



ED McMAHON

Announcer Needs No Selling Job

Any child who spends his precious playtime reading from a magazine into a flashlight—pretending it's a microphone—is certain to one day wind up as the best announcer in the land.

That's just what Ed McMahon did as a child in Lowell, Mass., and that's just what he is today, according to a poll conducted among the nation's television editors by "Motion Picture-Television Daily," making it the second year in a row he's won it.

Due to the increasing popularity of NBC-TV's "Tonight" show and McMahon's polished commercials and opening introduction (ending with the familiar "and me, I'm Ed McMahon"), the 43-year-old ex-Marine pilot is now rated the best in his craft.

"As long as I can remember, I wanted to be an announcer," he said in his NBC office at Rockefeller Center. "I think I inherited it from my father, who was in sales promotion."

On television and radio, McMahon has sold beer, bricks, biscuits, cars, appliances, dog food, insurance and tea, to name a very small number of the products he's moved.

Much of his sales ability was developed at Catholic University, where he had to juggle a half-dozen part-time selling jobs to support himself, his wife and their infant daughter (whom he sometimes took to class) while he was a student in the university's speech and drama department. He graduated in 1949.

Today, Catholic University must be added to the list of products, services and institutions he sells, even though it is during off-hours. Three years ago, the university presented McMahon with an Achievement Award as an active and prominent alumnus in the field of communications. (And in keeping with the ecumenical spirit, so to speak, he was toastmaster at the recent 125th-anniversary banquet held by the Fordham University Alumni Federation.)

One of the part-time jobs McMahon held at Catholic University was selling stainless steel cookware. So proficient was he that he soon had 17 men working for him.

"The president of the company wanted me to leave school and be a junior partner in his firm," McMahon remembers. "I had to resign, I was so successful."

The 6-foot, 4-inch 200-pound McMahon, who is the father of four, said this not to boast but to give evidence of his zest for hard work and long hours.

"I've worked hard all my life; I just wouldn't know what to do with myself if I weren't busy," he said, offering a statement that probably strikes a leisure-conscious culture as out of date.

But McMahon is not merely selling a bill of goods.

In addition to his five-nights-a-week duty on the "Tonight" show—preparation for which takes a good part of the day—McMahon does a quiz-type radio show for a New York station, puts in three hours on NBC's "Monitor" on Saturdays and recently for a week in a Broadway show (replacing comedian Alan King (McMahon's stock). In addition, McMahon has done extensive summer stock. In addition, McMahon makes numerous appearances for program sponsors, making commercial films and speaking to salesmen and distributors about selling the product.

Early in his career, he held down an announcing job at a Lowell radio station from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m., then worked from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. as a surveyor for the War Department—in another town.

As a youngster, McMahon held typical jobs as shoeshine boy and newspaper boy in addition to an untypical job as 16-year-old manager of a "floating bingo game." Since then, he's been a plumber's helper, ditch digger, peanut vendor in a ball park, carpenter's helper, straw boss on a construction crew, truck driver, sound-truck announcer, carnival barker, a fountain-pen demonstrator, and he once hired out his car as a taxi.

He has hawked gadgets on Atlantic City's Steel Pier and sold potato peelers on the street around the corner from where he now does practically the same thing—but wins polls doing it. —(Catholic Press Features).



Hostile Witness

by EUPHEMIA WYATT

Hostile Witness—Certainly the neatly curled short white perukes of the barristers and the crimson robe of the full-wigged judge add both color and dignity to the English court room drama of which "Hostile Witness" is of the highest quality. After a long run in London it has come to Broadway with Ray Milland as Simon Crawford, the eminent barrister who suddenly finds himself about to be arrested by Scotland Yard as the murderer of a retired Judge, one of his oldest friends.

He has been "framed" of course, but framed so skillfully that it requires all Crawford's wide experience and the well-trained brains in his law chambers to have him from a verdict of "Guilty."

It is not till the last quarter of an hour of the play that the audience, who have been guessing pertinaciously "Who-Don't" are let into the secret.

It opens in Crawford's Chambers (law office) where we are introduced to the characters who will next meet in the Central Criminal Court, Old Bailey.

Crawford has just had time to choose a brilliant colleague for his defense and to ask him as a personal favor to take for his assistant the youngest member of Crawford's chambers, who happens to be a girl.

The choice comes as a vast surprise to the young lady in question who had thought Crawford had small respect for her ability. A touch of comedy is introduced with Percy, the office boy and a "Colonel Blimp," Major Maitland, who is Crawford's friend and neighbor.

It's a play which calls for some cerebral exercise and keeps one at strictest attention all evening. An old theatrical friend, Melville Cooper, is the patriarchal looking Judge with alert intelligence.

Angela Thoriston is the female barrister—in a wig—and Michael Allinson, who succeeded Mulhara in My Fair Lady—the counsel for defense whom we hope to see soon again in a longer part.

Ray Milland has gained as much in forcefulness as in weight and brings "Hostile Witness" to a rousing climax. Much the most exciting play of the season.

Philadelphia, Here I Come!—An importation by the David Merrick Production from the original Gate Theatre cast, staged by Hilton Edwards.

The play by Bryan Friel is written with amnesia and understanding which gives importance to what seems a very slight theme—the departure of a boy from Ballybeg to go seek his fortune with an Aunt in Philadelphia. Friel has made use of the device employed by O'Neill in "Days Without End," the alter ego or inner self of Gareth O'Donnell who lays bare with a psychic surgeon's knife Gareth's pitiful frustrations.

His reactions to the taciturnity of his father; the devotion of old Madge who brought him up; his childishly minded school friends; to Kate, the girl he loved and didn't have the courage to marry.

There are cutbacks to this meagre romance and the visit of his very American Aunt who breaks through Gareth's evasive barriers while he tries to create from her chatter some picture of his light hearted mother whom he never knew.

Although determined to get away from Ballybeg, his enthusiasm slackens when the school master brings him the gift of his poems; when one of the boys takes off his own belt as a parting remembrance and Kate, now a rich man's wife stops-by to wish him luck.

He doesn't see old Madge slip her wages into his suit case. Patrick Bedford plays Gareth; and Donal Donnelly gives a brilliant performance as the inner Gareth, a mixture of irony, humor and resentment. The other characters are played with the skill native to Irish actors.

This is the play to which David Merrick was alluding when he sent a message to Stanley Kaufman when the Times requested tickets for the last preview so that Mr. Kaufman, their new drama critic would have twenty-four hours instead of two hours for writing his review.

To insure Mr. Kaufman's absence, the theatre went dark the last preview night. "Fault of a switch," said Merrick who offered tickets holders tickets for other nights at preview prices by which Merrick lost several thousand dollars. But he won the argument.

Jonah—A Biblical fantasy presented by the American Places non-profit theatre in which Jonah has a Yiddish accent and resents leaving his wife and baby when God's Angel bids him to go to Ninevah with a warning of its destruction. Jonah speaks at great length and in total darkness after two angels have rocked a miniature galley in a sea of blue calico waves and Jonah is imprisoned in the whale's belly.

The Ninevah he enters is jazz mad and turns his warning into a dance but they do put on sackcloth and God forgives them which again arouses Jonah's resentment but at this point a fog of obscurity engulfs both the audience and play.

Too bad because it started out bravely with Earl Hyman as the Angel and Sorrell Bookie as Jonah. Music was composed by Meyer Kupferman; the decor and choreography by Remy Charlip.

WAIT A MINIM!—A "minim" seems to be the very smallest note in musical notation. From which you may infer that the company who chose this title must not only be musically very good but also humble-minded. A group of a grateful audience may add that they have brought to New York a type of musical revue which is unique and delightful. It came to life when a South African named Leon Gluckman, who had planned to produce a native play and leading lady broke her leg, realized that he would be paying rent for at least a month for an empty theatre.

In desperation he turned to the sons of Dr. Hugh Tracey, the leading authority on African music. Paul and Andrew Tracey had never appeared professionally but were themselves musicians and had collected a number of folk songs from other countries as well as musical instruments.

