

'Puttin on the Hits' reduces viewer's appetite

It's a dream come true for about half the population of the United States. A show for people who like to comb their hair funny in front of the bathroom mirror while singing into a hairbrush has at last surfaced on the TV screen.

After monitoring "Puttin' on the Hits" for several weeks, something became clear to me that

might have gone unnoticed by a less seasoned viewer. "Puttin' on the Hits" is not an outlet for frustrated lip-syncers at all, but rather an appetite suppressant for problem eaters to watch during Saturday evening mealtimes.

An explanation of the show's premise is in order. "Everyone wants to star in their own video," the producers cunningly thought.

"Let's cash in on that. We'll buy a second-hand stage from "Solid Gold," hire an obnoxious piece of beefcake to be overly touchy-feely with the female contestants and we'll fill the time slot right before 'Dance Fever' (another diet show). We'll warm up folks who watch 'Dance Fever' for the hips by focusing on lips. (This diverts the problem eater's attention



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Mark Holt

from his or her own mouth to somebody else's.)

"To liven things up, we'll hire washed-up celebrities who split their time between Tattle Tales' and 'The Love Boat' to judge the performers. Lip-sync, appearance and originality (originality? For mouthing someone else's song?) will be the judging criterion and winners will receive things like cough drops, greeting cards, tile sealer or insignificant amounts of money for their efforts. It will be ideal! Since contestants provide the talent, and we only pay the one that wins, we can get by with just an electric bill, prizes from specially selected Salvation Army

stores and a salary for the host. And there is nothing to produce! The guests do all the work and we simply pick the ones that look the least foolish a few days before the show. "Ah, The American Dream, something for nothing!" (This attractive lack of substance translates into an empty stomach for the dieter.)

The makers of "Puttin' on the Hits" are quite clever indeed. To pass off an effective diet program as just another third-rate contest

show with a musical twist is no small accomplishment. It even comes equipped with a fool-proof backup system should the weightlessness and emphasis on lips not curb an appetite. The host alone induces nausea and vomiting.

Andy Warhol once said that someday everyone will be famous for at least 15 minutes. "Puttin' on the Hits" goes that one better: we only have to tolerate each contestant's fame for six minutes.

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