

Assignment TV

By **TERRENCE O'FLAHERTY**

Nothing in literature is more durable than the Cinderella story and it has been told in many ways for generations. "My Fair Lady" was a practical, 20th-Century Cinderella based on George Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion," whose chimney corner was a flower stand and whose fairy godmother was Henry Higgins. Both girls were a smashing success at the ball; both lost their boyfriends at midnight and found them again in time for the final curtain. Tomorrow at 7:30 p.m. CBS replays the musical version of "Cinderella" which the network commissioned from Rodgers and Hammerstein eleven years ago. It is a pleasant, traditional adaptation

which unfortunately lacks what "My Fair Lady" had: the brilliant writing of Shaw. This is the third time around for the CBS production which was taped three years ago and it shows every sign of becoming as regular a revival as "The Wizard of Oz." This week's third re-run will be familiar to most viewers, but it is not the original television production of the Rodgers and Hammerstein version. Collectors of old TV memories will recall that the premiere on March 31, 1957, had a far more distinguished cast, more imaginative settings and a sophisticated script. It attracted 100,000,000 viewers—the largest audience that had ever seen any

sort of an entertainment in history up to that time—enough people to fill the biggest Broadway theater seven days a week for 165 years. But it was a flop. USING the mystical measuring stick which networks employ for such large things, CBS was convinced that the American mass audience preferred its fairy tales told straight, without humor and without elegance. They scrapped the costly color production and restaged it in 1965 with a new cast and less sophistication. It is this version you will see this week. Perhaps CBS regrets its haste because the original version starred Julie Andrews, who has now become the biggest single attraction in show business. At that time she had been a stage hit in the English camp musical, "The Boy Friend," which brought her to America, and she was appearing on Broadway in "My Fair Lady" but was as yet unknown to movie

and TV audiences. The real "Cinderella" in the cast was Jon Cypher, an unknown singer who played Prince Charming, his first big role. Edie Adams was the Fairy Godmother and the wicked stepisters were two of our time, Kaye Ballard and Alice Ghostly. MISS ADAMS played her role with a kind of burlesque-house runway swing—which may or may not have been intentional—and the stepisters were so wildly wonderful I couldn't help thinking the prince made the wrong choice. Miss Andrews may have been prettier, but I have a hunch he would have enjoyed himself more if he'd married one of the stepisters. It cost \$405,000 which was distributed among two composers, 51 performers, 30 dancers, 90 technicians, 34 wardrobe attendants and one "mouse-handler" for the pumpkin coach scene. In 1957, television shows

were performed "live" without the perfection which videotape now makes possible. Although the original production was in color, very few viewers had color receivers and everyone west of Chicago saw it in black-and-white anyway because there was no such thing as a color kinescope film. So the gem-like settings, the pale purple walls, and the green trees with chartreuse apples were lost on nearly everyone but members of the Stage Hands Union. THE NEW version stars two newcomers, Leslie Ann Warren and Stuart Damon, who were unknown when it was taped three years ago and are unknown still. The Fairy Godmother is Celeste Holm, a far cry from Edie Adams but probably more acceptable to the mass audience which prefers its fairies to be lady-like. The stepisters are Barbara Ruick and Pat Carroll who perform their roles with considerable gusto but little style, however some professional polish is provided by Ginger Rogers and Walter Pidgeon as the King and Queen. Jo Van Fleet is the Wicked Stepmother with a servant problem. No mouse-handler is listed.

Benson Speech To Be Shown In San Pedro

"Stand Up for Freedom," a night's meeting of the San Pedro United Republicans of California. The meeting will be at the San Pedro 7th Street Elementary School, 1530 7th St., San Pedro, at 8 p.m. The speech was filmed for television in the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City.

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