

Coke Time With Eddie Fisher

Diahann Carroll episode - aired April 13, 1955

Florence Henderson episode - aired November 5, 1954

Filmed at Studio 6A, NBC Studios - 30 Rockefeller Plaza,
Manhattan, New York City, New York

Coke Time with Eddie Fisher was an American musical variety television series starring singer Eddie Fisher. It which was broadcast by NBC on Wednesday and Friday nights from 7:30PM to 7:45PM on Wednesdays and Fridays, from April 29, 1953, to February 22, 1957. The opening theme was "May I Sing To You".

The program was initially hosted by Don Ameche with Freddy Robbins as the announcer, but in late October 1953 Ameche left the program and Robbins became its host. Eddie Fisher became the host on January 13, 1954 through September 7, 1956.

An April 1954 promotion offered people an opportunity to win a trip to New York City, visit with Fisher during a rehearsal and be his guests for the program's broadcast. The contest also offered autographed special recordings by Fisher. In January 1957, Coca-Cola offered a 45 rpm recording of six songs that Fisher had sung on Coke Time. The RCA Victor record was available for 25 cents by mail with a coupon found on Coca-Cola cartons.

Edwin Jack "Eddie" Fisher was an American singer and entertainer, who was one of the world's most famous and successful singers in the 1950s, selling millions of records and having his own TV show.

Fisher, fourth of seven children, was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the son of Russian-born Jewish immigrants Kate and Joseph Fisher. His father's surname was originally Tisch or Fisch, but was anglicised to Fisher upon entry into the United States.

To his family, Fisher was always called "Sonny Boy", a nickname derived from the song of the same name in Al Jolson's film *The Singing Fool*. Fisher attended Thomas Junior High School, South Philadelphia High School, and Simon Gratz High School. It was known at an early age that he had talent as a vocalist and he started singing in numerous amateur contests, which he usually won. He made his radio debut on WFIL, a local Philadelphia radio station. He also performed on Arthur Godfrey's *Talent Scouts*, a popular radio show which later moved to TV. Because he became a local star, Fisher dropped out of high school in the middle of his senior year to pursue his career.

By 1946, Fisher was crooning with the bands of Buddy Morrow and Charlie Ventura. He was heard in 1949 by Eddie Cantor at Grossinger's Resort in the Borscht Belt. After performing on Cantor's radio show he was an instant hit and gained nationwide exposure. He then signed with RCA Victor.

Fred Robbins - was briefly the host of *The Talent Shop* and *cavalcade of Bands* for the DuMont TV network. From 1953 through 1956, he was the announcer/host and Coca-Cola's spokesman on *Coke Time with Eddie Fisher* on NBC.

Robbins starred or played himself in more than two dozen television shows or movies from the 1940's through the 1980's.

Diahann Carroll - was born Carol Diahann Johnson. When she was 16, she teamed up with a girlfriend from school and auditioned for *Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts* show using the name of Diahann Carroll. She was invited to appear by herself and won the contest.

In 1954, she and Pearl Bailey supported Dorothy Dandridge as the femme fatale *Carmen Jones* in 1954. Diahann later supported Dorothy Dandridge again in Otto Preminger's *Porgy and Bess* in 1959. During this time, she also became a popular singing personality on late night television programs with Jack Paar and Steve Allen.

Additionally, she portrayed a nurse and widow struggling to raise her small son in the television series *Julia* in 1968. Carroll became the first African-American female star with top billing in which the show centered around her lead character.

Throughout the late 1980's and early 1990's, she toured with her husband, singer Vic Damone, with occasional acting appearances.

Florence Henderson - was born in Dale, Indiana, the youngest of 10 children. Henderson started her career on the stage performing in musicals such as *Oklahoma!* and *South Pacific* at Lincoln Center. Along with Bill Hayes, she appeared in the Oldsmobile commercials from 1958 through 1961 on *The Patti Page Show*.

Henderson became the first woman to guest host *The Tonight Show* in the period after Jack Paar left as the show's host and before Johnny Carson began as host in October 1962. She was

also *The Today Girl* on NBC's morning show, doing weather and light news, a position also once held by Barbara Walters.

Her most memorable role was as Carol Brady in *The Brady Bunch* which aired on ABC from 1969 until 1974. Henderson's best friend, Shirley Jones, had turned down the role. Henderson flew to New York City every weekend during the run of *The Brady Bunch* (which filmed in Los Angeles) in order to be with her family.

Shower Of Stars

Aired Thursday evening, January 10, 1957 on CBS at 8:30PM

William Lundigan - was playing child roles on radio and producing radio plays at 16. A Universal Pictures production chief heard Lundigan's voice, met him, arranged a screen test and signed him to a motion picture contract in 1937. He would go on to work in films at Universal, Warner Brothers, MGM and 20th Century Fox to the mid-1950's. He then began appearing on television shows like *Lux Video Theatre*, *Schlitz Playhouse*, *General Electric Theater*, *The Ford Television Theatre*, and *The Star and the Story*. He was also the host for *Climax!* and *Shower Of Stars*.

Jack Benny - Born Benjamin Kubelsky, he began to study the violin at the age six. While his musical "ineptness" would later become his trademark, in reality, he was a very accomplished player. When given the opportunity to play in live theatre

professionally, Benny played hooky from school to perform. After failing all of his examinations, the principal asked him to leave school.

