

THE FRANKIE HOWERD SHOW

to

FUR OR FEATHERS

The Frankie Howerd Show

Thu 9:00-9:30 p.m., 26 Feb-8 Apr 1976

Sat 8:30-9:00 p.m., 24 Apr-5 Jun 1976

The CBC imported British comic Frankie Howerd, who had recently appeared in the BBC series *Up Pompeii*, to star in a situation comedy to be called *Oooh, Canada!* Howerd's shtik was vulgar, typically English toilet humour and the bawdy double entendre, as he usually functioned as a character in the story as well as the show's host and commentator on the action. The premise of the show, which was retitled before it went to the air, held that Howerd played a British immigrant, unemployed in Toronto. Each show offered a different opportunity for Howerd to make a success of himself and to fail. Through the course of the series, he has to confront the different Canadian institutions that might put him on the road to success.

Howerd lived in a run-down rooming house, along with the rest of the show's regular, supporting characters. They included his nosy landlady, played by Ruth Springford, and her son, played by Gary Files; Wally Wheeler, played by Jack Duffy, who lived in obscurity in the basement to avoid making alimony payments; and Denise, a model and dancer played by Peggy Mahon, who gave Howerd the opportunity to lace the show with jokes about her breasts.

The show offered a form of comedy distinctly different from the CBC's own *King of Kensington*, whose time slot *The Frankie Howerd Show* took for the first part of its run, or such highly rated U.S. shows as *Laverne and Shirley* or *Happy Days* (which were vulgar in their own, more innocent ways). Nevertheless it ran only thirteen weeks.

The program was produced by Bill Lynn and Norman Campbell, and written by Bill Lynn, Jerry O'Flanagan, and Ken Finkleman.

Frank's Bandstand

Fri 5:30-6:00 p.m., 2 Oct 1964-25 Jun 1965

Frank Cameron introduced music with regulars Patricia McKinnon, Karen Oxley, D.J. Jefferson, and Brian Ahern and the Brunswick Playboys in this variety show from Halifax. See Music Hop.

French For Love

Sun 2:00-2:30 p.m., 3 Jan-30 May 1965

Sun 1:00-1:30 p.m., 2 Jan

Sun 3:30-4:00 p.m., 3 Apr-10 Jul 1966

Gerard and Sheila Arthur, the husband and wife team who were heard on CBC radio in Time For French, were the creators and principals of this television series, which presented conversational French for English-speaking audiences. (As of autumn 1965, the radio show was also called French For Love.) In sketches, with dialogue in both French and English, the Arthurs argued in such a way that the audience could understand the discussion in both languages. The show also included two other segments. One, called What The Dictionaries Don't Tell, concerned idioms and subtleties of the French language. For the other, called Pages choisies, Gerard Arthur read a text in French, and followed that with an English translation.

As of 28 February 1965, Gerard Arthur retired from the show, but Sheila Arthur continued to write the scripts. Their places were taken by Felixe Fitzgerald and Paul Hebert. By the start of the second season, however, the Arthurs returned as co-hosts, although the sketches were performed by a series of actors, including Carol Zorro and Yvon Dufour, and Lise Lasalle and Raymond Cosgrove.

French For Love was produced in Montreal by Denyse Adam.

Friday After School

Fri 5:00-5:30 p.m., 1 Oct 1976-25 Mar 1977

Fri 4:30-5:00 p.m., 7 Oct 1977-8 Sep 1978

Fri 4:30-5:00 p.m., 5 Jan-30 Mar 1979

This was the blanket title for a series of children's programmes purchased from the BBC and elsewhere.

