

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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## "TELEVISION USA" UNDERWAY AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

No. 16

February 1, 1963

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Television USA: Thirteen Seasons, a series of 54 programs originally seen on television between 1948 and 1961, will be reviewed on tv film and kinescope at the Museum of Modern Art beginning this Tuesday, February 5th with The Storm and Kukla, Fran and Ollie's Lemonade. The same program will be repeated on Wednesday, February 6. The entire series runs through May 2.

The Storm, a one-hour chronicle of a lonely girl finding brief happiness, was directed by Yul Brynner for CBS' Studio One in 1949. Starring Marsha Hunt, John Rodney and Dean Haren, The Storm was adapted for television from McNight Malmar's story.

Lemonade, with Kukla, Fran and Ollie, displays Burr Tillstrom's agility with puppetry and humor as his Kukla squeezes a lemon, adds water and sugar and opens a lemonade stand. The second half of the show is a spoof on the advertising industry as Kukla, Fran and Ollie attempt to create a lyric for the promotion of Kukla's lemonade. The half hour show originated over NBC in 1949.

On Thursday, Friday and Saturday, February 7 through 9, the Museum will show a half hour of excerpts from early Dave Garroway shows which emanated from Chicago (1950-51) over NBC and The Paper Box Kid, a half hour thriller first shown as part of the Danger series on CBS in 1952.

In Garroway at Large, the well-known performer introduces and comments on dance and music acts in which the television medium is used particularly imaginatively. Bill Hobin was the director.

In The Paper Box Kid, Martin Ritt plays the young man who steals for the thrill, regardless of the ends. The show was directed by Sidney Lumet and is based on a story by Mark Hellinger.

The television retrospective, under the direction of Jac Venza, with Doris Hibbard as his assistant, is the first time television has joined the other 20th century visual arts at the Museum. The series is planned to provide a second view of some of the outstanding shows in the new medium. Lewis Freedman was responsible for the dramatic selections for the series; Burt Shevelove for the comedy and music programs; Isaac Kleinerman for the news and special events; Perry Wolff for the arts and sciences. Abe Liss selected the commercials to be interspersed with some of the programs in the series.

Preparation for the series began in 1961 when the American Broadcasting Company, the Columbia Broadcasting System and the National Broadcasting Company, Inc. underwrote the costs of initial research to discover whether or not enough material existed on film or kinescope for a major retrospective. The year 1948 was selected for the beginning of the series, as little was available previous to that date because of lack of kinescope facilities.

Programs will be screened at 3:00 and 5:30 in the Museum's Film Auditorium. Admission to the Museum is \$1.00 for non-members; 25 cents for children. There is no extra charge for the auditorium television series.

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Stills and additional information available from Marcia Rubinoff, Publicity Department, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York 19, N. Y. CI 5-8900.

47

TELEVISION U.S.A.: THIRTEEN SEASONS

We intend tonight's show as a foretaste of the exhibition which will occupy our screen for the next three months - one of the longest exhibitions ever to be presented in the Museum's auditorium. Tonight's excerpts and shows have been chosen from the formative period of television - not alone because of the nostalgia they will undoubtedly invoke from this of all audiences, but also because we wanted to pinpoint that period of four or five years in the late Forties and early Fifties when television seemed suddenly to come into its own, discover its identity, and learn how it differed from other related mediums. We begin with excerpts from Garroway at Large in which the master of relaxation demonstrates in his own person the intimacy, informality, and spontaneity of live television at its best. Second comes that venerable and daring echo of the Army-McCarthy Hearings, "Murren on McCarthy." The hearings themselves, the greatest show ever put on television, we could not secure, for the ironic reason that the rights have been sold to motion pictures, but "Murren on McCarthy," as you will see, is every bit as sensational a show. Finally, the great comedians. All the popular arts have reached their peak in the field of comedy, and television is no exception. The artists you will see stem from a tradition as old as comedy itself, but they have used the new medium with ingenuity and respect, and it is surprising, as these films show, how early they learned to dominate its limitations. And now - enjoy.

