

# Popular music series in prime time TV: 1947-1985

## How Many Do You Remember?

by Tim Brooks

Rock music and prime time television have never gotten along very well. While situation comedies, dramas and action series like *The A-Team* draw tens of millions of viewers every week, season after season, the few attempts at purely musical series showcasing current popular music have been short-lived. For the most part, music series have succeeded only around the "fringes" of the peak viewing hours — in the afternoon or late night — or as one-time specials like NBC's recent *Motown 25th Anniversary* show.

The reasons are not hard to fathom, at least for those aware of the economics and audience requirements of national television. It is not, as some writers have suggested, because rock stars are too

forgotten.

The following descriptions of some of the most interesting prime time and late night network pop and rock music series are taken from the just-released third edition of *The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network TV Shows, 1946-Present*, by Earle Marsh and myself, which describes every network series that has ever run in the evening. In the course of our continuing research for this book we have run across all kinds of video oddities, from the original 1947 "video d.j." (you watched him sitting beside the turntable as the record spun), to 1950s shows where an unknown cast mouthed the words to current hit records, to the current late-night showcases for music videos. This is just a sampling: included are straight musical series, from 1950s "pop" to 1980s rock — but not traditional variety shows (many of which were

hosted by pop stars, from Dinah Shore to the Jacksons). See how many you remember.

Program descriptions are taken from *The Complete Directory To Prime Time Network TV Shows, 1946-Present* (Third Edition, 1985), reprinted by permission of Ballantine Books. In addition to being a writer and record collector, Tim Brooks is Director of Program Research for NBC-TV.

### ABC ROCKS

*Music Videos*

FIRST TELECAST: June 22, 1984

LAST TELECAST:

BROADCAST HISTORY:

June 1984- , ABC Fri 12:00 midnight-12:30 A.M.

One year after the premiere of NBC's Friday Night Videos, network television's first attempt to respond to the popularity of cable television's MTV (Music

Television), ABC entered the fray with this half hour of music videos. Each weekly show consisted of a number of currently popular rock music videos, by such artists as Prince, The Cars, Cyndi Lauper, Bonnie Tyler, Eurythmics, Billy Idol, David Bowie, Huey Lewis and the News, and Flock of Seagulls.

### BIG BEAT, THE

*Music*

FIRST TELECAST: July 12, 1957

LAST TELECAST: August 2, 1957

BROADCAST HISTORY:

Jul 1957-Aug 1957, ABC Fri 10:00-10:30

HOST:

Alan Freed

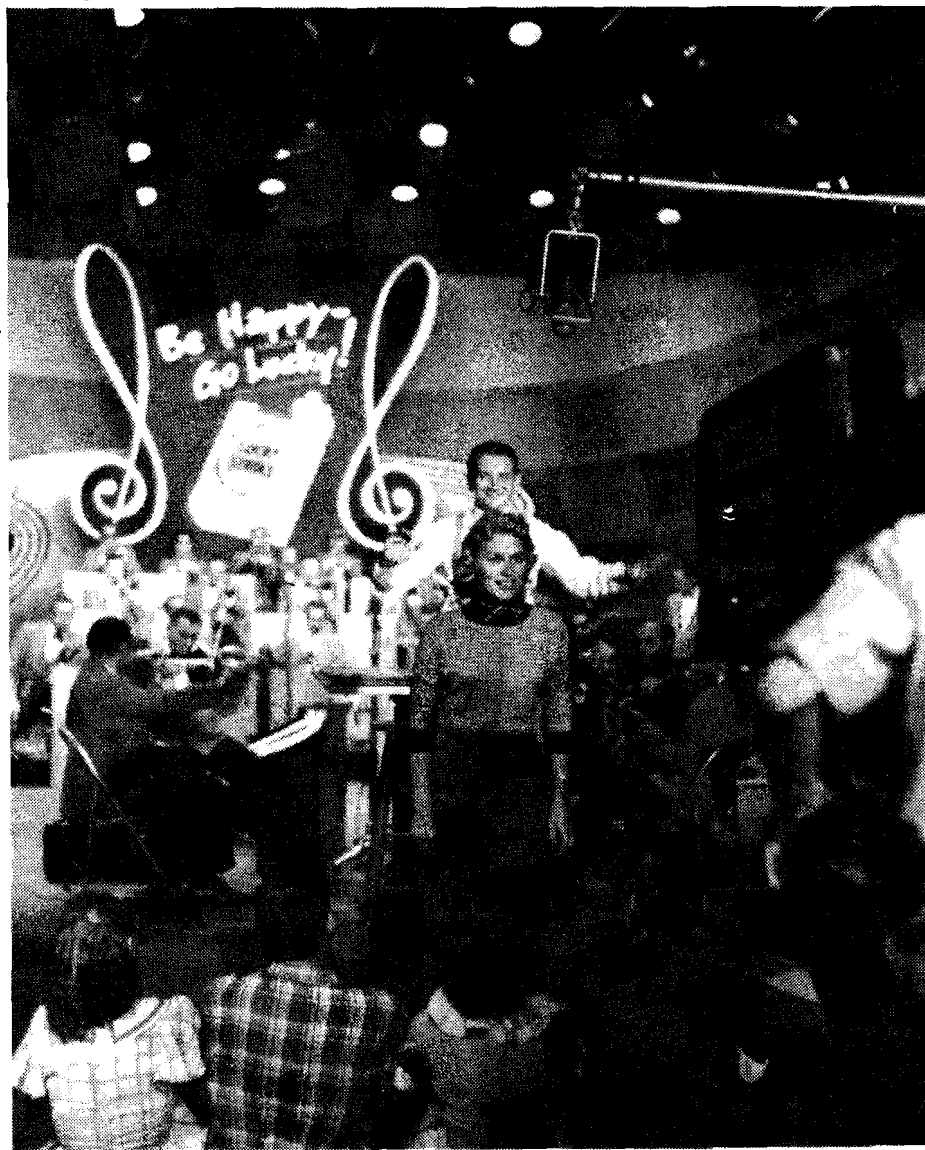
Alan Freed was the New York City disc jockey who is credited with coining the term "rock 'n' roll" and who did much to popularize "the big beat" in the mid-1950s. A flamboyant showman and promoter, Freed packaged this series of four rock spectaculars for ABC in the summer of 1957. The list of guests reads like a Who's Who of rock in the 1950s; the first show alone starred Connie Francis, The Everly