Friday Island

Fri 5:30-6:00 p.m., 19 Oct 1962-12 Apr 1963

Friday Island was the fictional location for this half-hour comedy/drama produced in Vancouver, and created by the people who had previously developed Tidewater Tramp. The Granger family, from Ottawa, visited this gulf island off the coast of British Columbia, saw their future, and opened a tourist lodge there. Mom and Dad Granger were played by Lillian Carlson and Walter Marsh, and their two sons were Stephen, played by Mark de Courcey, and Tadpole, played by Kevin Burchett. Other members of the family were James Onley, as Grandpa, and Rae Brown, as Aunt Sophie. Mildred Franklin played Aunt Vi, Reagh Cooper was the young boy, Boomer, and Niki Lipman was Barbara. Robert Clothier was the merchant, Archie, and Barbara Tremain was the postmistress, Annabelle. They ran the general store (although they did not exactly run it together; they had not spoken to each other for years, and had built a fence down the middle of the building to separate the shop from the post office).

The program was written by Peter Statner, Christine Best, and Peter Power, and produced by John Thorn.

The Friendly Giant

Tue 4:30-4:45 p.m., 30 Sep 1958-23 Jun 1959

Wed 4:30-5:00 p.m., 3 Oct 1959-6 Apr 1960

Tue/Wed 4:30-4:45 p.m., 6 Apr 1960-

Mon/Wed/Fri 4:30-4:45 p.m., 17 Oct 1960-30 Sep 1961

Mon/Wed/Fri 3:30-3:45 p.m., 2 Oct-31 Dec 1961

Mon/Wed/Fri 4:30-4:45 p.m., 3 Jan-29 Jun 1962

Mon /Wed/Fri 2:45-3:00 p.m., 15 Oct 1962-28 Jun 1963

Mon-Fri 3:30-3:45 p.m., 14 Oct 1963-26 Jun 1964

Mon-Fri 11:00-11:15 a.m., 19 Oct 1964-28 May 1965

Mon-Fri 10:30-10:45 a.m., 18 Oct 1965-27 May 1966

For many years, one of the most familiar and welcome faces on CBC television was that of the Friendly Giant, Bob Homme. One of the the most genial and relaxed presences on television, Friendly usually introduced each show, "Once upon a time, not long ago, not far away. . ." The camera might survey the main street of a miniature town until it stopped at an enormous boot, and then tilt up to his face. "I'll hurry over to the castle and go in the back door so I can let the drawbridge down and open the big doors for you," he told us. "Are you ready?" he asked. "Here's my castle." Then, as a harp and tinwhistle duo played the theme music, "Early One Morning," the drawbridge of a miniature castle lowered and front doors, lettered "Friendly Giant," swung open to invite young viewers in. In front of the fireplace, Friendly's gigantic hand always arranged "one little chair for one of you, and a bigger chair for two more to curl up in, and for someone who likes to rock, a rocking chair in the middle." Then, he instructed us to "look up. . . waayyy up," and he called Rusty, a rooster who lived in a sack that hung on the castle wall. They were joined, shortly, by Jerome, the giraffe, who stuck his head through the window that Friendly always stood by. For the remainder of the fifteen minute show, they would chat, read a story book, and play music and sing. Then, Friendly would say goodbye to Jerome and Rusty, and to his young guests. He let them out the front door and pulled up the drawbridge after them as, in the sky above the castle, a cow jumped over the moon.

In the tradition of genial television father figures, such as Captain Kangaroo and, later, Mister Rogers, the Friendly Giant welcomed young guests into his television home and provided a quiet, entertaining, and educational time. One account of the show noted that the puppet characters represented typical children and points of identification for young viewers--Rusty, who was small, and spoke rapidly in a high-pitched falsetto, as the excitable younger child, and the large, drawling, low-voiced Jerome as the know-it-all, older sibling--and Friendly served as a reasonable mediator (Maclean's [April 1970]).

The format for *The Friendly Giant* was strict, in that the beginning and end of the show were the same each day, and what went on in the middle would vary in substance, but not in shape. The set formula for the show's structure opened up different areas that the cast of two could work with more freely. The performances by Homme, as the giant, and Rod Coneybeare, as the voices of both Rusty and Jerome, had an easygoing, conversational tone. Homme outlined the show and he and Coneybeare rehearsed without written dialogue before going in front of the cameras. Each show dealt with a specific theme, such as going fishing or the reasons people wear hats or the idea of having to choose, and the story and the song generally illustrated or had something to do with that theme.

