

Assignment TV

By **TERRENCE O'FLAHERTY**

Never look out the window if you want to see if it's summer—look at the TV set instead. If there are reruns it's still spring; when they're replaced by low-budget variety shows, it is certainly to be summer. Two new ones have just been born—both with a weak pulse.

After watching them it's easy to understand why Ed Sullivan has lasted as long as he has. Only a personality of stone could survive the weekly erosion.

"We're try not to look like Ted Mack's Amateur Hours," said the assistant producer of NBC's new summertime talent extravaganza, "Showcase '68," prior to its network pre-

miere from Santa Monica a couple of weeks ago.

Alas, his efforts were to no avail. Not only did it look LIKE the Amateur Hour, it looked WORSE than the Amateur Hour. The network describes it as "a showcase for the best young performers discovered in this cross-country talent search," despite extensive evidence that it is merely another series designed to create work for second string talent from the Sunset Strip.

WHILE WATCHING a combo called "The Jade Set" as they performed an ancient rock version of "Summertime," I considered the possibility that the talent level was

deliberately low to encourage any "undiscovered talent" that may have been watching, but such subtleties are not characteristic of the medium and certainly not of this production.

Other acts were amateurish comedian George McKelvie, blonde chanteuse Jane Bailey, and a subteen group called the Craig Hundley Trio.

A jury composed of two L.A. disc jockeys and the entertainment editor of Teen Magazine ignored the only polished performer and split the award between the trio and the comedian. Miss Bailey was beautifully groomed and her voice was trained. Obviously, she was doomed from the start.

THE SHOW'S HOST, Lloyd Thaxton, once struggled for recognition himself, and he is quoted as saying he would never discourage any new performer. "People told me to go back to Toledo," he said, and, judging solely from the

premiere, I would say the advice was not without merit.

Directly after "Showcase '68" the audience survivors—if any—can tune to "Showtime," a new CBS summer series replacing Red Skelton. It is taped in a nightclub set at England's Etree Studios by Skelton's production company and is similar in format to the "Spotlight" series which replaced him last summer.

The first of 11 guest hosts was Shelley Berman, whose entre-act monologue and introductions were affected to the point of anemia. I suspect that he thought he was being veddy British, but it took the major part of the hour for my embarrassment to subside sufficiently to enjoy his satire on the language barriers at an international peace conference.

British variety talent is invariably more interesting than the local brand—due in part to their unabashed corn and their Cockney accents—and the premiere was no ex-

'Starlight Sernades' Set By Long Beach Symphony

Plans for the 1968 "Starlight Sernades" have been announced by Marvin Cloyd, chairman for the annual concert series sponsored by the Long Beach Symphony Association. The series of three evening outdoor concerts will be held in Recreation Park. All three will be free to the public.

This season the orchestra will host three guest conductors, each a specialist in the music for which their concert has been programmed. There will be a "Viennese Sernade," a "Broadway Sernade" and a "Hollywood Sernade." In addition to the

ception. In addition there was the smooth, old-fashioned vocalizing of Matt Monroe.

The "Hollywood Sernade" Aug. 20 will be conducted by 1968 Academy award winner, Elmer Bernstein, and will feature some of the music for which he received 12 nominations for Academy Awards.

Families and organizations are urged to plan to attend these concerts and to come early and bring picnic suppers. The concerts are planned to begin at 8 p.m. and end before 10 p.m.

Gets Degree

Robert Masao Nakamura, 2539 W. 235th St., has earned a Doctor of Philosophy degree in biochemistry from the University of Southern California.

City Gets \$810,000 In Fees

SACRAMENTO — Distribution of \$183 million to cities and counties of California in motor vehicle license fees was announced today by Houston I. Flournoy, state controller. This sum represented apportionments for the period Dec. 1, 1937 through May 31, 1968.

Los Angeles County received \$31,118,990 as its share on the basis of 6,844,000 population, Flournoy said.

The city of Torrance received a total of \$810,731 for the period.

Flournoy said the allocation amounts to \$6.37 for each city resident, and \$4.97 for each county resident.

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