

# RADIO REVIEW

PUBLISHED BY: WOMEN'S NATIONAL RADIO COMMITTEE, 113 WEST 57TH STREET, NEW YORK CITY

VOL. I, No. 1

LUELLA S. LAUDIN, EDITOR

JULY, 1935

**To Our Members:** *This is the bulletin for which you have been asking us. Your suggestions have shaped its plans and policies. Your correspondence has furnished the basis for much of the material contained in it, and your views are reflected in the editorial comment.*

*In short, this is your official organ, drawn up according to your own specifications. We bespeak your continued cooperation in order that RADIO REVIEW may always furnish the radio industry with a timely and accurate guide to trends in listeners' attitudes.*

## A "Fifty-Fifty" Break

Radio has passed the stage where broadcasters and sponsors may think only in terms of profits. Radio is a business, to be sure, but its peculiar intimacy with the American home gives it a responsibility which other forms of industry do not have. It has reached the proportions of a public utility.

Whether or not radio acknowledges its responsibility, it exists, and has become even greater during the well-known depression. People who formerly patronized the arts can no longer afford to do so. For them radio must take the place of the concert hall, the opera, the lecture forum and the theatre. Since radio has supplanted all of these to a considerable extent, it is to be expected that it would offer in return a reasonable proportion of programs of a similar nature. Alas! It has given us instead a parade of vaudeville.

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True, there are such outstanding programs as the Philharmonic, Wallenstein's Sinfonietta, the Metropolitan Opera, Frank Black's Symphony, Howard Barlow's Symphony and a few other symphony orchestras scattered across the country. This past year there has been a revival of interest in chamber music which is heartening. Among lighter features, Jack Benny, Burns and Allen, Paul Whiteman, "One Man's Family" and a sprinkling of others are worthy of special commendation. However, in proportion to the many hours of broadcasting heard daily on all stations, what a pitifully small percentage of all programs is really good!

Let us take music, for example. According to Mr. M. H. Aylesworth, President of the National Broadcasting Company, more than two-thirds of all programs are musical. This does not include comedy hours which have musical interludes, or dramatic programs with a musical background. What proportion of these broadcasts is outstanding?

According to the *New York Times*, which selects the best musical programs of the week and lists them separately in its Sunday edition, only nineteen were considered good enough to be included in this special listing on July 21. Further, of the nineteen, five may be heard only on a local station.

Radio will have to do better than that. The preponderance of light programs is conditioning an entire nation, and particularly the portion thereof which has never been exposed to culture, to an appreciation of inferior entertainment. It would be just as easy to develop a liking for better things by giving the people a greater number of worthwhile programs. This does not mean that there would be no more vaudeville. It would, however, insure for those who enjoy comedy, dance music and other lighter features the best of each type. It would eliminate only the feeble imitators of the topnotchers. The world's finest music, literature and drama would be available in the same proportion as lighter features. For the first time in the history of radio, the more discriminating portion of the national audience would get a "fifty-fifty" break. At present only about ten percent of all programs heard is planned for this audience.

The future of American culture depends upon what is done with radio.

*Think this over in terms of the average day's programs.*

## *Twisting the Dial—News and Comment*

The surprise of the year was the success of the Town Hall of the Air—"America's Town Meeting." This short series began in May and was recently concluded. It provided a national forum for the discussion of public questions. A feature of the broadcasts was the participation of the studio audience which asked questions or commented on the main speakers. More than 2,700 letters were received after the first program was presented. The series will be resumed in the Fall under the same auspices—the League for Political Education.

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For many years Fleischman's Yeast has taken the radio audience weekly on a personally-conducted tour of the intestinal tract. An otherwise excellent program has been ruined for many people by the too-frank discussion every Thursday night of what yeast will do for one's innards. A new series has just been launched by the same sponsor on Sunday evenings to make America's youth pimple-conscious. The advertising delicately skates around the edge of the subject in its attempt to keep the national complexion unsullied with the aid of Fleischman's Yeast. The first few programs of the series have introduced two breezy reporters who take turns in questioning passersby from some busy New York City street corner. The questions are of the "smart Aleck" variety calculated to bring gales of laughter from adolescents but which sound moronic to this reviewer.

Station WMCA in New York City has been presenting street corner interviews for five years under the direction of A. L. Alexander, but its program is much more intelligently handled. Questions about timely subjects are asked, and several people are invited to comment on each, thus furnishing variety and dramatic interest.

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Another local station, WEVD, is responsible for a feature which is very popular with the intelligentsia of the Metropolitan Area. It is called the WEVD University of the Air and its summer series will deal with such timely subjects as "Slum Clearance and Rehousing to Date," "Labor and Collective Bargaining," "America in the Face of the Crisis" and "An Adequate Social Security Program"—with experts in each field to discuss the various ramifications of the subjects.

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Two of the programs which received awards from the Women's National Radio Committee last spring may be heard during the summer months. "You and Your Government" continues with a new series entitled, "Taxation for Prosperity," with both sides of the question interestingly presented by well-known speakers. Columbia's Concert Hall under the direction of Howard Barlow is back on the air on Saturday nights from 9:00 to 9:30 P. M. E. D. S. T.

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Columbia Broadcasting System is about to launch a new series entitled "The Music Box" on Saturday afternoons from 2:00 to 2:30 P. M. E. D. S. T.

LOUIS PRIMA FIVE: Tuesday and Wednesday, 9:00 to 9:15 P. M. E. D. S. T. Columbia network.

It is called "syncopation" but it sounds like just plain noise. The laurels of Whiteman, Waring, Lombardo, et al. are safe while this New Orleans jazz band is on the air.

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ROSALINE GREEN—Monday through Friday, WOR-Mutual network—1:40 P. M. E. D. S. T.

A woman's hour with a crisp delivery that every woman will enjoy. Has WOR a monopoly on the best women announcers? (Martha Deane, who is a prime favorite, also appears on WOR. If you haven't heard Martha, tune in some day at 2:30 P. M. E. D. S. T. You'll like her.) News of interest to women is what Rosaline presents, and she makes every broadcast entertaining.

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STATE FAIR CONCERT—Sunday, 7:00 to 7:30 P. M. E. D. S. T. Blue network NBC.

The successor to Jack Benny for the summer. Realizing that it would be difficult to find a comedian to fill Jack's shoes satisfactorily during his absence, the sponsor of this program—Certo—has wisely turned to music. Those who set the dials automatically at WJZ at this hour every Sunday will be well pleased with the light music offered by Lanny Ross and Howard Barlow. Taken out of the boisterous atmosphere where Lanny is usually placed on his other programs, you'll enjoy him—and of course, the orchestra is up to the usual Barlow standard.

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CORNELIA OTIS SKINNER—Sunday, 9:30 to 9:45 P. M. E. D. S. T. Blue network NBC.

A delightful quarter hour with one of America's most popular diseases. Her artistry will hold you spell-bound. And, praise be, the Jergens people seem to be toning down their advertising, too. It was well-handled the Sunday this program was reviewed—July 21.

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G-MEN. Saturday, 9:00-9:30 P. M. E. D. S. T. Red network NBC.

Well, it was bound to come. The epidemic of G-Men pictures could hardly escape the attention of radio. However, this "sissy" version of the adventures of our red-blooded G-Men may be safely heard by old ladies with very weak hearts. Not very interesting or exciting.

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WOMEN'S NATIONAL RADIO COMMITTEE  
113 WEST 57TH STREET  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

and Haydn's "Surprise" Symphony are some of the selections heard by this reporter recently on W2XR. Lighter classics, operattas, and salon music are offered for those who do not hear enough of them on other stations. For the benefit of those East of the Mississippi, W2XR is at the end of the dial on the 1550 kilocycle channel.

An interesting fact is that though this station is never written up by radio columnists and is listed in only two New York newspapers, it has a large following of music lovers.

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## *Our Listening Groups Report*

. . . that Cities Service Hour, Palmolive Beauty Box Hour, Julia Sanderson and Frank Crumit and Harold Sanford's light opera program are the most popular of the lighter musical programs.

. . . that Jack Benny's followers are in mourning following his desertion of the airwaves for a much-needed vacation, and that Burns and Allen have moved up into first place as the most popular comedy feature.

. . . that One Man's Family, despite its tiresome advertising which most listeners tune out, is still the best dramatic program, with NBC's Drama Guild running a close second. As one leader writes of the latter, ". . . and it doesn't soak us in tea, either!"

. . . that Amos 'n' Andy, which goes on and on, is still a prime favorite.

Most frequently complained about: the advertising or beauty hints on all cosmetic programs, with Lady Esther romping away with all honors for being the greatest bore.

Runner-up: Tastyeast's advertising.

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## *New Programs in Review*

LOMBARDO ROAD. Monday—8:00 to 8:30 P. M. E. D. S. T. Columbia network.

Lovely dance music in the usual smooth Lombardo manner.

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N. T. G. AND HIS CHORUS GIRLS. Tuesday—9:00 to 9:30 P. M. E. D. S. T. Blue network. NBC.

Radio at its worst. The suggestiveness and cheapness of this program is unbelievable. Summer is supposed to be the "silly season" for radio programs, but poor taste remains poor taste, regardless of season.

Maybe it will prove financially successful for its sponsor at that. Listening to the unfunny humor ought to boost the sales of Bromo-Seltzer, as well as other headache remedies.

Vocalists and instrumentalists performing musical literature will be presented in a half-hour program which promises to be truly outstanding. The first one will be heard on Saturday, August 3rd.

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In May, announcement was made by Columbia that an Advisory Board would be organized to raise the standard of children's radio programs. (This was the result of a suggestion made by the Women's National Radio Committee at a radio conference on March 25th. Columbia is the only radio company which has adopted the idea.) The Board is now complete and includes Dr. Arthur T. Jersild, of Teachers' College; Mrs. Henry Breckinridge, Chairman of the Municipal Arts Committee of New York City; Mrs. William Barclay Parsons, Jr., President of the Parents' League; Newel W. Edson, of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, and Mrs. Harold Vincent Milligan, Chairman of the Women's National Radio Committee.

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Nominated as the worst musical program on the air: "Home on the Range"—the serialized story of Western life for which John Charles Thomas dons cowboy chaps and a ten-gallon hat weekly. When it is considered that this artist literally packs concert halls on every appearance with people who pay to hear him sing his own musical literature, it is maddening to hear him as an "also-ran" on a mediocre program.

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Frank Black's Sunday night symphonic broadcasts provide a pleasant three-quarters of an hour for music-lovers. NBC might well cut fifteen minutes from some other program and give Mr. Black a full hour on the air.

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Another program where good music is performed and the selections well-chosen, is Wallenstein's Sinfonietta. 9:00 to 9:30 P. M. E. D. S. T. on the WOR-Mutual network.

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WOR broadcasts the popular Lewisohn Stadium concerts every Saturday evening at 8:30 P. M. E. D. S. T. as well as the operas presented at the Stadium on Thursdays at the same hour.

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A little station with a big idea—Station W2XR in New York City. This is on the air only four hours daily—from four to eight o'clock—but it has set a standard for itself that larger stations might well emulate. It features serious music, giving as little attention to jazz as the networks devote to good music. Instead of offering fourth-rate vaudeville to conform to its limited budget, W2XR supplements its studio talent with recorded masterpieces. Beethoven's "Pastoral" Symphony, Concerto in D Major by Brahms, Concerto No. 1 in B Flat Minor by Tschaiakowsky, Excerpts from "Die Walkure" by Wagner

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# RADIO REVIEW

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VOL. II, No. 2

LUELLA S. LAUDIN, EDITOR

FEBRUARY, 1936

## *Standard-Bearers of Tomorrow*

One of the less-publicized programs which is meeting with considerable success is the NBC series entitled, "Music Is My Hobby." Non-professionals come before the microphone weekly to share with the radio audience their joy in creating music. They perform for the sheer love of playing and some of this spirit is communicated to those who listen. While many cheap, highly press-agented programs parade under the name of "amateur" only this series is entitled to use the word in the sense that Webster defines its meaning; but unfortunately so distorted has the true definition of "amateur" become in the minds of the radio audience that it would immediately cheapen the "Hobby" series if NBC were to label it "amateur."

The factor which accounts to a great extent for the popularity of these programs is that they stimulate a desire to play for the fun of it. Doubtless many old pianos have been tuned and countless books of finger exercises have been taken down from attic shelves since Walter Koons began this commendable series.

However, it must not be forgotten that the generation which is enjoying these and other good programs has had the benefit

of some experience in playing music. These men and women grew up in an era in which most children took music lessons of some kind. Because there is a strong bond between the creation and appreciation of good music, it is they who now constitute a large portion of the concert audiences and listen to serious music on the air.

To insure a continuation of our musical life, children of today must learn music appreciation as their parents did,—by playing as well as listening. Radio offers an excellent medium of education and fortunately has made a slight beginning in this direction. However, one hour of Walter Damrosch a week or a limited series of Junior Philharmonic concerts during the Winter is not sufficient to create another generation of music-lovers. Not only is the amount of time devoted to broadcasting music appreciation inadequate but in its present form it fosters only one phrase of it—passive listening.

We need the cooperation of radio to inspire children with the same spirit that "Music Is My Hobby" imbues in adults. Of course the programs for children should not take the same form as the listeners would be annoyed rather than stimulated by hearing precocious young amateurs on the air. It would probably be best to work out something which will encourage participation of the junior audience in the home at the time of the broadcast. The purpose of the programs would be to give children a desire to play for their own amusement, under the guidance of private music teachers. With proper direction such a series could become the most valuable contribution radio has to make to the future of music.

We encourage unusual talent to become "professional" but we do not keep pace by providing outlets for our gifted young people. Radio itself cannot absorb the continual outpouring of music schools and yet hundreds of additional artists yearly dedicate their lives to music. We must look ahead to provide audiences for them, and the children of today are the best prospects. We should therefore begin now by developing music appreciation in both active and passive forms to build discriminating concert and radio audiences in the future.

It is food for sober reflection that our children are the standard-bearers of the future cultural life of our nation. All agencies available should combine to contribute to the essential training for this grave responsibility, and of these, radio

There seems to be a deliberate attempt to promote closer relationships between smaller stations and their audiences, and we note that some seem to have the listeners practically sitting in their laps. The usual method is to invite those who wish to become "palsy-walsy" to phone in requests for their favorite selections. We tried it one night, asking for "Passeped" and were told that "on account of the restrictions—you know, the rumpus with Warner Brothers—" they couldn't play it. We were so abashed to think we never knew Delibes wrote for Warner Brothers that we hung up in hasty confusion.

