

Book Reviews

TV Films: How to Produce Them

By The Chalmers Sisters. Published (1951); distributed by American Photography, 421 Fifth Ave. South, Minneapolis 15, Minn. 102 pp. + 4 pp. index. Illustrated. $4\frac{1}{2} \times 6$ in. Price \$1.00.

This is not a formal book.

It is a pocket handbook telling the novice "how to do it." As such, its value cannot be disputed, particularly to those who wish to start producing motion pictures in a small way for television, church or similar markets.

Our novice might well purchase this book before he purchases equipment, not that he should necessarily buy the brands recommended but so that he should know what to demand in return for his capital.

Perhaps nowhere else will one find a complete guide in such small size; the chapters range from how to write your own script to how to market your product, from the psychology of directing to a check list for shooting, and how to edit and synchronize sound with picture. The technical error in their explanation of *why* sound is printed 26 frames ahead of sight does not result in misinformation as to what to do in practice.

If you have had professional experience in Hollywood or elsewhere you will not need this book. But if you are new in the game, you will find it stimulating and helpful.—*Harry R. Lubcke*, Consultant, 2443 Creston Way, Hollywood 28, Calif.

The Producer

By Richard Brooks. Published (1951) by Simon and Schuster, Rockefeller Center, New York 20. 337 pp. $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ in. Price \$3.50.

This is a novel about today in Hollywood and a producer who in his time and place is another Babbitt. The author has been writing and directing motion pictures since World War II and as a novelist he is already known for *The Brick Foxhole* (1945) and *The Boiling Point* (1948).

There is no warning printed at the front of this book that "any resemblance to persons living or dead..."—so, except

for what may be strictly autobiographical, the book is intended to depict a composite of the producer in Hollywood. As such, it is successful and valid: it neither paints too much in black nor tries to make a lily-white picture. The choices in gray scale are good and there is transmitted a picture that is lively and colorful without gilded lilies.

If a few scenes and conversations appear flat, the book's overall effect is that of some depth and perspective, a well made picture, well focused and projected. It will light and help bring into focus those nontechnical aspects of motion picture production which are huffed and puffed greatly in the trade and general press. And it will provide a couple of evenings of interesting entertainment.—V.A.

Radio, Television, and Society

By Charles A. Siepmann. Published (1950) by Oxford University Press, 114 Fifth Ave., New York 11. i-vii + 410 pp. $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ in. Price \$4.75.

This is an absorbing and educative primer (with footnotes), oriented for the United States reader who never knew or does not remember the chaos and static in the nursery of the baby radio industry. And the book offers much for those who are wondering how the newer broadcasting brat, television, will turn out. There is perforce much said about the Federal Communications Commission and its predecessors but even so there is no guarantee that the reader will come to understand every FCC decision, including those on color television.

The author throws much clear light on both the attacks on, and the campaigns on behalf of, advertising in our system of broadcasting. There are thorough comparisons with the British system, and with the Canadian system which stands part way between those of the United States and Great Britain.

The author is well qualified. He was 12 years with the British Broadcasting Corp. for which he was Director of Program Planning and a member of the Corporation's Control Board. A Rocke-

efeller Foundation fellowship brought him to the United States in 1937 to study and report on broadcasting over educational stations. In 1939-42 he was a university lecturer and adviser to President Conant of Harvard. During World War II he was with the Office of War Information. In 1945 he served as consultant to the FCC and was one of the authors of its "Blue Book." Since 1946 he has been Professor of Education at New York University and Director of its Film Library. He also completed before this book a commissioned survey of broadcasting in Canada.

This is not a technical book but it will help make less confounded a variety of governmental and business decisions about technical matters.—V.A.

Gas Discharge Lamps

By G. Funke and P. J. Orange. Published (1951) by N. V. Philips' Gloeilampenfabrieken, Eindhoven, Netherlands. Distributed in U.S.A. by Elsevier Publishing Co., 250 Fifth Ave., New York 1. i-xvi + 242 pp. + 28 pp. appendix. 200 illustrations. 6 × 9 in. Price \$4.50. English edition.

This is a survey, made by scientists on the staff of the Philips company, of existing types of discharge lamps marketed by that company and a compilation of published work by members of its engineering staff.

The book opens with a good discussion of the fundamental principles of the electrical discharge lamp, some of the

underlying reasons for the current-voltage relation found in them, the necessity for special operating equipment, and the general effect of such equipment on the characteristics of the lamp.

Specific discussions cover, for instance, the sodium lamp, for which are given its general physical make-up, its electrical characteristics and the radiation output. Some of the claims, however, made for this lamp as a unit for street lighting have not been substantiated by those interested in street lighting in this country. Two chapters on the characteristics and uses of high-pressure mercury-vapor lamps include a discussion of the effect of this type of light on vision. A compact array of information on the operation and light-giving properties of the fluorescent lamp is fitted into fifty pages, followed by a chapter on beacons and luminous advertisements, and another on stroboscopic and flash tubes.

The appendixes include a list of definitions, and some reference to the works of other engineers in addition to the extended list of papers by Philips engineers already mentioned. The 200 figures and photographic reproductions are well planned. Such books as this, however, would be much easier to read if the generally adopted nomenclature were followed and if the various lamps were referred to either by name or by a description instead of by such designations as Type ML, HO, HP, etc.—*W. E. Forsythe* (Editor, *Physical Tables* of the Smithsonian Institution), 15006 Terrace Road, Cleveland 12, Ohio.

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Complete sets of all sixty current standards in a heavy three-post binder with the index are \$13.50, plus 3% sales tax for purchases within New York City, and are available from Society Headquarters. Single copies of any particular standard must be ordered from the American Standards Association, 70 East 45th St., New York 17, N.Y.