

As I See It

# More Saints Than Soap

By Pat Costa



I turned on my favorite soap opera the other day and what I heard shocked me to the core.

There was Nancy, sweet, loving, everybody's friend Nancy telling her closest sidekick Martha to "mind your own business."

For those who don't watch "Edge of Night" or any other soap opera, the phrase may seem mild in light of the tough language and violence that pervades TV today.

But what these non-soapy viewers don't understand is that Nancy just happens to be "Edge of Night's" saint-in-residence.

Nancy is: lovely woman, understanding wife, communicating mother, trusted friend to all of Monticello, impeccable housekeeper, gourmet cook (who prepares breakfast in her designer's clothes) and most recently a politically-oriented envoy to carry out a secret mission on a Caribbean island.

Nancy offends nothing. In a recent trial which took up six months on the show she managed to remain friends with both the chief of police and the defendant, her good friend Nicole.

On the subject of bringing up kids, she is the trusted confidante of her daughter although recent signs are that Nancy will thumbs down the hippie philosophy her daughter is espousing.

Nancy's living room is pretty much middle class average (she decorated it herself, naturally) but it is the constant meeting place of mothers and wives of senators, police chiefs, criminal lawyers, psychiatrists.

Friends reunite there after

long separations (each actor gets two to four weeks off during the summer) intrigues are exposed, confidences bared and advice a n d understanding given.

My one other soapy indulgence is "General Hospital" At the seventh floor station there is little nursing going on, principally because the nurses and doctors have so many problems, physical, mental, emotional and marital, themselves.

Keeping everyone on keel is Jessie. Jessie is head nurse, widowed and recently re-married, keeper of secrets, confidante of the chef of staff and ministering angel to all.

Never mind that Jessie is as wooden and enigmatic as a badly carved totem pole.

Without Jessie the world wouldn't turn. But, ah that's the name of another soap opera. One, fortunately, I've not been exposed to or I would be hooked, weak willed viewer that I am.

But my friends inform me that there are other saints in residence. Namely Ellen in "As the World Turns." Sometimes Nancy, too.

Bert Bauer makes "The Guiding Light" what it is and the persevering JoAnne Tate does her thing (and has for 20 years) on "Search for Tomorrow."

The saintly honors are done by Valerie on "Secret Storm" and Vanessa performs them on "Love of Life."

"Love is a Many Splendored Thing" I'm told has no Goody Two Shoes. They don't need them. The clothes are so gorgeous, I hear, there is no time for hook watching.

# At Home with the Movies

PEYTON PLACE (1958)  
Thursday, Dec. 3 (CBS)

To be telecast in two parts, tomorrow and Friday night, this is the "original," adapted from Grace Metalious' lurid best-seller about sordid doings in a New England town and starring Lana Turner, Hope Lange, Lloyd Nolan, Diane Varsi, Mildred Dunnock and Arthur Kennedy.

When the film was first released, most critics were surprised, and pleased, that producer Jerry Wald was able to clean up the book and yet present an absorbing adult film, with fine performances all around.

The national Catholic film office rated it A-3, unobjectionable for adults. It is definitely adult fare (there is a rape of a teen-ager by her stepfather, among other things), but critic Moira Walsh of America magazine remarked that the film offered "a sane moral outlook on life."

PEYTON PLACE (Part 2)  
Friday, Dec. 4 (CBS)  
(See Thursday, Dec. 3)

TEXAS ACROSS THE RIVER (1966)  
Saturday, Dec. 5 (NBC)

Dean Martin is a good bad-man, Joey Bishop is his Indian sidekick and Alain Delon is a Spanish duke in a spoof of Westerns, especially the Indians vs. U.S. Calvary brand of Western.

Most critics thought the humor was heavy-handed and might have worked better if the

COURIER 2

This is a summary and evaluation of prime-time films offered by the network to its affiliate stations. Check your local listings to ascertain if your channel is scheduling the network offering.

actors didn't spend so much time making sure you know it's a parody (extra long double-takes, etc.). But the one liners and sight gags are plentiful, offering harmless escapist entertainment.

NCOMP rated it unobjectionable for adults, and found that "its parody succeeds more often than it misses."

CIRCUS WORLD (1964)  
Sunday, Dec. 6 (ABC)

A soap opera with sawdust, this stars John Wayne as a circus owner who plans a European tour in the hope that he will somehow find the mother (Rita Hayworth) of his foster daughter (Claudia Cardinale), the young circus performer he has raised since the mother disappeared from a circus 14 years ago.

Although filled with circus and soap-opera cliches, it offers dozens of fine circus acts, lots of animals and clowns for the youngsters, and some spectacular scenes, including the sinking of a circus boat and aerial suspense in a burning tent.

NCOMP rated it A-1, unobjectionable for all.