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We find that some small educational stations are doing a good job without the benefit of much publicity. WHA in Wisconsin has some excellent features in its School of the Air and the State Department of Public Instruction makes use of them, too. Station WOI in Iowa has a program our friends out there turn handsprings in describing, boasting there is nothing quite like it on the air. The name of it is "The Music Shop" and we gather that it is a program featuring recorded music with the addition of some individual touch the Iowans love. WSUI in Iowa City has all the clubwomen of the State tuned in regularly for its educational features.

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WNYC's Master Works hour every morning between nine and ten offers entire concertos, sonatas, symphonies and other works recorded by distinguished artists. We find that most people would rather listen to good records than "flesh-and-blood" inferior musicians.

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Why women use soap: "Women have paid me thousands of dollars for treatments with Milk of Magnesia Cream which you can give yourself even more effectively . . . ." (WOR).

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We wish Columbia Broadcasting System weren't so stingy with its time allowance for the "Understanding Opera" broadcasts. Twenty-five minutes for explanatory remarks and music isn't half enough to accomplish the purpose of the program.

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## *Our Listening Groups Report*

. . . that they are fed up with the box-top racket and are going to do something drastic about it.

. . . that they like those Harold Sanford Light Operas on NBC.

. . . that the level of the "Magic Key" has gone steadily downward, though it began with a great hullabaloo.

. . . that they wish Columbia would make "Poet's Gold" a permanent institution.

. . . that they like the Velvetone Music program Sunday evenings.

. . . that they don't like "swing" music.

. . . that they like the "Magic of Speech."

. . . that they like Robert Ripley.

. . . that they are disappointed in General Motors this winter.

Most frequently complained about last month: The advertising on "The O'Neill's" and the "bait" on the Tom Mix program.

A highly exciting program guaranteed to produce goose flesh on marble statues is WOR's "Witch's Tale." Weird, macabre stories which make your blood run cold are presented weekly, and they are well done, though we could dispense with the annoying Witch's cackle at the beginning of the program. Caution: Decidedly not for Junior nor for Aunt Hattie if she faints easily. In fact, we'd feel more comfortable about the whole thing if it were on at a very late hour when all children are safely tucked in bed.

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Ho hum! We wish the automobile companies didn't contain so many orators. Their music speaks for them so much better than they do.

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NBC has a new children's program which is charming, but you'll have to hurry up if you want to hear it, as it is on for a limited time only. "The Old Puppet Maker" is written by someone who knows what little children like to hear. To tell the truth, we enjoyed it ourselves. We hope NBC will change its mind and let it continue indefinitely as it is much needed. After all, Mr. Wing, young children have only "The Singing Lady" to fall back on and fifteen minutes a day is hardly enough.

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For the benefit of those in the East who crave dinner music we have this cheering note: You can tune into W2XR (1550 kilocycle channel) at six o'clock from Monday through Friday and leave the dials set for two solid hours of beautiful music with practically no interruption. The standard of the selections has given W2XR the title of "The Quality Station" which gives you a faint idea of what to expect. Tune in some evening and give yourself a treat.

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Our idea of a sympathetic announcer is Kelvin Keech. On those Sloan's programs you have the feeling he would gladly come over to massage a lame arm if you really needed his services.

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One of the most amusing "stooges" on the air is McGillicuddy who is briefly heard on Walter O'Keefe's program. We'll trade the unconvincing talk about Camel's effect upon enervated athletes for a few extra minutes of McGillicuddy and for good measure throw in Deane Janis.

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Do you remember the Fannie Kilbourne "Dot and Will" stories which used to appear in the American Magazine? Someone with rare taste and good judgment has brought them intact to the NBC Blue Network and we are still shaking our head in astonishment. You can hear them daily at 1:45 P.M. EST.

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Well, it seems both Columbia and National were serious when they promised to clean up their advertising. We note it is definitely improving on both these networks. We wish we could say as much for the other companies but some of the programs rejected by the "big two" are now going over to less discriminating stations. Have you noticed that even Fleischman's Yeast has become refined and no longer places the accent either on intestinal tracts or blemished complexions? And that Feenamint has left Columbia? Janet McRory of NBC and Gilson Grey at CBS deserve the credit for the purified copy of their organizations. Nice work, J. and G.!

can do the greatest good. While music is but one form of culture it is related to all the arts and supplements several.

We hope radio will think seriously about its responsibility and do its share.

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### *Twisting the Dial—News and Comment*

Choicest fan letter of the month: The one received by WIXAL in Boston, praising a program which featured "too recordings of Chickovskie's Nut Cracker's Sweets." Another interesting comment came from a school teacher in Johannesburg, South Africa, who enthuses about WIXAL's excellent educational programs, adding that she gets up at two-thirty in the morning to hear them. In this country we go to bed to avoid listening to an endless parade of jazz in the early hours of the morning.

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We timidly tuned in one night to WOR's "Soldiers of Fortune" with the guilty knowledge that we were poaching on men's preserves, as this series is dedicated to the alleged stronger sex. It's all right, girls—it's safe to listen. Swashbuckling tales featuring he-men, and music preferred by barrel-chested males give this program a true masculine finish, but you may like it. We imagine the Casper Milquetoasts will get a kick out of it vicariously experiencing the adventures of Tex O'Reilly as they listen.

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An unusual series of program called "Understanding Advertising" is on WOR-Mutual Saturday afternoon. It presents an entirely new angle of advertising, giving its background and relation to the consumer. Roy Dickinson and Leonard Lewis of Printers' Ink appear in it weekly and do a good job before the microphone. You'll find this interesting.

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Idly twisting the dial one morning our attention was arrested by the dramatic accents of someone who asked, "Would you like to have one of the great thrills of your life?" We listened with bated breath, and the "thrill"—believe it or not—was Kolynos Toothpaste. Looks as if we will have to go through life being bored with it all!

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We highly recommend the new program on NBC's Red Network entitled, "The Constitution in the Twentieth Century." All phases of this interesting subject will be heard in the series which will continue weekly on Tuesday evenings until June 9th. Special note to our listening groups: Add this to your "must" list.

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We are thinking seriously of switching to Maxwell House coffee now that "Show Boat" has introduced an excellent young singer who raises the level of the entire program by her contribution. Her name is Winifred Cecil and if you haven't heard "Show Boat" in a long time, try it some Thursday night. We think you'll be agreeably surprised.

## *New Programs in Review*

**FOREVER YOUNG.** Sponsored by Camay Soap. NBC Red Network. 3:00 P.M. EST Monday through Friday.

We are quite willing to stake our all on the statement that this is the best serial on the air today, and we're not forgetting "One Man's Family," either. It is a well-written story with a boy and girl of high-school age as the central characters. The situations introduced are plausible and the dialogue is real. Anyone who has a high school student in the family will chuckle over the familiar phrases heard in this program. We feel almost apologetic in pointing out that the role of the fifteen-year old young sister should be played by someone who sounds younger than the present actress does. Warning: Tune in a few minutes after the hour to avoid the tiresome advertising. This is a program which doesn't need to say anything more than "Camay Soap presents—" to win friends, but of course it will be Sunday in the middle of the week before the sponsor will be convinced of that.

**DAVID HARUM.** Sponsored by Bab-o. NBC Blue Network. 10:45 A.M. EST. Monday through Friday.

This is not a dramatization of the book but is suggested by it. For purposes of radio David has become a very noble character but you'll like him. The parts are well-played even the "folksy" types sounding as if they had a full set of teeth apiece. We say this because most of the small town characters delineated on the air sound as if they were whistling their words between two teeth. The program is pleasant and you'll probably tune in again after you have once heard it. Bearing in mind that at one time Bab-o presented a child star who sang abominably we hasten to say this is a much, much better way of bringing the product to the attention of housewives, but goodness gracious, Babbit, you don't have to rub it in that way. We've heard of Bab-o before though you'd never think it, judging from the length of the spiel that goes with DAVID HARUM.

**BING CROSBY.** Sponsored by Kraft Cheese. NBC Red Network. 10:00 P.M. EST. Thursday.

Not a new program but a new master of ceremonies and a slight change in style. This is a variety program more on the order of Vallee than Al Jolson—praise be!—but it has a flavor of its own. Bing sounds as nonchalant as he appears in the movies and while we're not crazy about his singing, young people are, so that evens the score. Bob Burns is a regular feature and is really funny in a way reminiscent of Will Rogers. The Dorsey orchestra delivers smooth rhythm, and every program presents one musical artist of ability in addition to the other features. Advertising not bad.

## *Special Notice:*

The American Legion Auxiliary will present an award to the sponsor of the best program on the air illustrating the fundamentals of true Americanism. Both commercial and sustaining programs will be considered, and children's, as well as adult features, will be studied.

The only other condition is that the program will have been presented at least once a week during the contest period, which is from March 15th to May 31st.

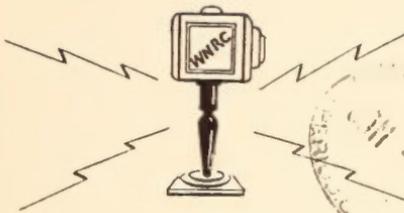
The Women's National Radio Committee has been asked to select the winning program and its decision will be final.

Mrs. William H. Corwith, representative of the Auxiliary on the WNRC, will cooperate in the arrangements.

Announcement of the winning program will be made in a later issue of RADIO REVIEW

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113 WEST 57TH STREET  
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V. I, No. 2

LUELLA S. LAUDIN, EDITOR

SEPTEMBER, 1935

## *Radio Advertising and Common Sense*

Recently a statement was issued by the American Newspaper Publishers Association to the effect that 70% of the advertisers who were using radio as a medium from 1929 to 1933 had dropped out in 1934. The trade papers of the radio industry have retaliated by publishing some convincing figures of their own to refute the claims made by the publishers. *Broadcasting*, the publication which makes every attack upon the industry its personal battle, comes right out and says that the data is inaccurate, and that "ballot box stuffing" figured strongly in arriving at the publishers' figures.

It is not for the Women's National Radio Committee to take sides in this controversy between radio and the press. However, representing as it does a vast number of women—the buyers of the country—the Committee is in a position to point out ways and means of using radio advertising to better advantage.

Correspondence with members and non-members convinces us that the national audience does not resent radio advertising. It is merely the abuses of the system, caused by poor judgment on the part of advertisers and their agencies, which provoke indignant protests and heap bitter criticisms upon radio.

For one thing, the bright boys in the advertising agencies should have learned by this time that it is easier to win goodwill by flattering women's intelligence than by assuming that all of us are retarded mentally. We do not believe, for instance, that the way to a man's heart is through face powder, or that lipstick alone lends charm. We cannot swallow statements claiming that a beauty cream will remove wrinkles after one treatment, or make us look ten years younger in three hours. We know that no toothpaste or toothpowder can do more than clean teeth, all the ballyhoo to the contrary notwithstanding. In short, we do not want to venture into the mystic realm of "hocus-pocus" and while we are much touched by the continuity writers' assumption that contact with the outside world has not affected our naiveté, we do not believe in miracles.

We understand, in spite of our limited intelligence, that consideration must be given to sponsors who spend thousands of dollars weekly to advertise over the radio. We cannot expect every advertiser to make the same beautiful gesture Montgomery-Ward did when they presented Biblical dramas last season with the modest announcement, "Montgomery-Ward presents . . .". Perhaps it was because this unique manner of advertising stood out as an oasis in a desert choked with words that so much praise came to us for Messrs. Montgomery-Ward; but there has been little inclination for other advertisers to follow suit. Most of them seem to be grimly determined to see how far they may tax the listening audience before a spontaneous outburst of protest arises from every corner of the land.

It took foresight and courage to do what Columbia Broadcasting System did last spring when it restricted the amount of advertising on all its sponsored programs; but in all probability, the advertisers who have had to conform to Columbia's ruling have gained, and not lost in so doing. Certainly a radio fan who sits down to enjoy a program and has not been irritated by a tiresome preamble, or frequent interruptions, must feel a warm glow of gratitude toward the advertiser who made this pleasure possible.

We believe radio may be used most effectively to complement advertising in newspapers and magazines. Properly planned, radio advertising need do little more than whet our interest in a campaign about to be launched, details of which will be found in our local newspapers; or to call attention gently but firmly to the continued merits of various products. In the latter instance, the educational work in print may be carried on quite

independently but the combined appeal to the ear and the eye will doubtless prove most effective.

This presupposes a harmonious relationship between radio and the press which at present does not exist, and so we wish to ask both factions at this time, "Won't you please kiss and make up?"

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### *Twisting the Dial—News and Comment*

Allen Prescott, "The Wife Saver," is a young man with a delightful sense of humor who presents household hints about everything under the sun of interest to homemakers, and makes his material very entertaining. Tune in some Tuesday or Wednesday morning—NBC Red Network.

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"Saturday Musicales," the series of musical programs presented by Columbia Broadcasting System for the past seven weeks, has now come to a close, and from the letters of praise received at the offices of the Women's National Radio Committee, we know these excellent broadcasts will be sadly missed. They were the only programs of their kind on the air. It seems, however, that the time was much needed for a jazz band—and have you noticed the scarcity of jazz on the airwaves lately?

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Most of the serials which appear during the daytime hours are distinguished chiefly for their trashiness, in addition to which their sponsors attempt to put over hokum reminiscent of the old-time medicine shows. Isn't it about time that the agencies thought of some new way to sell cosmetics to win the attention of women, without giving them "ten-twent'-thirt'" drammer? Three that are worth listening to are "Today's Children" (NBC Blue network); "Story of Mary Marlin" (Columbia network), and "Vic and Sade" (NBC Red network). The first of these is particularly enjoyable because Pillsbury does not permit the commercials to become too long. "Vic and Sade" has a little too much Crisco on every program. (Aside to Columbia's Gilson Gray: Have you been clocking the commercials on Mary Marlin lately?)

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One of the finest dramatic productions on the air is Columbia's "America's Hour"—the Sunday night program which has been painting in words and music a colorful and fascinating picture of America's progress. Interesting facts about our basic industries are dramatized with the thread of the story of every program carried by a narrator whose voice is very pleasing. The well-written manuscripts, excellent cast and clever sound effects, plus Howard Barlow's very satisfying music, combine to make "America's Hour" a program Columbia may well point to with pride. Listening to this program ought to be made compulsory for high school and college students. Yes, we're raving—but it's that kind of program. 9:00 to 10:00 P. M. E. D. S. T.

