



RECORDING—EDUCATIONAL MEDIUM

Birmingham, Ala. Salutes Birmingham, England

WAPI—Birmingham—BBC Exchange Discs; Contrasts in Life There-Here Told

"Birmingham, Alabama Calling Birmingham, England!" What, something new in lend-lease? Well no, not exactly.

A few weeks ago, WAPI—Birmingham, Alabama broadcast a special salute from the people of its fair city to the residents of Birmingham, England. And, one week later, the English city retaliated by airing a special program to their American neighbor of the same name.

The two broadcasts, both recorded, told the story of the highlights in the everyday life of the people of both countries. For instance, in the Alabama city, WAPI recording crews interviewed a typical Birmingham resident while he worked at his job in a local steel mill, asking him many personal questions, such as: how he liked his job; how much money he made; how he spent it; what he liked best in the way of entertainment and many more such questions.

Knowing too, that the women of Birmingham, England would want to know the inside slants on how American women raised their children, the WAPI roving reporter interviewed a housewife with such inquiries as: how her children were fed; what they were fed; what entertainment she most enjoyed; how she enjoyed cooking; her favorite dish, and what was her recipe for cooking southern fried chicken.

Ambling into the corner drugstore, WAPI's inquiring microphone eavesdropped on three typical Alabama youths (two girls and a boy) while they were passing along to each other the latest American slang. The reporter ended his stay by giving his British listeners a complete description of an average American drugstore, complete from toothpicks to electric heaters, chocolate sundaes to castor oil. And so it went on, one interview after the other, until WAPI knew more about Birmingham, Alabama, its

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A group of Chicago elementary school pupils listen to an educational recording in their classroom.

Transcriptions—Recorders Supplement Other Modern Teaching Aids In Today's Classrooms

By George Jennings, Director,
Radio Council—WBEZ Chicago Public Schools

There is hardly a teacher or school administrator today who does not recognize the value of radio in the classroom . . . but, many teachers and administrators are not aware of the vast amount of teaching material

which is now available on transcriptions. This material has all the attributes of radio . . . the inherent dramatic quality, the immediacy, the vitality . . . plus many important attributes of its own.

These attributes are not so much in the content of the transcribed programs as they are in the medium of presentation . . . namely, the recording itself. While the techniques of using the transcription are in many ways similar to those of using the radio broadcast, the disc has the great advantage of permanency and of frequent re-usability. Also, the machine may be stopped at any time during the course of the transcription, the head lifted, put back and any part of the disc replayed.

One of the greatest difficulties of scheduling radio broadcasts for schools is the seeming inflexibility of school

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SOUR FATE

Recently, Urban Johnson, head of the WBBM—Chicago sound department, decided to make a recording which would explain some of the difficult assignments radio sound technicians often encounter in providing realistic background for dramatic shows. "Urb" asked Mort Hall of the continuity department to write a trial script, something full of drama, pathos and intrigue. The result was a story of a jealous husband, a nagging wife and—the strangest sound on record—the sound of a man in a vinegar vat being slowly pickled to death!

Radio Daily

audio record

PUBLISHED BY AUDIO DEVICES, INC.

VOL. 3, NO. 1

JANUARY, 1947

Published monthly by Audio Devices, Inc., 444 Madison Avenue, New York City, in the interests of better disc recording. Mailed without cost to radio stations, recording studios, motion picture studios, colleges, vocational schools and recording enthusiasts throughout the United States and Canada.

Use of Top-Flight Talent Key to I. D. E. Success

Outstanding Public Service Recorded Programs Praised by Radio Industry

In its seven-year history the Institute for Democratic Education, a unique non-profit organization has produced and distributed an impressive body of transcribed radio shows which has earned it top rank with radio stations and ether critics. Devoted to the advancement of American ideals, the Institute has utilized the best professional talent—writers, actors, musicians, directors—to turn out transcriptions that have pioneered a proud path in the realm of public service programs. Each of its LEST WE FORGET series of 13 or 26 recordings, all genuine Americana, has been made available free to radio stations, bringing power-packed educational entertainment to millions of Americans.



