HOLBROOK AND MARK TWAIN

A magnificient effort

By RICK DU BROW
United Press International

HOLLYWOOD (UPI) — Hal Holbrook, who alters his content from performance to performance, has about six hours of Twain material that he uses, and one hopes that CBS-TV has had the good sense to try to get him to do one or more sequels—if he doesn't think this would put him out of business. Monday night's broadcast was certainly classic in the true sense of the word, and a group of such programs would constitute a magnificent unit.

He is a great actor, Holbrook, and a great comedian. Of course, Mr. Twain provided him with some rather good material. For example: "Man is the only animal that blushes, or needs to." In this day and age, it is almost incredible to think that at one time, the academic bluenoses, with their typical farsightedness felt Twain was unfit to be read in schools—too common, you know, not at all like William Dean Howells.

Made Respectable

Gentlemen like H.L Mencken actually had to spend part of their working days committing literary assassination upon the professorial societies until Twain was finally made wholly respectable in the academies that supposedly help determine such things. In 1913, Mencken wrote in the Smart Set magazine of Twain:

"I believe that he was the true father of our national literature, the first genuine American artist of the blood royal."

Twain's finest achievement was undoubtedly "Huckleberry Finn," and so it as only fitting Monday night that the highlight of Holbrook's portrayal was an enactment of the author reciting and playing out a passage of the book. I also particularly enjoyed the "Sunrise on the River" recitation from "Life on the Mississippi" and Twain's discussion of "My Friend Satan," whom he claimed had never had a chance to present his side of the story.

Not Intellectual

Despite the oversimplification by some historians that Twain was actually a full-fledged cynic most of his adult life, his better biographers have suggested that his pessimism was probably about on the intellectual level of a village skeptic—until the years when family tragedy plagued him. Mr. Holbrook, recognizing that Twain was basically not intellectual in a very strong sense, depicted the level of his skepticism shrewdly on Monday.

Yet, the stings of his anger at the foibles and nature of the human race could be felt in Holbrook's portrayal. With Twain's incomparable sense of exaggeration, he enacted the author's words against the hypocrisy of pseudo-religious persons so that one almost doubled up in anguished laughter. There were also Twain's barbs at the kind of patriotism that was described as saying: "Our country, right or wrong" and "Even though the war be wrong, we are in it."

Above all, though, Mr. Holbrook caught the uproarious nature of Twain's writings and storytelling, and the beauty of his pureness of heart. Twain created the prototype of the typical American boy, who came to embody the outlook of a nation—an outlook that later, in our time, has come to be mocked, sneered at and substituted for in many circles, but never improved upon. Mr. Holbrook captured all this and more, in the subtlety of his performance. He is an artist, a genius at his profession, and a gentleman.

Family Tradition

HOLLYWOOD (UPI)—Following a long family tradition, Eddie Fov III will keep busy in show business as a vice president for television's Screen Gems

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Kanter Appointed

HOLLYWOOD (UPI) -- Hal Kanter has been appointed by the Writers Guild to fill the unexpired term of Rod Serling who resigned as president because of future movie assignments

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Italian Film

HOLLYWOOD (UPI)—Lloyd Nolan and Michael Rennie head for Rome and Greece to co-star in "A Jailbird" for Rizzoli Films

The buck Ends here . . . .

By Ivan D. E. Beaumont

The other morning I picked up the telephone and dialed 873-3895.

"Good Morning," was the answer. I said, "Hello, Woody, say if your cow ain't gone dry, stop by the house with a half gallon of milk."

"Sure thing," the happy fellow returned. "I'm at Thirteenth Street and Third Avenue and will be up your way soon."

And that was Woody Kreifels, the Alamito milk man who has one of Ed Ernst's telephones in his truck. Pretty handy item, Woody says. The number is not in the new telephone books, but Woody says he is advertising the service to spread the word.

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The second printing of the Nebraska City Centennial book of 1954 will be off the presses March 20.

The Chamber's public relations committee is spearheading the sale of the books as part of the Nebraska Centennial programs.

The Jaycee Jaynes will assist with the sales and advance orders are being accepted through the Chamber office. The books sell for $1 each.

Four pages of pictures have been inserted in the book which is a document cherished by most. The original book was compiled by the Women's Division of the Chamber. They did a dandy job.

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Did you hear the one about the expectant mother and her busy morning?

It seems the woman had an appointment with a doctor for an examination and amid the rush of getting up late and getting the kids off to school, the only container she could find for a specimen was a whiskey bottle which she placed in the front seat of the car.

She went to a grocery store and when she returned to her car she was found by another shopper, slumping over the steering wheel.

The alarmed shopper rushed to the car to offer help, but instead of an emergency, she found the expectant mother slumped, yes, but laughing heartily.

The mother related her hectic morning of the whiskey bottle, tranporting the kids to school and the grocery list.

But what really flipped her was the whiskey bottle.

"It's gone. Somebody stole it." And she laughed again.

That ought to be enough to make anyone change brands.

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Stolen from the back shop: This little youngster came into the world with a smile on his face.

The doctor gave him a gentle pat but instead of the usual cry, the infant began laughing.

The nurse took over and the best she could do was get a giggle from the little fella. Finally, they noticed his tiny clenched fist.

He was grasping a birth control pill.

Lee Remick's In

HOLLYWOOD (UPI) — Lee Remick is the newst addition to the April 10 telecast of the Academy Awards presentations.

Heflin Returns

HOLLYWOOD (UPI) -- Van Heflin returns to Broadway next season in Ira Wallach's comedy, "Beer Island"



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