by a Governor's Citation Emmy Award.

### PUBLIC AFFAIRS

In the early WABD war-time period, a Mrs. Birney Girden spoke briefly appealing for 20,000 used garments on a Greek War Relief special. Later that year there were programs about pet care from the ASPCA and the first use of television by a police department in MISSING PERSONS, along with films made by the Office of War Information including WINGS UP with Captain Clark Gable.

Today's scheduling is considerably dif-

ferent. In an effort to reflect the concerns and interests of a diverse metropolitan community, such important issues as alcoholism, drug abuse, neighborhood crime, aging, and women's interests are explored in depth in one-to-three-month-long series of segments integrated into locally produced programs of WNEW-TV. To date nearly five hundred BIG APPLE vignettes of metropolitan life have been produced, pinpointing for a minute a particular aspect of the city's ethnic, recreational, historic or educational resources.

Jerry Lewis' Telethon is the country's best known health services campaign, but this two-decades-old effort was not the first. In 1947 WABD ran a series of appeals each night for weeks on behalf of the Infantile Paralysis Polio Fund. The Muscular Dystrophy campaign started as children's backyard carnivals at Thanksgiving time, organized by concerned parents and friends of MD children. The carnivals in the Washington area were picked up and carried on WTTG's children's programs, then on other stations around the country, culminating in 1956 in a 2½ hour "Roundup" with Jerry Lewis and Dean Martin from Carnegie Hall. That first WNEW-TV broadcast, later to be renamed a Telethon, raised \$600,000. In 1983 the MDA National Telethon raised more than \$30 million.

The political arena has been examined as early as Mayors O'Dwyer and Impelletteri, the Stevenson-Sparkman debates, and the day-after-day, history-making coverage of the Army-McCarthy Hearings from WTTG. WITH MAYOR LINDSAY aired through his time in office. TOWN MEETING often dealt with politics, and the LAST WORD debates, broadcast late in the evening before election day, gave voters the final opportunity to see the candidates in action before they went to the polls.

Local community problems were discussed on COMMUNITY DIALOGUE, and SOLUTIONS. ALTERNATIVES was a monthly series in which young people spoke about drug abuse, teen alcoholism and other pressures affecting their lives. One program about drugs was aired from New York and London via satellite.

At the same time as INSIDE BEDFORD-STUYVESANT, WNEW-TV began to air a series of FOCUS spots designed to break down prejudices and help bridge the gap between the many groups that constitute the New York metropolitan area. The spots were shown more than a dozen times throughout the day, at least three times in the prime evening period.

The FOCUS spots were unique in that, for the first time, members of the community—ranging from corporate executives to heads of community self-help groups, from drop-out teenagers to class presidents—ad-libbed a one-minute message of information and help on the air. In less than two years over 2,000 individuals appeared on FOCUS spots. Other Metromedia stations began to produce FOCUS spots, and stations from all over the country wrote to ask how they should be organized and produced. The question that precedes the TEN O'CLOCK NEWS, "It's 10 pm; do you know where your children are?" is the result of a FOCUS spot suggested by a community leader, Mildred Coleman.

From the experience and impact of INSIDE BEDFORD-STUYVESANT came

a series of five specials, HARLEM CULTURAL FESTIVAL, featuring Mahalia Jackson, Count Basie, Miriam Makeba, George Kirby and the Fifth Dimension, among a number of Black entertainers. In 1971 the station paid tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr. with a special program called BLACK REFLECTIONS, hosted by Diana Sands with Roberta Flack and the Johnson Dancers, and Julian Bond reading from Dr. King's speeches.

Nearly two decades earlier, the voice of another religious leader was heard on Channel Five, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen. Bishop Sheen had approached the networks, but they were concerned he would not draw a large enough audience. WABD offered Sheen a prime-time spot on their station, and LIFE IS WORTH LIVING did very well, even against Milton Berle.