Harold Franklin, IDE program director and Sam Levene, Hollywood motion picture star, discuss merits of "Hey, Cabhie!" script, one of the programs in the new IDE series—LEST WE FORGET—THE AMERICAN DREAM.

IDE's tenth series LEST WE FORGET—THESE GREAT AMERICANS achieved unprecedented airing, afforded more than \$250,000 worth of free time. Using big names to recreate dramatically the big people of our nation, the series features among others John Carradine as Woodrow Wilson, Ralph Morgan as Joseph Pulitzer, Quentin Reynolds as Wendell Willkie and Melvyn Douglas in the program on Franklin D. Roosevelt. This latter show was played by 710 stations as

part of the regular series broadcast and as a memorial tribute on the first anniversary of FDR's death. The entire series has been given 1,700 hours on the air by 622 stations. In 1946 there were 7,000 individual broadcasts with many stations playing particular programs four or five times for special occasions. IDE shows were given 52% class "A" time and among the stations using them were 100 of 5,000w and 10 of 50,000w strength.

After radio broadcasts have been completed, the Institute makes recordings available to schools through 25 distribution centers centrally spotted over the country and previous series are being circulated among 1,900 schools. During the war, the Army and OWI used the programs which also reached an international audience via short-wave.

IDE was among the first to apply successful advertising techniques to public service programs, using dramatic spot announcement to carry its democratic message.

Two new projects in the working stage at the Institute promise good listening and learning. One series, LEST WE FORGET — THE AMERICAN DREAM, dramatically probes the problems of prejudice and inter-group rela-

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Recordings "Publicity Tool" In Negro College Fund Appeal

Electrical transcriptions were used for the first time in the short existence of the United Negro College Fund during the recent annual appeal for funds to meet current expenses of thirty-three Negro private colleges.

Under the direction of Bob Masson, who handled all radio activity for UNCF four five-minute transcriptions were made, two on a side, each using the volunteer services of an outstanding Negro entertainer. They were: Kenneth Spencer, currently featured baritone in "Showboat"; Josh White, cafe-society entertainer; Ella Fitzgerald, the "Tisketa-Tasket" girl; and the Mills Brothers. Each recording included a short "pitch" for the Fund.

One hundred sixty discs were made and distributed to an equal number of radio stations in fifty-four major campaign cities. A final check has not as yet been made as to the extent to which these recordings were used, however, preliminary reports indicate the United Negro College Fund met with a reasonable degree of success in having the transcriptions played. A representative of the Fund remarked that he felt UNCF would continue to use recordings as a regular part of their publicity program in connection with their annual appeals.

Alabama Station Salutes English Outlet In Disc Swap

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likes and its dislikes, than it had ever hoped to know.

Each portion of the Alabama city's salute was woven together with a musical bridge and a narrator to tell the story of Birmingham, and to weave the continuity around each interview. All interviews were later redubbed onto regular 16" discs for air-shipment to England.

The Birmingham, England salute to the people of Birmingham, Ala. told the British side of the story and pointed out the contrasts between life in England and life in the United States.

Yes, this is something new in lend-lease.



MILTON CROSS
ORALEXICOGRAPHER!

ORALEXICON is the name given to a new series of record albums, produced by NBC's Radio Recording Division in New York, seeking to standardize the pronunciation of difficult words and foreign names that are so often mispronounced on the air and in daily life. (The first edition is devoted entirely to classical music nomenclature and terminology.)

As radio's oldest and most popular announcer and commentator of classical and operatic music, Milton Cross was chosen to set up a standard of pronunciation that could be followed successfully by English speaking announcers and music lovers everywhere. Milton Cross is, therefore, the world's first ORALEXICOGRAPHER, and the ORALEXICON the first Recorded Pronouncing Dictionary for Classical Music.

