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This week's not-so-quiet revolution in television

McGEORGE BUNDY
He's the revolutionary

Special to The Star

NEW YORK—A $200 million satellite television system that would offer U.S. viewers five new educational channels was proposed by the Ford Foundation this week.

Ford said that under the new system American viewers would gain:

- A wider choice of programs in addition to existing entertainment;
- Live programming as opposed to television's largely taped presentations, plus informational and cultural programs broadcast during "prime" time;
- Live educational programs for an estimated 40 million students at all educational levels, plus instructional materials which could be stored on tapes for reuse;
- Live and complete coverage of hearings, debates, public court trials, political conventions, public sessions of congress, and documentaries on national and international issues, interviews and discussions with top leaders;
- Cultural, musical, dramatic and literary presentations from any point in the U.S., including premieres of opera, symphony and the theatre.

The system won't effect Canada unless the CBC builds special receiving and transmitting stations and buy programs.

However, viewers in some border cities, Windsor and Vancouver for example, would probably be able to pick up the new channels from U.S. stations.

The proposed system—The Broadcasters Non-Profit Satellite System (BNS)—would consist of four satellites, one in each time zone. Each would beam out six commercial channels and five educational channels.

Educational programs would be picked up and transmitted from the dozens of U.S. educational television stations already established. Most of these are owned by universities and private groups.

BNS would be administered by a board of directors with representatives of commercial and non-commercial broadcasters, foundations, schools, universities, and perhaps government bodies.

The proposal was made to the Federal Communications Commission early in the week. Now, the television industry is expecting a long legal wrangle after the Commission invites comments on the proposal, Oct. 1.

When could it come about? McGeorge Bundy, former presidential adviser and now president of the Ford Foundation, says the system could be in operation a year and a half after the commission gives permission.

Ford has also suggested an alternative system that would beam out 10 new educational channels in each time zone. But this alternative would cost more. It comes it will be as a laser development of BNS.

BNS would pay for its educational programming by renting its commercial channels to the existing networks.

That rental would net BNS about $30 million for the first year, and as much as $60 million within 10 years, Ford said.

The networks would stand to save $40 million a year by using the satellites instead of cables, which cost them a total of $200 million per year.

Bundy made public the detailed proposal at the time set by the FFC to receive statements from interested parties over ABC-TV's application to launch its own satellite system.

ABC's bid for a satellite license, reportedly backed by Hughes Aircraft Corp., the prime manufacturer of satellite components, brought strong opposition from the American Telephone & Telegraph Co., and the Communications Satellite Corp. (COMSAT). Both claim COMSAT is the only firm authorized to operate satellite systems.

Bundy said his group has no intention of owning or operating such a system, but was only suggesting a tentative plan. Some corporations suspect otherwise.

The proposal, which threatens to shatter the mammoth industry's status quo, also puts the highly-respected Bundy on the firing line before powerful interests in the communications industry who feel the foundation has no business proposing corporations. "What the hell does Ford know about communications?" said one corporation executive.

Bundy offered the proposal as a "model" which he hopes the FCC will use in inviting suggestions from the "widest possible public." The FCC has set no date to rule on the proposal.

Toronto Daily Star

REACH FOR A STAR, MOST PEOPLE DO

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SOME 3,000 FOLK-MUSIC FANS WATCHED THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS OPEN LAST NIGHT'S FIRST CONCERT AT INNIS LAKE

—Star photos by Art Jones

PETE SEEGER: STILL THE MAN WHO MADE IT ALL HAPPEN

At the age of 6, Mariposa already seems retrospective

By ARTHUR ZELDIN
Star staff writer

The air hung over Innis Lake last night like somebody's used washcloth, perhaps it was this dampness which made the opening concert of the 1966 Mariposa Folk Festival an essentially sedate affair.

But something else hung heavy in the air, too—the feeling that what we, the 2,000-strong members of the audience, were watching, listening to, was a retrospective rather than a festival of everything that is current in the wide-ranging field of today's "folk" music.

This is not to say the performers weren't good—many of them were great. The headliner of the concert, for instance, was Pete Seeger, the dean of American folk-singers. Seeger is an excellent folk scholar and musician; he is also humorous, courageous, tender, an utterly unpretentious and dignified man. He brings these qualities to every performance, including last night's.

But listen to Ian Tyson's introduction to Seeger: "If this man hadn't started singing folk songs 25 years ago, we may not have been here tonight."

Exactly.

Seeger is to today's music what D. W. Griffith is to today's movies: the founding father, the innovator, the influence. His talent, like Griffith's, will withstand the passing of time. But he is very definitely not in the midst of the musical styles that are developing in 1966.

Tyson himself, the dean of Canadian folk-singers, was the headliner for the first half of the concert. Tyson is not only a singer, but a forceful stage presence. Brilliantly accompanied by David Bea on a complementary guitar, he delivered fine material, including some of his own, in a mature and timbrous voice.

But what he delivered was Ian Tyson, 1965, and not the Ian Tyson who has lately been doing a lot of work with the big electric sound. His half dozen songs were in themselves an Ian Tyson retrospective.

With one unlikely exception, there was not an electric guitar in the whole conglomeration of sounds that were performed last night. What we were listening to was music from the mechanical age. And in 1966, the mechanical age is, while not dead, no longer really alive either.

Folk music in all its pure, non-electric varieties, from blues to blue grass to ethnic, and for all that it comprises the elements of today's big sound, seems destined to become the sub-culture that rock-and-roll once was.

It is a museum art, although one that can still be practised beautifully by occasional newcomers like Joni Mitchell.

Miss Mitchell plays guitar tolerably; her voice is an interesting, although not unusual, husky version of Joan Baez's. The songs that she writes and delivers so feelingly, though, are lovely: poetic, even Canadian in their tone.

They make her performance.

But even Miss Mitchell's style seems destined to have limited appeal as opposed to the huge, and growing popularity of electric music. So far, the sixth annual Mariposa Festival is outpacing the attendance of the previous three trouble-plagued years.

Still, last night's audience remained significantly small, compared to the halcyon days of the mid-1960s. And it was very definitely non-"Yorkville," older, more proper, with lots of mamas and papas and little sweet-stirred kiddies.

The majority there were young, of course. But they also behaved as if they were living in the mechanical age rather than the electrical. They didn't participate. They paid tribute.

The one electrical exception, incidentally, was Big Walter Horton's electric guitar in the Sunnyland Slim, Big Walter Horton and Johnny Young Chicago blues group.

But it seemed out of place, neither quite at home with the original, piano-laden sound of the Mississippi blues, nor vibrant enough on its own.

To my ear, the Chicago blues of this group seemed a strange hybrid, belonging whole-heartedly neither to the past nor to the present.

And this predicament also cloaked the appearance of the top-talking Canadian Indians, who performed a variety of age-old Indian dances.

Ironically enough, I suppose, the Indians were the emblem of last night's concert, in effect, their routine said: "Here is a whole culture, lovingly researched, practised, performed—and codified, classified, categorized."

Or even retrospective.

JONI MITCHELL: CANADIAN SOUND

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