

Nighttime cable TV host spotlights Michigan talent

By Duane Stewart
special writer

DINO VALLE is to cable TV what Johnny Carson is to late-night television. Executive producer, host and performer on his own show, Valle gives talented people from all over Michigan an opportunity to strut their stuff before the cameras of Channel 28 United Cable TV of Lincoln Park.

"The Dino Valle Show" is a well-executed half hour of chit-chat and entertainment, slick and professional, with emphasis on the neighborhood star rather than the nationwide superstar. "Our basic idea is to give promotion and exposure to the talent we have right here in Michigan," Valle said. "The local communities are saturated with good performers. There's a need for a show like this, but no one has it."

In his own life, Valle has learned the importance of media exposure. In the early '60s, he left his birthplace in Rome and came to America to study opera. He was going to the Detroit Institute of Musical Arts when he decided to enter a local contest that judged various performers on the quality of their musicianship and voice. The Mario Lanza Award, named after the operatic exploits of one of Hollywood's greatest, was given to Dino Valle for his excellence in music.

"THAT LAUNCHED my career right there," he said. "Just having the encouragement and the exposure was enough to keep me working at my art."

The award was not given in vain. Valle has paid back what he received with his own contribution to music. He is opera director in Dearborn, using his expertise for the arrangement of an opera and concert series at the Henry Ford Centennial Library. A concert of excerpts from many operas will be given May 21, and in the fall "Traviata" by Verdi will be staged.

Valle also hosts a daily show on WCAR in Livonia. The Italian opera hour is run between 4-5 p.m. A five-piece band called Dino Valle and the Venetians is often seen around Michigan. Five record albums spotlight the music and singing of this man whose voice could be a bottled spice.

He sings with other artists at Opera Night every Wednesday at the Pom D'Amore restaurant on Plymouth Road in Livonia. Valle, a resident of Dearborn Heights, can now make a living off his talent. His success is pretty much a chain reaction of the award he won, which put him in the limelight for those few necessary moments.

Most artists would like to make a career of their art. But for many it is only a part-time hobby waiting for the magical moment of discovery. "The Dino

Valle Show" could be one step closer to the Johnny Carson show for the impatient performer awaiting a break.

ALTHOUGH THERE is no monetary payment for the local entertainers appearing with Valle, there is the more valuable reward of recognition.

Channel 28 has been broadcasting the program since September of '81 to such downriver communities as Lincoln Park, Woodhaven, Trenton and Gibraltar.

"I really hope this show can be syndicated nationally or be taken up by a major station," Valle said. "I believe I have the knowledge to make a good local show. I've had four years background in television. I worked with Rita Bell, Vic Caputo and Bob Hayes, and I also obtained some valuable experience with Channel 9 and Channel 20."

"If this show can get the major network coverage that Rita Bell had it will be very helpful for the entertainers who appear."

"The Dino Valle Show" has been host to a variety of people, of varying personalities and varying talents. Johnny Glazer, a singer and comedian from WXYZ Radio, was on. Then there was comedienne Edna Brown of Lincoln Park, the Two Generations rock band from Jackson, the Imaginations who did a Blues Brothers imitation, the Ba-

roque Duo of Rochester on flute and harpsichord, and the Frontier Gummert of Ortonville — a country-western group that staged a gunfight.

VALLE MAKES it a point that he does not want to be labeled as a low-budget "Gong Show."

"By no means are we an amateur talent show. I have professionals on the show, people who have been playing at clubs around town, people from radio and stage. I don't encourage the type of thing where some mother thinks her little girl is the next Shirley Temple so she tries to use my show as her publicity platform."

Most of the acts are booked by Talent Coordinator Al Cole of Garden City. He has been a professional agent for many entertainers (including Valle) for quite a long time. He offers his phone number for the aspiring artists who would like to audition for a spot on "The Dino Valle Show." It is 261-2141 or 261-2143.

The show is pre-recorded every Saturday between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. It airs every Wednesday and Friday from 7-7:30 p.m.

Tony Palmieri is producer, Mark D. Brevester is director, Tina Zelinski runs audio, and Dennis Harrison is camera man. They function on a volunteer basis.

Well, the credits have rolled. And until next week . . .



ART EMANUELE/staff photographer

Dino Valle, who hosts a daily Italian opera hour on WCAR Radio of Livonia, recently also became host of a twice-weekly entertainment show on Channel 28 United Cable TV of Lincoln Park.

Golden songs make musical 'South Pacific' glow

Performances of the Farmington Players production of the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical "South Pacific" continue through May 22. Tickets were sold out before the show opened.

By Barbara Michale
special writer

With Rodgers and Hammerstein

review

tunes of pure gold. "South Pacific" is a perennial audience favorite. The current production by the Farmington Players is a spirited rendition featuring many fine voices and able perform-

ers. Set on a South Pacific island occupied by the U.S. Navy during World War II, the show focuses on two poignant love stories with interracial complications.

Ensign Nellie Forbush, a naive young nurse from Little Rock, falls in love with Emile DeBecque, a middle-aged French planter with a shady past. Nellie cannot cope, though, when she learns of DeBecque's two Polynesian children from his first marriage.

Meanwhile, Lt. Joseph Cable, a

young marine on special assignment to the island, falls in love with Liat, a beautiful native girl, but he finds it hard to face the prospect of an interracial marriage.

PERKY LINDA Finner is thoroughly engaging as Nellie, the "cock-eyed optimist" who's "in love with a wonderful guy" but resolves to "wash that man right out of my hair." Finner has a pleasing voice and also convincingly portrays Nellie's heartache.

As Emile, John Emmert's strong baritone is at its best in the hauntingly beautiful "Some Enchanted Evening."

Emmert also does a fine job of conveying Emile's European charm, though his facial expressions are a bit stiff. His parody of Nellie singing while washing her hair is an audience favorite.

Lt. Cable is a serious man who must be taught to unwind, but Jim Austin seems excessively unemotional in the role. His voice is effective in "Younger Than Springtime" but more animation is needed everywhere, especially with "You've Got to Be Taught," the song that spells out the show's anti-prejudice theme.

As Bloody Mary, Liat's shrewd, cunning mother, Mary Frankfurth is brimming with gusto. Her enthusiasm is infectious in "Happy Talk," and her rich voice casts a romantic spell with "Bali Hai."

Dick Sammis' Luther Billis is a lovable rogue who manipulates his way around naval regulations. This Luther has fewer rough edges than the way he is usually portrayed, and his adoration of Nellie comes across much stronger.

SAMMIS LEADS the Seabees in a lively chorus of "There is Nothing Like a Dame" and also heads the hilarious drag chorus line in "Honeybun."

In supporting roles, Dick Coe and Bob McWeeney are convincing as commanding officers. Coe's MacArthur affectations are an amusing touch. Louise Rizzi is a fetching Liat, and Robby Goldman and Angie Gillette are DeBecque's adorable youngsters.

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