Monday, Dec. 7 (NBC)

The usually-scheduled Mon-

# 'Commercializing' the Church

Catholic Press Features

The scene is a Catholic bazaar, and the center of attention is a new station wagon.

Making it the center of attention is an aggressive hard-selling nun, who energetically and enthusiastically points out the various advantages of the vehicle.

The "nun" is actress Fran Ryan, and the scene is from a series of Plymouth TV commercials.

In another commercial, a roomful of clergymen praise the staying power of Schick razor blades.

Heretofore, the closest TV commercials came to putting religion to work was when a female singer referred to Chock Full O' Nuts as "heavenly coffee," but the unwritten taboo against commercializing religion appears to have been lifted.

No noticeable protest has been made against the nun-selling-the-station-wagon commercial, nor against the razor-blade commercial, although both feature stereotypes: the nun-concerned with money-raising, and the clergymen leading an easy life, with several of them in the razor-blade commercial standing around sipping tea.

Religion also steals aboard a TV commercial for Lufthansa Airlines, with the video portion showing a male traveler being pampered by beautiful air hostesses on one of the Lufthansa flights. Just before he is about to take another business trip, the man's jealous wife asks hopefully, "Harry, doesn't the Vatican have an airline?"

The lifting of the religion taboo in commercials may have been encouraged by the success of recent ethnic-oriented ads despite complaints that this type of commercial has usually brought.

Protests are being made by Mexican-American groups against the "Frito Bandito" character, on the grounds it fostered the stereotype that



Actress Fran Ryan (center) is selling a Plymouth.

Mexican-Americans are not to be trusted. However, despite promises by Frito-Lay that the bandito character would be dropped, he's still around, swiping corn chips.

The popularity of the hungry Italian husband (played, ironically, by Jewish actor Jack So-mack) in the Alka Seltzer com-

mmercial — "Mama mia, that's a spicy meat-a-ball!" — is certain to result in more ethnic characterizations in upcoming TV commercials.

Not to mention "the Jewish mother" stereotype (played by Lillian Adams) in the long-running Plymouth commercials. (Catholic Press Features)

# Audience Key to Success Of Chamber Orchestra

By FRANK CROCIATA

David Fetler's Rochester Chamber Orchestra opened its three-concert season at Nazareth Arts Center last Sunday. This amazing organization has won a permanent place in the musical life of Rochester, but unfortunately not for its musical accomplishments.

Three times a year, Dr. Fetler assembles 29 players for two rehearsals and a performance. The results are sometimes disastrous. Yet the orchestra's faithful audience always turns out, and in respectable numbers.

Dr. Fetler states that the principal justifications for the orchestra's existence are its interested audience and the vast untapped repertoire for small orchestras.

Fetler opened with a long-buried "Serenade in C" of 17th Century composer Josef Vejvanovsky. It was a harmless little bit of nothing that might be a relief after repeated performances of the work of Bach, Handel and Purcell.

A bit of nothing that was not so harmless was a performance of the "Fantasie for Horn, Timpani and Strings" of Bernard Rogers. Chamber Orchestra first horn, Milan Yancich, was soloist. The performance was given in memory of Mr. Rogers, an Eastman composition professor, who died in 1968. It was an embarrassing, deflated exercise that didn't even serve to show off the soloist, let alone serve any musical purpose, and certainly did Roger's reputation no good. A fitting tribute might better have been a well-rehearsed performance of one of the Bach suites. Mr. Yancich performed the solo passages adroitly and nearly always was on pitch, a rarity for local horn players.

Before intermission, concertmistress Leorene Field was heard in the "Violin Concerto in B-flat Major" by Pergolesi.

Miss Field is a spirited solo performer and one of the orchestra's few musical assets (Mr. Yancich is another). This was more or less the best performance of the afternoon.

After intermission, Fetler dug up a truly offensive modern piece called "Frenetico" by Carlos Surinach. It amounted to much pointless activity. Surinach was particularly taken with a chord lifted from Stravinski's "Firebird", which he repeated often, for no apparent reason, and at will.

The program concluded with a ragged performance of the Mozart "Hafner" Symphony. Dr. Fetler has always programmed at least one piece that could be "pulled off" with little or no preparation. He relies on the musicians' experience and his questionable ability to pull things together. The results are disheartening. The orchestra could stand six more strings and one more rehearsal. Dr. Fetler cannot be expected to perform miracles. The need for a chamber orchestra is here. Meanwhile, as the storied Viennese, we must "ignore the performance and applaud Mozart." Dr. Fetler was applauded warmly.

# Fisher to Present Bat McGrath and Don Potter

The Student Union of St. John Fisher College will present Bat McGrath and Don Potter at 8:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 6, in Kearney Hall.

McGrath and Potter, singers and guitarists who write much of their own material, recently relinquished their coffee house here in favor of concert performances. They were featured in Chuck Mangione's Friends and Love Concert that has received wide attention through recordings and National Educational Television.

# The Sun

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