

Original Amateur Hour

US TV talent show : 1948- : dir. : ? x ? min
 prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:

Presenter: Ted Mack, Announcer: Dennis James, Amateur variety performers of all ages

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	∞	M	⌘	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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From peanuts to castanets, the show must go on

Source: How Sweet it Was

How Sweet it Was – Television: A Pictorial Commentary comment:

“Ted Mack brought radio’s “Original Amateur Hour” to television in 1948. The successor to the late Major Bowes, Mack has maintained the show’s format, although the famed gong which announced the untimely end of a disastrous performance has now disappeared. Over the years the general quality of the performers seems to have improved. Gone are the days when each programme seemed to have at least

one contestant prepared to render “Sweet Adeline” on a bicycle pump. Mack, a gentle, patient man, is adept at calming the skittish amateurs. During the programme’s long run, he has travelled hundreds of thousands of miles with the show in search of new contestants.”

“Mack is shown here with a group of three-time winners. They are (left to right): The Four Peanuts, a barbershop quartet; baritone Robert Hamilton, violinist Norma Ferris;

accordionist Patrick O'Brien; tenor Michael McCarthy; and Myrna and Carolos Camara, Castilian dancers."

[no listing in "Halliwell's Television Companion", "History of Television", "Television's Greatest Hits" or "25 Years of ITV - 1955-1980"]

No further information currently available. "*How Sweet it Was*" was published in 1966, and "**Original Amateur Hour**" was still going strong. Talent shows just keep on coming, and in one sense the glitzier the packaging the tawdrier they look. I would far sooner watch a 1950s show such as this one, for all its primitive technical standards, than a current edition of "**Stars in Their Eyes**" or any of its ilk. In the UK probably the definitive show of this kind was Hughie Green's "**Opportunity Knocks**" (who could forget his Clap-ometer? Or used-car salesman patter?), but of more interest to the archive were shows such as "**Mini-Pops**", where all the performers were children.

See subject index under **CHILD ACTORS / CHILD PERFORMERS**, [DANCE / BALLET](#) and **MUSIC / YOUNG MUSICIANS**.