

Children's TV Programs Need Simplicity, Taste, Imagination, Says Writer

Parents who have wondered about the quality of the television programs their children will soon be viewing at home or in the neighbor's living rooms should be heartened by the same approach used in constructing the NBC TV program success, "Kukla, Fran and Ollie."

In a recent article for the New York Times, Burr Tillstrom, creator of the Kukla puppet show, explained the ideals honored by television producers who aim at a children-audience.

"Good entertainment is the basis of any show for any age, and the two prime requisites for any program are simplicity and good taste. Once the planner of a program for children realizes that these are the simple rules, he should relax.

"On television it is difficult to design a program for any one age group. By placing a program at a certain time in the late afternoon or early evening you can be almost sure that it is family time." That is about

as far as the program planner can go.

Then Mr. Tillstrom listed the explicit considerations which guide a children's show: sincerity, simplicity, accuracy, imagination, and informality.

"FIRST AMONG the qualities to be sought after is simple sincerity. The wise showman won't try to do any faking before a young audience; neither will he attempt subtleties. The first they are likely to see through, the second they are not likely to understand.

"This is particularly true in television, where characters and situations are much more real and infinitely closer than they ever could be in any other medium. The camera takes you right into the living room, and there is no place to hide; everything you do is seen, and the televi-

on camera is almost unbearably honest.

"Therefore, the fewer complications involved in a children's program, the better. The simplest props and the least complicated plots have the most appeal.

"Secondly, a children's program should be certain of its facts. When anyone on a children's show—live or on-screen—pronounces or omits historical, geographical or arithmetical details, you can be sure the program bears from children and from all ages.

"As long as the program planners make sure that the children never see or hear anything unkind, however, the correspondents are correspondingly gentle. Then the corrections are as lowly as a compliment.

"A third quality to be aimed at

is that of imagination. For while children are intensely practical, they're also highly imaginative. Much of their play is make-believe, and, universally, they love fairy tales, the Oz books and similar fantasies. They find a show that makes that sort of stories real to them a delight.

"INFORMALTY OR intimacy is the fourth point to be stressed for young audiences (although I think it can apply to older audiences as well). Children love to feel that they are a part of the show; and if your audience are part of you, you are pretty certain of their loyalty.

"We never try to avoid genuine emotions that might be met with in daily life; even pathos sometimes comes into our programs, but we make it gentle and we see to it that we invariably close on a happy note."

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NEW KIDDIES' FAVORITE



Howdy Doody, recently elected "President of the Kids of the United States", whispers secrets of state to his top advisor and confidant, Bob Smith. Both are starred in the "Howdy Doody Show" which the NBC network brings to WHAM-TV viewers each weekday evening at 6:30 p.m.

Video Networks Pass Big Shows

Television stations eventually will be interconnected into a nationwide network just as radio broadcasting stations are now.

There are five methods of building a television network: 1. Rebroadcasting, 2. Coaxial cable, 3. Microwave relay, (radio relay with towers), 4. Stratovision (radio relay from airplanes), 5. Television recording on movie film.

REBROADCASTING
This method has been used between New York and Schenectady and New York and Philadelphia. The signal from the originating station is received by a special antenna system preferably on a high hill. The received signal is then relayed to the local television station by a low power microwave transmitter received again and transmitted on a regular television channel.

COAXIAL CABLE
One often reads or hears about coaxial cable as a television network system. At the present time the nation's main coaxial television cable extends from Boston to New York to Philadelphia, Washington and Richmond. It cuts westward from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Indianapolis and St. Louis. This cable serves all the major networks.

MICROWAVE RELAY
The microwave relay is rapidly proving to be an excellent method of television networking. It utilizes a system of radio transmitters and receivers operating at very high frequencies. WHAM-TV will receive its NBC network programs from the cable but indirectly via microwave relay tower erected on a farm 5 miles from Le Roy. Every network program WBENTV in Buffalo gets off the cable will be passed on to WHAM-TV by the relay through Le Roy to the Pinnacle Hill transmitter in Rochester.

THE ELECTRICAL CHARGES which contain all the elements of the original picture go out on the air from the transmitter in single file, like a telegraph message, and ultimately encounter the aerials attached to home receiving sets. A good roof-top antenna is a combination of tuning and amplifying circuits necessary to select the desired program and build it up to suitable strength after its trip through the air. After the incoming signal is amplified it is led to a reproducing tube called the "kinescope" inside the home television receiver. **THIS KINESCOPE** is a funnel-shaped, cathode-ray tube containing an electron generator, or gun, and a screen that is coated with material which will glow and emit light when it is hit by the electrical impulses entering this receiver. (The outside face of this tube is the screen of the receiver on which you see the picture.) When the television program is fed into the receiver via the antennae in the form of electrical impulses, the electrons hitting the luminous material of the tube-screen emit light in the same design as seen by the studio cameras. Thus, the original picture is reproduced in the home as the screen glows in proportion to the strength of the electrical charge in the transmitted signal.

Miracles of Video Have Strange Cause

Television is the most complex communication system ever devised. It consists simply of the transmission of a picture or image from one place to another instantaneously. That sounds simple but the process involves amazing events rivaling the magic of Aladdin's lamp.