Richard Griffith  
Curator, Museum of Modern Art  
Film Library  
February 4, 1963

Similar release sent to  
CBS, NBC - ABC

February 4, 1963

More than 300 invited guests attended a preview and reception at the Museum of Modern Art, Monday evening February 4 inaugurating "Television USA: Thirteen Seasons," a series of television programs to be presented at the Museum from February 5 through May 2.

Gardner Cowles welcomed the guests in the Museum's Film Auditorium, and pointed out that television is the first new art to be invited since the Museum was founded in 1929.

Richard Griffith, Curator of the Museum's Film Library, introduced the evening's program, which consisted of excerpts from shows produced in the early fifties. ("Garroway at Large," "Murren on McCarthy" and comedians including Imogene Coca and Sid Caesar, Jackie Gleason and Jack Benny.)

Jac Venza, director of the television project for the Museum, spoke briefly at the end of the program calling for the establishment of a television archive.

A reception in the Garden Restaurant followed.

Guests included:

Mike Wallace  
Leonard Lyons  
Mrs. Albert Lasker  
Adlai Stevenson  
Irene Selznick  
Leland Haywood  
Geoffrey Hellman  
Brian O'Doherty  
Aline Saarinen  
Dwight MacDonald  
Burr Tillstrom  
Robert Kintner  
Robert Saudak  
Marvin Barrett

23  
43

Remarks of Gardner Cowles  
Museum of Modern Art  
February 4, 1963

(give you)

Let me take just a couple of minutes of explanation of this new program.

The Museum of Modern Art was founded in 1929. Television is the first completely new medium to come before the public since the founding of the Museum.

In 1935 the Museum founded its motion picture film library, but by that date the motion picture already had a considerable history.

The powers that be in this Museum have been thinking long and hard for several years about television.

What was the new medium exactly - this complex combine of reportage, entertainment, and marketing? And what should be the Museum's relation to it? Could we and should we attempt to use it to bring the Museum's works of art before a virtually universal public? Should a television archive be established in emulation of the Film Library? And how far had the new medium come-- had television's THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY yet appeared?

Led by Jean Kintner and August Heckscher, and with the active help of Elizabeth Shaw, the Junior Council of the Museum spent much time investigating these problems. The exhibition which opens tonight was suggested by Jennie Nicholson Crosse as a means of permitting both the Museum and its public to assay at first-hand how far television had developed and what it had achieved in its first thirteen seasons. Jac Venza kindly agreed to take the responsibility for selecting the programs, greatly assisted by Miss Doris Hibbard and a committee consisting of Lewis Freedman, Abe Liss, Perry Wolff, Burt Shevelove and Isaac Kleinerman. The show was mounted, using the facilities of the Film Library and under the general

supervision of Dick Griffith. The American Broadcasting Company, the Columbia Broadcasting System, and the National Broadcasting Company made the exhibition possible through financial support. The networks also put their legal departments at our disposal to help in the difficult and complicated task of securing clearances and permissions from the sponsors, agencies, and artists whose permissions were necessary.

The American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, American Federation of Musicians, Writers Guild of America, and Directors Guild of America were helpful in speeding the work of securing permissions, as was Richard H. Koch, who rode herd on this, the thorniest aspect of the exhibition. Rene d'Harnoncourt contributed generously of his enthusiasm.

Indeed, "Television, U.S.A." is a collective enterprise involving virtually every branch of the television industry, as well as most departments of the Museum. So unprecedented a project inevitably involved a load of grief for all concerned, but we think you'll agree it was worth it.

Thus, with the opening tonight of a 13-week series of screenings selected from programs produced between 1948 and 1961, television joins the other visual arts of the Museum. The series will focus on those areas in which the Museum feels the medium has made significant contributions to the art of our time. We hope this series, and others to follow, will help the public to develop standards of understanding, enjoyment and evaluation!

*(the specifics)*  
Here, now, is Dick Griffith, to tell you about this evening's program: