

TV's 'Occasional Wife' Is it a Laughing Matter?

Los Angeles—Is "Occasional Wife" to be looked upon as one of television's occasional lapses in good taste or, rather, as one of TV's occasional examples of effective satire?

One of the very few new TV series to draw both good reviews and good ratings during the current television season, the NBC comedy has neverthe-

less drawn mixed reactions as to its propriety on the home screen.

"Occasional Wife" is a comedy series about a fake marriage. Peter Christopher (played by Michael Callan) works for

a baby-food company whose boss discriminates against unmarried employees. "Am sorry, Peter—no marriage, no promotion." Desiring to overcome this problem but yet continue to enjoy bachelorhood, Peter asks a hat-check girl named Greta (Patricia Harty) to pose as his wife whenever he must "produce her" for his boss—a situation that frequently arises and which provides most of the program's comedy.

Recently, two reviewers for Catholic publications took opposite stands on "Occasional Wife." One charging that the series is "harmful to married life, the other maintaining that the series is one of television's first successful attempts at satire.

Mrs. Ann Herman, TV critic for the "Southwest Catholic Register" of the El Paso diocese, wrote that "in a society where the state of matrimony is taken with increasing lightness," the TV series about a phony marriage is "the crowning-blow."

"Even if the writers were able in this false premise to maintain some standards, the whole basis of our society is being taken too lightly," Mrs. Herman commented.

"Aside from this," she went on, "the situations that arise lead to a lowering of certain standards that need to be maintained. When Christopher and Greta are invited to the boss's for a weekend, they are given ONE bedroom. Over Christopher's protests, Greta does insist that he sleep in the bathroom. He insisted they were two mature adults. He got what he deserved when another guest turned the cold water on him."

"The ease with which the stars move back and forth between each other's apartments (Peter has gotten Greta an apartment just two flights above his so that she can come down the fire-escape whenever Peter's boss pays an unexpected visit) shows a relaxation in standards between the sexes. It is not necessarily advisable for two unmarried people to run freely in and out of each other's bedrooms. On the TV screen this suggests more to the young who are watching and will imitate the actions shown.

"The appearance of the stars as husband and wife when the occasion demands, to be followed by an active social life maintained by each partner takes lightly the permanence of marriage. The whole state of

marriage is shown as one to be used when it is convenient and to be discarded for added convenience."

William Donnelly, TV critic for "The Tidings" of Los Angeles, sees "Occasional Wife" as a well-done satire on the efforts of big business to make over employees in the company's image and the employee's willingness to "pander to the boss' tastes." He credits much of the program's success to such techniques as the off-camera voice of the narrator.

"He introduces each show and ties scenes together," Donnelly wrote, "but more importantly, he poses cliffhanger questions or comments dryly while the picture on your screen has frozen the actors in their scene. This greatly helps the satiric idea by treating a fast-talking operator like the super heroes of radio and comic books."

He also calls attention to an interesting switch on the standard TV situation-comedy:

"In the old domestic comedies, the husband and wife are deeply in love with one another but have difficulty working out

the practical intricacies of their lives together. In "Occasional Wife," Peter and Greta are quite capable of engineering the most difficult situations. There is only one insurmountable situation—the one which requires them to love one another.

"Those unique characteristics of marriage which call for joint tax returns, in-laws, one bedroom and the submission of one's independence, are frightening to those who have a marriage in image only." —(Catholic Press Features)

'King and I' Scheduled At Nazareth Academy

Nazareth Academy's production of the musical, "The King and I," will open Friday, April 14, at 8:15 p.m. in the school auditorium on Lake Avenue for a three-day run with final performance Saturday at 8:15.

This musical play, with music by Richard Rodgers and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein, is based on the novel, "Ann and the King of Siam" by Margaret Landon. The Nazareth production will be presented by the Perosian Choir under the direction of Sister Rose Teresa, choral director and William Andia, dramatic director.

The original show in New York City ran for three years and then went on a two-year tour. It has had many revivals at the New York City Center and was recorded by Capitol and Decca Records.

Through his stage sets, Andia has tried to bring the Orient of the 19th Century to the audience. The songs of this play have been called "singing soliloquies" conveying the strange poignant vitality of the East.

The cast with its choruses of wives and children and its dancers numbers about 50, including Perosian Choir members, a male cast from schools or local theater groups, and children.



Michael Callan and Patricia Harty in "Occasional Wife."

Fine Dining Around Town

One of the newest additions to the dining scene is the Coachman Restaurant located in Ridge Rd. West. It is part of the Coachman Motor Inn a haven of hospitality for the weary traveler. Area residents have found it a mecca for enjoyable dining and pleasant evenings in a relaxing atmosphere of hospitality and service. The kitchen under the watchful eye of chef Joseph "Peppy" Cairo prepares an excellent Surf n Turf and the Veal Scallopini ala Marsala is out of this world. Your dining host at the Coachman is Michael Cassara and he'll be pleased to welcome you and your party. A real family favorite at Coachman is their Sunday Smorgasbord. Try it. We know you'll approve.

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THE ROYAL BALLET from the Nazareth Academy production of "The King and I" includes: (row 1) Jeanne Werner, Eileen Cannan, Patrice Pallone, Katherine Cornish, Angela Miele, Leona Schmitz; (row 2) Teresa Tomasso, Patricia Smith, Maureen Stone, Eileen McCluskey, Mary Frances Camello, Yvonne Miele. Missing from photo are Mary Kloc and Sharlene

Tryouts For 'Blood Wedding'

Blackfriars, Inc. will hold tryouts for their final production of the season on April 6 and 7 at their headquarters, 892 Clinton Ave. S. from 8 p.m. till 10 p.m.

This final show will be Francis Lorca's "Blood Wedding," directed by Richard Mancini. A cast of 22, including a Spanish guitar player, will be needed.

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