expensive (how much does Johnny Carson get paid?), or because network programmers are old fogeys who don't like rock 'n' roll (many of them were brought up on it; most of NBC's top program executives are under 40, and ABC has always aimed to be a "youth" network).

Rather, it is simply because not enough people watch shows devoted exclusively to pop music. Even if you and all your friends — or, say, everyone in the country your age — watched a rock show, it wouldn't be enough. Network series have to attract huge audiences, including people of all ages, to pay for those million-dollar episodes you see every night. Both kids and adults will watch *The Cosby Show* and *The A-Team*. Even *Dallas* draws large numbers of young women and teens, along with its older viewers. But a contemporary rock series gets *only* young people, while their fathers and mothers leave the room. (If you make it palatable to father and mother, the kids leave the room.) Music is rather splintered these days; even rock has many constituencies, some of whom want Michael Jackson, others the Dead Kennedys, others only vintage Jerry Lee Lewis. It's hard to get them all to sit down together, and if there's anything networks have to do, it's get *everyone* (or at least some of every group) watching at once.

So rock is seen in fringe times, where costs are lower and audiences can be smaller. And of course it's seen on MTV's cable networks, for which you pay.

Despite these unpleasant facts of life, quite a number of pop music series have been seen over the years, some of them as starstudded as only a network series can be. How we would like to see Alan Freed's 1957 summer series *The Big Beat* again! Most famous are those big budget twins of the mid 1960s, *Shindig* and *Hullabaloo*, but there are others you may have



An early 1950s telecast of TV's (and radio's) original "countdown" show, *Your Hit Parade*.

Brothers ("Bye Bye Love"), Ferlin Husky ("Gone"), Don Rondo ("White Silver Sands"), the Billy Williams Quartet ("I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter"), Nancy Wiskey ("Freight Train"), and Johnnie and Joe ("Over the Mountain"). Later guests included Andy Williams, Chuck Berry, Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers, Bobby Darin, the Fontane Sisters, Fats Domino, Clyde McPhatter, Dale Hawkins, Gogi Grant, Mickey and Sylvia, Jerry Lee Lewis, and more — all in four half-hour telecasts! The *Big Beat* was probably a better representation of the current hit parade, all with original artists doing their own hits, than was ever heard on *Your Hit Parade*. In addition to serving as host, Freed led his own orchestra on the show, which included star saxophonists "Big Al" Sears and Sam "the Man" Taylor.

## **BIG RECORD, THE**

*Music*

**FIRST TELECAST:** September 18, 1957

**LAST TELECAST:** June 11, 1958

**BROADCAST HISTORY:**

Sep 1957-Mar 1958, CBS Wed 8:00-8:30

Mar 1958-Jun 1958, CBS Wed 8:30-9:00

**HOSTESS:**

Patti Page

Singer Patti Page, who had sold millions of her own records, was the hostess of this live musical showcase. The program's guest stars were well-established recording artists singing their biggest-selling or trademark songs; those currently on the popular record charts; and up-and-coming young singers who were, in the words of the producers, "due to hit the jukebox jackpot within the near future." The range of selections included show music and standards in addition to rock 'n' roll, then a fairly new trend in music. Emphasis was placed on standards, however, to attract a wider audience than the teenage-oriented top-40 songs.

