The Virginian-Pilot and The Portsmouth Star

# Entertainment

TV — RADIO — MOVIES — BOOKS — THEATER

Section F

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## Beauties . . .

*Jane Lynch (top) as Moonbeam McSwine and Barbara Cameron as Daisy Mae*

### Musical Comedy Opens

# *Dogpatch Up In Arms*

Like the quick-change artists of old vaudeville members of "The Confederacy" cast have shucked the greys and blues, dipped into the ragbag and emerged dressed to play the most famous of all nowherevilles — Dogpatch, U.S.A.

**Barefoot in an earthy plot of mixed-up nonsense and cool slapstick the cast of gossamer feed-sack-clad girls and belly button bulging males are about as happy as hogs on a hot tin floor when—**

When—

When a hot cable sizzles into Dogpatch from Washington, eats its way through the wax-coated eardrums and goes something like this:

### *Most Unnecessary*

Dogpatch is the most. It's the most nowhere, the most unnecessary town in the U.S.A. It's Bikini with out-houses. In short, Dogpatch must be evacuated to make room for something worthwhile and constructive—like nuclear tests.

Tests, smests, the Dogpatch hoi-polloi allow that nowhere is somewhere to them and subsequent efforts to displace the unwashed populace are about as easy as getting Khrushchev to say yes.

Veteran of more than 1,000 Broadway performances, the musical is scheduled at the Robert E. Lee Amphitheater by the Tidewater Historic Drama Association School of Fine Arts for Sunday nights, Aug. 2 and Aug. 9.

phitheater by the Tidewater Historic Drama Association School of Fine Arts, the first of three Sunday night productions.

**"Lil Abner" will be played by Franklin Summers, lead baritone of "The Confederacy" choir. Barbara Cameron will play Daisy Mae.**

Other American primitives like Appassionata Von Climax, Hairless Joe, Moonbeam McSwine, Senator Phogbound and General Bullmoose help beef up the cast.

Tickets for the performances will be on sale at the Robert E. Lee Amphitheater or reservations may be made by calling Garden 8-4342.



## . . . and the Beasts

*Mike Wright (left) as Hairless Joe and Danny Gunn as Injun Joe*

*By John Crosby*



# Some TV Re-Runs First Rate

"Someone once said to me that history is safe," said Burton Benjamin, producer of "Twentieth Century" who rather violently disagrees with that idea. "Then history can have no validity. I could recall to them the parallel to our times when the mark was devalued and Hitler walked in.

**"To counteract the statement, that history is safe and invalid, I'd like to quote Santayana who said, 'Those who do not remember history will repeat it!'"**

I recalled this statement the other day while watching "Twentieth Century's" repeat of the Nuremberg trials.

"Twentieth Century" is the sort of thing television ought to do more often and the rest of us ought to look at more often. The shows are beautifully edited slices of history. They are—like everything else on television—being rerun in the summertime.

Unlike most reruns, these are worth catching again. In fact, much of "Twentieth Century" could stand constant reruns. Today, for instance, you can see again the first part of "The Face of Crime" and next week see the rest of it.

### *First Raters*

From now until October 18 there will be reruns of "War in China," "Ghandi," "FDR—Third Term to Pearl Harbor," "The Atomic Age" (in two parts), "War in Spain," "The Windsors," "FBI," "Guided Missile," and "Mussolini."

**"Twentieth Century," Mr. Benjamin said the other day, kind of evolved from some half-finished thinking around CBS. The original idea was to do a show based on Mark Sullivan's "Our Times."**

"The book was certainly well written," he said. "But it dealt in trends rather than in actual historical sequences. The only way the show could be plausible, we decided, was to deal in specifics—to search for the microcosm.

Much of "Twentieth Century," dealing as it does in the past, consists of old film clips—after all, you can't shoot any new footage of Adolf Hitler or Stalin—the researchers for the show, Mel Stuart and Jim McDonough, have gotten very expert at tracking down rare footage.