The consensus of opinion among real music-lovers seems to be that the best of the station-created musical programs emanate from WOR. We wish to emphasize the word "station-created" before some hot-headed fan writes to ask, "What's the matter with the Philharmonic?" Incidentally, the Philharmonic concerts were first broadcast, many years ago, from WOR.

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Dance music that is different: Veloz and Yolanda's Orchestra, heard several nights a week over WGN and WOR. Their enthusiastic fans become quite incoherent in describing the particular brand of jazz offered by this Chicago unit. On the other hand, our California correspondents tell us we haven't heard anything in dance music until we have listened to Meredith Willson's "chiffon jazz". The silken strains are heard over NBC at irregular intervals.

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Why a good musical program like NBC's Melody Hour is put on the air at an hour when most people are sleeping on Sunday morning, instead of being given a better spot later in the day, is one of radio's mysteries. (Maybe the answer will also shed light on the reason for presenting an excellent travelogue early Monday morning, when most people are thinking only about the quickest, shortest travel route to work.) However—to get back to the Melody Hour: If this were less of a hodge-podge, so far as program material is concerned, it might be more distinguished. There are so few musical hours which present both vocalists and instrumentalists in serious music that this program provides a pleasant change for the intrepid souls who arise early on Sundays. Up to two weeks ago, the announcer on the program was without doubt the poorest choice NBC could have found for the series, as it was obvious he was unable to pronounce correctly any foreign titles or composers' names. However, this situation may have been changed since the last reports on the Melody Hour came in from our listening groups.

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The sponsor of the A & P Gypsies, who have been giving pleasure weekly to thousands in the past ten years, deserves an extra pat on the back for the sensible commercials. They never become tiresome, and Milton J. Cross' mellifluous voice makes even the price of duckling sound interesting.

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WEVD has captured one of the better women pianists—Grace Castagnetta, better known to radio audiences as Carla Romano. She will be heard in a new Bach and Brahms series every Wednesday evening from 10:00 to 10:30 P. M. E. D. S. T. Too bad this program will not be heard outside of the Metropolitan area.

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Lady Esther would be gratified to hear the favorable comments which have come in since the advertising announcements were cut down on that program.

An appreciative correspondent sums it up when she says, "Now nothing can spoil our enjoyment of Wayne King's lovely music."

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NBC's Music Guild could easily become the most outstanding series of this type on the air. At present, however, the programs are characterized by a lack of balance and frequently become tiresome. More variety would help considerably. In addition, the standard of performance is uneven, ranging from average to very good. This is unfortunate, because the idea behind the Guild is excellent, and despite its imperfections, it is above the average.

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WMCA is presenting a very interesting series over its network—the Inter-City Group—Tuesday nights at 9:15 P. M. E. D. S. T. The programs are entitled, "Women in Washington" and names that have become familiar to people with an eye on the Washington scene will be heard throughout these broadcasts. Listeners will learn what women in the government service are doing—and we hope some of these male critics who would relegate all women to the kitchen will tune in and become properly chastened.

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Apparently the radio is turned on, in some homes, at break of dawn, judging by letters which have come in praising the early morning programs. Yoichi Hiraoka, Cheerio and William Meeder are most frequently mentioned. To balance the picture, any number of fans sit up until midnight and later to hear Shandor and "Lights Out" (NBC) and the occasional symphonic broadcasts of the Columbia network.

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The program which is most frequently recalled and sincerely missed is the old Slumber Hour. Can't this program be sold to some mattress or bed manufacturer, as a "natural"?

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The Eton Boys—Columbia's popular quartet which seems to have a "roving" commission on the dial—is the particular delight of shut-ins. Other favorites are news commentators and band music. The Army, Navy and Marine Bands are among radio's most popular features.

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It is to weep. An advance schedule of CBS programs "of special interest to educational and cultural groups" lists only five musical programs which the network itself recommends. Of these, two have not yet made their debut. However, the publicity on Lawrence Tibbett's opening broadcast indicates that he will again follow the "something-for-everyone" pattern of former radio seasons, despite the fact that he is one of the greatest artists America has ever produced. Too bad!

## *Our Listening Groups Report*

. . . that Stanley High is rapidly moving into first place as a popular news commentator.

. . . that the combination of Stoopnagle and Budd, and Fred Waring's Orchestra, makes a very delightful program.

. . . that Erno Rapee's Radio City programs on Sundays are enormously appreciated.

. . . that Columbia's Salon Orchestra helps make ironing a pleasure for many housewives.

. . . that they would appreciate hearing the titles of musical selections after, as well as before each number, especially on serious programs.

. . . that they like the dance music of Messrs. Richard Himber, Lennie Hayton and Mark Warnow.

. . . that "One Man's Family" is too fine a series to be spoiled by having the young people in the cast grunt, instead of saying "Yes".

. . . that they do not believe in Santa Claus, and know that the testimonials of movie stars, doctors, nurses, etc. are paid for.

. . . that they resent advertising announcements beginning with "Listen . . ." or "I want you to try . . .". Advertising agencies please note!

. . . that local stations carrying symphonic programs coming from a key station on a network make listeners gnash their teeth with rage by inserting local "spot" advertising between numbers, and even between movements of a symphony. None of the "big three" would ever be guilty of such crudity on a key station, and should make some arrangements with affiliated stations to prevent this particular outrage from occurring in outlying sections.

Most frequently complained about this past month: Pepsodent's advertising (much too long) with none other than Martin J. Porter, Radio Editor of the *N. Y. Evening Journal* and *Radio Guide*, heading the list of complainants.

Runner-up: The announcements on the Real Silk Hosiery and Dr. Lyon's Tooth Powder programs (neck and neck).

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## *New Programs in Review*

**POET'S GOLD.** Columbia Network. Wednesday, 10:45 P. M. E. D. S. T.

Just when our members had become so insistent that we were about to stage an indignation meeting on Columbia's doorstep, practically demanding the return of David Ross' **POET'S GOLD**, this lovely program came back to the air. Beautiful poetry, lovely music, and David Ross' golden voice—need we say more?

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**SWIFT STUDIO PARTY.** NBC Red Network. Tuesday, 10:00 to 10:30 P.M. E. D. S. T.

Sigmund Romberg's pleasing music, Deems Taylor's suave, enjoyable humor, and Helen Marshall's singing are the highlights of an otherwise undistinguished light musical program. The Phelps enthusiasts will miss him, of course, but Deems Taylor's deft touch will probably win even loyal Phelpsians before long. The studio atmosphere seems forced and the frequent interruptions of applause become annoying as the program progresses. Why is it so difficult for radio to reproduce an authentic "party" atmosphere?

\*VICK'S. NBC Network. Monday, 9:30 to 10:30 P. M. E. D. S. T.

Grace Moore is back on the air and has borrowed a leaf from her movie experience. She provides a dramatized setting for her numbers on the theory, evidently, that her fans want a sugar-coated wrapper around every song. We earnestly hope that this style does not start a new cycle in radio, and that all concert and operatic artists who come back on the air do not feel impelled to provide a special background for music which has stood the test of time. Bori and Tibbett dipped in syrup would be more than faint heart could bear! We can't say we like music rolled in sugar and tied up in ribbons and lace, as it is now offered to us by Vick's.

\*(Note: This review is based on the opinions of a small sub-committee, as the listening groups have not yet had time to report. If we find at a later date that our members want honey and treacle with their music, we are prepared to eat our words.)

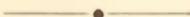


SUGAR CANE. NBC Red Network. Sunday, 12:15 to 12:30 P. M. E. D. S. T.

Just another precocious child singer, this time selling shoes. There ought to be a law. . .



As we go to press, we have the enthusiastic reports of a sub-committee which reviewed for us the first program of a new series sponsored jointly by E. R. Squibb & Sons, and World Peaceways. "To Arms for Peace," by unanimous opinion, is the best radio program which has ever been staged, and it would exhaust all our adjectives to do justice to it. Lucrezia Bori, a scene from "Journey's End" and Senator Borah were the high spots of the opening broadcast. The entire concept of the series, its dignified sponsorship, the care which has been lavished upon the program, and the brief commercials, make this a model for all radio to follow. Make special note of the hour—and be sure to listen in every Thursday night. Columbia Network—9:30 to 10:00 P. M. E. D. S. T.



### To Our Members:

*We must apologize for the delay in getting out this second number of RADIO REVIEW. The totally unexpected demand for copies which came from every corner of the United States and from Canada, completely swamped our small staff. We are now prepared to take care of any demands which may be made upon us and promise to be more prompt in the future.*

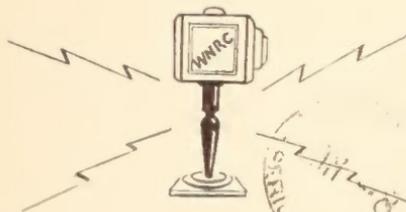
*Due to the fact that we had not provided in our budget for the enormous printing and mailing costs which this pamphlet will entail, we regretfully announce that we shall be forced to impose a charge of six cents per copy on all future issues. Advance payment may be made in stamps or coins. Please enter your subscription at once if you wish to have RADIO REVIEW come to you regularly.*

WOMEN'S NATIONAL RADIO COMMITTEE

113 WEST 57TH STREET

NEW YORK, N. Y.





# RADIO REVIEW

PUBLISHED BY: WOMEN'S NATIONAL RADIO COMMITTEE, 113 WEST 57TH STREET, NEW YORK CITY

V. I, No. 3

LUELLA S. LAUDIN, EDITOR

OCTOBER, 1935

## *Heart Throbs and Coffee*

About two years ago, people living in New York City and its environs began to hear many favorable comments about a program presented by a local station. The master of ceremonies, who was the main attraction, skillfully brought out the personality of each performer and kept his own within pleasantly modest bounds. This successful feature was the original amateur hour, and the man who made it the talk of New York was Major Bowes.

The radio industry, ever imitative, was quick to pick up the idea and experiment with it. Amateur hours cropped up on local stations all over the country, and lest foreigners be deprived of the unique pleasures of this novelty, were even presented in other languages. The ultimate has probably been achieved, now that we have several juvenile editions on the air. To date we can report no amateur animal performers but this may be in the offing.

However, it was not until one of radio's heaviest advertisers brought Major Bowes to the networks that the country at large had an opportunity to discover what latent talent lies in washerwomen, fruit store salesmen and others in prosaic occupations. An amazing number of gifted grocery clerks, all

specializing, by a strange coincidence, in one particular brand of coffee, have been brought to light. In addition to hearing amateurs on the radio, fans may now see them in a few vaudeville theatres scattered over the country. Only opera remains uninvaded as yet, but any day now we may expect to hear that Major Bowes has persuaded Mr. Johnson to introduce amateur opera companies into the Metropolitan.

Our grievance with amateur hours is not based on the fact that they are making a few men wealthy at the expense of ambitious young people and unemployed professionals who perform at "amateur" rates. (The *New York Post* under dates of October 15, 16, 17 and 18 printed some illuminating comments in connection with this situation.) We are not particularly concerned about the statement printed in *Variety* to the effect that only twenty per cent of the so-called amateurs are genuine. Our correspondence convinces us that the public is beginning to realize that the term "amateur" must be taken with generous helpings of salt. What we do challenge vigorously is the feeble justification offered for prolonging the amateur hour cycle in radio.

The excuse heard most frequently is that it discovers new talent. What for? The graduates of the amateur hour who have received radio contracts may be counted on the fingers of one hand. Certainly, none of them have become the big "name" stars of radio in the past two years. The contestants who obtain vaudeville engagements are dropped after a while to yield to a new crop of vote-winners. The balance of those who flock to New York City in the hope of appearing on one of the better-known programs, are stranded at the rate of three hundred a week, according to a recent report of the Emergency Relief Transit Bureau. Incidentally, they are the guests of the taxpayers of the City who unwittingly bear this added burden. Some of the programs announce that only people residing in New York are eligible, but since all would-be stars file a brief personal history with their application, it can be no secret that most of them come from out of town.

Booking agents cannot begin to place all the artists from the legitimate, vaudeville and concert stage who are available for "cakes and coffee". Swelling the hordes of these are an ever-increasing number of ex-amateurs, who, having had a taste of the glamour of the stage, are reluctant to return to their former trades. Every large radio studio has lists of artists who have

successfully passed audition tests and are now waiting for an opening.

The closing down of vaudeville on the Loew and RKO circuits means that engagements for variety artists are limited to the few theatres which still have stage shows. In New York City, the center of the theatrical profession, only one vaudeville theatre and two picture houses showing stage shows remain. To be very practical, this means that in the Times Square district approximately two dozen acts a week are employed, and to fill them, there are thousands of trained performers available. The tales these people could tell would probably eclipse in pathos any sob-story told on an amateur hour.

Nevertheless, despite this oversupply of talent, the amateur hour continues—because it is cheaper to produce; because those who are making money out of the idea are anxious to keep it alive; because clever publicity build-ups give the impression that the entire country is clamoring for amateurs; and finally, because the sponsors are also advertisers in magazines and newspapers, and as a matter of good business, attacks on their programs are soft-pedalled.

We suggest that amateur hours be converted into variety programs, employing concert and dramatic artists, vaudeville actors, and a master of ceremonies to preserve continuity. Rudy Vallee and Paul Whiteman have made a success of this type of program without the addition of heart throbs.

Long before amateur hours became epidemic, Roxy and Major Bowes periodically discovered new talent which they proceeded to promote. Orchestra leaders always have delighted in adopting and developing prodigies. However, it might be more efficient for all concerned were radio production managers, music and dramatic critics, and orchestra leaders to organize a national committee to pass upon aspirants for a career in radio, the theatre or the concert hall. Sub-committees appointed in large cities throughout the country could care for applicants outside of New York City. The young people requiring additional training would be given practical advice by the experts on the committees; the others who were ready to begin their careers would certainly have a better opportunity to succeed than present-day aspirants who take the heart-breaking journey from obscurity to fleeting fame to oblivion, via the amateur hour.

## *Twisting the Dial—News and Comment*

We never thought we would live to see the day when a commercial credit would actually prove to be the highlight of a program, but this did happen a few weeks ago on WOR's "Good Evening Serenade". And did you know that those obliging United Cigar Store salesmen will bathe the baby or feed your canary while you visit Aunt Tillie?