## **JOHNNY CASH PRESENTS THE EVERLY BROTHERS SHOW**

*Musical Variety*

**FIRST TELECAST:** July 8, 1970

**LAST TELECAST:** September 16, 1970

**BROADCAST HISTORY:**

Jul 1970-Sep 1970, ABC Wed 9:00-10:00

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### REGULARS:

Don Everly  
Phil Everly  
Joe Higgins  
Ruth McDevitt

Rock 'n' roll singers Don and Phil Everly spent the summer of 1970 as the replacement for The Johnny Cash Show. Although their songs were generally known as top-40 hits, the sources of much of their material were Country and gospel music and many of their guest stars were performers from that idiom. The emphasis of the series was on currently popular recordings, with Joe Higgins and Ruth McDevitt providing regular comic relief.

### DICK CLARK PRESENTS THE ROCK AND ROLL YEARS

#### Music

FIRST TELECAST: November 28, 1973

LAST TELECAST: January 9, 1974

#### BROADCAST HISTORY:

Nov 1973-Jan 1974, ABC Wed 8:00-8:30

#### HOST/EXECUTIVE PRODUCER:

Dick Clark

### REGULARS:

Jeff Kutash Dancers

This series presented a nostalgic portrait of the rock and roll era through performances by its top artists, laced with chatter about the styles, dances, and news events of the period. Each program consisted of three acts taped before a live audience at Santa Monica Civic Auditorium in California, five acts from the past shown in film clips, and one spot titled "The Immortal," in which a superstar of the past performed. Many of the top recording stars of the 1950s and 1960s appeared, such as Chuck Berry, Pat Boone, Danny and the Juniors, the Shirelles, Duane Eddy, and Little Richard; there were also some more recent acts, such as Chicago and Three Dog Night. The "Immortals" (most of them deceased) included Jimi Hendrix, James Dean, Clyde McPhatter, and Jim Croce. Unfortunately, Clark



Frankie Avalon gamely tries to do "The Freddie," on *Hullabaloo*, as an amused Freddie Garrity (of Freddie & the Dreamers) and Annette watch (1965).

### GEORGIA GIBBS AND HER MILLION RECORD SHOW

#### Music

FIRST TELECAST: July 1, 1957

LAST TELECAST: September 2, 1957

#### BROADCAST HISTORY:

Jul 1957-Sep 1957, NBC Mon 7:30-7:45

### REGULARS:

Georgia Gibbs  
The Eddie Safranski Orchestra

"Her Nibs" Miss Georgia Gibbs (the nickname was

Hullabaloo was one of TV's few attempts to give rock 'n' roll a big-budget, top-quality showcase all its own in prime time. (Another, seen at about the same time, was *Shindig*.) Each week top popular recording artists performed their current hits, backed by elaborate production and the frenetic, miniskirted Hullabaloo Dancers. The whole affair was very youth-oriented, with a great deal of noise and motion, and the general atmosphere was that of a discotheque in full swing — in fact, one segment was called "Hullabaloo A-Go-Go." (Just for the record, the "girl in the cage" doing a perpetual frug was Lada Edmund, Jr.)



Lada Edmund, the girl in a cage, doing her perpetual frug on NBC's *Hullabaloo* (1965).

### DOTTY MACK SHOW, THE Music

FIRST TELECAST: February 16, 1953

LAST TELECAST: September 3, 1956

#### BROADCAST HISTORY:

Feb 1953-Jun 1953, DUM Mon 10:45-11:00

Jul 1953-Aug 1953, DUM Tue 9:00-9:30

Aug 1953-Oct 1953, ABC Thu 9:00-9:30

Oct 1953-Mar 1954, ABC Sat 6:30-7:00

Apr 1954-Oct 1954, ABC Sat 7:30-8:00

Oct 1954-Jun 1955, ABC Sat 8:00-9:00

Jun 1955-Sep 1955, ABC Tue 9:30-10:00

## DICK CLARK SHOW, THE

### Music

**FIRST TELECAST:** February 16, 1958

**LAST TELECAST:** September 10, 1960

### BROADCAST HISTORY:

Feb 1958-Sep 1960, ABC Sat 7:30-8:00

### HOST:

Dick Clark

Dick Clark, host of the highly successful afternoon series American Bandstand, was featured in this nighttime derivative of his daytime show. Each week a number of recording artists, whose records were currently on the "Top 40" charts, performed their hits on The Dick Clark Show. Although some of them actually sang on the show, most of them lip-synched to their own recordings. Some of the numbers were performed simply; others were done as production numbers. The highlight of the show was the unveiling of the "American Bandstand Top Ten" records for the following week at the conclusion of the program. The series was also known as The Dick Clark Saturday Night Beechnut Show.