Perhaps the most important element of *The Friendly Giant* was its conscientious and accessible approach to music for children. Friendly played wind instruments, such as the recorder, the pennywhistle, or the clarinet, Rusty played harp (which was actually played by John Duncan), and Jerome sang along. Once a week, they were joined by a pair of puppet cats who played a musical concert of their own. These simple little ensembles encouraged children to appreciate songs and to make music.

The Friendly Giant was created by Bob Homme, and produced by Michael Spivak (1958-59), Dan McCarthy (1959-60), Doug Davidson (1960-65), Ed Mercel (1965-66), Hedley Read (1966-71), Graham Doyle (1971-74), Gloria White (1974-75), Barry Cranston (1975-76), and John Ryan (1976-84). The show's run ended at the same time as the CBC instituted massive budget cuts imposed by the federal government, although the network denied that there was any connection.

Frigidaire Entertains

Fri 8:30-9:00 p.m., 1 Oct 1954-1 Jul 1955

Byng Whittaker and Frosia Gregory were the hosts for this half-hour, musical variety show, which had the format of a masked ball. The three Niosi brothers, Bert, Joe, and Johnny, provided music, as did the orchestra, conducted by Jimmy Namaro. Harvey Hart produced.

Front And Centre

Wed 8:30-9:00 p.m., 3 Jul-18 Sep 1963

Pepsi-Cola Canada and Kraft Foods sponsored this twelve week, musical variety series in the summer of 1963. Before a studio audience each week, on Front And Centre's star-shaped, thrust stage, well-known Canadian entertainers performed and then introduced new talent to the television audience. On the first show, for example, Quebec singer Micheline presented Les Jerolas, a variety act (who had appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show when the U.S. show was broadcast from the O'Keefe Centre in Toronto, and consequently, ironically, had already been seen by a larger audience than Front And Centre could ever attract). Other guests included Allan Blye (who presented Malka and Joso), Pat Hervey (with drummer Barry Hart), Shirley Harmer, Wally Koster, Tommy Common, Larry Mann, Ian and Sylvia, Patti Lewis, and Tommy Hunter. Each week, the show also employed a different musical director and choreographer. They included conductors Lucio Agostini, Ricky Hyslop, and Eddie Karam, and dancers Don Gillies and Bob Van Norman.

Front and Centre was written by Chris Beard and produced by Terry Kyne, whose next project would be the late night variety show, Nightcap.

