

Son Jody entertains this time.



Dinah (Continued)

PROBABLY the hardest sales job Dinah ever had to do was on herself. The problem: convince herself that she could do a successful television show, and be a wife and mother, too.

Dinah had seriously considered retiring twice. The first time was when Melissa was born, 10 years ago. "I just didn't feel like going back to work," she recalls. "I wanted to be with my baby." And she did stay home for a while.

But she missed show business. Furthermore, the baby slept most of the day anyway, enabling Dinah to make a few guest appearances. This whetted her appetite to get back to work full-time.

She faced a more difficult decision when Missy was four.

By then she had been signed to her present show and had less free time with her family than ever. When asked why she occasionally cooked lunch for the crew, Dinah said, "I have to do something to keep my domesticity."

But it was no laughing matter, as she found out one afternoon when she drove Missy home from the Farmers Market. On the way back, Dinah turned on the car radio and started to hum to the music.

"Please don't," Missy pleaded.

The woman whose voice had thrilled millions was taken aback by this response from her own daughter. But she dismissed it as tiredness on Missy's part.

A couple of nights later, after tucking her daughter into bed, Dinah started singing a lullaby. This time, Missy broke into tears. Dinah couldn't figure out why.

The normal Hollywood procedure might have been to call a psychiatrist for help. Dinah preferred asking her sister Bessie, who seemed to know the right answer. Mrs. Seligman felt that Missy associated singing with Dinah's career which kept her away from her.

This is the end, Dinah told herself. A person can cut herself into only so many slices, and obviously there wasn't enough time for everything. Besides, between their savings and what George earned, she could easily afford to retire.

That she didn't was due to her ability to convince herself that if she rearranged her time properly, if she improved her organization to the highest peak of efficiency, she could still be a good wife and mother—as well as a TV star.

Today, Dinah's schedule is one of the most strenuous in television. When this writer complimented her on the spontaneity of her show and its "unrehearsed" flavor, she smiled and said, "Just the opposite is true. It flows easily because we



George Montgomery with Jody and Melissa.

rehearse it so thoroughly. We go over our lines and songs again and again until they are so much a part of us that we don't have to ask 'what comes next?' By the time we are on the air, we can have fun because we are relaxed."

Since Dinah herself makes the final decision on all material and guests, she has to put in considerably more hours than if she were merely the star of the show. Her working day frequently stretches from early morning till after midnight.

Just how well coordinated her activities have become was obvious when I visited her at NBC one noon, during what she optimistically referred to as "my one-hour lunch break." During this time, she ate a large bowl of mixed salad, a piece of cake, a roll, drank two cups of coffee, discussed a song with her arranger, decided on several wardrobe changes, was fitted into a dress, had her hair put up, went over a scene with a writer, discussed a list of appointments with her secretary—and still had time to answer my questions without looking harassed or making me uneasy.

She has managed to arrange her schedule to have breakfast every morning with George, Missy, 10, and Jody, 4. She takes Missy to school almost every day of the week, and invariably manages to stop rehearsals in time to be home for dinner with her family before she returns to NBC. Week ends are for the family.

There are some who claim that only a woman who has an unhappy home life and wants to escape will concentrate on her career as Dinah does. That is not true. In a town where marriage contracts are often canceled at the drop of a dirty look, the Montgomerys' 15 years of married life is one of the most heartening unions in the entertainment field.

One question Dinah often hears is: "Where will you go from here?" After all, she seems to have everything a woman could ask for.

To this Dinah replies, "There's always a new challenge. It isn't the money a person makes. The Government gets most of that, anyway. But there is an excitement in show business that you can't find anywhere else. As long as I feel the way I do now, I'll stay in it."

That promises to be a long time.

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