

Radio and Television

By JOHN CROSBY

Hollywood and New York



"Hollywood Opening Night" is a very descriptive title for that NBC-TV program (9 p.m. EST Mondays), suggesting as it does the grandeur and the glitter and also, I'm afraid, much of the falseness of movieland. The casts in these dramas have included some first-rate names. Dorothy Lamour made her TV debut in "Hollywood Opening Night." Others have included William Bendix, Wendell Corey, Maurice O'Sullivan, Ethel Barrymore, MacDonald Carey and Joan Caulfield. The stories — most of them, anyhow — are bright, fairly well-polished comedies and marked by an air I can only describe as Hollywood urbanity which means that the hero and heroine cuff one another around like playful puppies. The program is unique in a lot of ways. It was the first live dramatic show to come out of Hollywood. It's the only straight dramatic show I know which is performed in front of an audience.

THAT MAY SEEM unimportant but it isn't. The other night, for example, the play, a comedy starring Miss O'Sullivan and Mr. Corey, was overwhelmed by some

of the most vehement acting I ever saw. I couldn't figure out what possessed these actors until I began hearing the laughs. Then I knew. These people were groping for laughs through a tangle of cables and cameras and technicians, aiming at an audience which in NBC's Burbank studios is seated way over their heads. To get laughs under such conditions you have to hit hard and, brother, they did. They belted the dialog around until my ears rocked. Miss O'Sullivan, playing a wife, would issue an ultimatum to her husband (Mr. Corey) to stop being silly; then she'd fold her arms across her breast, tilt her chin and turn her back on him — an executive bit of business for so small a crisis. Mr. Corey's boss in the play was addicted to pounding his desk and screaming. "Well, call somebody! Do something!" And Mr. Corey flailed his arms around like windmills and slammed doors. It was all pretty frantic.

IT'S ONLY FAIR to say that this isn't the actors' fault. If you put an audience in front of an actor, he has to play to it. There's no known way of pretending it isn't there. I suppose we'll never get rid of the audience at the Bob Hope show or even the "I Love Lucy" type of thing but I deplore its getting its foot into the door of straight dramatic shows.

"Hollywood Opening Night" has another feature which, I'm afraid, we'll just have to get used to. The host, TV plays all have to have hosts now — Robert Montgomery, Irene Dunne, or, in this case, Jimmy Fidler — who have the terribly arduous task of telling us we are about to see a play and here it is.

Afterwards they appear again to say wasn't it wonderful and here are the wonderful people — Mr. Corey, Miss O'Sullivan — who performed so wonderfully in it. It's nice work if you can get it, being a host.

Mr. Fidler, incidentally, has revised his personality quite a bit since last I heard him. He used to have a high-pitched, prissy voice which radiated disapproval. For television, the voice has gone way down into the cellar. It's a very masculine and — well — genial voice now. I don't know how Mr. Fidler managed to do this. Surgery, probably.

"HOLLYWOOD OPENING NIGHT" is a pleasant, well-lit, well-upholstered vacuum of a show which should kill a half hour of your time as painlessly as possible.

As dramatic fare, you'd have trouble remembering any of it 10 minutes after it went off the air. Hollywood is still miles behind New York in live dramatic techniques and it's going to stay there until it gets that audience nonsense out of its head.

All of which brings me to another live dramatic show which took place the same night, the "Studio One" production of "I Am Jonathan Scrivener." "Studio One" was, in my book, the first live drama show on television. Then it took a colossal dip in prestige and recently has been trying to fight its way back to respectability.

Last Monday's was the first under its new producer, Fletcher Markle, a wonder boy of radio and later a movie producer. It was terrific.

IT WAS A TRICKY story which sounded like a cross between J. M. Barrie's "Dear Brutus" and "Seven Keys to Baldpate." Badly handled it could have been just another TV show.

But it was magnificently directed by Paul Nickell, a poet with a television camera, and it was a superb lesson in how to tell a story on television — a blend of movement and stillness, faces and hands and bodies, shadow and light. The story was told, not in spite of the technical mastery, but by means of it. I have only space

left to say that the acting by John Forsythe, Felicia Montealegre and Maria Riva left me breathless with admiration. (New York Herald Tribune Synd.)

Weather Over The Nation

By The Associated Press

	High	Low
Akron, cloudy	51	36
Albany, cloudy	63	44
Bismarck, cloudy	38	20
Boston, cloudy	45	31
Buffalo, cloudy	47	30
Chicago, cloudy	52	39
Cincinnati, cloudy	56	46
Cleveland, cloudy	54	41
Columbus, cloudy	58	45
Denver, cloudy	50	32
Detroit, cloudy	50	39
Indianapolis, cloudy	56	44
Los Angeles, cloudy	57	52
Louisville, cloudy	59	51
Miami, clear	75	70
Minneapolis, cloudy	38	20
New Orleans, fog	70	61
Pittsburgh, cloudy	52	45
Tampa, clear	76	51
Toledo, cloudy	52	39
Tucson, clear	67	38
Washington, D. C., fog	44	33

Dartmouth College at Hanover, N. H., will stage its 43rd annual winter carnival this year—the oldest such celebration in North America.

Culprit Returns Stone Footprints

CHARDON, O., Dec. 8.—The stone

footprints, chiseled from historic Princess Rock were back in the hands of their rightful owner today. But the name of the culprit who stole them was not made public.

Genoa County Commissioner Thomas L. White said the thief brought the footprints to his home Sunday night under cover of darkness.

A pact made previously through

County Hospital last week according to Supt. Richard Clair. The births have now been reported at the Murrow County Hospital since it opened on Feb. 12 of this year, earlier set of twins at the hospital Clair said.

Princess Rock were left by an Indian Princess who leaped to her death in a ravine to escape a worse fate at the hands of a pursuing brave. A foot-square slab containing the prints were chiseled from the rock a month ago.

lawyer provided the thief's name would not be disclosed if he agreed to pay damages. White said the thief claimed he did not know the footprints were valued.

According to legend, the footprints were left by an Indian Princess who leaped to her death in a ravine to escape a worse fate at the hands of a pursuing brave. A foot-square slab containing the prints were chiseled from the rock a month ago.

HOSPITAL'S FIRST TWINS
MT. GILEAD—First living set of twins were born at the Morrow



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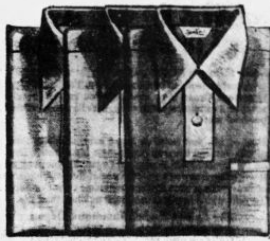
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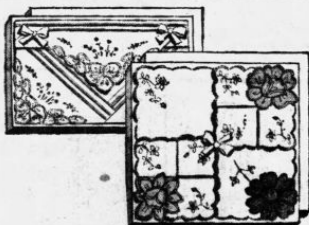
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