An Audience Of Friends

Tech Show, from minute with interlocutor to "Dijon with Bittern"; what has been and what is it today? From written and verbal history, here's the tale.

In the beginning the show had the same ingredients that it has now: a group of overworked Techrmen who wanted something to do. For the first four years these enthusiastic amateurs produced a program far different from recent Tech Shows as minstrels, variety shows, and even Gilbert and Sullivan came under the heading of "Annual MIT Musical!" As these first students grew in experience, so did their efforts, and, despite its varied style, Tech Show (as it became officially known in the early nineteen twenties) became tremendously popular—so popular, in fact, that the last ten years the show was making enough money to afford professional assistance.

In the beginning the audience of the late twenties and early twenties grew into quite an affair. With budgets in the range of twenty thousand dollars (as compared to five thousand for this year) and professional direction to boot, the "revues" became full-scale productions, replete with ballet and professional musicians. Only one street acted the scene: there were absolutely no girls. But the crowds flocked in. The "Trend" of those days decided itself out in dinner jackets at its to take its girl to the Tech Show, which was customarily performed in a downtown Boston theatre. When it went "on the road," the Tech Show company was greeted with fanfare and ceremony, and opening night at Smith was the social event of the season. "Dijon's General Manager was the biggest star, and the show itself, well-financed and highly polished, was at a peak of popularity.

And then, as with so many theatrical ventures, the pretty, popular balloon burst, and watered on the spindles of most of its backers. Emerson, which once close to the twenty-five thousand dollar mark in 1925, finally outstripped reserves, and, in one bad year, the Show was in real financial difficulty. With its first acute loss of money, came a major loss of enthusiasm, and with it a lowered standard of performance.

The next few years saw the Show drop from its '25 peak and become instead a loosely-knit evening of skits. The Tech Show of the late twenties and thirties was a poorly organized student production, often thrown together at the last minute; it probably resembled more closely our present-day All-Tech Sing, and unfortunately, was considerably lower in quality. Finally, in 1938, the Tech Show became as a student project, even to a fashionable social event, and returned to a topical review, vanished from sight altogether, not to return until after the war.

But the thread of interest was maintained in Bill Green, a professor in the Humanities Department. Prof. Green had seen the evolution of Tech Show since his arrival in 1925 and was still here when a student named Bob Hildebrand "got the bug" to bring back Tech Show. This was in 1947, and the ideas which Hildebrand inaugurated brought us quickly through the thirties. The magic of opening night at Smith, either in the dressing room or out in the house, is still there and growing with every new year and every new Show. Whether it will ever again become what it was in the twenties, and whether it should try, are questions that those who produce it and those who see it should decide for themselves. It is rumored that someone wants to take it to Smith this spring. Whether it will ever again become what it was in the twenties, and whether it should try, are questions that those who produce it and those who see it should decide for themselves. It is rumored that someone wants to take it to Smith this spring. Whether it will ever again become what it was in the twenties, and whether it should try, are questions that those who produce it and those who see it should decide for themselves. It is rumored that someone wants to take it to Smith this spring.

The formula has worked, and evidently

Ancestry Of Tech Show Reviewed; Past Includes Minstrel, Variety, Ballet

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