

Actor, Writer and Now Director

By ALEENE MacMINN

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HOLLYWOOD — Michael Landon, the actor on "Bonanza," is becoming Michael Landon, the actor-writer-director, also on "Bonanza." Landon has written nine scripts for the NBC series to date and he adds the new facet of directing in an episode titled, "To Die In Darkness," which he also wrote.

Much of the action in "To Die in Darkness" takes place in a mine shaft and centers on Lorne Green and David Canary.

"It was something we hadn't done before and by isolating David and Lorne we could learn a little bit more about the character David plays," commented Landon, the author, in explaining how he came up with the idea.

Landon, the director, had praise for the cast and crew. "They all worked very, very hard, and the crew especially had fun because of the challenging aspects," he said. The crew's particular challenge was to build a 30-foot mile shaft, one of the largest sets ever constructed for the series.



MIKE LANDON
... triple-threat man

Author Landon also proposed a challenge for director Landon because the floor area of the shaft was only 7 by 7 feet, making cramped quarters for camera, movement, angles and the like.

The one who did get off easy was Landon, the actor. "I'm not in this particular show a great deal," he said. "I wrote it with the intention of directing it and I didn't want to have to direct myself in too many sequences."

He also admitted that he finds it easier to write for other people. "It's difficult for me to remember my own dialogue. If I'm directing, I'm

busy thinking about what's coming next and I can't concentrate on my lines."

Like other writers, Landon finds his words "either flow smoothly ... or else it's like pulling teeth." He writes his scripts longhand ("I type, but only the hunt and peck method") and he's never sure how the story will end when he starts.

"I don't work from an outline and I don't know if the characters will live or die, so it's fun for me to see what happens to them as I go along."

He feels that it's a big help to be able to write a script and then direct it. "Usually, you get just one polish job because economically it's impossible for a writer to stick with a script until it's on the screen. Problems constantly come up on the set and as the writer, I could rewrite there on the spot."

There's only one drawback to being a triple-threat man, Mike found. One day you wake up and it's all over. "I was terribly jealous when I went in and found someone else sitting in the director's chair." Overnight, he had become just an "actor."



BARBARA STANWYCK is the proprietress of a notorious New Orleans establishment in "Walk on the Wild Side," the ABC Sunday night movie.

STARLITES

Amanda Blake, who plays Kitty on "Gunsmoke," became the first woman to be inducted into the hall of fame of great western actors and actresses recently in a ceremony at the Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City.

Jada Rowland, who has rejoined "The Secret Storm" as Amy Ames Britton, a role she created, was discovered at the age of 6 by distinguished actress Katharine Cornell. Miss Cornell happened to attend a grammar school play in New York City in which Miss Rowland was appearing. As a result, young Miss Rowland was invited to make her Broadway debut with Miss Cornell in "That Lady."