

TIME 14/12/70

TELEVISION

- Hans Werner Henze
- Burt Bacharach
- Aram Khatchaturian
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- Pierre Boulez
- Benjamin Britten
- Carlos Chávez
- Leonard Bernstein
- Luciano Berio
- John Lennon
- Ravi Shankar
- Fela Sowande
- Mohammed Abdul Wahab
- Paul Ben-Haim
- Antonio Carlos Jobim
- Anyone else?

es Joda!!

**We're ready to sing
a World Anthem
...if one of you
will just write it.**

A song to celebrate our earth, our seas,
our precious air.

A song to catch and ring out the rare
spirit of man, alive and aware here on our
tiny sphere in the emptiness of space.

A song that transcends hemispheres
and languages and transient cultures.

A song for all of us to sing.
Together.

How about it, one of you?

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The Don and Howard Show

The Philadelphia Eagles' Billy Walik caught a Giant punt and broke loose for a 45-yd. runback. ABC-TV Commentator Howard Cosell spoke up in his distinctive nasal twang: "While we were walking up to the booth tonight, my colleague, Dandy Don Meredith, said: 'Howard, you watch, Walik is going to break a punt tonight.'" To which Colleague Meredith cheerfully replied: "Now, Hahrd, Ah didn't say that. But if you say Ah said it, Ah'll stick with it." Pause. "Hahrd, why do you always do that to me?" The gang in the press box burst into laughter.

Meredith's Texas drawl and bucolic quips sound as if they belong on one of ABC *Monday Night Football's* competitors, *Mayberry R.F.D.* Which makes them a highly effective counterpoint to Cosell's rasping New York pedantry. As Meredith told TIME's Mark Goodman last week, "If Cosell says, 'They have a paucity of plays,' I may say something like, 'If you mean they ain't got a whole bunch, you're right.'" As a result, the Don and Howard Show has become so entertaining that at times it comes close to upstaging the action on the field below. There have been rumors that Cosell might bow out next season, which would be unfortunate. Still, Meredith has amply demonstrated that he can carry the ball by himself.

Raucous Fans. A former star quarterback for the Dallas Cowboys, Meredith, 32, does not disguise his partiality to either the Cowboys or quarterbacks. During the Eagle-Giant game Meredith had to take over in the second half, when Cosell, flu-ridden and well fortified against chill, threw up on Dandy Don's black cowboy boots and had to leave the frigid press box. There was no question that a quarterback was at the mike late in the second half, when quarterbacks Fran Tarkenton of the Giants and Norm Snead of the Eagles punched over for touchdowns. "When you're in trouble, go to your power runners," Meredith gleefully cried.

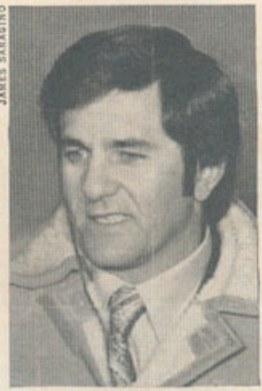
He was at his most partisan when his beloved Cowboys were lurching toward a 38-0 drubbing from the St. Louis Cardinals. The Cards jumped off to a quick 17-0 lead, and raucous Cowboy fans began screaming for Quarterback Craig Morton's scalp. "We want Meredith!" they chanted. Don, who had heard the same fans boo him on more than one occasion, sighed: "Man, you don't know what trouble is till you're 17 points behind in the Cotton Bowl."

Morton soon threw a clothesline pass straight into the arms of a Cardinal defender. "Well," said Meredith wryly, "maybe he was the only man open." As the fans continued to call for him, Meredith grinned: "There's no way you're going to get me down on that

field tonight." He apologized in the closing moments for "not doing a very good job tonight." In fact, his running comments saved an otherwise dull run-away ball game.

Say Whatever. On occasion, Meredith does not mind dealing in personalities. Indeed, during his days with the Cowboys he was one of the most acute and outspoken of pro ball-players. During the Minnesota-Kansas City game he remarked: "If Minnesota's Bud Grant and my old coach, Tom Landry, were in a personality contest, they'd have trouble coming up with a winner."

Meredith's humor is complemented by a quick, nervous intelligence and an encompassing fund of football savvy. A native of Mt. Vernon, Texas, he



DON MEREDITH



HOWARD COSELL

broke a passel of passing records at Southern Methodist, and was a top draft choice of the Cowboys in 1960. His splendid nine-year professional career (1,170 passes completed for 17,199 yds. and 135 touchdowns) was somewhat tarnished by his inability to lead the talented Cowboys to an N.F.L. championship. He retired at the end of the 1968 season to devote himself to his Dallas brokerage business. Last year his old friend, CBS Announcer Frank Gifford, recommended Meredith to Roone Arledge, president of ABC-TV Sports. "I hired him over our first lunch," Arledge recalls. "I told him to say whatever he felt like saying. People are tired of announcers who treat football like a religion, and Meredith is just the touch we needed."