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John Charles Thomas has gone back to programs more in keeping with his position in the musical world, and we notice all the newspaper radio critics are applauding. If you didn't hear Mr. Thomas a few weeks ago in Gilbert and Sullivan's "Trial by Jury" you missed a treat.

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If you have a short wave set, tune in some Tuesday, Thursday or Sunday to W1XAL, between the hours of four and seven o'clock, EST. This station is dedicated to education, and professors from Boston and Harvard universities are frequently heard.

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We have no way of keeping tabs on the number of times a popular hit is played over the radio, but it seems to us the music from "Top Hat" must have passed its millionth rendition by this time.

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John Wanamaker is on the air, sponsoring an hour of good music five nights a week over W2XR, the station which specializes in quality music.

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Listen to "Your English" some Sunday afternoon and be sure the children are gathered round when you tune in. They will enjoy the lessons dramatized in interesting fashion on this program, and will probably take fiendish delight in correcting your speech for days after, if they are like some boys we know.

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Suggested for the next book of similes: As persistently as a radio tenor hangs on to those high notes.

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From comments we have heard recently, that Sunday night coffee program seems to be divided pretty evenly into three parts: coffee advertising, amateurs, and publicizing the master of ceremonies.

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We still think WOR leads the field in station-created music. The Wallenstein Sinfonietta and his String Sinfonia; Philip James' Little Symphony, and the new Master Musician series on Sunday evenings make that station stand out.

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We have yet to receive our first letter praising a "torch" or "blues" singer. After listening to the introductions which usually precede their efforts we have come to the conclusion that most of them are chosen for their pulchritude,

rather than for any vocal ability. Maybe it would be a good idea to have would-be sponsors blindfolded while they listen to prospects.

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The Firestone Hour is frequently mentioned in our correspondence. Light music sung by Margaret Speaks without frills or furbelows, and the accompaniment by William Daly's orchestra make this a pleasant half hour.

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Have you discovered Bob Burns yet? He is generally heard on the Whiteman Hour and his Arkansas drawl is most ingratiating.

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We don't know who originated the idea of having the second chorus of every dance number sung by a member of the orchestra, but having groaned through countless performances by would-be vocalists, we welcome the news that Messrs. Frank Black and Al Goodman are starting a trend back to straight playing of dance music, with no megaphoning of the second chorus.

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Those anguished cries heard over the entire country every Sunday evening come from the thousands of radio listeners who must decide between the Benny and Woollcott programs, when they would like to hear both.

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We must confess there are lots of things about the broadcasting business we cannot understand, and here's one of them. Richard Blondell's Story Teller's House is, in our estimation, the finest children's program on the air. However, it is presented at a morning hour when most children are in school. How about changing the time, WOR?

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All the symphony orchestras are coming back to the air, and we are particularly pleased to hear that this season the Boston Symphony will be heard regularly on NBC, although only half the concert is presented, unfortunately. We now have enough orchestral music to satisfy anyone, but song, piano and violin literature remain the stepchildren of radio. We suggest that some of the mediocre jazz bands heard on sustaining hours be cancelled and the time utilized to experiment in this comparatively untouched field.

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Lois Long brings a sophisticated woman's hour to the air for the first time, and if you are a New Yorker (the magazine) fan, as we are, you are familiar with her flippant, amusing style. Miss Long's program is totally different from any other and, with one exception, the series has been highly entertaining. The exception is the program on which Dwight Fiske appeared as guest artist. Mr. Fiske definitely is not fitted for radio, and we cannot understand how his material slipped past the program department at Columbia. People who go to night clubs and musical comedies expect to hear risque songs and humor, but even these same people resent having vulgarity invade their homes.

## *Our Listening Groups Report*

. . . that they wish some station would put on a half-hour or hour program of good dinner music like the old Black-and-Gold Room dinner concerts.

. . . that Burns and Allen's new sponsor is interfering with their delightful nonsense by injecting too much "juice" into the program.

. . . that they wish Fred Allen would go back to straight comedy, sans amateurs. His distinctive style is wasted on the rubber-stamp portion of his present program.

. . . that they wish some announcers wouldn't speak so quickly, as it makes them feel "hectic".

. . . that their children love the band music played by the United States Army, Navy and Marine Bands. Maybe some sponsor will get away from comic strip entertainment on the air and give them band music to sell cereal.

. . . that they agree with our opinion of the Squibb program and are enjoying it very much.

Most frequently complained about last month: The advertising on Capt. Tim Healy's program, because it is too good to spoil by having Capt. Healy write Ivory Soap ads into his manuscript.

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## *New Programs in Review*

EDDIE CANTOR. Columbia Network. Sunday, 8:00 to 8:30 P. M. EST.

Eddie Cantor, the delight of studio audiences, is back, and judging from the loud applause heard every few minutes on the radio, must be giving great satisfaction to those who have passes for the Cantor show. As for the radio audience—a minor consideration, apparently, in the Cantor scheme of things—Eddie does condescend to sing into the microphone twice on every program. If you are one of those ungrateful wretches who can't appreciate Eddie's generosity in letting us hear the laughter which greets his studio clowning, you can turn to the pleasant light musical program on WJZ and the Blue Network during one of those long pauses when Eddie is waiting for the visible audience to "catch on".

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WALTER O'KEEFE. Columbia Network. Tuesday and Thursday evenings, 9:00 to 9:30 P. M. EST.

Don't think all the good comedians are to be heard only on Sundays, if you haven't tried to find one during the week. Walter O'Keefe is as funny as some you hear more about, and funnier than most. We like Walter and predict he will be near the top of the polls for favorite comedians when the season is further along. The Casa Loma Orchestra adds to the enjoyment, but we could dispense with the "blues" singing.

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CAVALCADE OF AMERICA. Columbia Network. Wednesday, 8:00 to 8:30 P. M. EST.

When big business attempts to blaze new trails and presents an educational program, we think it is time to cheer. The story of America's progress is drama as absorbing as fiction, and on this half-hour it is particularly entertaining. Well-known actors appear in the principal roles to enhance the pleasure of the listeners. Don't let the word "educational" fool you, for this program will hold your interest from start to finish. We recommend it especially as family entertainment, and suggest that the children be allowed to sit up and hear it. The DuPont modest commercials deserve an extra round of applause.

ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT. Columbia Network. Sunday evening, 7:00 to 7:30 P.M. EST.

The Town Crier, our favorite raconteur, has returned after an absence all too long and this enthusiastic reporter is prepared to gorge her family with Cream of Wheat if the sponsor will devote less time to commercials and give us every possible moment of Mr. Woolcott. In this series he is even more entertaining than ever—if it is possible for Mr. Woolcott to eclipse his brilliant successes of previous seasons.

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JACK BENNY AND MARY LIVINGSTONE. NBC Blue Network, Sunday evening, 7:00 to 7:30 P.M. EST.

The most imitated team in radio, but no one else has ever quite managed to catch that suave Benny touch or Livingstone pertness. In thousands of homes, fans settle back with a sigh of contentment when the familiar "Jello, again—" is heard, knowing that Jack and Mary will not disappoint them. They tell us, however, that they miss Frank Parker. Johnny Green's Orchestra specializes in symphonic jazz which we much prefer to jazzed symphony.

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LESLIE HOWARD. Columbia Network. Sunday evening, 8:30 to 9:00 P. M. EST.

At the risk of being scolded by some radio editor for indulging in superlatives, we must say that here is radio's finest dramatic actor. While "The Amateur Gentleman" is not up to the standard of some of the stage productions in which Mr. Howard has been seen, it is absorbing throughout and every member of the cast is well chosen. This is another program for the whole family to enjoy, for which many thanks to the sponsor. The only fault we have to find with it is that listeners are forced to wallow in Honey and Almond Cream in one long boresome commercial, rudely jarring the pleasant mood established by the program.

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GENERAL MOTORS SYMPHONY. NBC Red Network. Sunday, 10:00 to 11:00 P. M. EST.

In the serious music division, this is still the best sponsored program. The first half of the series is featuring well-known musical artists, and we understand the second half will again present visiting conductors.

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THE NEW PENNY. NBC Blue Network. Tuesday evening, 9:30 to 10:00 P.M. EST.

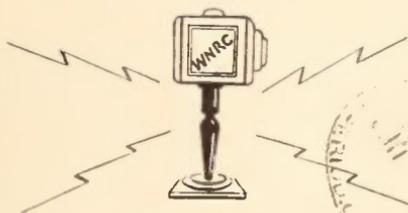
What was our astonishment, as this serial began to unfold, to find that it was suspiciously like *The Story of Helen Trent*, with some slight revisions. There is the same divorce in the very beginning, the kind friend of the family who is a lawyer this time instead of a doctor, the orphan who is adopted, and the same laughs-between-tears background. The one great difference is that this program has Helen Hayes, whose artistry makes the totally inadequate vehicle seem like a superb production. As a Helen Hayes fan who would enjoy hearing her recite the alphabet, we can only sigh, as we listen faithfully every week, and wish the manuscript measured up to the magnificent acting of its star. P.S. In the interests of accurate reporting we must state that out of appreciation of the good taste with which the commercials are handled, we purchased and sampled some Sanka coffee: but our indignation at having to hear Helen Hayes in a nondescript play kept us awake anyway.

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*Beginning with this issue, RADIO REVIEW may be obtained on subscription only. The cost is 75c per year, payable in stamps or coins.*

WOMEN'S NATIONAL RADIO COMMITTEE  
113 WEST 57TH STREET  
NEW YORK, N. Y.





# RADIO REVIEW

PUBLISHED BY: WOMEN'S NATIONAL RADIO COMMITTEE, 113 WEST 57TH STREET, NEW YORK CITY

Vol. I, No. 4

LUELLA S. LAUDIN, EDITOR

NOVEMBER, 1935

## *Paging Harpo Marx*

The Winter radio season is in full swing, and thus far has been marked by little that is new or startling.

To be sure, tap dancing is now a regular radio feature. The advertisers' demand for "names" has brought the dancing feet of Fred Astaire and Eleanor Powell to the microphone. On the stage or screen these artists stand alone in their field, but as their rhythmic taps come to us over the air we cannot join those who wax enthusiastic. It seems to us any good sound-effects man could imitate the sounds made by either, and unquestionably their singing could be surpassed by dozens of young men and women who have never gotten within hailing distance of a microphone, simply because they are not "names". With the current vogue for "big-timers" riding the airwaves, we await with breathless interest the news that Harpo Marx is coming to radio.

As for music, it is difficult to reconcile the advertisers' conception of what the audience wants to hear with the results of the radio poll just completed. According to popular vote, Sibelius and Beethoven head the list of favorite composers, indicating that the national audience demands the best in music. Isn't it

about time sponsors realized that those who enjoy the Philharmonic and the Boston Symphony Orchestras would applaud the same standard of music on a commercial program?

To E. R. Squibb and duPont must go the plaudits of grateful listeners for venturing off the beaten track. The actors on the Squibb programs have not been "names" but the dramatic sketches have been consistently entertaining nevertheless. The musical artists have been held to high artistic standards with no playing down to the so-called public taste. For its "Cavalcade" series, duPont has searched the history textbooks to find dramatic material and the result has been eminently satisfactory. Dignity and good taste have been evident throughout the presentations of both these sponsors and our correspondence indicates that the radio audience is properly appreciative.

Otherwise the same patterns continue. Some of the programs stand the test of time better than others, notably raconteurs, news commentators, variety hours, musical programs and "human interest" serials. Comedians seem to encounter the most difficulty in maintaining their hold on the public's affections, and of course, this is easy to explain. It is not simple to find entertaining material fifty-two weeks in the year, and the relentless microphone does not transmit pantomime or grimaces which might make stale jokes sound better.

Children's programs continue to be the weakest spots in the whole broadcasting system, with advertisers clinging tenaciously to the theory that only feverish and overexciting material will sell cereal and food drinks. The networks are at work on this problem and promise definite improvement soon, but thus far the results are reminiscent of the old tale of the laboring mountain and the mouse.

Most encouraging is the news that National Broadcasting Company will allocate more time on its networks for educational and cultural programs. We await further developments with interest.

The time may yet come when broadcasters, and not advertisers, will dictate radio policy. In their relations toward advertisers, the companies are still much too willing to make concessions. We'd like to see more spine displayed by the broadcasters in keeping their customers in line. Following this line of wishful

thinking, we can visualize the following scene taking place in the Sales Department of a big radio company:

**PROSPECTIVE CUSTOMER:** I'd like to have from seven to seven-thirty Sunday night for my show. (Editorial note: In the broadcasting business every program is a "show".)

**RADIO EXECUTIVE:** What kind of show have you in mind?

**ADVERTISER:** Light musical—master of ceremonies—orchestra—male quartet and a class contralto.

**RADIO EXECUTIVE:** Then there's only one spot you can have and that's between nine and nine-thirty. We need something light to follow the dramatic program from eight-thirty to nine, and to precede the forum which is on from nine-thirty to ten. Your show is just the thing. We can't sell you any other time on Sunday. And while we're discussing program, it must be understood that you will submit your list of musical selections in advance so that we are sure you do not include numbers which have been played on the daytime hours more than twice.

Since in this Utopian state we are discussing, all radio companies will be bound by an agreement to follow the same procedure, there will be no fear on the executive's part that the aggrieved customer will run to a rival company. He will sign on the dotted line, knowing that a balanced evening's entertainment will insure a wider listening audience for his "show" than would be possible on the old plan.

Yes, we're boldly advocating planned broadcasting, considered in terms of the whole morning, afternoon and evening, instead of the scrambled pattern which prevails at present. It may be a long way off—but won't it be wonderful when it comes?

## *Twisting the Dial—News and Comment*

There are ugly rumors that Alexander Woolcott's contract will not be renewed because his sponsor objects to Mr. Woolcott's liberal views on many current topics of interest. Say it isn't so, Cream of Wheat!

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If you like homespun philosophy, interspersed with humor, listen to Lum and Abner on the Blue Network some night. They seem to be among the most popular of the "jes' plain folks" type of program.

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Well, it seems we spoke too soon. Immediately after last month's REVIEW was off the press, a singing rooster appeared on Fred Allen's program as a contender for amateur honors. From now on we may expect almost anything in the way of barnyard pets. Only the mellowing influence of the approaching holiday season restrains us from withering comment about the exchange of jackasses!

---

Every once in awhile we are reminded anew of radio's educational possibilities in the field of public health and safety. The program called "Motor Madness" presented by NBC on November 12th should be repeated once a week, we think, to impress reckless automobile drivers with the dangers of carelessness on the road.

