

C.F.C.F. RADIO  
GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY 1919 - 1969

**RCA**  
SPC 407



EXPRESSLY PREPARED FOR  
C.F.C.F. RADIO  
BY RCA LIMITED

COMPILED BY JIM KIDD FROM THE C.F.C.F.  
LIBRARY, HIS PERSONAL COLLECTION,  
AND THOSE OF ED MANNING AND HANK  
FLEISCHMAN.

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By this time, even the Mount Royal Studios, spacious as they were, had become obsolete. Larger broadcast facilities were prepared in the King's Hall Building on St. Catherine Street West which included a "Hanging Studio", acoustically isolated from the building structure surrounding it.

World War Two brought radio to the fore-front beyond its wildest expectations as Canadians across the country followed the course of the second global conflict in just over two decades. CFCF rebroadcast all the war-time speeches by Churchill, Roosevelt, Mackenzie King, augmented by our already-expanding news team, as it quickly became obvious that the speed and immediacy of radio news could be matched by no other medium, a situation that exists even today, almost thirty years later. Music and quiz programs played a diminishing role in the program schedule as more and more time was given to feature news reports and analysis. Near the end of the war, CFCF began its affiliation with the new ABC radio network, a partnership that still exists. One of the first major programs heard from ABC was the Saturday afternoon broadcast live from the Metropolitan Opera with Milton Cross as commentator.

An explosion and fire in the new King's Hall Studios in January 1948 forced a move to temporary studios on Cote de Neiges where larger facilities were available. Within weeks full service was restored which included many local variety programs still fondly remembered by Montrealers.... "Little Players Of The Air", "The Good Neighbour Club", and the remote broadcasts from many of the city's clubs and hotels. This was not radio's finest hour as Television's initial impact cut heavily into audience ratings. The networks in particular changed and revamped formats trying to find a solution. It soon became evident that the answer lay in local programming almost to the complete exclusion of networks. Radio quickly adopted its first "back-yard" philosophy and took a hard look at its public affairs-community service responsibilities. In this respect television was the best thing that ever happened to radio, bringing to the sound-only broadcasters a new awareness of their place in the community and how they could recapture their audiences.

Almost in answer to a prayer, the electronics industry presented radio with its biggest impetus since the vacuum tube....the transistor. Overnight, radio became the most personal form of information/entertainment....in homes, bedrooms, kitchens, cars, boats, barber-shops, grocery stores and wherever else someone wanted the latest news, sport scores, weather forecast or new song. Some Madison Avenue wit phrased it perfectly... "The smaller radios get, the bigger radio gets."

Again, CFCF was forced to move quickly... a sudden and disastrous fire at Cote de Neige destroyed all studios and offices, described on the air by a CFCF newsman as had the earlier King's Hall explosion! No one was injured, and amazingly enough, no air time was lost. Within days temporary studios were established in the Penthouse of the Dominion Square Building until a complete broadcast complex could be built on the sixth floor. In 1963, CFCF moved into the

broadcast centre in which CFCF television was already operating, bringing the entire Marconi Broadcast Division under one roof.

The last ten years in the history of CFCF has seen it incorporate all the best in contemporary radio. A well balanced format of music/news/public affairs comment/sports/special events. CFCF microphones have taken Montrealers to all the world's news makers to bring the actual sounds into their homes or cars, just as they happen, whether it be across the world or across the street. Two recent news events dramatized radio's pervasive reach....the news of President Kennedy's death was flashed around the world by radio....it was radio, in the street, on the bus, in the barbershop, that brought the tragedy of the event to the world...virtually within minutes, the entire free world had known what happened. On the night of November 9th, 1965, an unprecedented power failure struck seven northeastern states and parts of Canada....the uninterrupted flow of radio information was credited with averting panic during the 14 hours of blackout. CFCF, through its studio telephone call director, even joined ABC Radio Chicago, with ABC in New York as they were unable to reach each other. Montrealers were treated to a rare glimpse of "closed circuit" conversation as the two stations decided which would originate the upcoming 6:00PM newscast. Chicago won the toss!

"Talk" radio came into vogue....again CFCF pioneered a sensible, non-sensational approach to open-line broadcasting. Recent programs have created national news coverage, particularly in the field of public affairs. The use of the long-distance telephone conversation and our own special telephone studio switchboard have enabled Montrealers to talk directly with the personalities in the news both at home and around the World.