The School of Radio Technique, situated in Radio City and America's oldest school devoted exclusively to radio broadcasting, designed the ORALEXICON specifically for announcers, commentators and students who have long felt the need of a pronunciation standard that could be learned easily by ear and followed with confidence.

In addition to the names of the world's most famous composers of classical and operatic music, ORALEXICON gives Milton Cross' pronunciation of: Popular Grand Operas, Contemporary Orchestral Conductors, Samples of radio continuity for Operatic and Symphonic Programs, and finally oft-used Musical Terms with exact definitions. The album consists of 4-12 inch Vinylite records (8 sides), a 20 page Manual of Instructions and mimeographed copies of the continuity used.

Material Shortages and Recording Under Adverse Conditions Big Headache

By John Bubbers
Studio Engineering Supervisor
WOV—New York

(This is the fifth in a series of articles by leading figures in the recording field.)

During the war... and its shortages, many strange situations arose that often called for quick action. More often, "haywire" repairs had to be devised to make things function in a "normal" sort of way. Even the simplest of parts were at various times impossible to get and stocks were in some instances nearly depleted before the replacements came through.

The tube situation became critical during the latter part of '43 and after taking careful study of the demand, it was found that a certain type would last only eight



John Bubbers weeks under operating conditions. Close analysis of the problem showed cathode leaks in all of the failures. This was attributed to insufficient removal of heat from the area surrounding the tubes. A few feet of duct work connecting to our fresh air supply from the air conditioning apparatus reduced our losses to ten percent of the original.

Problems of misaligned cutting heads proved to be a severe headache since time lost in their repair also had to be minimized and spacers and jigs were devised to permit their alignment by unskilled personnel. A rather strange thing occurred one hot afternoon when we were transporting an old portable cutting unit by car to a very isolated location. Upon arriving, we found that the dampening mechanism had lost its original resiliency and would not function properly. This was rectified by locating the nearest refrigerator and cooling it down. The cutter then functioned normally.

Other precautions of supply were at first unpredictable, but as we soon learned... our rule was "expect the worst." The quality of recording discs, fortunately, was maintained, even though the supply at times was rather limited.

Looking back, our problems of the war years have taught us ingenuity and foresight and their memory is cherished only because these problems are in the past.



A section view of the Kasper-Gordon recording studio with acoustical-correction diffusers arranged in random pattern on one wall.

Fay Photo, Boston

Acoustical Properties of Recording Studio Improved By Use of Semi-Spherical Diffusers

(From an article prepared by Forrest L. Bishop, Chief Engineer, Kasper-Gordon, Inc., for COMMUNICATIONS)

With high-fidelity reproduction a must characteristic of all types of recording today, the studio has become a major fidelity factor. For it is in the studio that many basic problems can originate. It has thus become necessary to develop or redesign studios that have a minimum of acoustical faults.

In our Boston studios we were faced with a problem of boominess resulting from phase distortion and reverberation. Our early analysis of the acoustical properties of the studios indicated two major factors contributed to the defect: the small room dimensions and the construction of two walls, a long wall on the control-room side and a short wall meeting the long one at right angles, both of which were surfaced with painted wall-board.

A series of test recordings were made and measurements were taken at various positions in the room with a sound level meter at frequencies from 30 to 10,000 cycles. In all measurements, high peaks appeared in varying degrees within the range of 100 to 150 cycles together with long hangovers of reverberation.

Since absorption had proved a failure, we believed that diffusion might bring about the desired effect. The conventional treatment would have been polycylindrical, but we decided to use semi-spherical diffusers. We believed that we would have greater control over the amount and quality of diffusion by the addition, subtraction and placement of

the diffusing semi-spheres.

The spheres were made from a cement and cellulose mixture, easily molded to the desired size and shape. The semi-spherical sections ranged in size from 12 to 36 inches across. When permanently attached, they were bolted to the walls by special steel brackets. In determining the position of the diffusers, they were arranged in random pattern, more diffusers being used at the end of the studio where less life was desired. To carry out the principle of diffusion still further, a convex pane of plexiglass was installed in the control-room window.