Front Page Challenge

Mon 9:30-10:00 p.m., 24 Jun-7 Oct 1957

Tue 8:00-8:30 p.m., 22 Oct 1957-17 Jun 1958

Tue 8:00-8:30 p.m., 28 Sep 1958-16 Jun 1959

Tue 9:00-9:30 p.m., 25 Sep 1959-21 Jun 1960

Tue 9:30-10:00 p.m., 20 Sep 1960-13 Jun 1961

Tue 9:30-10:00 p.m., 19 Sep 1961-26 Jun 1962

Tue 9:30-10:00 p.m., 25 Sep 1962-25 Jun 1963

Tue 9:30-10:00 p.m., 24 Sep 1963-23 Jun 1964

Tue 9:30-10:00 p.m., 29 Sep 1964-29 Jun 1965

Tue 9:00-9:30 p.m., 14 Sep 1965-29 Jun 1966

Mon 10:00-10:30 p.m., 12 Sep 1966-12 Jun 1967

Mon 9:00-9:30 p.m., 11 Sep 1967-10 Jun 1968

Mon 9:00-9:30 p.m., 23 Sep 1968-23 Jun 1969

Mon 8:30-9:00 p.m., 29 Sep 1969-27 Jun 1970

Mon 8:30-9:00 p.m., 21 Sep 1970-14 Jun 1971

Mon 9:30-10:00 p.m., 20 Sep 1971-12 Jun 1972

Tue 9:30-10:00 p.m., 12 Sep 1972-3 Apr 1973

Sat 8:00-8:30 p.m., During NHL Playoffs, 1973

Tue 9:30-10:00 p.m., 22 May-12 Jun 1973

Tue 9:30-10:00 p.m., 18 Sep 1973-20 Apr 1974

Sat 8:00-8:30 p.m., 21 Apr 1973-22 Jun 1974

Tue 9:30-10:00 p.m., 17 Sep 1974-

Sat 8:00-8:30 p.m., 12 Apr-14 Jun 1975

Mon 8:30-9:00 p.m., 22 Sep 1975-31 May 1976

Mon 9:00-9:30 p.m., 20 Sep 1976-6 Jun 1977

Mon 8:30-9:00 p.m., 19 Sep 1977-5 Jun 1978

Fri 8:30-9:00 p.m., 22 Sep 1978-15 Sep 1979

Fri 8:30-9:00 p.m., 8 Oct 1979-12 Sep 1980

Mon 9:30-10:00 p.m., 15 Sep 1980-25 May 1981

Mon 9:30-10:00 p.m., 1 Jun-3 Jul 1981 (R)

Fri 8:30-9:00 p.m., 3 Jul-25 Sep (R)

Sun 7:30-8:00 p.m., 4 Oct 1981-30 May 1982

Mon 9:30-10:00 p.m., 31 May-14 Jun 1982

Mon 9:30-10:00 p.m., 14 Jun-6 Sep 1982 (R)

Sun 8:30-9:00 p.m., 26 Sep 1982-22 May 1983

Front Page Challenge is an axiom of Canadian television. Although an entertainment program, its principal reason for being was informational. The series, created by writer John Aylesworth and developed by producer Harvey Hart, started as an inexpensive summer replacement for The Denny Vaughan Show and before the summer run was up, the new quiz show had usurped the time slot for Vaughan's musical variety program.

Each week, three regular panelists and a guest asked questions of challengers, who were usually concealed from view, in order to guess headline-making news stories. After each quiz, the audience watched a newsreel-style account of the story, and the mystery guest descended from the booth above and behind the panel to sit for an interview with the four panelists. In the early period of the program's history, there were usually three quizzes, which lasted four minutes each. Consequently, the show ran at a quick pace and interviews were very brief. Later, the game was shortened to three, then two minutes, and the panel played only two games per show, allowing more time for the question period.

On the debut broadcast, 24 June 1957, panelists Gordon Sinclair, Toby Robins, Alex Barris, and guest Scott Young, with the help of moderator Win Barron and announcer Bernard (Bunny) Cowan, identified Alfred Scadding, a survivor of the Moose River mining disaster, Madame Alex Legros, who attended at the birth of the Dionne Quintuplets, and Jean Drapeau, the mayor of Montreal, who represented the investigation into vice in that city. The panelists were chosen after extensive auditions and tryouts. Barron was the commentator for Canadian Paramount News and, besides the credibility that his news voice offered, also presented himself as a distinguished presence. Sinclair, a veteran reporter and commentator on Toronto's private radio station CFRB appeared as a direct, brash, opinionated questioner, and filled the producers' needs for a "curmudgeon" on the panel. Also a reporter, Barris was associated more with the entertainment beat through his column in the Globe and Mail, and had also made a run at television in his own variety show, The Barris Beat. Robins was chosen from a list of union television actresses, and her looks were an issue (as they obviously were not with the choices of Sinclair and Barris). John Aylesworth has insultingly confessed, "We had located plenty of newspapermen without difficulty, but good-looking women reporters are so rare we realized we would have to give a few actresses a trial." As an announcer, Cowan was the commercial voice of Lever

Brothers, and took on the job of the show's announcer when that company decided to sponsor Front Page Challenge.