Meredith is enjoying himself immensely. "Could I ask for anything better? I'm not trying to be a stand-up comic, but I don't want to report a game as a catastrophic event either." He concedes that the view from the press box has made him miss football more than ever this year. "It's funny," he muses, "but I still get nervous and can't eat before a game. But as long as I feel that way, I think I can do a good job."

Handstands and Fluent Fusion

If 1969 was the year of the supergroup, 1970 will most likely go down in history as the year rock began searching for a superman. The candidates have come from everywhere—especially from such fretful or dissent-ridden groups as the Beatles, Jefferson Airplane and Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young. One reason behind the search for individualism is that youth in America, as elsewhere, has become less interested in rock as a mind-blowing communal expression and more curious about what individual musicians may have to say. What the rock world seems to need right now, therefore, is a high-talented, low-keyed, protest-free approach to life and sound that will appeal equally to the flower child in the young and the gardener of verses in the old.

The most likely candidate, so far, is a tousle-haired Englishman named Elton John, 23. Because he burst on the U.S. scene only four months ago, it is

classical touches—sweeping strings and poignant little solos by oboe and harp, for example—lend both drama and restraint to John's big beat. The first album is already in *Billboard's* top 25. *Tumbleweed*, earthier and more direct, ought to be one of the big hits of 1971. John's first U.S. tour—last week he all but filled the Tyrone Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis and two weeks ago jammed Manhattan's Fillmore East four times in two nights—shows off a natural stage presence and timing worthy of a veteran stand-up comic.



ELTON JOHN AT PLAY
One-man music factory.

too early to tell whether John is a superman. But he is certainly a one-man music factory with a rich bag of assorted talents. He plays piano with the urbane primitivism of a Glenn Gould thumping out variations on rock 'n' roll's Jerry Lee Lewis. His singing style ranges from a Mick Jagger snarl to a delicate, insinuating plaint that recalls José Feliciano. As a composer, John has already turned out more than a dozen of the year's best songs—in styles that include country rock, country blues, just plain country, gospel, soft rock and classical rock.

Porky Pig. His record albums—*Elton John* and *Tumbleweed Connection*, the latter to be released this week by Uni Records—are as different from each other as they are elegantly superior to much of what rock has produced in the past year or two. Part of the credit for that must go to John's favorite arranger, Paul Buckmaster, 24, whose deft

John has been doing his live act only since last summer. Perhaps that is the reason he seems to want to sell himself more than he really has to. He comes on with a long cape looking a bit like Michael J. Pollard impersonating Batman, and gradually sheds down to a star-patterned T shirt, slacks and a Porky Pig button that lights up. Then, kicking away the piano bench, he goes into an old-fashioned rock-'n'-roll finale and plays standing up, kneeling down, even handstanding on the keyboard with feet high in air.

John began playing piano at home at age four. Later he studied piano and theory formally for five years at London's Royal Academy of Music. Then he chucked the classics for pop, joined the British group called Bluesology and adopted his current name, figuring he would just never make it as Reginald Kenneth Dwight.

In 1968 he and a lad named Bernie Taupin both answered an ad in a British pop weekly; a record company was looking for composers and lyricists. They didn't get the job but they have been together ever since, Bernie writing lyrics, Elton music.

Holy Moses. Their current songs defy categorization because of Taupin's almost cinematic imagery and John's fluent, original fusion of recent pop forms. *Border Song* ("Holy Moses let us live in peace/Let us strive to find a way to make all hatred cease") is more authentically gospel than anything Anglican has a right to be. Imported or not, it has quickly been picked up and recorded by blacks like Dorothy Morrison and Aretha Franklin.

In a graceful love ballad, *I Need You to Turn To*, John plays the harp-sichord with a delicate touch that creates just the right pinch of pink-cheeked, Highland-flavored romance. Songs like *My Father's Gun* and *Talking Old Soldiers* show the clear influence of The Band in their concern, respectively, for the history of the old American South and the ever-present pain of growing old. It is an influence freely and proudly conceded by the composers. One thing most of the songs have in common is a relentless rhythmic build-up from a quiet beginning. *Burn Down the Mission*, for example, starts out like a country stroll and ends like a hell-bent Georgia stagecoach.

Beyond his music and potential as a major singing star, Elton John also symbolizes a subtle but highly significant change in a field where once no composer worth his suede jacket would be caught dead without a guitar. Slowly, surely, the piano is gaining ground. Partly, this reflects rock's recent absorption of jazz and the blues, in which the piano has always played a predominant role. More important, many of today's leading rock composers find the range and nuance of the piano more suitable for the personal, diverse and poetic turn rock is taking.

■ William Bender