

The Washington Star

Portfolio

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SECTION D

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TV TONIGHT

Making a Choice Is Just Too Much

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On a scale of 1 to 10, how do you rate as a grand opera fanatic? (9.9?) Circus aficionado? (9.95?) Basketball nut? (9.92?) Admirer of "M*A*S*H," waiting for tonight's episode on which Hot Lips gets married? (9.97?)

If by chance you score high in all those departments — lots of luck. Not only do we have all that on the tube tonight, we also have the pilots of three new spring series on ABC-7 (check Pat Simmons' report on Page D-3), and a "Who's Who" hour that includes an interview with James Earl Ray, and a look at the controversial media coverage of the terrorism in Washington.

Indeed, apart from "Who's Who" and "M*A*S*H," there is only one other regular weekly series on prime time tonight, ABC's "Happy Days."

Let's begin, at the top, with previews of the specials:

La Boheme (14, 22, 26, 53 at 8). You have a front row seat as the Metropolitan Opera invites you to the first live telecast of one of its productions. James Levine (replacing Thomas Schippers, ill with the flu) conducts Puccini's romantic opera about the early 19th century Bohemian artist colony in Paris' Latin Quarter. Tenor Luciano Pavarotti, King of the High C's, who has lost an estimated 100 pounds "to fit the television," and Renata Scottò sing the eloquently touching roles of Rodolfo and Mimi, while Musetta and Marcello are sung by Maralin Niska and Ingmar Wixell.

Your host: Tony Randall, who registers a 10 on the opera nut scale, and whose delight at getting this close to being on stage at the Met ("my dream and constant fantasy") will be obvious.

The Circus (WRC-4 at 8). Highlights of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey circus, hosted by Gene Kelly, includes the flamboyant animal act of Germany's Gunther Gebel-Williams, controlling a center ring full of pumas, leopards and panthers. There's even a mini-camera inside the cage, manned by one of his proteges. Other acts: clown Lou Jacobs and his lovable pooch; the Elephant Disco (I kid you not), The Flying Farfans, chimps, gymnasts, and clowns, clowns.

Who's Who (WTOP-9 at 8). TV-9 was going to bump tonight's edition for the Bullets' game with Kansas City, until it learned that the program would include a review of the media coverage of the events here last week, with considerable footage involving Max Robinson and other newsmen. The news-making feature of the show, however, should be Dan Rather's interview with James Earl Ray, in Tennessee State prison. The Charles Kirtland feature: a visit to the treasures of