Before the end of the summer run, the lineup changed. Barron never adjusted to television and appeared stiff and incapable of controlling the game, and was sent on vacation. Barris was perceived as too flippant to be a panelist, but producer Hart tried him out as a replacement in the moderator's chair. By the time the show started its regular run, however, Fred Davis, the co-host of CBC-TV's afternoon show Open House, and who had also had an on-air audition for the job during the summer, became the moderator, and Pierre Berton, then managing editor of Maclean's magazine, took the third regular spot on the panel. The combination of Davis, Sinclair, Robins, Berton, and Cowan remained intact until 1961.

Toby Robins had worked conscientiously to overcome her lack of experience in journalism to play the game on a more nearly equal basis with Sinclair, Berton, and their guest panelists, who could include news personalities such as June Callwood, Mike Wallace, or Walter Cronkite, and she succeeded. However, where Sinclair or Berton might gain attention for their incisive questions, for their own opinions, or for putting an interview subject on the spot with a potentially embarrassing question, Robins gained more press and viewer attention for her wardrobe (which is perhaps surprising considering some of the outlandish jackets and ties Sinclair wore) or other aspects of her appearance, such as the period in 1959 when she wore a blonde wig. She was extremely important to the success of the program in its early years. She represented a young and lively professional woman to the Canadian television public. She remained with the show through an entire pregnancy, and had a child without having to miss a broadcast, and, as Barbara Frum has attested, made a mark in the Canadian consciousness of the 1950s as a result. In summer 1959, she also started to attract press by requesting more money for her appearances on Front Page Challenge. In fact, the CBC attempted to undercut her by approaching June Callwood to take the job at the same rate Robins was getting. Callwood refused, Robins and the network reached an agreement, and she returned to the show. Each summer, however, she held out for a raise, and used that as a reason to leave the program to devote herself to a full-time acting career in 1961.

After a series of on-air auditions with different women, Betty Kennedy became the third permanent panelist (and "permanent" seems an appropriate word in discussions of Front Page Challenge). Like Sinclair, Kennedy was well-known to Toronto radio audiences for her work at CFRB, where she was an announcer and skilled interviewer. Unlike her predecessor, who was notably bright and lively, Kennedy projected a quieter and more knowledgeable intelligence and a moderate and sympathetic conversational style. Like June Callwood and, later,

Barbara Frum, Betty Kennedy has been a hallmark for women in Canadian journalism, most particularly for the wide public audiences she has gained on Front Page Challenge.

For many years, then, one of the most familiar sights on Canadian television was a panel with Gordon Sinclair on the far left, next to Betty Kennedy on his left, with Pierre Berton at the far right, flanking a guest in the third seat.

The producers of Front Page Challenge have attracted hundreds of guest challengers to the program, some predictable, others less so. Prime Ministers Louis St. Laurent, John Diefenbaker, Lester Pearson, Pierre Trudeau, and Joe Clark all showed up at various times, as did a battery of other federal, provincial, and international politicians, journalists, and witnesses to stories. One of the most important guests for the program was Eleanor Roosevelt, whose 1958 appearance gave the show greater credibility and power to attract international public figures and celebrities. Errol Flynn, who had recently returned from Cuba, challenged the panelists to guess the story of the Cuban Revolution. Igor Gouzenko appeared with a bag over his head, At several points, Berton and Sinclair themselves have been challengers, Berton on weeks when he was supposed to be out of town and absent from the broadcast and Sinclair without his own knowledge, with Davis answering the questions or another Front Page Challenge staff member responding from the isolation booth while wearing a Gordon Sinclair mask. In most cases, identification of the concealed guest is enough to reveal the story. Perhaps the perfect Front Page Challenger, however, as Pierre Berton and producer Jim Guthro have noted, was Boris Karloff, who represented the Regina Cyclone of 1912, which stranded him when he was with a British theatre troupe then touring Canada.

