



## Sound & Vision - May 1983

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News about books on TV.

### The Adventures of Niko

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When the **Adventures of Niko** were first shown in 1981, Elkan Allan of *The Times* reported: "beautifully shot, with high production values... and a charm, freshness, and quality of confidence which makes it stand out above the usual fare offered to children". In fact, this series of six half-hour films, shot on location in Greece with English-speaking Greek actors, has won 4 major international awards but has had very little exposure on TV.

Jonathan Rumbold, writer, director and co-producer of the series (and author of Granada Paperback's **The Adventures of Niko**) had some very big problems to overcome on returning to Britain with the rough-cuts of his films - no TV company would back him so that he could finish them. ITV and the BBC turned him down and only Thames and ATV even gave the project any consideration. Eventually, Talbot TV, an independent distributor (previously involved with **Black Beauty**) came to Mr Rumbold's assistance and Niko appeared in several ITV regions. It has just finished its six-week run on Granada TV and has now been bought for screening by Anglia, Tyne Tees, Yorkshire, TV South West, Channel, TV South, Grampian and HTV at some stage in the future. Try not to miss it.

Benjamin Ferullo (aged 12 and on the children's jury at the Festival of Giffoni, which awarded the 'Grifone di Bronzo' to the series) explained: "the **Adventures of Niko** is the best film of the Festival because Niko is a boy like us."

The Foreword to the book of **The Adventures of Niko** (Granada, 0 583 30563 6, £1.25) makes clear that the setting is not modern day Crete (it is actually set between the wars) but that should have no effect on the appeal of Niko to today's young readers. The mountain village, Niko's bad-tempered uncle, his spirited grandmother, his cousin Katerina, the bandits he joins after running away, the travelling theatre company, even the donkeys and mules, all combine in a fast-moving, exciting and frequently funny read. The short chapters, largish print and scattering of black and white illustrations are a bonus for the easily daunted.

### Jackanory Stories

Three favourites will return to Jackanory this Summer (no firm dates as yet) shortly after new books are published by BBC publications: John Grant's **Littlenose** in his first book of adventures, written and illustrated by John Grant, published jointly with Knight books (£1.10), on May 16; Joan Aiken's hilarious adventures of Arabel and Mortimer on holiday in Ireland, and solving the mystery of a disappearing taxi appear in **Mortimer's Cross**, published jointly by Jonathan Cape for £5.50 on June 9th, and Joan Eadington's **Jonny Briggs** is published in a new paperback edition by BBC/Knight books on June 20th at £1.10.

## **Anybody There?**

A second series of **Everybody Here** - 10 programmes mixing contortionists with frogs and trampolining, teaching invaluable skills like Greek Dancing, how to run backwards and the art of putting your finger on your nose, plus stories, jokes, songs and games with children from all cultures. Michael Rosen has compiled Channel 4's programmes which go out at 5.00 starting on May 18th and the Bodley Head book of the same name (£3.95).

## **Children of Fire Mountain**

This adventure takes place in New Zealand at the turn of the century, when Sarah Jane and her grandfather arrive from England and plan to build a hotel on sacred Maori land despite warnings from an eerie ancient Maori. It was originally made by South Pacific TV in thirteen parts and will be shown by Thames TV this year (no firm dates yet). The Thames Methuen book is written by Graeme Farmer from the television series by Roger Simpson.

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