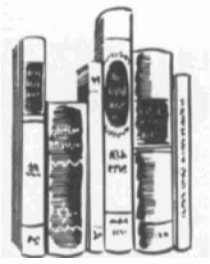

books reviewed

TV Tape Commercials

By Harry Wayne McMahan. Published (1960) by Communication Arts Books, Hastings House, 151 East 50 St., New York 22. 110 pp. 5¼ by 8¼-in. Price $4.50.

The author of this book has managed to take a highly technical subject and treat it so that a lay reader can readily assimilate a good working knowledge of TV tape technique.

The first few chapters bring into focus the evolution of tape, documenting some of the actual production problems and how they are handled in this new medium.

Many of the subjects touched upon not only shed light upon the tape technique, but also are applicable to commercial production in general. The writing is handled in a breezy, fresh, easy to read manner which in no way detracts from the information content of the book. Generally speaking, this is a book that should be on the shelf of every individual who has occasion to be conversant with any phase of taped commercials, and this includes production personnel as well as advertising commercial copywriters and producers.

The contents take the reader in chronological order through the history of the evolution of tape, its beginnings, a glance at the problems of commercial production, the specific application of tape to those problems, case histories of some TV tape commercials, a discussion of the comparative advantages of tape and film, and some of the production tools that tape offers to the user.

A variety of commercials requiring production values of different sorts are documented in specific terms. Also under discussion are the characteristics of tape as a medium, its inherent kinship to live TV quality, the immediacy, audio quality, costs, labor problems, etc.

The author is most careful to mention points which are of specific interest to the advertising agencies, a service that will aid the technical workers tremendously, because in so doing, the author gives the layman at least a passing understanding of some of the problems, perhaps preventing some individuals from asking for the impossible. It should, therefore, be made mandatory that all advertising agency personnel having anything to do with TV production read this book several times.

After some of the actual production problems are handled, there is a lucid rundown on the modus operandi of tape itself with many wise squibs of advice to the user. Toward the end of the book some excellent suggestions for TV station use of tape facilities are made, and for this reason, independent station personnel would find the book of great value to them.

Although this is not a technical book in the strict sense of the word, there is much in it of interest to engineers if only to give the slide-rule addicts a peep into the other side of the problem, and to give them some relaxing reading matter with sufficient interest in their own field.

The only negative comment that can be made about this book is that perhaps the author has become a bit over-enthusiastic about the tape medium in the sense that he seems to be prejudiced in a small degree to suggest the use of tape for some applications that might be done a little more efficiently handled on film. (The writer of this review, likewise, may be equally prejudiced in favor of film.) However, in fairness to the author of the book, it must be said that the tape medium is one that does inspire enthusiasm when seen in action, because of the quality and immediacy of the product when properly applied to the commercial or dramatic problem. When properly lit and handled with proper setups, it is undoubtedly superior to film. In its ideal use for maximum perfection, if tape were to be handled with individual setups as is done in film, the ultimate in perfection would be achieved, but this is not the purpose of tape, and this type of treatment would negate the fast working advantages that tape offers.

Included with the book is a bookmark made of a short length of videotape, so the reader can get a first hand look at the material.—*Ernest M. Pittaro*, Dancer-Fitzgerald-Sample, Inc., 347 Madison Ave., New York 17.

Scientific Publications

(of the Fuji Photo Film Co., Ltd.) No. 4, 1934-1952

Published December 1959. Shin Fujisawa, Editor. Distributed by Maruzen Co., Ltd., Tokyo. 131 pp. Paperbound. Price $1.50.

Scientific Publications brings together under one cover papers published over a specified period of time by the personnel of the Research Department of the Fuji Photo Film Co., Ltd. Issues 1–3 contain papers published in 1953–55. Number 4 which appears after a lapse of several years coincides in time with the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Company and is made up of papers and abridgments of papers published in the period 1934 to 1952. Many of these papers appeared originally in early issues of the *Journal of the Society of Scientific Photography of Japan*, almost unobtainable in the United States, or they were presented at scientific meetings but apparently not published.

Issue No. 4 contains 19 original reports in Japanese, with abstracts, tables, and captions of figures in English. With the aid of the English portions, the reader who does not understand Japanese often can still glean much information from the papers. Four of the papers deal with the preparation of sensitizing dyes, two with color couplers, two with the fading of silver images caused by residual thiosulfate,

and two with the construction of sensitometers; others are on the action of 5-bromobenzotriazole in emulsions, hypersensitizing by exposure, the effect of corpuscular radiation on photographic emulsions, recovery of components from waste fixing solutions, a camera for testing resolving power, a meter for measuring silver ion concentration, coating of glass to reduce two-layer reflection, and the chemical composition of commercial emulsions. The paper on the latter subject gives the silver, gelatin, silver iodide, silver bromide, soluble bromide ion, and soluble chloride ion contents of 15 photographic emulsions of Western manufacture. In addition, the issue contains the complete Japanese version of a review article on the use of photographic plates in spectrographic analysis, originally published in 1948, and 22 abridgments, in both English and Japanese, of papers published during the period 1936 to 1947.—*T. H. James*, Eastman Kodak Co., Research Laboratories, Rochester 4, N.Y.

Color Motion Picture Services is an informative brochure, beautifully printed, describing by picture (color and black-and-white) and text the equipment and processes used in the laboratories of General Film Laboratories Corp. A flow chart of optional color processing procedures (double page in color) offers a simple and precise illustration in a most attractive form of various color processing methods. Inquiries and requests may be directed to General Film Laboratories Corp., Central Division, 106 W. 14 St., Kansas City 5, Mo.

Commercial Sound Catalogue No. 132 offers descriptions (including specifications) and illustrations of a wide rage of microphones and speakers produced by Electro-Voice, Inc., Buchanan, Mich. The microphones are categorized according to the type of generating element: crystal, ceramic, carbon, and dynamic; and according to type of pickup pattern: nondirectional (omnidirectional), unidirectional (cardioid and sound spot) and differential (close talking). The catalogue is available upon request to the company.

section reports

The Atlanta Section met on May 10 at WSB-TV with an attendance of 25. Guest speaker Edward Schmidt, Vice-President, Reeves Soundcraft, discussed "The History of Magnetic Striping." Mr. Schmidt gave an interesting presentation of the history of magnetic striping, a field that is much older than most people realize. The early problems and various methods of striping were discussed and slides of historical and contemporary equipment for stripping film were shown.

Most of the basic problems of magnetic striping have been solved, and it has been firmly established in the theatrical and educational fields for five to ten years. It is now also making strong progress in the TV industry. It is felt by many that 16mm single-system sound on a magnetic stripe can rival 35mm optical sound.

The newest field for magnetic striping is 8mm film. This has been slower in developing because small defects that had held the tape away from the recording head have been relatively more serious on the very narrow stripe used on 8mm film than they have been on the broader stripes that can be used on 16mm and 35mm films. However, these problems have now been largely solved, and a good future is now predicted for magnetic striping on 8mm film.

Slides were shown of the Reeves Soundcraft production facilities. After the formal presentation a lively and informative question-and-answer period was held. It was felt generally that this program was

Membership Certificates (Active and Associate members only). Attractive hand engrossed certificates, suitable for framing for display in offices or homes, may be obtained by writing to Society headquarters, at 55 West 42nd St., New York 36, Price: $2.50.