## FRIDAY NIGHT VIDEOS

### Music

**FIRST TELECAST:** July 29, 1983

**LAST TELECAST:**

### BROADCAST HISTORY:

Jul 1983- , NBC Fri 12:30-2:00 A.M.

### ANNOUNCER (Off Camera):

Nick Michaels

This last-night series was commercial television's answer to the considerable popularity of cable TV's MTV (Music Television) network. Like MTV, Friday Night Videos consisted primarily of the latest rock music videos, most of them by currently hot artists such as Culture Club, the Police, John Cougar Mellencamp, Styx, Quarterflash and Paul McCartney. Mixed in were "Hall of Fame Videos" by stars of the 1960s and 1970s (the Beatles, Hollies, Doors, etc.); "Private Reel," a profile of a major star; and "Video Vote," in which viewers got to vote for one of two selected videos, using nationwide 900-numbers. On the series' premiere, Duran Duran's "Hungry Like the Wolf" trounced David Bowie's "Let's Dance" by 59,000 to 37,000 calls. On later telecasts the combined vote ran as high as 200,000 calls. A highlight of each show was a "World Premiere Video," the first network showing of a major artist's clip. The program got banner ratings in December 1983 when it premiered Michael Jackson's million-dollar "Thriller" video under this heading.

given to her by Garry Moore) hosted this 15-minute summer show during 1957. In addition to introducing promising young singers, Georgia sang a number of popular songs, at least two of which were million sellers on record. Included, no doubt, were her own three gold records, "Kiss of Fire," "Tweedle Dee," and "Dance with Me, Henry." Occasionally, before doing her rendition of someone else's big hit, she would play an excerpt from the original recording which had sold a million.

## HOOTENANNY

### Music

**FIRST TELECAST:** April 6, 1963

**LAST TELECAST:** September 12, 1964

### BROADCAST HISTORY:

Apr 1963-Sep 1963, ABC Sat 8:30-9:00

Sep 1963-Sep 1964, ABC Sat 7:30-8:30

### HOST:

Jack Linkletter

### THEME:

"Hootenanny Saturday Night," by Alfred Uhry and Richard Lewine

A traveling musical jamboree, taped before a live audience at a different college campus each week, and featuring the popularized "folk music" of early 1960s. Artists were generally commercial pop-folk groups such as the Limelites, the Chad Mitchell Trio, and the Smothers Brothers, but also included some traditional performers such as Josh White and the Carter Family.

Interestingly, several major stars refused to appear on this program because it continued the 1950s practice of "blacklisting" certain performers with alleged left-wing views (such as Pete Seeger and the Weavers). This, it was said, was due to sponsor pressure. Among those who refused to appear were the Kingston Trio, Joan Baez, and Peter, Paul and Mary.

## HULLABALOO

### Music

**FIRST TELECAST:** January 12, 1965

**LAST TELECAST:** August 29, 1966

### BROADCAST HISTORY:

Jan 1965-May 1965, NBC Tue 8:30-9:30

Jun 1965-Aug 1965, NBC Tue 10:00-11:00

Sep 1965-Aug 1966, NBC Mon 7:30-8:00

### REGULARS:

The Hullabaloo Dancers (6 girls, 4 boys)

### MUSIC DIRECTOR:

Peter Matz

### PRODUCER:

Gary Smith

A different host presided each week, including Paul Anka, Jack Jones, Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello, and Jerry Lewis (with his rock-star son, Gary). Performing were such acts as the Supremes, the Ronettes, Sonny and Cher, and many others. A special feature during the first three months was a weekly segment taped in London, hosted by rock impresario Brian Epstein and presenting top English acts such as Gerry and the Pacemakers, Marianne Faithful, Herman's Hermits, and the Moody Blues. Brian never brought on the biggest English superstars of all, however — his own proteges, the Beatles. (They finally did appear after Brian had left the show, in a January 1966 telecast.)

## DON KIRSHNER'S ROCK CONCERT

### Music

### BROADCAST HISTORY:

Syndicated only

90 minutes

Produced: 1973-1981

Released: September 1973

### HOST:

Don Kirshner

This was one of the two principal showcases for rock music in the mid- and late 1970s. Although it was syndicated for local airing anywhere on a station's schedule, it usually ran late at night, like NBC's Midnight Special. The emphasis was on progressive rock bands, such as the Allman Brothers, Fleetwood Mac, Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin and the Ramones, but a wide variety of contemporary talent appeared — Paul McCartney and Wings, Dr. Hook, Blondie, Chuck Berry, etc. Mick Jagger and the Rolling Stones headlined the much-heralded premiere in 1973. In the later 1970s soft-pop acts started to creep in (Captain and Tennille, Johnny Nash, Shaun Cassidy, even Debby Boone), but the program never abandoned the non-top-40 side of rock. Some hip comics also were seen, among them Martin Mull, the Village Idiots, and Natural Gas.

