

MISS ELEANOR MICHAELS
ROOM 253
COLOR TELEVISION NEWS

D-M

NBC GETS OFF TO FAST START IN COMPATIBLE COLOR TELEVISION;
SARNOFF HAILS FCC APPROVAL OF RCA-PIONEERED STANDARDS

The National Broadcasting Company raced off to a lightning start in color television yesterday by putting a color signal on the network at 5:32 p.m., EST, within minutes after announcement of approval of compatible color signal specifications for television by the Federal Communications Commission.

Brig. Gen. David Sarnoff, Chairman of the Boards of the Radio Corporation of America and NBC, at 6:30 p.m., EST highlighted a special colorcast which originated in NBC's Colonial Theatre, New York, world's first fully equipped color television studio.

General Sarnoff was introduced by Sylvester L. Weaver, Jr., President of NBC.

This morning, on NBC-TV's TODAY program, Mr. Weaver was interviewed by Dave Garroway at the Colonial Theatre. Dr. Charles B. Jolliffe, vice president and technical director of the Radio Corporation of America, also was interviewed on the program.

When the FCC decision was announced, NBC flashed a multi-colored slide reading "Color News Bulletin" on the air, and an announcer began: "Attention, please! Color television is here. You are looking at the first color picture telecast since compatible standards for color television were approved."

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Congratulating the FCC on its action, General Sarnoff said, "Approval by the FCC of compatible color television broadcasting is a great victory for RCA, but an even greater triumph for the public and the television industry.

"RCA developed the compatible color television system. We have fought and worked hard and long for its adoption for commercial use because we were confident from the beginning that it is the right system in the public interest."

General Sarnoff underlined the importance of compatibility of the approved standards, pointing out that without this feature "your set would go completely blind to color broadcasts."

He concluded:

"This day will be remembered in the annals of communications, along with the historic date of April 30, 1939 when RCA-NBC introduced all-electronic black-and-white television as a new broadcast service to the public at the opening of the World's Fair in New York. At that time we added sight to sound. Today, we add color to sight.

"RCA is proud of the leadership its scientists and engineers achieved in developing the all-electronic black-and-white television system -- the all-electronic compatible color system -- and the RCA tri-color tube, which made the latter practical.

"Dedicated to pioneering and steadfast in our purpose to give America preeminence in communications, we shall continue our efforts to advance and to merit the faith and confidence the American people have in 'RCA' as an emblem of quality, dependability and progress."

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Preceding General Sarnoff's speech, which was on film, Mr. Weaver appeared before the RCA color cameras and took the television audience on a brief tour of the Colonial Theatre's facilities. "From here," said Mr. Weaver, "will come some of the most exciting moments of your entertainment in the weeks and months ahead."

Although a period of approximately 40 days will elapse before the new standards become effective, NEC has applied for permission to broadcast the Menotti opera, "Amahl and the Night Visitors," as a "color premiere." Rehearsals for this show had been interrupted for yesterday's special colorcast, and Mr. Weaver walked about the set explaining various aspects of the production. If FCC permission is granted, this "premiere" will be broadcast over the NEC network on Dec. 20 (5 to 6 p.m., EST) and will be seen on the nation's existing sets in high-definition black-and-white.

Mr. Weaver told the television audience that color sets will be on the market in six months, and will sell for around \$800 to \$1,000 for a 14-inch screen. "But," he pointed out, "RCA has protected the investment you've made in your present black-and-white set. Although the camera photographing me... is sending out a picture in color, you are receiving a perfect black-and-white picture without an adapter or any other gadget. That's what we mean when we speak of the RCA compatible color television system."

In the interview with Garroway, Mr. Weaver said that use of color as a part of the "Today" program could be expected some time after the colorcast, subject to FCC permission, of the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena on New Year's Day. He explained that NEC's new custom-designed color mobile unit, which will be used for the

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first time during the Pasadena program, will be available for other special events, some of which could be fitted into the "Today" program, the morning news and special feature show. Mr. Weaver said that such events could perhaps be under way by cherry-blossom time in Washington.

Dr. Jolliffe, in his remarks, said that approval of the RCA-pioneered compatible color standards was "a great Christmas present for the engineers of RCA and the industry." He also observed that a development such as compatible color, because of its complexity, was a group effort rather than the work of any one man. "That," he said, "is the present theory of industrial research."

NBC's Introductory Year plan for color will get into high gear with yesterday's FCC decision. Under this plan, each of NBC's major programs will be done at least once in color. Until the new standards go into effect, the broadcasting of these programs in color will be subject to special authorization of the FCC.

The color production which, subject to FCC authorization, will follow. "Amahl and the Night Visitors" will be "Season's Greetings," a variety show starring Ezio Pinza, Harpo Marx, Dennis King, and others, which is scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 22.

On New Year's Day, also subject to FCC authorization, NBC will telecast the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena in color, contingent on FCC permission. This would be the first West Coast origination of compatible color, and the first transcontinental West-to-East color transmission.

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Color productions of the Kate Smith and Dinah Shore shows are among those scheduled for January as NBC accelerates its color conversion activities.

Development of color programming techniques at NBC has been under way at an intensive pace for the past year. The Colonial Theatre has been operating on virtually a seven-days-a-week basis, with NBC's color corps devising new techniques of lighting, staging and make-up.

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NBC-New York, 12/18/55