---

Found! a perfect description of the Voice of Experience program and its audience. This gem occurs in an article written by Clifton Fadiman in the October *Stage*. Mr. Fadiman speaks of the program as ". . . scrofulous matter . . . clearly intended for goggle-eyed cretins only." In the same article, he describes with deadly accuracy most of the amateur hours heard on the networks and in comparison with Mr. Fadiman's delineation, our criticism in last month's REVIEW appears as devastating as the sigh of a canary.

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We hear some complimentary things now and then about Station WBT in Charlotte, N. C. Our correspondents point with particular pride to a novelty called, "Sing, It's Good for You." The inspiration for the singing, we gather, is the fun to be found in household tasks, all set to music. And while we're speaking of favorite features on local stations, our Chicago friends say that a news commentator named C. B. Gregory deserves special mention. The ladies in Milwaukee speak of Richard S. Davis, on WTMJ, as a raconteur who will go far. We've probably started something, singling out a few stations for praise, but if the correspondence from those localities means anything, they deserve it.

Smart boys, these agency script writers. One of them hit upon the brilliant idea of holding a contest for amateur radio announcers during the Ray Perkins program. The material read by the contestants consists solely of announcements about the virtues of Feenamint, after which the studio audience solemnly applauds. Of course no other material could possibly be found to test diction, voice production, microphone personality and other qualifications. Yes, it's fun to be fooled!

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The Ford Sunday night concerts will be considerably improved and their popularity increased with comparatively little effort. First of all, however, the program director will have to make up his mind whether he is trying to build a symphonic broadcast, or a musical melange. At present the program is difficult to judge by even ordinary musical standards. Certainly the Fred Waring broadcasts sponsored by Ford do satisfy the audience for light music as they are uniformly excellent. It is regrettable that the Sunday night series does not do the same for music-lovers who want to hear a high standard of serious music. The superb soloists who appear are frequently handicapped by an insufficiently rehearsed orchestra and the chorus detracts from, rather than adds to the enjoyment of the hour as it is not first class. The Detroit Symphony under Gabrilowitsch demonstrated it was capable of reaching musical heights never yet achieved in this Sunday night series.

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If you want to get acquainted with New York City's best after-dinner speakers, watch WMCA and the Inter-city chain. The most important testimonials, benefits and interesting events which occur in the vicinity of our fair city are broadcast by this station, through the enterprise of Dick Fishell. Mr. Fishell doubles in brass and also handles sports announcing for WMCA.

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We'd like to call especial attention to an entertaining series which encourages the creation of home-made music. "Music Is My Hobby," presented on Thursday evenings over NBC's Red Network, brings before the microphone men and women who are prominent in fields far removed from music, playing their favorite instruments. The listener is impressed with the joy these people seem to derive in performing for their own pleasure. Incidentally, one of the most amusing quips we have heard in some time may be credited to Mr. William T. Taylor, the banker, who was a recent guest on this series. When asked by the radio announcer how a busy banker could find time to sing, he replied, "My answer is the same I received a few years ago when I asked a friend who was studying music if she was intending to become a professional. She replied, 'No—I'm merely studying music for my own amazement!'"

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We are about to initiate a Forgive-Our-Bragging Department. Subscriptions for RADIO REVIEW have been received in the past two weeks from Australia, Japan and France.

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The old saying about imitation being the sincerest form of flattery comes to mind with the announcement that the National Association of Broadcasters has organized a committee to award prizes for the best radio programs. Hmm -- -- sounds much like a "you-splash-me-and-I'll-splash-you" plan to us.

We thought the "holding-hands-with-you-alone" technique had been swept into discard when Your Lover went off the air; but it is being worked again on Ted Malone's "Between the Book Ends" program. Sounds very cheap to us. David Ross on CBS and Margery Graham on WGN have demonstrated that radio readers can have dignity and good taste and still command large followings.

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We hear that Buck Rogers is going off the air. This news will be greeted with great joy by mothers throughout the land. Now if "Og" and "Popeye" would join Buck, it would add considerably to their cup of joy, we are quite certain!

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Never have we heard such enthusiastic comments as is brought forth by the America's Town Meeting of the Air series. It seems everyone is talking about these programs, which provide vital, challenging material presented in most entertaining fashion. Having heard so many times that it is impossible to underestimate the radio audience's mental age—a statement with which we violently disagree—we are overjoyed to note the success of this series. If its response is any indication of a low mental age nationally, we are prepared to endorse N. T. G. and His Girls as an ideal children's program.

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It is not fair either to the radio audience or to the Boston Symphony to offer a one hour excerpt from its Saturday night program, and on some of the Western stations where the sample is further cut in half, the result is doubly unfortunate. The lack of program balance caused by picking up just part of the concert defeats the purpose of both NBC and the Boston Symphony in broadcasting this magnificent orchestra, which is to acquaint even the uneducated with the best in music. We do not have to go back very far in radio history to recall that it was not until the entire opera was offered weekly by Listerine that opera became popular as a radio feature. We hope NBC will make time to give us the whole Saturday night program, just as the country now enjoys the Philharmonic in its entirety on Sunday afternoons on CBS.

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Wallace Beery's mild, almost apologetic air as master of ceremonies on the Shell Chateau program is a welcome relief after Al Jolson. The super-enthusiastic, "oh, boy" attitude of some of the "give-the-little-girl-a-hand" school of m. c.'s should be confined to programs selling headache remedies. As for us, we'll take Wallace Beery.

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NBC's Radio Guild is conducting a Shakespearean "King" Cycle which we recommend for your attention. With commonplace serials publicized out of all proportion to their real merit, we feel we should be very remiss in failing to point out a series as fine as this.

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The "Cultivation of Taste" series on WIXAL, Boston, is something you should not miss if you have a short wave set. The subject is handled fascinatingly, at the same time demonstrating the practical value of good taste in everyday life.

## *Our Listening Groups Report*

. . . that they do not think Jack Benny's program is as entertaining this season as last, and that Jack sounds tired.

. . . that they like Dr. Hendrik Willem van Loon.

. . . that they do not think the daily March of Time programs are as interesting as the one weekly broadcast used to be.

. . . that they like Vivienne Segal's singing.

. . . that they consider WOR's "Love Doctor" a cheap program and can't understand why WOR wastes time on such trash.

. . . that they like the Baker, Beetle and Bottle combination, but wish Mr. Gulf didn't appear so frequently in the script.

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Most frequently complained about last month: The advertising on the Princess Pat program.

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In response to numerous requests, the Women's National Radio Committee issues its list of approved children's programs. We regret the list is not longer, but shall be pleased to add to it any new programs worthy of joining the small but select circle of those we can conscientiously recommend. They are listed in alphabetical sequence.

Alfred Terhune's Dog Stories—WOR—Mutual

Animal News Club—NBC

Captain Healy's Stamp Club—NBC

Junior Journal of the Air—NBC

\*The Puzzlers—WOR—Mutual

The Singing Lady—NBC

The Story Teller's House—WOR—Mutual

### *Educational Features*

American School of the Air—CBS

Cavalcade of America—CBS

Damrosch Music Appreciation Hour—NBC

Your English—NBC

\*For high school boys and girls.

We regret that the program entitled, "Great Moments in History," (NBC) is on the air too late to be included in this list.

## *New Programs in Review*

**CHEVROLET.** NBC Red Network. Saturday evening, 9:00 to 9:30 P.M. E. S. T.

A pleasing light musical program. Rubinoff plays his violin and conducts his orchestra in the manner his fans adore. Jan Peerce and Virginia Ræ uphold the singing honors of the feature. This program, while new, seems to be a definite hit.

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**JUMBO.** NBC Red Network. Tuesday evening, 9:30 to 10:00 P.M. E.S.T.

The Jimmy Durante enthusiasts who have heretofore bemoaned the fact that radio does not do justice to Jimmy's personality may now breathe a sigh of relief. The Jumbo program gives him every opportunity to exploit the madcap comedy and unique brand of entertainment which only he possesses. There is no equivocating possible on the subject of Durante—you either think he is one of the world's greatest comics, or you can't understand what the other half sees in him. If you belong to the latter school, this program may help you understand his popularity. Donald Novis and Gloria Grafton sing acceptably, and Arthur Sinclair, a performer new to radio, is a welcome addition. This is the only novelty of the season in lighter programs, and we recommend it as such.

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**LET'S TALK IT OVER.** NBC Blue Network. Monday afternoon, 4:30 to 5:00 P.M. E.S.T.

At the time this is written there have been only two programs presented in this new series, but we have heard favorable comments about it from several sources. Undoubtedly, it's the success NBC has been groping for these many months. It is live, warm, and up-to-the-minute. Emily Post, Anne Hard and Alma Kitchell will be featured regularly. We understand Margaret Cuthbert has had a finger in this pie, and if so, we congratulate both Miss Cuthbert and NBC on the result.

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**CORN COB PIPE CLUB.** NBC Red Network. Saturday evening, 10:30 to 11:00 P.M. E.S.T.

We can't understand this program as a network presentation at all. It sounds more like the sort of half hour which one might expect to hear on a five-watt station. As a matter of fact, when our attention was called to it by some of our friends, we thought it was a satire to end all hillbilly "folksy" presentations, but apparently, we were wrong and the sponsor is in dead earnest. All we can say is that the intelligent men of our acquaintance who smoke pipes would tune this program out instantly, so it should not be regarded as typical of the entertainment enjoyed by pipe smokers.

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**WOMEN'S NATIONAL RADIO COMMITTEE**  
113 WEST 57TH STREET  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

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# RADIO REVIEW

PUBLISHED BY: WOMEN'S NATIONAL RADIO COMMITTEE, 113 WEST 57TH STREET, NEW YORK CITY

Vol. 2, No. 1

LUELLA S. LAUDIN, EDITOR

JANUARY, 1936

## *Radio Yardsticks*

The Women's National Radio Committee has every reason to be proud of its activities in 1935. We have seen many of our suggestions for the improvement of programs become policy with radio companies, and while our exact position so far as the industry is concerned changes from day to day, we believe we have convinced the gentlemen who make the wheels go around that we are sincere, that we have no axes to grind, and that we desire above all to be constructive.

When we have praised a progressive step or a good program, we have basked in the warmth of the enthusiasm about our work which our encomiums aroused. When we have denounced objectionable features, the frigidity which at once became apparent in the attitude of radio row made us long for the balmy breezes of the Antarctic so that we might thaw out. Alternately we have been God's gift to radio or its "number one headache", depending upon our reviews of programs.

We find ourselves, unwittingly, in competition with commercial surveys and more often than not, our findings are diametrically opposed. Programs we praise lavishly based upon listening group reports are frequently at the bottom of commercial

lists, and those we condemn in some instances are near the top. Despite this marked difference of opinion we continue to believe in our quaint, old-fashioned way, that when women take the pains to write voluntarily to tell us their impressions of current programs, and a study of correspondence from many points discloses a unanimity of opinion, we have the best gauge in the world upon which to base our criticisms.

In addition, we are influenced in our attitude by the fact that none of the women we meet seem to have been approached by commercial surveys. When we inquire at meetings whether they have been questioned the answer invariably is "no". Who are the people who give the information upon which ratings are based, anyway? And why is it assumed that only people with telephone service are intelligent radio listeners?

Do commercial surveys include women in isolated sections as well as in crowded cities? We get letters from communities in the country which do not even show on a map.

Do these yardsticks include shut-ins, who represent radio's most constant audience. A quiet survey we made last year in this particular group provided findings totally at variance with all the things we had ever read about the radio tastes of these people.

Until we discover to our satisfaction a more accurate measuring stick than present surveys provide, we shall continue to be uninfluenced by them. Crossley to the contrary notwithstanding, we maintain that the Squibb program was one of the finest produced in many years, and that the General Motors series of last year was far superior to this season's. We wish both General Motors and Squibb had displayed more courage about sticking to their ideals. We didn't think business men were so wishy-washy.

Just now we find that Phil Baker has caught up with and surpassed Jack Benny. Probably this will be greeted with loud guffaws by Crossley and other commercial organizations. We also note that even loyal Amos 'n Andy fans are at last turning in disgust from their old favorites because the commercials have become too heavy to stomach. We are quite prepared to hear, as soon as this is off the press, that we're crazy; the sales of Pepsodent have never been so heavy, etc., etc. . . . but nevertheless we stick to our statement.

Credit where credit is due, say we—and so a hearty salute to the orchestra which introduces those clever sound effects on the Popeye program, even if the program itself is trash.

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The Standard School and Symphony programs on the Pacific Coast network have the same following that the Damrosch Hour has in other parts of the country. And while we are speaking of Coast features, Station KROW is highly commended by our friends in Oakland for its self-imposed restrictions on radio advertising.

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When we first heard commercial credits worked into the script on programs featuring comedians, we thought the idea was clever but since then it has been so overworked that we long for the straight commercial once again. Burns and Allen are now fifty percent tomato juice and Benny seems to be sinking into a sea of jello, with the flavor of his comedy completely submerged.

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It seems we erred in crediting Listerine with being the first to sponsor an entire opera. Lucky Strike had that distinction. This season as you know NBC is broadcasting the Saturday matinee performance in full, and if you haven't written your letter of appreciation yet, do so at once.

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When we think of the wonderful manuscripts for children's programs we have read and what possibilities they offer for unusual presentations that youngsters would love, we write whenever we hear Kaltenmeyer's Kindergarten.

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The WEVD University of the Air has an impressive lineup of speakers and broad range of subjects this season. We wish these programs were broadcast nationally. We think there are enough people who would listen faithfully to justify an experiment in cooperation between WEVD and a network.

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We have spoken many times of the Packard program and our regret that Mr. Tibbett's incomparable voice is wasted on mediocre selections during part of the program. No one who has heard his "Largo al Factotum" can honestly be satisfied to listen to some of the trivia Mr. Tibbett sings. However, this time we wish to shed additional tears over the fact that the program has an unbelievably bad orchestral background.

## *Our Listening Groups Report*

- . . . that they still think Whiteman is the King of Jazz.
  - . . . that they like Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick.
  - . . . that Lois Long is a refreshing personality in radio.
  - . . . that they think some programs which operate under the guise of giving advice to troubled souls get away with a lot of material that should be censored. "Mental garbage," one woman terms it.
  - . . . that they like the Southernaires Quartet.
  - . . . that they like Hollywood Hotel.
- 

Most frequently complained about last month, and with *unusual* bitterness: The advertising on Amos 'n Andy's program.