While performing at the same theater as The Marx Brothers, Minnie Marx (the Marx Brothers mother and manager) asked Jack to come with them on the road to be their musical director. Jack's father would not allow this to happen. Eventually, Benny wound up on a vaudeville tour with the The Marx Brothers. After several disappointing performances following The Marx Brothers act, he was ready to give up. Thanks to Minnie Marx, she encouraged him to keep going. She told him it wasn't because he was a bad performer, rather nobody has ever been able to successfully follow the zany comedy of her sons.

As a gag, Benny appeared as a contestant on The \$64,000 Question on October 8, 1957. The category was the violin. Benny insisted on walking away with \$64 after answering the first question correctly. Hal March finally gave him \$64 out of his own pocket.

Vincent Price - was, first and foremost, a man of the stage. It is where he began his career and where it ended. As well as acting on stage, Price regularly performed on radio network programs, including *Lux Radio Theatre*, *CBS Playhouse* and shows for the BBC. He also wrote several best selling books on art collecting and cookery.

His first horror film was *Dragonwyck* in 1946. It was a Gothic melodrama set in the Hudson Valley in the early 1800's. In *House of Wax*, he fine-tuned the character type he had established in *Dragonwyck*. During the 1960's, Price was happy to stay in this

genre of films. By the 1970's and 1980's, he limited himself mainly to voice-overs and television guest appearances.

Liberace - was born Wladziu Valentino Liberace. As a teenager, Liberace earned wages playing popular tunes at movie theaters and speakeasies. At 14, he debuted as a soloist with the Chicago Symphony. By the age of 17, Liberace joined the Works Progress Administration Symphony Orchestra.

By 1940, Liberace was traveling with his custom-made piano, on top of which he would place his candelabrum. In 1952, *The Liberace Show* brought Liberace popularity across the country. After two years, the show was one of the most popular on television. It was carried by 217 American stations and could be seen in 20 foreign countries.

When he opened the Riviera Casino Hotel in Las Vegas in 1954, he was the city's highest paid entertainer. That concert was the first time he wore an extravagant costume.

Liberace was bestowed with many awards during his lifetime including: Instrumentalist of the Year, Best Dressed Entertainer, Entertainer of the Year, two Emmy Awards, six gold albums, and two stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. The Guinness Book of World Records lists him as the world's highest paid musician and pianist.

The opening of The Liberace Museum in Las Vegas, Nevada in 1978, served as key funding for the Liberace Foundation. Today the Liberace Garage is located at 5115 Dean Martin Drive, Unit 905, Las Vegas, Nevada.

Quotes From Liberace:

At the 1982 Academy Awards: "I made my greatest contribution to motion pictures years ago. I stopped making them."

On stage at one of his shows: "I didn't get dressed like this to go unnoticed."

Bob Crosby - was 10 years younger than his brother Harry, who as Bing Crosby, achieved fame as the most popular singer of the first half of the 20th century. He followed his older brother into the music business and made a good career for himself as the front man for one of the premier jazz bands of the 1930's. The Bob Crosby Orchestra and its combo side group, the Bob Cats, became one of the greatest jazz bands of all time.

Crosby and The Bobcats were successful on radio and television. He was the orchestra leader for *The Jack Benny Show* on radio, taking over from Phil Harris and then onto television.

He was awarded two Stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for Television at 6252 Hollywood Boulevard and for Radio at 6313 Hollywood Boulevard in Hollywood, California.

Rod McKuen - developed his scratchy voice in the late 1950's when, as an aspiring rock 'n' roll singer, he had to make himself heard over an especially loud band, night after night, for weeks.

At the height of his popularity, his songs were recorded by The Kingston Trio, Bing Crosby, Jimmie Rodgers, The Smothers Brothers, Perry Como, Glenn Yarbrough, Oliver, and Frank Sinatra.

Sinatra recorded an entire album of McKuen songs in 1969, entitled *A Man Alone*. Terry Jacks had a number-one single in 1974 with McKuen's best-known song, *Seasons in the Sun*.

Joan O'Brien - began her show business career while she was in high school, on a local television music show in California with Tennessee Ernie Ford.

Her most memorable appearance was in *Operation Petticoat* as the nurse who gets in everyone's way causing uncomfortable crowding in a small submarine.

Joan's final movie was *Get Yourself A College Girl*, a 1960's teen film featuring Nancy Sinatra, with music by The Animals and The Dave Clark Five. After that, she went back to singing touring with the Harry James Orchestra. She left show business for good in 1968 to concentrate on raising her children and later became a successful executive with the Hilton Hotel chain. As of 2015, she was living in Auburn, California.

Jayne Mansfield - was born Vera Jayne Palmer in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. While in high school, she took violin, piano and viola lessons. She also studied Spanish, German and consistently received grades in the high Bs in all subjects.

Next, she attended the University of Dallas and participated in little-theater productions. Her first film was a bit role as a cigarette girl in *Pete Kelly's Blues* in 1955. By the time she portrayed Rita Marlowe in *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?* and *Playgirl After Dark*, Jayne was now known as the poor man's Marilyn Monroe. She did have a real talent for acting, but the

movie executives insisted she stay in her dumb blonde stereotype roles.

She turned down the role of Ginger Grant on *Gilligan's Island* which eventually went to Tina Louise.

Mansfield was the mother of five children. In addition to English, she spoke four other languages: French, Spanish, German and Italian. Her IQ was reported between 149 and 163. Mansfield also had classical training on the piano and violin.

Quotes From Jayne Mansfield:

"If you want the best things in life, you have to earn them for yourself."

"You know which title I like best? I like to be called mother."

"If you're going to do something wrong, do it big, because the punishment is the same either way."

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