Ben Casey Encyclopedia Article

Ben Casey

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The medical drama *Ben Casey* premiered in October 1961 and soon became the most popular program on ABC. It featured Vince Edwards as the intensely handsome young neurosurgeon at a large metropolitan hospital. The wise Dr. Zorba, who was played by veteran actor Sam Jaffe, mentored him in his efforts to combat disease and the medical establishment. The younger physician's brooding, almost grim, manner echoed the show's tensely realistic tone. The series often confronted controversial subjects and was praised for accurately presenting medical ethics and dilemmas. Each episode began with a voice intoning the words "Man. Woman. Birth. Death. Infinity" as the camera focused on a hand writing the symbols for the words, thus dramatically announcing the somber subject matter of the show. The series ended in 1966. Contemporary viewers have come to associate *Ben Casey* with other medical programs like *Dr. Kildare* and *Marcus Welby, M.D.* in that they all tended to project the image of the "perfect doctor."

Further Reading:

Castleman, Harry, and Walter Podrazik. *Harry and Wally's Favorite TV Shows.* New York, Prentice Hall Press, 1989.

Harris, Jay. *TV Guide: The First 25 Years.* New York, New American Library, 1980.