The producers of Front Page Challenge, after Harvey Hart returned to CBC drama at the end of the summer season in 1957, have been Jim Guthro (1957-61), Bob Jarvis (1961-62), Drew Crossan (1962-64), Don Brown (1964-73), and Ray McConnell (173-date). Writers for the show, since Aylesworth, have included Alfie Scopp, Allan Manings, Jack Hutchinson, Chuck Weir, and Gary Lautens. Since 1970, the show's guests have been booked by Lorraine Thomson. Since Front Page Challenge went onto the regular programming schedule in 1957, the show has also featured an orchestra conducted by Lucio Agostini, then as now something of a luxury for a supposedly low-cost game show. Starting in the 1970s, the show has also travelled to CBC production centres throughout Canada for taping sessions.

In 1984, Gordon Sinclair died. His place as a regular panelist was taken by Maclean's magazine columnist and Washington correspondent Allan

Fotheringham. Front Page Challenge has no numbers or jerseys that could have been retired in Sinclair's honour, although senior panelist Pierre Berton moved into the leadoff spot at the left of the desk while Fotheringham took the cleanup position at the far right. Original panelist Toby Robins died in 1986.

Front Page Challenge is one of the few Canadian television programs to have its own published history. See Alex Barris, *Front Page Challenge: The 25th Anniversary* (Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1981).

Front Row Centre

Sat 9:00-10:30 p.m., 5 May-29 Sep 1962

The CBC used this title for a series of movies to replace the Saturday night hockey broadcast in the summer of 1962

Front Row Centre

Wed 9:00-10:30 p.m., 6 Oct 1976-2 Mar 1977

Wed 8:30-10:00 p.m., 18 Jan-15 Mar 1978

While John Hirsch was the head of CBC drama, the network commissioned and aired a number of films and prestige dramatic productions under the title *Front Row Centre*. They included, as the series opener, *Sarah*, with Zoe Caldwell as Sarah Berhardt; Claude Jutra's film, *Dreamspeaker*, originally broadcast on *For The Record*; Allan King's film adaptation of Carol Bolt's play, *One Night Stand*; and Michel Tremblay's *Les Belles Soeurs*; a production of Pirandello's *Six Characters In Search Of An Author*, directed by David Giles; and *Ladies In Waiting*, with Martha Henry, Mary Savidge, and Moya Fenwick. The executive producer was Robert Allen.

Frontiers

Sun 5:30-6:00 p.m., 4 Jan-31 May 1959

Frontiers, a series of documentaries produced at the National Film Board by David Bairstow, replaced The Candid Eye in the television lineup. The films, which outlined recent developments in fields such as science, medicine, and industry, were written by a selection of writers, who included Charles Israel, Alwyne Whatsley, William Weintraub, Gordon Burwash, and Sally Lindsay. In the half-hour, Sunday afternoon slot, the network aired: Conquest Of Cold, in two parts; Northern Town; Prairie Bonanza, which dealt with the petrochemical industry; a film in two parts on automation in Canadian industry; People Of The Peace, in two parts; Canada, World Citizen; a two part film on chemical science; The Mine Makers; Canada, World Trader; and The Gifted Ones.

Fun Time

Thu 5:30-6:00 p.m., 5 Jul-27 Sep 1956

Fri 5:00-5:30 p.m., 5 Oct 1956-1 Feb 1957

Frank Heron was Captain Frank of the Fun Time Showboat in this thirty minute show for children produced in Montreal. The show also starred two children, Alan Jack and June Mack, and featured magician Tom Auburn and Otto Muller and his orchestra. The show started with juggling or magic or a circus act. Alan and June also showed viewers games that they could play, there was an animal corner, and Elmer the elephant gave the kids tips on water and traffic safety. Film segments took Heron and the two children on different adventures, up in an aircraft, to the zoo, on a roller coaster ride, and so on. Roger Racine produced Fun Time. Captain Frank's parrot was named Matey.

Fur Or Feathers

Wed 5:00-5:15 p.m., 6 Jul-21 Sep 1955

Mon 4:30-4:45 p.m., 26 Sep 1955-25 Jun 1956

Ian McTaggart Cowan showed live animals in this fifteen minute program for children produced in Vancouver.