Don Kirshner had begun his career with Bobby Darin in the 1950s, and was a major figure in the music business by this time (he was responsible for the Monkees, among others). ABC hired him in late 1972 as impresario for its short-lived In Concert, but he left to start his own show a few months later. Some of the executives at ABC, he remarked, didn't seem to know the difference between the Allman Brothers and the Osmond Brothers.

There was no regular host at first. Beginning with the second season, Kirshner himself began to do brief introductions (on camera but offstage).

Apr 1955-Mar 1956, ABC Mon 9:00-9:30  
Apr 1956-Jul 1956, ABC Thu 10:00-10:30  
Jul 1956-Sep 1956, ABC Mon 8:00-8:30

### REGULARS:

Dotty Mack

Bob Braun

Colin Male

Dotty Mack had one of the simpler acts on early television: she pantomimed to other performers' hit records. She began her miming on The Paul Dixon Show out of Cincinnati, then landed a 15-minute spot by herself on DuMont called, appropriately, Girl Alone. Four months later, in July 1953, the program was expanded to 30 minutes, two assistants (Bob Braun and Colin Male) were added, and the title was changed to The Dotty Mack Show. Shortly thereafter ABC picked it up. At times the program was a full hour in length, although 30 minutes was normal.

Most of the songs pantomimed were currently popular favorites or novelty songs by such stars as Eddie Fisher, Perry Como, or Patti Page; sometimes puppets or other visual aids accompanied the pantomimes. Things began to get complicated when rock 'n' roll started taking over the hit parade in 1955. Although Dotty gamely included such records as "Rock Around the Clock" in her repertoire, the sight of pleasant young people pantomiming to Bill Haley or Elvis Presley records became slightly ludicrous, and the show quietly passed from the scene in 1956.

## MAKE YOUR OWN KIND OF MUSIC

### Musical Variety

**FIRST TELECAST:** July 20, 1971

**LAST TELECAST:** September 7, 1971

### BROADCAST HISTORY:

Jul 1971-Sep 1971, NBC Tue 8:00-9:00

### REGULARS:

The Carpenters

Al Hirt

Mark Lindsay

The New Doodletown Pipers

Tom Patchett and Jay Tarses

Allyn Ferguson & the Jack Elliott Orchestra

This summer musical variety series featured popular singers Richard and Karen Carpenter, trumpet player Al Hirt, singer Mark Lindsay (formerly lead singer of the rock group Paul Revere and the Raiders), the New Doodletown Pipers (16-person singing group), and the comedy team of Patchett and Tarses.

The title for this show was taken from a popular song of 1969.

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**MALIBU U***Music***FIRST TELECAST:** July 21, 1967**LAST TELECAST:** September 1, 1967**BROADCAST HISTORY:***Jul 1967-Sep 1967, ABC Fri 8:30-9:00***REGULARS:**

Rick Nelson

Robie Porter

The Bob Banas Dancers

Popular singer Rick Nelson was the host of this summer music show which originated from the famous Malibu Beach area in Southern California. As "Dean of the Drop-Ins" at this mythical college, Rick invited guest professors — all popular singers — to lecture (sing their hits) to the student body. There was a lot of body to lecture, mostly bikini-clad young girls ("Malibeauties"), and the curriculum for the summer school included such subjects as surfing, sunbathing, girl-watching, and a field trip to a bikini factory (not much going on there). Australian singer Robie Porter was a featured regular.

**MIDNIGHT SPECIAL, THE***Music***FIRST TELECAST:** February 2, 1973**LAST TELECAST:** May 1, 1981**BROADCAST HISTORY:***Feb 1973-Sep 1980, NBC Fri 1:00-2:30 A.M.**Sep 1980-May 1981, NBC Fri 12:30-2:00 A.M.***HOSTESS:**

Helen Reddy (1975-1976)

**ANNOUNCER:**

Wolfman Jack

For young people coming home from a Friday night date, or for those who were still up after The Tonight Show, The Midnight Special provided 90 minutes of taped in-concert popular music. The emphasis was on rock and, when the series first went on the air, everyone was a guest star — there was no regular host. Among the popular stars who hosted the show were Johnny Rivers, Mac Davis, Paul Anka, Lou Rawls, Ray Charles, Jerry Lee Lewis, Chubby Checker, Al Green, Curtis Mayfield, David Bowie, and Charlie Rich. It was Helen Reddy, the hostess of the premiere telecast, however, who finally became permanent host, two years later — in July, 1975. Less than a year later she gave up that role and weekly guest hosts returned.