There has never been any formal script as the revue took shape during the rehearsals when Mr. Gluckman, whose good taste seems impeccable, must have helped to combine ideas as they matured. All the numbers are short and glide into each as do the sliding screens which are the backgrounds.

Three more young amateurs joined the company—a Frenchman and an Oxford graduate from Rhodesia. The folk songs are in Japanese, French, German, English, Haitian and dialects from India and Africa. They are all sung softly to the accompaniment of known and unknown instruments of which Andrew Tracey plays seventeen; Paul Tracey, fourteen and Nigel Pegram, thirteen.

Only at the end does the company let go with native drums in a South African fighting song which so excites the audience that it had to be repeated three times.

It is very difficult to give any idea of the charm of the scenes, the variety of the music and atmosphere and the humor and sagacity of the singers.

No wonder that South Africa kept them there for two years as did London. But don't take any chance, enjoy this minim as quickly as you can.

Knights Slate Memorial Mass

The Annual Palm Sunday Corporate Communion of Ithaca Council #277, Knights of Columbus will be held at the 8 a.m. Mass in the Immaculate Conception Church. The Mass will be offered for the memory of State Deputy Edward L. Kunzinger.

Grand Knight Stephen Zaborian requests that all members meet at the Council Home at 7:30 a.m. and march to the church led by the Color Guard of the Fourth Degree Assembly.

Following the Mass, a country-style breakfast will be served in the Council Home by the ladies of the Auxiliary.

FROM THE AUTHOR OF "ROOM AT THE TOP" ... JUDITH CRIST, N.Y. Herald Tribune

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FILMS ABOUT TOWN

The Agony and the Ecstasy—Charlton Heston as Michaelangelo effectively captures the anguish of artistic creation as well as the inner conflict between his spiritual feeling for Contessa de Medici and his love of artistic perfection represented in the completion of the Sistine Chapel. Julius the badgering warrior Pope is played by Rex Harrison, who displays a delightful urbanity whether he is discharging his role as the Churches religious head or engaging the enemy in an attempt to recover the Papal States. (Riviera, 1451 Lake Ave., Matinees 2 p.m. Wed., Sat. & Sun. Evenings 8 p.m.)

A Patch of Blue—"What gives this film its special magic, is the slow unfolding of the (blind) girl's personality and intelligence in response to the first warmth she has ever known. For once, it is not the Negro who is deprived, he is the giver—first food, then books, music, the beginnings of a formal education, but most of all sympathy and understanding. Blindness, the film seems to say, can be a blessing if it helps one to cross the color line and respond to the feelings of love."—Arthur Knight (Cinema Theatre—Clinton Ave. S., at Goodman—weekdays 7:20, 9:25, Sat., and Sun., 1:45, 3:40, 5:35, 7:40, 9:50).

Cat Ballou—A wild and offbeat spoof of "adult westerns." This picture gives Jane Fonda and Lee Marvin an opportunity to show their comic prowess. Whether you argue that the film could have been more tightly constructed or not, you will agree that it is delightful satire. **The Collector**—William Wyler has made a fine thriller from John Fowles' best-selling novel about a warped young man who tries to make a girl fall in love with him while he holds her captive. Terence Stamp and Samantha Eggar are excellent as the two principals. —Catholic Film Newsletter (Warring theatre, Warring Rd. Plaza, Cat—8:30, 10:05 Collector—8:05 daily—Children's matinee weekends). —Hogle Jameson

Sound of Music—The Broadway story of the Trapp Family Singers is directed by Robert Wise in lively cinematic style. Julie Andrews brings joy and harmony to the role of the young novice who becomes the wife of Baron von Trapp. Beautifully filmed in color, enhanced by many excellent supporting players, this delightful musical will appeal to the whole family. —Catholic Film Newsletter (Monroe Theatre, 583 Monroe Ave., Matinees 2 p.m. Wed., and Sat., evenings 8 p.m.)



PAUL NEWMAN plays a tough, cynical detective in Warner Brothers' suspense-thriller "Harper" due to open April 6 at Rochester's Paramount Theater. (A-3 rating)

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