

Assignment TV

By TERRENCE O'FLAHERTY

If this is the Love Generation, then the singers of the 1930s and '40s were the Affectionate Generation. One of the affectionate ones is Connie Haines. When she sang "You Made Me Love You" with Tommy Dorsey back in 1939 a whole generation believed her and felt good about it.

I met her last week and I'm happy to report that, despite all the Under Thirty propaganda, Miss Haines is as attractive now as she was then and a lot more pleasant company than the soulful, introspective lady thrushes who dominate the pop music scene today and behave on interviews as if they're talking to their psychiatrists.

"People say, 'Connie, why don't you take off the rose-colored glasses?' and I reply - 'why should I? I like them.'"

Her current assignment will require all the rose-colored glasses she can find - and maybe even a psychiatrist. For the past month as the hostess on KGO TV's morning movie (channel 7 from 9 to 11 daily), she has had to sit through "Thunder on the Hill" with Ann Blyth as a condemned murderer in a nunnery; "Strangers on a Train," a Hitchcock study in homicide; "Everybody Does It" with Linda Darnell as a socialite concert pianist; "Comrade X" wherein Clark Gable fights the Russians and wins Hedy Lamarr; and "The Duchess of Idaho" - one of her own movies in which all the good acting is done under water by Esther Williams.

IN ADDITION to actually WATCHING the movies Miss Haine's chores include introducing commercials at the rate of ten to the hour and calling viewers to see if they can identify the mystery tune. If they can't, they get a free Chinese dinner anyway. During

these sessions she is the only live human being on San Francisco television between 9 and 11 a.m.

Connie Haines is a Southern girl with a soft accent and enthusiasm that is inexhaustible. And when you consider that she has been singing in nightclubs since she was 13 years old it seems amazing that she has retained a kind of ladylike quality.

"But my mother was ALWAYS along with me," she insisted with a big smile and a flutter of eyelashes. "And I was in bed by midnight."

AS BABY Yvonne JaMais, age 10, she had her own 30-minute radio show in Jacksonville, Fla., in which she sang with an 18-piece orchestra. Anyone who could survive that, obviously was destined for success. Four years later she was on the bill with Fred Allen at the Roxie. Her big break came when Harry James happened to hear her during an audition for Major Bowes.

"Well, I'm singin' mah heart out in this stuffy lil old hole and my manager said 'That was Harry James' and I said 'Who's Harry James?' I declare he was the rudest man I'd ever met. He walked right out in the middle of mah second song."

Harry, being no fool, had left to talk to her mother. He hired her, changed her name, and lost her to Tommy Dorsey's band where she sang with another newcomer named Frank Sinatra.

Today Connie Haines lives in Orinda, a suburb of San Francisco, and commutes to her TV job every morning at 6 a.m. Last year she married Del Courtney a bandleader who has had the experience it takes to be an understanding husband to a singer. He was formerly married to one of the King Sisters and all her singing kinfolk.

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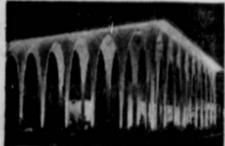
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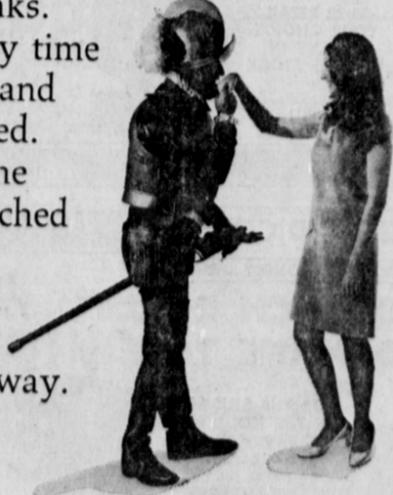
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