Most of the singers who appeared on this series had currently popular hit songs, with the emphasis on young performers on the way up. In addition to serving as host, Buddy Bregman accompanied on piano those who performed live. However, the majority lip-synced to their hit records. Among those who appeared were Bobby Darin, Ritchie Valens, the Platters, the Teddy Bears, and Annette Funicello, along with an established, older star each week (Milton Berle, Jerry Lewis, etc.) who would chat and perhaps perform. At the end of each show, Buddy announced the top five records of the week.

**MUSICAL MERRY-GO-ROUND***Music***FIRST TELECAST:** July 25, 1947**LAST TELECAST:** March 11, 1949**BROADCAST HISTORY:***Jul 1947-Sep 1947, NBC Fri 8:00-8:30**Oct 1947-Jan 1948, NBC Thu 8:00-8:30**Jan 1948-Feb 1948, NBC Fri 7:45-8:00**Feb 1948-Mar 1949, NBC Fri 7:30-7:50***REGULARS:**

Jack Kilty

Frederic (Fritz) DeWilde

Eve Young (1947)

Penny Gerard (1948-1949)

One of the earliest regular musical programs on network TV, this extremely simple series was at first called Disc Magic and was essentially a disc-jockey show. Viewers watched d.j. Kilty play popular records and occasionally introduce some live entertainment. In 1947, anything on the flickering screen seemed interesting to watch. Then in October 1947 the title was changed to Musical Merry-Go-Round and the format shifted to live entertainment exclusively, with songs by Kilty, Eve Young (and, later, Penny Gerard), bits by actor Fritz DeWilde, and guest performers. Most of the guests were unknown cabaret talent rather than established stars.

**OH, BOY***Music***FIRST TELECAST:** July 16, 1959**LAST TELECAST:** September 3, 1959**BROADCAST HISTORY:***Jul 1959-Sep 1959, ABC Thu 7:30-8:00***HOST:**

Tony Hall

Shindig was one of two rock 'n' roll shows seen on TV during the mid-1960s (the other: NBC's Hullabaloo). It was a fast-paced, youthful program and, like its NBC counterpart, featured many of the top names in popular music performing their latest hits, while platoons of dancers staged elaborate production numbers. There was also a "disc pick of the week" feature.

The premiere telecast starred Sam Cooke and featured such acts as the Everly Brothers, Righteous Brothers, the Wellingtons, Bobby Sherman (a Shindig "discovery"), and comic Alan Sues. The second season had an even bigger opening, as the show expanded to two nights a week and opened with the Rolling Stones. Although none of the rock stars seen on Shindig were weekly regulars, some (noted above) returned many times. Others appearing included such superstars as the Beatles, the Beach Boys, Chuck Berry, Neil Sedaka, and even old-timer Louis Armstrong. They couldn't get the biggest rock star of all, however — nobody could get Elvis — so in May 1965 Shindig devoted an entire telecast to his songs, as a tribute to Elvis' tenth anniversary in show business.

During the 1965-1966 season guest stars from other areas of show business also began to appear, such as Mickey Rooney, Zsa Zsa Gabor, Ed Wynn and, on Halloween Boris Karloff.

**TEEN TIME TUNES***Music***FIRST TELECAST:** March 14, 1949**LAST TELECAST:** July 15, 1949**BROADCAST HISTORY:***Mar 1949-Jul 1949, DUM Mon-Fri 6:30-6:45***REGULARS:**

Sue Benjamin (Bennett)

Alan Logan Trio

A pretty young vocalist named Sue Benjamin, just out of college, was the featured singer on this early program. It was typical of the extremely low-budget musical interludes favored by the networks — especially cash-poor ABC and DuMont — in the early days of TV. Miss Benjamin recalls that it was produced in a corner of the same studio used for Vincent Lopez, The Small Fry Club, Wendy Barrie, and others, and the set really consisted of no more than a drape with the musical trio (pianist Alan Logan, guitar, and bass) and herself in front. The program was

**BROADCAST HISTORY:***Jul 1950-Aug 1950, NBC Mon 9:00-9:30**Oct 1950-Jun 1958, NBC Sat 10:30-11:00 (OS)**Oct 1958-Apr 1959, CBS Fri 7:30-8:00**Aug 1974, CBS Fri 8:00-8:30***VOCALISTS:**

Eileen Wilson (1950-1952)

Snooky Lanson (1950-1957)