The resulting acoustical improvement was evident immediately. Those familiar with the studio recognized it by ear alone. The series of test recordings and measurements which followed proved that all boominess had been eliminated. Both speech and music were recorded with high-fidelity quality. Piano recordings, which formerly were made with great difficulty, could be cut with fidelity at all instrumental amplitudes. A chorus of 60 recorded in our small studio, a procedure that would have been impossible in the old studio. And the disc reproduction was excellent.



Beautiful movie queen Betty Grable and young daughter Vicki amble through some of daddy's (band leader Harry James) latest recordings in their Hollywood home.

Photo by Kornman as appeared in Photoplay

Recording In Today's Classrooms (Continued from Page 1)

schedules, particularly on the secondary level . . . another difficulty is the course of study. Most teachers in high school keep all their classes reasonably close together in their work. If one class listens to a broadcast chances are it is the only class so doing, and no matter how much the radio program may add to that class it is put behind the others whose schedule did not fit the broadcast time. There's no such difficulty with the transcriptions. Every class in every course of study has the opportunity to hear the same material. All classes are kept on an equal basis. Schools equipped with recorders may, of course, record any "live" program and re-broadcast it later over their own p.a. systems at a time most convenient for classroom presentation.

The material that is now available on discs astounds most educators when they first become acquainted with it. The great industrial companies, such as Westinghouse, General Electric and others; the airlines; the trade associations—all have material available, generally without cost to the school. Frequently material (which usually carries no other advertising material than that the disc is presented by "the blank research laboratory") on discs becomes the permanent property of the school.

In this connection, many schools have contacted their local radio stations for transcriptions which are no longer usable on the airwaves but are extremely valuable in the classroom.

The United States Office of Education publishes an extensive catalog of recordings and transcriptions which are available to schools on either a loan or a permanent basis. Many professional magazines, such as the Journal of the Association for Education by Radio, present reviews of current recorded material and frequently list availabilities.

There is still another use of transcriptions in the school that is equipped with recording machines as well as playbacks. The easiest way to learn a foreign language is to listen to it; the easiest way for a speech student to correct his mistakes is to listen to a recording of himself. Speech correction classes, public speaking classes, dramatic groups all may benefit by hearing playbacks of their activities.

The progressive educator will not depend upon discs and transcriptions to the exclusion of all other teaching aids. He will use them along with radio, motion pictures, maps and charts, models, and in some schools even television, as a further means of making his teaching dynamic, meaningful and vital to his students.

Fine Talent Key To IDE Success

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tions in terms of plain people—ordinary Americans whose backgrounds make them vivid story material. Employing a striking new technique of listener identification, the programs achieve a maximum of personal projection of the hearer into the situations of the average people who are the heroes of the programs.

IDE is run by men who know the job of radio and democracy. Its Board of Governors, headed by the Dean of Boston University, Howard M. LeSourd, includes such names as Norman Corwin, Paul Lazarsfeld, Lyman Bryson and Phillips Carlin. Harold Franklin is the Institute's program director.

Original Recording For

BILLIONTH RECORD



... on **audiograms**

Recently in Camden, N. J., where the Victor Talking Machine Company was founded some 48 years ago, the billionth R.C.A. Victor Record was produced, thus marking a milestone in the history of the company, as well as the record industry.

For this history-making record, the Victor Division of the Radio Corporation of America chose two of John Philip Sousa's stirring marches, "Semper Fidelis" and "The Stars and Stripes Forever," played by the Boston

Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Serge Koussevitzky. And for the discs, on which the original sound recording was made, they chose Audiograms.

For the original sound recording in the phonograph record and electrical transcription industries—for master discs used in processing—for sound recording and reproduction in radio broadcasting and motion picture studios—Audiograms hold a place of eminent leadership.

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