WMCA and the Inter-city group presents daily an interesting gentleman named Dr. Kurt Haeseler whose mission in life it is to help us girls do our work more efficiently around the house. How to remove stains from hardwood floors without removing our skin and other helpful hints of a similar nature is Dr. Haeseler's contribution to housewives, and we listen with sinking heart. With the growing tendency to prop men before microphones to tell us how to run our homes, the outlook for the future is exceedingly gloomy. It looks as if we will have to march down to Wall Street in a body one of these days to take over the deserted desks while big business dons aprons in our homes.

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Columbia Broadcasting System distributes weekly a special listing of programs for educational and cultural groups, and the most recent one reveals that the network is at a new "low" so far as good music is concerned. Of ten programs which Columbia considers outstanding, two are frankly student efforts, which leaves eight to be considered. Of these, only the Philharmonic and Howard Barlow's "Understanding Opera" are worthy of commendation. Sorry, Columbia—we can't rave over your musical bill of fare.

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"The Other Americas" program on NBC's Blue Network gives the listener a totally different impression of our Latin-American neighbors than we gather from reading about them in the papers. Edward Tomlinson, who conducts the series, and the Joseph Littau orchestra, which specializes in music from the other Americas, make this an entertaining, as well as educational program.

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One of the radio teams which seems to be as old as broadcasting itself is Peter de Rose and May Singhi Breen, but apparently they manage to find something new all the time, judging by the loyalty of their audience.

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The blow has fallen and not only is Alexander Woollcott off the air but he is to be succeeded—of all things!—by Buck Rogers. How anyone who has enjoyed Woollcott can be expected to switch to Buck makes us speculate anew about the reasoning processes of sponsors. It seems to us this is an unexpected "break" for rival cereal manufacturers.

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There are many programs which do not strive for sensational success but are content to develop an audience which will follow them week after week as the years go along. They are entertaining, if not spectacular, and they are extremely popular. In this grouping we place such programs as the A & P Gypsies, the Contented Hour, Cities Service, Life Is A Song, Album of Familiar Music, and the Pacific Coast's Caswell Coffee Hour.

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WMCA'S Good-Will Court, originated and conducted by A. L. Alexander, is another feature which should be heard from coast to coast, if only as an example of how a program of this type can be conducted without offense. Judges from the city courts generously give up their time on Sunday nights to help individuals who come to them with legal and domestic problems, and offer practical advice on what steps to take. The program never resorts to theatrical devices or cheap sensationalism, depending upon the real life drama enacted before the microphone to hold the interest of the radio audience.

When we first advocated a policy of restricted advertising and selective accounts for broadcasters, we were called visionary and impractical. If we may be permitted to borrow a masculine trait and crow just a little, we want to point out that the network which instituted this policy seems to be walking off with the major share of new business this year.

And so—Crossley, Starch and all their associates notwithstanding, we shall continue to judge by our own yardstick, and point the way for those advertisers and broadcasters who wish to follow the road to increased sales and bigger dividends in 1936.

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### *Twisting the Dial—News and Comment*

If you have read the book, "Washington-Merry-Go-Round" or the syndicated news column of the same name you are somewhat prepared for the broadcast conducted by Pearson and Allen on the WOR-Mutual network. Spicy comment about news of the day, what goes on in Washington, sidelights about personalities—all these combine to make as entertaining a program as the season has presented thus far. And when Drew and Bob bring a squirming statesman to the microphone to be interviewed, they manage to extract all the information you want to know, minus the usual coating of platitudes. In short, this is a feature which should promptly be put on your "must" list.

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One of the plaintive cries which comes to us frequently is, "Why don't radio engineers do something so that we don't have to hop up and down during a variety program to adjust the volume every few minutes? When it is set just right for talk the music can be heard a block away." Not knowing a thing about the mysteries of the control room except that it contains a great many queer gadgets, operated by young men with funereal countenances, we pass this complaint along to all broadcasting studios as our Girl Scout deed of the day.

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As we go to press "The Music Goes Round and Round" is epidemic, and radio being what it is, no doubt Haile Salassie's youngest son is singing "ho-ho-ho" to his father's distraction.

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Everyone is talking about those exciting Thursday night programs presented by the League for Political Education and we want to take this means of answering the many letters we receive asking if the questions are "planted" or whether it is all as straightforward as it seems. Having attended several of the broadcasts we can testify that there is no need to take artificial means to start the discussion. The problem of the patient chairman is to select from the many who jump to their feet at once in great excitement and want to hurl questions at the shrinking speakers of the evening.

## *New Programs in Review*

**METROPOLITAN AUDITIONS.** NBC Red Network. Sponsored by Sherwin-Williams. Sunday, 3:30 to 4:00 P.M. EST.

We understand this program went through court procedure in order that the sponsor might win the right to present it, and after hearing it, we wonder what the hotly disputed original feature is supposed to be. While excellent singers are heard and the magic name of Edward Johnson is connected with it, to call the program "Metropolitan Auditions" is a misnomer. It is simply a musical program, with Edward Johnson acting as master of ceremonies. What is the idea, we wonder, of having Mr. Johnson solemnly wish each artist success, if it is supposed to be a try-out for the Metropolitan? If the public were going to judge the merits of the performance his comment might have some point; but since he is the judge and jury—why?

---

**THE WIDOW'S SONS.** NBC Red Network. Sustaining. Sunday, 4:00 to 4:30 P.M. EST.

Mountaineers in the hills of the South are portrayed with accuracy and understanding by Lulu Vollner, who wrote this script. The plot is interesting, the cast well-chosen and the production excellent. NBC has done itself proud in staging this program. Incidentally, people who think of hillbillies in terms of adenoidal singers strumming banjos should listen to "The Widow's Sons" to hear a real portrayal of backwoodsmen.

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**NINE TO FIVE.** NBC Blue Network. Sponsored by L. C. Smith Corona Typewriter Company. Thursday, 7:15 to 7:30 P.M. EST.

Some of the characters in this serial are easily recognizable, even if the sketch is not typical of what goes on in the average business office. However, it has humor and interest and is off the beaten track.

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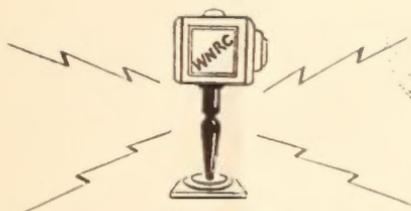
**PARADE OF YOUTH.** CBS Network. Sponsored by Ward Baking Company. Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. 6:15 to 6:30 P.M. EST.

A perfect example of how a good idea may be killed by its treatment. News about children for children, but with such theatricalism that its value is completely lost. Less sloppy sentiment and more dignity of presentation would probably improve this by a few hundred percent.

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**WOMEN'S NATIONAL RADIO COMMITTEE**  
113 WEST 57TH STREET  
NEW YORK, N. Y.



# RADIO REVIEW

PUBLISHED BY: WOMEN'S NATIONAL RADIO COMMITTEE, 113 WEST 57TH STREET, NEW YORK CITY

VOL. II, No. 3

LUELLA S. LAUDIN, EDITOR

MARCH, 1936

## *Stepchildren of Radio*

We have been going into the matter of children's programs rather thoroughly and have compiled some interesting material. We find, for instance, that of all the features which clutter up the airwaves on the late afternoon hours, only thirteen bear the unqualified stamp of approval of parents and children alike. Nine of these are sustaining features which means that in this branch of broadcasting as in all others we are indebted to broadcasters themselves for the best things on the air. The roll of honor is listed on another page and those who are interested will observe that three of the four sponsored programs are long-time successes, and that not one on the list is highly sensational or exciting. In the final analysis blood-and-thunder is not on top.

We have also made a study of the complaints concerning children's programs and note that most of the ones which are not wholly approved fall into one or another of the following classifications:

Too much material and action crammed into fifteen minutes, causing program to be paced too swiftly; characters speak

too quickly creating a staccato effect; program leaves junior audience in a state of anxiety about the fate of one of the characters; program too noisy; too many characters introduced making it difficult to follow plot; program purports to be story of an everyday boy but situations are far-fetched and would never occur in life; voices of actors irritating; program encourages use of poor English; story is silly and presumes upon intelligence of listeners.

Of the approved programs several are "one-man" presentations. All are paced at a moderate tempo and not one gives the impression of having in the background a program director who is frantically signalling the cast to "hurry! hurry!"

This is also true of the most successful serials on the air. "Forever Young", "One Man's Family", "Vic and Sade" and "Today's Children" all seem to move along smoothly and without effort. There is no striving for effect, no hectic atmosphere, no abnormal situations and never are there more than two actors before the microphone for any length of time. The people heard are warm, likable human beings who seem to have the same problems most of us have. They actually take the time to think now and then before making a reply, nor do they speak only pearls of wisdom. In short, life as it is for the average family is reflected in these stories and therein lies the secret of their popularity.

We learned that these programs are tremendously popular with children as well as adults. Why then, we wondered, would it not be a good idea to adapt the "real-life" formula to wholesome material for children? The answer to this proved to be enlightening.

The average radio advertiser, it seems, is not a bit interested in presenting a program which parents will approve. He wants to win the children and makes a deliberate attempt to select something which is "sure-fire" even though it may be objectionable to parents. A comic strip program or material which contains all the elements to which parents bitterly object is preferable, and writers of fine manuscripts have about one chance in a hundred of selling them. We have read countless stories which have gone the rounds of advertising agencies and have been rejected because they were "too good", astonishing as that may seem!

Having obtained a serial which answers his requirements, Mr. Advertiser proceeds to lure young audiences with bait. Every experienced writer knows his manuscript must include what is known in the trade as the "merchandising tie-up." This, in plain English, is any plan which will bring box-tops, labels or wrappers to the radio studios in exchange for some prize. Secret codes, club memberships, pins, badges and other gadgets are available for the nice little boy who will nag his mother into purchasing the required number of loaves of bread, boxes of cereal or cans of food drink. Until the listening habit is well-established, the sponsor does not risk having the program stand or fall on its own merits.

The remedy for the situation is clear, since this device is employed to a greater extent on bad programs than on good ones. The latter do not require this questionable practice to win goodwill and the former should not be encouraged in this way. If women, the buyers of the family, will refuse to be exploited through their children and will not permit them to send away for the prizes offered, an appraisal of programs on the late afternoon hours next year may tell a different story.

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### *Twisting the Dial—News and Comment*

Ralston's would be delighted, no doubt, to know that in the Borough of Queens, New York City, a few weeks ago boys were canvassing from house to house for package tops. The idea, it seems, was for several to pool their spoils to see if the result of this united effort would not win a hundred dollar check for "the gang." We'd love to know if one of the Tom Mix checks went to Jackson Heights. Won't someone tell us?

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Our idea of nothing at all in stunt programs is the Bock Goat Beauty Contest which was described on CBS. The silly season in radio has begun.

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Someone whose musical judgment we respect very highly tells us that the Seven G's, heard on the Phil Baker program is the finest vocal ensemble on the air. Too bad they are not given more to do during the half hour.

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The women of Oklahoma City want to know why "The Singing Lady" is not heard over their stations although "impossible programs" broadcast from New York and Chicago are. What should we tell them, Kellogg's?

The American School of the Air gets better and better every year. The dramatizations presented daily and particularly Dorothy Gordon's delightful music every Thursday are well-liked. Mr. Paley may well be proud of this feature.

---

The Chesterfield program has slipped in recent months and especially the last few weeks. The orchestra becomes noisier with every broadcast and Rosa Ponselle is a disappointment as a radio artist. Her voice has a constant vibration which is annoying, and true to the tradition of opera singers who have preceded her to the microphone, she sings selections for which her voice is not suited. The result is unfortunate. The brightest spot on the half hour is David Ross and the modest, convincing commercial credits.

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Dorothy Thompson is a welcome addition to the program conducted by Claudine Macdonald. We'd like to hear her every week instead of twice a month.

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We could hardly believe our eyes when we read that Beatrice Fairfax is going to give advice to the lovelorn on the Columbia network. Between *The Voice of Experience* and this new feature CBS seems to be cornering the market on silly women who like to have their love affairs solved confidentially with an audience of only a few million people.

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Pierre Coleman's "A Dog and His Boy" is as different as the title would indicate. It is on Station WINS every Saturday morning and will probably be on a network one of these days. Judging from the few broadcasts we have heard it should be.

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The most popular woman on the air today, bar none, is Martha Deane, despite the fact that there are sections of the country which do not even get a chance to hear her. Her assistant, Vincent Connolly, is always mentioned by the Deane enthusiasts, too. Nice team work on that program. We think its popularity is based on its naturalness and sincerity. The listeners get the impression that Miss Deane is speaking to them just as she would if she were holding a personal conversation with each across a tea table. Maybe it's our imagination but we think WOR has an intimate atmosphere anyway.

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We are glad to note that the Ford Sunday night concerts have been steadily improving. Particularly outstanding was the program on March 15th.

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"The Magic of Speech" is another feature on a long list of sustainers for which NBC should be heartily commended. The dramas staged by Vida Sutton to put over her points are entertaining as well as educational.

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"Forever Young," a charming serial, has the dubious honor of having the most nerve-racking commercial credits on the air at present. Not even Lady Esther

at her loquacious worst in the days before CBS brought relief to suffering thousands was any more annoying. The drip-water method of torturing prisoners used in some countries is evidently the inspiration for Camay's advertising.

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When oh when is Hendrik Willem van Loon coming back on the air? We miss him sorely.

---

Our friends in Birmingham, Ala. tell us that the Industrial High School Chorus heard over WBRC at 10:30 A.M. Fridays should be on a network. Adrew W. Smith, Radio Editor of the *News-Age-Herald* says, "Lawrence Tibbett wrote he received the greatest musical thrill of his life listening to the Negro children sing."

---

You could have knocked us over with a microbe when we heard this gem on a recent "Echoes of the Past" program. The story was about Ponce de Leon and all went well until someone shouted, "Here comes the boat now, Ponce de Leon. See the puff of smoke and hear the whistle blow!"—and lo! came the mournful note of a steamboat whistle across the airwaves. We expected at any minute to hear Ponce, the old anachronist, break into "The Robert E. Lee."

---

The Tom Broadhurst Stories on CBS every Saturday have the tang of the sea about them. His stories are thrilling enough to hold the interest of children yet they do not antagonize parents. If you are acquainted with the Broadhurst books for boys you will want your children to hear him on the radio. Men like this program, too.