Dorothy Collins (1950-1957, 1958-1959)

Sue Bennett (1951-1952)

June Valli (1952-1953)

Russell Arms (1952-1957)

Gisele MacKenzie (1953-1957)

Tommy Leonetti (1957-1958)

Jill Corey (1957-1958)

Alan Copeland (1957-1958)

Virginia Gibson (1957-1958)

Johnny Desmond (1958-1959)

Kelly Garrett (1974)

Chuck Woolery (1974)

Sheralee (1974)

**DANCERS:**

The Hit Paraders (chorus &amp; dancers) (1950-1958)

Peter Gennaro Dancers (1958-1959)

Tom Hansen Dancers (1974)

**ANNOUNCERS:**

Andre Baruch (1950-1957)

Del Sharbutt (1957-1958)

**ORCHESTRA:**

Raymond Scott (1950-1957)

Harry Sosnik (1958-1959)

Milton Delugg (1974)

**THEME:**

"Lucky Day"; "So Long for Awhile" (closing)

The legendary Lucky Strike Hit Parade, which had been a radio standby since 1935, was first seen on television during the summer of 1950, as a four-time-only replacement for Robert Montgomery Presents. It became a regular series the following October, simulcast with the radio version.

The format was essentially unchanged from radio, presenting the seven most popular songs in America as performed by a regular cast of singers and the Hit Parade Orchestra. Songs were not necessarily presented in rank order, although the rank of each was prominently featured and number one was always presented last, with great fanfare. Two or three "extras" — usually standards — were also included. Elaborate production numbers marked Your Hit Parade, and since many songs stayed on the charts

Beginning in the summer of 1975, a regular feature of *The Midnight Special* was "Rock Tribute," a segment that profiled a different rock star each week. Included were scenes of the star in concert, interviews, and various other insights into the star's life.

Another regular feature, added in the fall of 1979, was a weekly comedy segment in which a panel of comics and writers made fun of things that had happened on the previous week's telecast. The following April brought two other new features — "Golden Moments," highlighting clips of great performances from past telecasts of *The Midnight Special*, and "Top 10," a countdown of the week's top hits. The later feature was dropped six months later.

## MUSIC SCENE, THE

### Music

**FIRST TELECAST:** September 22, 1969

**LAST TELECAST:** January 12, 1970

#### BROADCAST HISTORY:

Sep 1969-Jan 1970, ABC Mon 7:30-8:15

#### HOSTS:

David Steinberg  
Larry Hankin  
Christopher Ross  
Paul Reid Roman  
Chris Bokeno  
Lily Tomlin  
Pat Williams Orchestra

A contemporary popular music program, at first utilizing six rotating hosts, but beginning in November hosted by David Steinberg (and guests) only. Practically every big name in rock music appeared on this short-lived show, with the first telecast alone featuring the Beatles, James Brown, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, Buck Owens, Three Dog Night, Oliver, and Tom Jones. Seen in later telecasts were Janis Joplin, Bobby Sherman, Sly & the Family Stone, Isaac Hayes, Stevie Wonder, Mama Cass, and even Groucho Marx, among others. A special feature was performances of the latest hit songs in various fields, such as rock, rhythm & blues, Country & Western, and comedy, based on *Billboard* magazine's record popularity charts. An improvisational comedy group was also seen.

## MUSIC SHOP, THE

### Musical Variety

**FIRST TELECAST:** January 11, 1959

**LAST TELECAST:** March 8, 1959

#### BROADCAST HISTORY:

Jan 1959-Mar 1959, NBC Sun 7:30-8:00

#### HOST:

Buddy Bregman

Filmed in England, and featuring popular vocal groups from Great Britain plus American guest stars, this series of half-hour musical programs aired on ABC for an eight-week period during the summer of 1959. Among those most frequently featured were Cliff Richard and the Drifters, the Dallas Boys, Marty Wilde, Cherry Wainer, and Dickie Pride. Jimmy Henny was co-host of the program for the last few weeks.

## PETER POTTER SHOW, THE

### Music/Discussion

**FIRST TELECAST:** September 13, 1953

**LAST TELECAST:** March 28, 1954

#### BROADCAST HISTORY:

Sep 1953-Jan 1954, ABC Sun 9:30-10:30

Jan 1954-Mar 1954, ABC Sun 9:30-10:00

#### HOST:

Peter Potter

Hollywood disc jockey Peter Potter brought his Juke Box Jury to national television in 1953. It consisted of the playing of new records, with ensuing discussion by a panel of celebrities from movies, theater, TV, and the recording industry. The studio audience also participated in the voting on each new record — "Will it be a hit (bong!)...or a miss (clunk!)?" Some live performances were also included.

The program was known during its first month by the familiar title Juke Box Jury, then switched to *The Peter Potter Show*.