VERY BRIEFLY it works like this: The lens of the television camera which starts the sending process by focusing on the image to be reproduced is similar to that of an ordinary Kodak movie camera. But the television camera has no film.

Instead it has a special tube called a "kinescope" or an "Image Orthicon", which receives the light from each scene or object focused through the camera lens.

Inside this kinescope is a small metal plate, coated with half a million microscopic dots, each dot being a photoelectric cell. Whenever light coming through the big TV camera lens strikes one of these tiny cells, it becomes charged with electricity.

THE AMOUNT of light entering the camera lens from the scene being "shot" determines the electrical charge built up in each dot, so that the lights and darks of the object are created in a pattern of electrical images.

Each of these microscopic "electric eyes" creates an electric impulse of its own. The im-

pulses from these dots are picked up by an "electronic scanner" within the kinescope tube and are passed from the camera into an amplifier which magnifies them millions of times in order finally to form the video wave which is flashed from the antennae of the transmitting station.

The program seen by the camera is then on the air in the form of electrical impulses. This process is so rapid that thirty pictures, or frames, can be flashed every second.

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This horsing around involves Kukla (left) and his crony, the snagle-toothed dragon Ollie (right), the puppet-brainchildren of Burr Tillstrom. They will appear for the children (and adult fans) with their singing mistresses of ceremonies, Fran Allison at 7 p.m., each weekday evening on WHAM-TV.

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Learn The Answers

(Continued from Page 6)

Q.—Can a television receiver be used to listen to regular radio programs?

A.—Not unless the receiver has a built-in radio. The reason is the same as that given in the preceding answer. The two services, radio and television, are at different frequencies in the radio spectrum; here are models with television and built-in radio. These provide superb radio reception.

INSTALLING A TELEVISION SET

Q.—Must I have a special antenna for a television set?

A.—Yes! Attention to the antenna will pay dividends.

Q.—Why is the range of a television station less than that of many standard radio stations?

A.—Because of the nature of the electro-magnetic waves used in television broadcasting. They travel in a straight line.

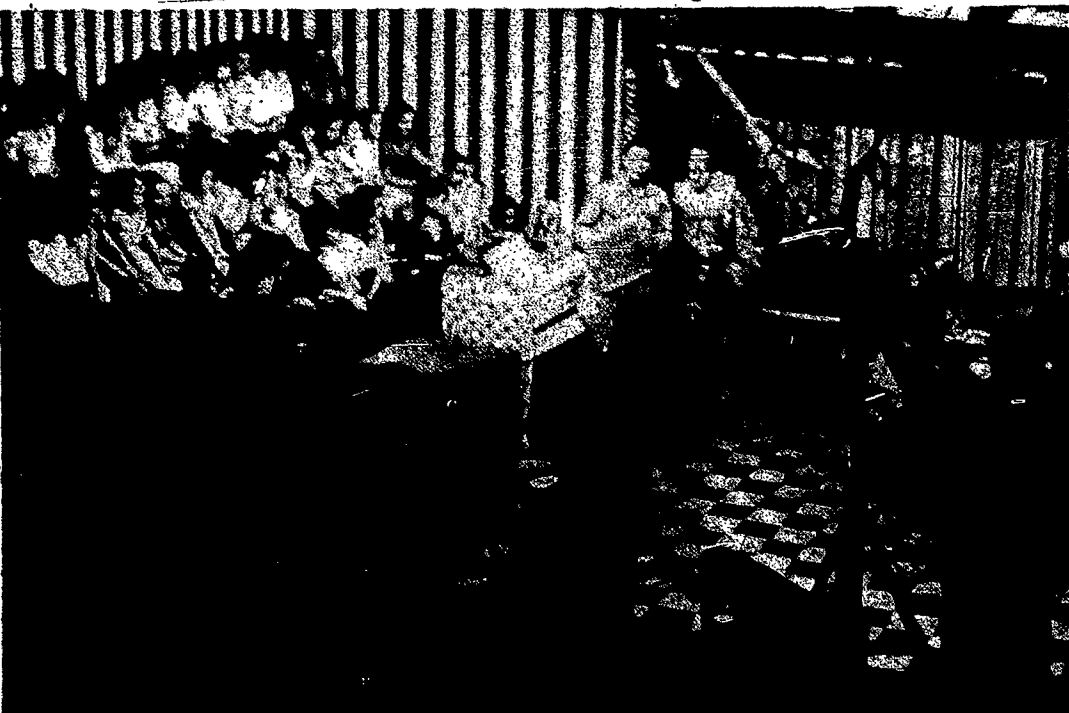
Q.—Is it necessary to darken the room when watching a television program?

A.—Not at all! Sets are designed to operate efficiently with excellent picture definition, under normal lighting conditions in your home — day or night!

Q.—Can the set be moved to some other part of the house once it's installed?

A.—Yes! Just make sure you have the proper connection between the television set and the antenna.

Kids Wait For This Every Afternoon



Overall view of the "Howdy Doody Show", the most popular children's program on television, which WHAM-TV will carry each weekday afternoons at 5:30 p.m. "Peanut Gallery" of invited kids (at left) watch Bob Smith and Charabel the Clown.