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At the time WNRC was first constituted, a representative of an advertising agency told one of its executives that "it is impossible to underestimate the intelligence of the radio audience." Apparently this continues to be the viewpoint of some agencies judging by the commercials on the Lucky Strike program. "Lucky Strike is not a cure-all but . . ." and similar statements are too ridiculous for words. Is Lucky Strike trying to compete with Peruna?

---

Our favorite reporter is a man who writes us in clear-cut terms about the things on the air which displease him most. A recent criticism is one with which we agree so heartily that we are going to quote him verbatim: "One reason for dissatisfaction, I believe, is the trend toward short programs. It's fifteen minutes of this and fifteen minutes of that, and more than the physical inconvenience of changing the dial continually is the necessity of transferring your mental interest from the Romance of Helen Boop to the cowboy songs of a Bronx hillbilly, and then to something else again." Thank you, Mr. New Haven.

---

We think it is high time to retire some of the standard works which have been heard all season, such as Liszt's "Second Hungarian Rhapsody" or "Les Preludes." Haven't our foremost conductors ever heard of his "Tasso"? And

why is Chausson's "Symphony" or his beautiful tone poem, "Viviane" completely ignored? Pianists, too, fall into the same musical ruts. Even Hoffman on his recent appearance did not venture off the beaten path but played the familiar "Moonlight Sonata" and two Chopin selections every radio pianist does. This situation is also true of lighter music. "Erminie" and "Fra Diavolo" are buried in camphor balls while "Vienna Woods" and "Blue Danube" are heard all too frequently. More imagination in planning programs is required, it seems to us.

We wonder if Chase and Sanborn are collecting a commission from Major Bowes for the use of their radio hour to boost his interests? First it was the road units and now it is the new magazine. Pretty generous of C. and S. This is the program, you will recall, which started out by presenting amateurs and wound up as a School for Salesmen.

### *Our Listening Groups Report*

- . . . that they like Lum 'n' Abner.
  - . . . that those Sunday afternoon University of Chicago Round Tables are excellent.
  - . . . that they still think the Jello commercials are the cleverest on the air.
  - . . . that they think those Sidewalk Interviewers, Belcher and Johnson, very amusing.
  - . . . that they like Richard Humber's music.
  - . . . that Kate Smith is as popular as ever.
  - . . . that the Town Hall of the Air is doing more to educate people concerning current issues than any other program on the air.
  - . . . that they enjoyed the Cities' Service tenth anniversary program.
  - . . . that they are glad the Goldbergs are back.
- Most frequently complained about last month: The much overdone "Salute to Cities" idea. Everyone knows the telegrams and enthusiastic messages are not as spontaneous as they appear to be.

### *New Programs in Review*

ZIEGFELD FOLLIES OF THE AIR. Sponsored. WABC-Columbia Network. 8:00-9:00 P.M. E.S.T. Saturday.

A good hour of entertainment with a little bit of everything thrown in. Fannie Brice's comedy, Al Goodman's orchestra, vocalists singly and in duets and the glamour of a musical comedy of the stage are brought to you over the microphone. The girls who act as heralds do not improve the program any, as the effect of the blended voices is that of a single person speaking in a room with poor acoustics. The commercials are actually silly and unconvincing. The announcer sounds as if he had just discovered soap, which gives you a faint idea.

WILDERNESS ROAD. Sustaining. WABC-Columbia Network. 5:15-5:30 P.M. E.S.T. Monday through Friday.

Here is an excellent children's program which deserves the applause of everyone who is interested in entertainment for young people. It is an historical drama well-written, cleverly staged and with a splendid cast. It is an ideal serial for children but adults

will enjoy it, too. As soon as the children have had a chance to get acquainted with it they'll love it. If advertisers are interested in a demonstration of a program which has adventure, excitement and dramatic suspense and nevertheless is not objectionable, we advise them to tune in to WILDERNESS ROAD. We rate it 100%.

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**CELEBRITY NIGHT.** Sponsored. NBC-Red Network. 10:30-11:00 P.M. E.S.T. Saturday.

A light musical program featuring George Olsen and Ethel Shutta. Miss Shutta sings comedy songs as few others on the air can, and George Olsen's music is always pleasant. The guest star idea (for a change!) is employed and gives promise of a note of variety every week. After hearing the commercials on some toothpaste programs it is rather a shock to discover toothbrushes have anything to do with gleaming teeth but the idea is thoroughly rammed down one's throat on this program. Another case of a lost opportunity to win goodwill by restraint in advertising—but then we fear sponsors will never learn.

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### APPROVED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS (Network presentations)

**AMERICAN SCHOOL OF THE AIR.** 2:30 P.M. CBS Network. Monday through Friday.

**ANIMAL CLOSE-UPS.** 6:15 P.M. WJZ-Blue Network. Tuesday and Thursday.

**ANIMAL NEWS CLUB.** 6:00 P.M. WJZ-Blue Network. Wednesday and Friday.

\***BILLY AND BETTY.** 6:45 P.M. WEA-Red Network. Monday through Friday.

\***CAPTAIN TIM HEALY.** 7:15 P.M. WJZ-Blue Network. Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

**DAMOSCH APPRECIATION HOUR.** 11:00-12:00 A.M. Red and Blue Networks. Friday.

**JUNIOR RADIO JOURNAL.** 5:15 P.M. WJZ-Blue Network. Monday.

\***SINGING LADY.** 5:30 P.M. WJZ-Blue Network. Monday through Friday.

**SPARE RIBS.** 8:00 A.M. WEA-Red Network. Monday through Saturday.

\***STANDARD SCHOOL BROADCAST.** 11:00-11:45 A.M. Pacific Coast Time. NBC stations KFSD, KFI, KPO, KGW, KOMO, and KHQ. Thursday.

**STORY TELLER'S HOUSE.** Tuesday, 3:45 P.M. WOR-Mutual. Saturday, 9:45 A.M.

**TOM BROADHURST'S SEA STORIES.** 5:15 P.M. CBS Network. Saturday.

**WILDERNESS ROAD.** 5:15 P.M. CBS Network. Monday through Friday.

\*Sponsored programs. All EST unless otherwise indicated.

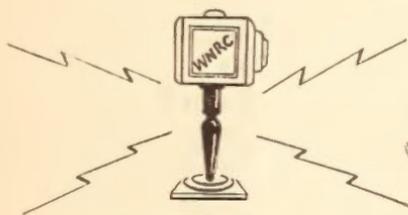
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*The cost is 75¢ per year.*

**WOMEN'S NATIONAL RADIO COMMITTEE**  
113 WEST 57TH STREET NEW YORK, N. Y.





# RADIO REVIEW

PUBLISHED BY: WOMEN'S NATIONAL RADIO COMMITTEE, 113 WEST 57TH STREET, NEW YORK CITY

Vol. II, No. 4

LUELLA S. LAUDIN, EDITOR

APRIL-MAY, 1936

## *Echoes of the Radio Poll*

The awards for outstanding radio programs have been presented and as was to be expected, both bouquets and brickbats have been thrown in the direction of the Committee on Awards. We have turned an attentive ear to the criticism as well as the praise, and another year we shall profit by this year's experience.

The poll which was used as a basis to guide the judges uncovered some illuminating facts. Nearly all who voted used the space reserved for comments to point out reasons for their selections or omissions, and a few suggested that next year the ballots include a provision for "the worst program on the air."

Approximately twenty-five per cent of the returns were only partially completed, with such explanations offered as, "Never listen to anything but music", or "Don't know much about children's programs." A small percentage of those who voted indicated that only news broadcasts interest them, and another group ignores everything but talks on current affairs.

Local pride played a considerable part in breaking down the votes in each classification, as many were scattered among programs heard only on local stations. This in part explains the poor showing made by nationally known news commentators, as many sections supported their own favorites.

Some strange quirks were revealed. For instance, many of the Leslie Howard fans mentioned "The Amateur Gentleman", although that program has been off the air for several months, and the sponsor withdrew it on the ground that it was not popular. People who selected the loftiest type of musical program and decried "cheap" entertainment saw nothing unusual in picking as the best non-musical program a trashy daytime serial of the Bertha M. Clay school. To some, Wayne King represents "serious music" and to others "One Man's Family" is an educational broadcast. The high standard of the children's programs chosen puzzled us until we recalled that in this instance adults were making the selection and would naturally pick those they would want children to hear.

Clearly evidenced is the public's interest in news broadcasts, music, comedy, variety, drama, human interest serials, current affairs, and other educational programs. The criticisms most frequently expressed were that too many commercially sponsored features sound alike and that too many programs of the same kind are on the air at the same time. On the other hand, a great many people expressed their gratitude for the joy radio brings into their lives.

On the whole, the attitude of radio listeners may be summed up in this fashion: They see the defects of the present system and are thinking about its potentialities without losing sight of the worthwhile things radio is doing. They heatedly criticize programs they do not like and yet realize other people may enjoy the very program with which they find fault. Since there will always be a difference of opinion concerning what is good and what is bad, continuation of varied entertainment is automatically insured, with the edge always in favor of the most vocal portion of the radio audience.

At the luncheon which was the occasion of the presentation of awards there was ample evidence of the interest in the work of the Women's National Radio Committee. The Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, Anning S. Prall, pledged the support of the government agency which exercises jurisdiction over radio. The men who represented the radio industry expressed a willingness to cooperate with us. And we, the Women's National Radio Committee, renew our promise to be constructive—to encourage the good and to point out the "sore spots" of radio broadcasting, but always from a dispassionate standpoint.

England about five hundred years ago, giving opportunity to paint a word picture of the customs and history of many sections of the world during this period, and to introduce dramatic situations which make this an absorbing serial.

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For our Things-We'd-Like-to-Have-Explained Department: When a foreign statesman's address, delivered in native language, is translated into English for the purposes of our dramatized news programs, why is an accent added?

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Richard Maxwell's "Songs of Cheer and Comfort" is quietly building a large audience, now that early morning listeners have discovered him. We find that many people like to hear hymns sung over the radio and Mr. Maxwell's sincere rendition of them is meeting with appreciation. CBS—9:30—10:00 A.M. E. S. T.

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We have been waiting patiently for "Parties at Pickfair" to thaw out but they still lack spontaneity and warmth. To us these programs sound as if the sponsorship (ice and ice refrigerator companies) had cast a chill over them which even the approach of warm weather can not dispel.

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### *Our Listening Groups Report—*

- . . . that they like Lionel Barrymore on the "Swift" program.
  - . . . that they like Dr. West's Celebrity Night.
  - . . . that they like Tom Powers' Life Studies.
  - . . . that they will never forget the final Toscanini broadcast.
  - . . . that they don't like to have comedians read the commercial credits on their programs.
  - . . . that nothing falls so flat as unfunny comedy of which there has been too much lately on all the airwaves.
- 

### *New Programs in Review*

HIT PARADE. Sponsored. CBS Network. Saturday, 10:00 to 11:00 P.M. E. S. T.

Freddie Rich's Orchestra playing melodic dance music in the feverish tempo which seems characteristic of all Lucky Strike programs, regardless of musical direction. The singing doesn't contribute anything to the program, and as for the commercial credits (time out for loud groans!)—we can hardly believe any one over six years of age will take them very seriously.

If you haven't heard any of Dr. Charles M. Courboin's organ recitals, tune in some Thursday night from 10:00 to 10:30 E. S. T. to hear some of the finest music radio has to offer. The programs are presented over WOR-Mutual, Yankee and Canadian Radio Commission networks.

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One of the things we have never been able to figure out is why "Contented Hour" has some one singing lullabies at 10:00 P.M. Most little ones of our acquaintance have retired long before the Lullaby Lady appears before the microphone. Is this just a cute idea to sing Mommy and Daddy to sleep?

---

WMCA has hit upon an original idea in its "WMCA Salutes—". Living Americans who have made some valuable contribution to civilization or who have performed a unique service in public life are singled out for tribute. There have been only two programs thus far but the plan has possibilities for a good educational feature.

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Among the high spots which radio listeners may look forward to this summer are the broadcasts of the Stadium Concerts which are sponsored by WOR-Mutual and broadcast as well by the Canadian Radio Commission. These programs given by the Philharmonic Orchestra and high-grade soloists, present some of the best orchestra concerts on the air during the summer months.

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If your boy is one of the many thousands who have suddenly taken to howling like a dog upon the slightest provocation, blame "Renfrew of the Mounted". This program, by the way, is a definite success and next Christmas will probably find Santa Claus staggering under the burden of Canadian Mounted Police uniforms for young "Renfrew" fans.

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Bing Crosby is to be commended for introducing at least one outstanding musical artist on his Music Hall program, but some of us would like it still more if Bing did not become so very familiar with his guests in an attempt to be friendly. There is a happy medium between overfamiliarity and formality and we hope Bing will achieve it soon. And speaking of movie stars as sponsors of great music, did you happen to hear Joan Crawford on the breathless occasion when she announced, "Of course, I don't want to claim Leopold Stokowski as my protege, but . . ."—?????? It's moments like this which reward us dial-twisters for our diligence!

---

We note with satisfaction a tendency to inject an educational note into programs which do not pretend to be anything but passive entertainment. "The Littleton Family" on WIXAL, Boston, is an outstanding example of this new trend. It traces the various branches of an imaginary family which lived in

## *Twisting the Dial—News and Comment*

One of life's tragedies which has not yet been reported in the newspapers is that "Myrt and Marge" has come to an unexpected close, leaving many listeners in doubt as to the fate of some of the characters. One of them was ill with a heart attack at the time of the last broadcast, and a few little details were left hanging in midair, with the result that "Myrt and Marge" fans have been too upset to reach for a fresh slice of gum. Now it seems they will never know what happened unless Wrigley puts an account of the final chapter into every package of Spearmint. We can safely predict that if this tense situation is ignored many chewing gum addicts are going to retaliate by taking to candy.

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Stoopnagle and Bud's delightful clowning is one of the brightest spots on the air. For people who are fed up with ancient "gags" and appreciate satire we recommend this team.

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Nominated by parents as the three worst programs on the air: Dick Tracy, Omar the Mystic, and Buck Rogers.

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Phil Spitalny's All-girl Orchestra offers a pleasing Sunday night program which seems to be very popular. As an ardent feminist our viewpoint may be different but we can only remark that some of the all-men orchestras succeed in sounding almost as good, despite the handicap of sex.