## SHINDIG

### Music

**FIRST TELECAST:** September 16, 1964

**LAST TELECAST:** January 8, 1966

#### BROADCAST HISTORY:

Sep 1964-Jan 1965, ABC Wed 8:30-9:00

Jan 1965-Sep 1965, ABC Wed 8:30-9:30

Sep 1965-Jan 1966, ABC Thu/Sat 7:30-8:00

#### REGULARS:

Jimmy O'Neill  
The Shindig Dancers

#### FREQUENTLY SEEN:

Bobby Sherman  
Righteous Brothers  
The Wellingtons  
Everly Brothers  
Donna Loren  
Glen Campbell  
Sonny & Cher

just a supper-club combo on TV. Despite the "Teen" in the title, they played mostly standards and opened with an inane little ditty that went something like, "It's time, time, time/Time for 'Teen Time Tunes!'" Hardly a precursor of *American Bandstand*!

Miss Benjamin later changed her professional name to Sue Bennett and had a successful career on *Kay Kyser's Kollege of Musical Knowledge and Your Hit Parade*.

## THIS IS MUSIC

### Music

**FIRST TELECAST:** June 13, 1958

**LAST TELECAST:** May 21, 1959

#### BROADCAST HISTORY:

Jun 1958-Sep 1958, ABC Fri 8:30-9:00

Sep 1958, ABC Mon 7:30-8:00

Oct 1958, ABC Mon 10:00-10:30

Nov 1958-Feb 1959, ABC Thu 10:00-10:30

Mar 1959, ABC Mon 9:30-10:00

Apr 1959-May 1959, ABC Thu 10:00-10:30

#### EMCEE:

Colin Male

#### REGULARS:

Ramona Burnett  
Lee Fogel  
Paula Jane  
Wanda Lewis  
The O'Neill Dancers  
Bud Chase  
Bob Smith  
Gail Johnson  
Bob Shreeve

When the original artists mouthed the words to their hit records, as they did on *American Bandstand*, to make sure that it sounded right, it was called lip-syncing. On this live series, which originated from Cincinnati, Ohio, a group of regular performers did the same thing, but to records made famous by other artists. They mouthed the words while the records were played. This *Is Music* hopped all over the ABC schedule during the 1958-1959 season, filling otherwise empty time slots. Many of the larger stations, which scheduled syndicated programs to fill time slots that the network did not program on a regular basis, did not air this series.

## YOUR HIT PARADE

### Music

**FIRST TELECAST:** July 10, 1950

**LAST TELECAST:** August 30, 1974

for months, considerable ingenuity was required to vary the treatment of a song from week to week. Among the songs that remained in the number-one spot for long periods in the early 1950s were "Too Young" (12 weeks), "Because of You" (11 weeks), and "Hey There" (10 weeks).

The survey strove to sound official. Each week listeners were told that "Your Hit Parade survey checks the best sellers on sheet music and phonograph records, the songs most heard on the air and most played on the automatic coin machines...an accurate, authentic tabulation of America's taste in popular music." No explanation of exactly how the surveying was done was ever revealed, however, and the actual compiling took place in great secrecy at Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborne, which was sponsor American Tobacco Company's advertising agency.

The ballads of the early 1950s were fine for TV presentation by a regular cast of singers, but trouble began to brew for *Your Hit Parade* in 1955 when a new kind of music invaded the charts — rock 'n' roll. Not only were the *Hit Parade* regulars ill-suited to perform this new, raucous music, but the youngsters who bought the records wanted to see only the original performers. There was something ludicrous about Snooky Lanson attempting "Hound Dog" in a different setting each week (usually as a childish novelty).

Although most of the *Hit Parade* singers were recording artists in their own right, only one of them ever had a hit big enough to appear on the program's top seven while a regular on the show. That was Gisele MacKenzie's "Hard to Get," which made the list briefly in 1955. Ironically, one-time *Hit Parade* regular June Valli had the biggest hit of her career, "Crying in the Chapel," only two months after leaving the show in June 1953.

In September 1957 the entire cast was replaced by a younger, more "contemporary" crew, none of whom were popular rock artists, however. The age-old format itself was extensively revamped the following February, with the hit parade reduced to five songs, plus five more melodious "extras" and a big \$200,000 "Mystery Tune" contest. None of this tinkering solved the problems created by drastically changing musical styles, and after a final season on CBS (during which the top-tunes list was drawn from *Billboard* magazine) the program expired on April 24, 1959. An abortive attempt was made at reviving the show in the summer of 1974, with the emphasis on *Your Hit Parade* songs from selected broadcasts of specific weeks in the 1940s and 1950s, mixed with currently popular hits performed by the original artists.