**They have dug up such oddities as films of Goerring looking menacingly insane and even a clip of Charles Chaplin in an exuberant waltz with Winston Churchill.**

"These aren't easy to find," Benjamin said. "For instance, in our show on Stalingrad, the Russians had had 35 cameramen at the Battle of Stalingrad, but we couldn't get a foot of their film. We had to depend on film from two private collectors. One of the shots included a shot of Khrushchev hugging General Khuivok.

### *Stars in Summer Theater*

# Betsy Palmer Looks to Great White Way

**By Margaret McManus**

IVORYTON, Conn. — In this quiet country town one of the best known summer theaters in the country is located in an old wooden building which was once a church.

**It was a humid July night. Thunder rumbled in the dark sky and occasional flashes of lightning streaked over the tops of giant oaks. Along the winding, narrow country roads, automobile headlights stabbed the blackness, and cars filled the gravel parking lot.**

A capacity crowd jammed the theater to see Betsy Palmer and Kurt Kazner co-star in "Once More With Feeling." Ivoryton is the first stop of their summer tour.

A shameless starer and eavesdropper, I wandered outside during intermission and found the crowd to be what now has become normal for summer theater audiences.

Since television, summer theater owners have come to realize their best drawing cards are television stars. Tonight was no exception.

The audience was a composite of habitues of the theater, of people who rarely go to the theater. But they came tonight to see one of their television favorites in person.

### *Polished Actress*

Betsy Palmer did not disappoint her friends. Primarily a television actress who has starred in every dramatic series on all three networks, she gave a polished, believable performance as the diplomatic wife of the impossibly temperamental symphony conductor.

**Although this is her first starring role in the theater, she had remarkable stage presence, her timing and confidence were excellent.**

However, there were those in her audience who couldn't have cared less about these hard come-by qualities of the finished performer.

Sitting in a back row a trio of women murmured through the last scene of the first act:

"She is thin, isn't she?"

"Doesn't she have a big hand? Is she wearing nail polish, or not? Is it colorless?"

"She has a long foot. I'll bet she takes a size eight. At least."

"I wonder how she got that suntan. Actresses always have one of those sun lamps. Takes a nice brown."

**"Did you know she's married to a doctor? An obstetrician. I read that in the paper."**

When the curtain came down on the first act these ladies applauded uproariously. I could only wonder whether they were applauding Betsy's performance, her suntan, or her husband, Dr. Vincent Merendino. Probably all three.

### *Curtain Calls*

Backstage, after the show, and four wildly enthusiastic curtain calls, the star changed from the elegant white chiffon evening gown of the final act to a white sharkskin dress. We drove a few blocks to the Ivoryton Hotel for supper.

This blonde, brown-eyed, thirtyish woman from East Chicago, Indiana, said she is very happy with the way things are going for her this summer.

**By the miracle of television tape she is able to do this summer tour and still appear regularly as a panel member of Garry Moore's "I've Got a Secret."**

"Garry is taking the summer off," Betsy said, "so we taped most of the 'Secret' shows ahead of time. I think I'll miss doing one show, but that's all. It's just wonderful because I wanted very much to do this summer stock, but I want to do television, too."

She said she hopes this play will lead to a Broadway show. And, if she has a chance to do a musical comedy, she will be ready for that. She's been taking singing lessons for some time.

"You have to be ready for your opportunities," she said. "Sometimes the brass ring only goes by once, and if you don't catch it, you never get a second chance."

### *Broadway Show*

In addition to doing "Secret" Betsy may return to the "Today" show, as Dave Garroway's regular Girl Friday. "Today" will be on tape next season. And since the taping hours will be in the late afternoons rather than early morning it is an infinitely more pleasant prospect.

**"And should I get a Broadway show," Betsy said, "the television hours wouldn't conflict with the theater hours at all."**

Betsy Palmer is a girl of foresight, but this is the least of her accomplishments. She has talent, intelligence, taste, and an enormous amount of natural charm.

Betsy Palmer can walk safely down the dark streets without worrying too much about shots from the bushes. In the immortal words of that lady on my left ear:

"After the show, let's wait outside and say hello to her. She won't mind. She's such a lovely girl."