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A few people have written us to point out the contrast between the hysterical dramatization of the Canadian mine disaster offered by "March of Time" and the unvarnished, dignified treatment by the Canadian Radio Commission.

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We have discovered why many people never listen to broadcasts of baseball games. They do not know what it is all about, believe it or not, and therefore can hardly be expected to wax enthusiastic. A five minute explanation of the finer points of the game broadcast now and then during the season would probably be welcomed by those to whom it is a mystery. And while we're thinking about it, the same thing should be done during football season and in connection with tennis tournaments. There are plenty of sections of the country where nary a baseball, football or tennis ball is handled from one end of the year to the next. Did you ever think of that, radio men????

---

David Ross is back with "Poet's Gold", and we hope CBS will make up its mind to leave him on the air for a time. In the past he has been taken off suddenly and with no apologies, usually to make way for some inferior program. Emery Deutsch's Gipsy music furnishes the background for Mr. Ross' delightful readings.

MARION TALLEY. Sponsored. NBC-Red Network. Friday, 10:30 to 10:45 P.M. E. S. T.

A pleasant program of light music featuring Marion Talley's singing and, incidentally, her new shape. The former speaks for itself and the announcer calls attention to the latter, giving all the credit to Ry-Krisp.

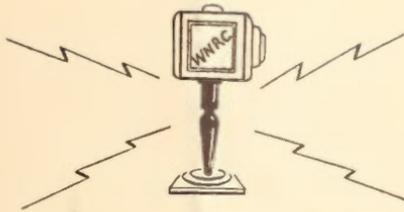
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EVERYBODY'S MUSIC. Sustaining. CBS Network. Sunday, 3:00 to 4:00 P.M. E. S. T.

An enjoyable program of good music under the baton of Howard Barlow. It is a thoroughly informal music appreciation hour with Henry W. Neely as commentator. Mr. Neely's approach to his subject is that of one who has found out that good music is not so difficult to understand, after all, and he makes his explanations brief, comprehensive and entertaining. Before the Symphony Orchestra has swung into the next selection, the listeners have been told enough about it to follow it with understanding. There is nothing original about the idea, as NBC through its Damrosch Appreciation Hour has been doing a similar thing very successfully for many years, and Columbia's own "Understanding Music" and "Understanding Opera" were of the same formula. However, this does not detract in any way from the value of "Everybody's Music" and credit is due Columbia for providing an entertaining hour of music on Sunday afternoon.

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WOMEN'S NATIONAL RADIO COMMITTEE  
113 West 57 Street,  
New York, N. Y.



OCT 12 1936  
ERIC S. GALT

# RADIO REVIEW

PUBLISHED BY: WOMEN'S NATIONAL RADIO COMMITTEE, 113 WEST 57TH STREET, NEW YORK CITY

VOL. II, No. 5

OCTOBER, 1936

## *Radio and Motion Pictures*

The history of the motion picture and of radio parallel each other in so many respects that it is difficult to understand why broadcasters are not profiting by the experience of the motion picture industry.

For several years, when the motion picture was in its infancy, film companies produced inferior pictures with little or no artistic merit until the intelligent public became articulate and today the most severe critics of movies concede that more and more exceptional motion pictures are being produced annually.

The radio broadcasters are now going through a particularly difficult period. While obviously it is not always possible to stage a radio show which has any relationship to the article being advertised, it is possible to have dignified programs; to eliminate the coarse and vulgar; and to make a contribution to the cultural life by presenting programs of higher quality.

Motion Pictures seemed to run in cycles—one gangster film was a box-office success, and every company immediately threw together a similar story, produced the film which joined the parade. The first variety program on the air was successful, and now a dozen or more variety shows are in prospect for this winter when everything from whistling to dancing will

be broadcast. Even variety hour fans can be surfeited with too much variety.

Response from many radio listeners in a recent survey indicate that few take the time to protest about programs they do not like—it is easier to twist the dial, while the sponsor does not realize that an enormous radio audience is lost because of the character of the program. Those who appreciate programs of high quality are not the letter writing fans, as a general rule. Yet, they constitute an intelligent audience whose interest should be sought by sponsors of radio programs.

For a moment, consider more specifically the problem of children and the radio. It is conceded that children listen to more programs intended for adults than ones designed for their entertainment. Instead of using this as an argument for lowering the standards of all programs for children, it should tend to raise the standards of adult offerings presented at hours when children are sure to be listening in. Here again, the same points raised by film companies are being advanced by broadcasters. Western pictures were among the favorites with children in the early days of the movies. This conclusion was reached after scanning the box office returns at the theatres. However, as years went on the same box office returns proved just as conclusively that boys and girls liked finer pictures too. In other words, just as appreciation of music is successfully taught, so appreciation of the motion picture has been included in the curricula of many schools, and why not now, a course in radio appreciation! Because surveys have shown the preference of many children for types of programs which educators and psychologists feel are harmful, is no justification for the continuance of the program. Rather, it is proof of the need of eliminating these inferior programs and substituting better ones which, coupled with a sincere effort to create a real appreciation of better entertainment, would increase the number of listeners for all good broadcasts.

The radio audience interested in finer entertainment is lost completely to many of the sponsors at present, just as a large potential motion picture audience was out of the reach of the theatre manager until he had better films to offer and unless the advertiser is reaching the public to which he is catering, his money is being wasted, whether it is spent in newspaper, magazine or radio advertising.

dislikes of radio listeners. Through this means, the station learned the average number of listening hours per day, the percentage of programs tuned in mornings, afternoons and evenings; how many of the listeners were professional or business people, how many owned automobiles, the number of home-owners, "to show that the audience is firmly established economically, settled in habits and locale, and highly responsible." "The majority," writes Mr. Ames, "voted for instrumental music of the highest type. Unqualified approval was registered for the Shakespearean cycle." These western stations doubtless proved that there is a radio audience keenly interested in high class music and finer programs, but this audience is not articulate. In May, KECA's magazine commented: "It is necessary that lovers of fine music thoroughly and permanently convince advertisers that the best way to gain their good will and custom is to provide them with the programmes they prefer. A rising graph in the sales chart is the most convincing argument. No merchant of sagacity and judgment will hesitate, in face of such a demonstration, to preserve and sponsor fine music and to restrain his advertising to the smallest duration and frequency."

Concluding his article, Mr. Ames writes: "If the majority of our discriminating listeners express themselves, they will do more to improve the standards of American radio programmes than any number of commissions and committees. Evolving programmes that are wholesome, entertaining and of cultural value amounts to a large order. Slow progress, trial and error, active cooperation between anxious broadcasters and every element of their vast audience, must precede standards of uniform excellence, which lie a long way ahead. My hope resides in the dialing fingers of every responsible listener, reflecting the quality of his tastes as well as the probity of his indignation."

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## *Our Listening Groups Report*

- . . . that they like the dignified advertising of sponsors presenting news commentators.
- . . . that Wilderness Road continues an enjoyable feature for young people.
- . . . that they enjoyed the broadcasts from Salzburg during the summer.
- . . . that they would be happy to dispense with the singing of choruses of popular songs on the dance music programs.
- . . . that they enjoy the political broadcasts this fall.
- . . . that they enjoyed the Lewisohn Stadium Symphony Concerts from New York City, the Robin Hood Dell Symphony Orchestra broadcasting from Philadelphia and the Chautauqua Symphony Concerts from Chautauqua.
- . . . that they are getting bored with so much repetition of the same musical selections by popular orchestras.
- . . . that they enjoy the animal stories by Don Lang.

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## *Twisting the Dial*

The first concert of the fall by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra on the Ford Sunday night hour was hailed with delight. The improvement in the orchestra color and quality was very noticeable, as was the precision which the orchestra utterly lacked last year.

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The General Motors broadcast with Stokowsky and John McCormack was very good indeed. John McCormack's voice sounded better than in years and his diction was superb.

## *Books on Radio*

TALKING ON THE RADIO. By O. E. Dunlap, Jr., Radio Editor of the New York Times. Published by Greenberg, Publisher.

It is probably safe to say that everybody is interested in radio. The interest of some is confined to its entertainment value, others are concerned with its place in the educational and cultural life of the country, others speak on the radio from time to time, and others have a technical interest in this invention. No matter what your particular interest in radio may be, you will enjoy this new book "Talking on the Radio" by Mr. Dunlap who summarizes practical "Do's and Don'ts" for broadcasters, and sets down fifty rules for preparation and delivery of radio talks. Probably Mr. Dunlap, too, has become annoyed with the rasping voices of amateurs on the air, with the lack of conciseness of many speeches, and with the many faults of novices on the air. For the listener it will be particularly helpful in developing the art of criticism.

Much has been written and said about advertising on the air. The radio public expects the commercial sponsors to use adequate time to properly advertise their wares, but it is strongly contended by many that the very nature of the advertising frequently antagonizes. In his book Mr. Dunlap, speaking especially of sales talks on news programs writes:

"It is a distinct error to open the sponsored news program with a blast of sales talk, just as it would be to have the front page of a newspaper covered with advertising and no news. The sponsor's name and product may be briefly and quite naturally mentioned at the beginning, but to preface the news with a minute or more of talk about breadmor headache pills annoys the listener, who is almost certain to get another dose in the middle and at the end of the program."

Radio listeners as well as radio speakers will enjoy Mr. Dunlap's book.

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CHILDREN AND RADIO PROGRAMS, written by Dr. Azriel L. Eisenberg, of Cincinnati, and published by the Columbia University Press, is recommended for the use of all persons interested in this general subject. Following an exhaustive research, during which Dr. Eisenberg had questionnaires filled in by approximately 3,000 children in all walks of life living in Greater New York; interviewed many of the pupils personally, and followed up a questionnaire to the parents with personal interviews with hundreds of them, the facts have been so correlated that the reader gets a clear picture of children, their likes and dislikes in radio programs.

Future issues of the RADIO REVIEW will comment in detail on some phases of this survey and the implications of these findings. Here in one concise volume is all of the material and ammunition necessary for those groups who are interested in raising the standards of children's programs. Here is conclusive evidence that the programs designed for children are a minor factor in the problem, and that more attention must be given to the character of the programs on the air during the listening periods of the young boys and girls.

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THE ART OF PLEASING EVERYBODY. In the current issue of the "Atlantic Monthly," an article on "The Art of Pleasing Everybody" by Richard Sheridan Ames discusses many interesting phases of radio broadcasting today. Mr. Ames gives facts about programs and radio response over two large California stations which have carried out interesting programs, giving Shakespearean plays and classical music to the exclusion of practically everything else. One of the stations had a monthly magazine, and from the subscribers received a twenty-five per cent return on a questionnaire sent out by the station to ascertain the likes and

BU 332

For years when intellectual groups asked for better motion pictures, they were told the "public" liked the fare being served daily in the theatres, and box office receipts were cited as proof of the contention. Only after twenty years were the motion picture companies convinced that finer pictures, intelligently produced, will not only please the public but will be box office successes as well.

Is it going to require twenty years to convince the radio broadcasters that intelligent radio listeners constitute a large percentage of the purchasers of the nation, and that they appreciate and demand programs of higher quality?

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## Comments

The Women's National Radio Committee commended the action of the Columbia Broadcasting System in restricting the time to be consumed by advertising on all programs, and in otherwise passing such rules as might tend to raise the standards of advertising on the air. The Committee has appreciated the cooperation of all companies in its efforts to insure dignified advertising. Although a great deal of progress has been made, there is yet much to be desired in some advertising. Members of the Radio Committee especially concerned with the advertising on the air will be interested in the following which is quoted from a recent issue of the New York Sun:

"Most radio programs are an insult to the average intelligence of the American public," said I. A. Hirschmann, vice-president of Saks-Fifth Avenue, at an address before the Sales Executives Club at the Hotel Roosevelt recently. "If newspapers presented their stories with the same saccharine, stupid, repetitious appeal for sales there would be few readers left," said Mr. Hirschmann. "While I hold no brief for some of the blatant, undignified appeals which appear in so much of our newspaper advertising, it at least has been forced to confine itself to publishers' standards which, on the whole, are intelligent.

"Americans deserve a better deal from the back-slapping, droning, repetitious, hard-hitting radio announcers. The taste of people can either be built up or regimented into cheaper standards. In this, the advertisers and sales managers of the country have an extra-curricular responsibility. I have never seen a well thought out campaign aimed at lifting the level and purchasing power of the people fail when it was well done."

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"A list of 2,053 names of songs learned over the radio are recorded by the children. Of these, 1,744, or 85% are popular dance songs; 135, or 7%, cowboy songs; 72, or 3%, theme songs; 58, or 3%, general and 44, or 2%, classical songs. Except for cowboy songs, the girls lead the boys in this activity generally, and in each category. *It is regrettable that so potent an instrument of musical education carries so few musical numbers of abiding value.*" So wrote Dr. Eisenberg in his book "Children and Radio Programs" published by Columbia University Press.

Eddie Cantor's program is one hundred per cent better than any he had before.

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And now comes a query from some listeners: "Why must every station broadcast baseball and football news for hours. Couldn't at least one of the NBC stations be kept open for the people who do not care for sports?"

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Congratulations to the large banking institutions which have arranged to present the Philadelphia Orchestra in a series of radio programs this winter. If the programs of the Orchestra are of the same high quality as usually presented in their concerts, the radio audience will have a rare treat.

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Why are George Burns and Gracie Allen, the clever comedy team, being completely drowned in tomato juice? By saturating the short broadcast with juicy tomatoes, even though ripened on the vine, many of Gracie's fans feel they cannot bear tomato juice—not even to "taste the difference."

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It was something of a shock the other night to hear a Metropolitan star sing "These Foolish Things." Nothing could really be more foolish.

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Radio fans will rejoice to learn that beginning on November 8th, the New York Philharmonic Sunday concerts will again be broadcast from 3 to 5 o'clock through the Columbia Broadcasting System.

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After a rip-snorting, hair raising, exciting episode in the series of stories on gang-busting, it comes as a ludicrous anti-climax to hear the merits of tooth paste advertised.

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During the summer months when so many substitute radio programs were on the air and while the listening groups of the Radio Committee were vacationing here and abroad, publication of the RADIO REVIEW was temporarily suspended. The RADIO REVIEW will now resume its place, voicing the ideas, and likes and dislikes of radio fans throughout the country who are especially interested in the activities of the Women's National Radio Committee.

*RADIO REVIEW may be obtained on subscription only.  
The cost is \$1.00 per year.*

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