As the first station in Canada to purchase its own helicopter, CFCF has used it not only for traffic reporting duties but as an extension of the already impressive ground mobile units. From our own roof-top heliport, it can swing into action within seconds, describing from the air what newsmen on the ground cannot see. On several occasions the CFCF helicopter has been used in the capture of escaped prisoners and in the search for lost hunters.

CFCF was also a pioneer in FM broadcasting. CFCF-FM began as a 250 Watt transmitter in the Sunlife Building in 1947. After full time programming began in the 1950's, it was assigned new call letters, CFQR-FM in 1967. Operating on 92.5 megacycles with a tower atop Mount Royal, CFQR broadcasts in full stereo twenty four hours daily, a strong voice in yet another new and promising road for broadcasters.

New marketing methods arrived and were adopted for local and national advertisers. Complete radio campaigns incorporating promotion announcements, advertising rotation, on-air contests and participation, remote broadcasts, point-of-purchase material, proof of purchase contests, and dealer/distributor/salesmen meetings all were offered to the broadcast advertiser as part of single campaigns. CFCF has many outstanding success stories, particularly in the introduction of new products and services.

It is but a few miles from 173 William Street to 405 Ogilvy Avenue, but it has taken fifty years. From that dark corner of the factory building from which faint signals and scratches were heard by a handful of "amateurs" to today's transistorized printed circuit wizardry from which a full "instant entertainment/information" program schedule is enjoyed by hundred of thousands, it has been an exciting adventure.

To the hundred of broadcast pioneers who contributed so much to the station's evolution, we, of this generation, promise an equally exciting period in the next fifty years. No other broadcasters are better equipped to meet the demands and challenges of radio's future than those of CFCF, the People Station.

had already begun ... regular performers heard from the Phillips Square location were the dance bands of Joseph Smith from the Mount Royal, Andy Tipaldi from the Ritz Carlton and Harold Leonard from the Windsor. The 1923 yacht races from Lake St. Louis were described using a portable, hand-cranked transmitter.

Artists broadcast under the names of their sponsors ... Cliquot Club Eskimos, A & P Gypsies, Ipana Troubadours, Goodrich Silvertown Orchestra and the Lucky Strike Orchestra. Billy Jones and Ernie Hare, the Happiness Boys, were known at various times as the Taystee Breadwinners, the Interwoven Pair, and the Best Food Boys!

CFCF and broadcasting in Canada as a whole came of age in 1927. Large, fully equipped studios were completed in the Mount Royal Hotel ... the new transmitter was set up on the penthouse. The main studio was completely covered with drapes, as was the practice to deaden the sound. More complex equipment was installed just in time for our participation in the greatest broadcast venture of the decade ... the Confederation Diamond Jubilee celebrations from Ottawa. A coast-to-coast network was improvised, with 23 stations involved ... CFCF was the key Eastern anchor, bringing to Montrealers as did each of the other stations in their areas, the sound of the Peace Tower bells for the first time in history. CFCX Shortwave, then called VE9DR, carried the signal world wide.

1928 brought to Canada the first Trans-Atlantic broadcast ... the Thanksgiving Service from Westminster Abbey. The Marconi receiving station in Yamachiche, Quebec picked up the BBC program and fed it to the CNR network, the fore-runner of the CBC. This was followed on November the 11th with a live transmission of the Armistice Service in Whitehall. What is now so commonplace was tremendously exciting. For the first time, the distances that separate the world's cities, began to shrink. Even the first live satellite television transmissions from Europe pale by comparison with the enthusiasm that these first trans-Atlantic broadcasts generated. One elderly lady in Saskatchewan wrote that "it was a shame to get our dear King up at such an hour" ... the broadcast was heard in the province at 4:00 AM!

1930 brought the wealth of U.S. programs to Montrealers when CFCF became an affiliate of the National Broadcasting Company. To a broadcaster, nothing is more nostalgic than an old program log. Here's the line-up for Monday, February 16, 1931:

7:27 AM Time Announcement  
7:30 AM Northeastern Breakfast Entertainers  
8:00 AM Quaker Early Birds – Gene & Glenn (NBC)  
8:15 AM Northeastern Breakfast Entertainers  
9:00 AM Parnassus Trio (NBC)  
9:15 AM Studio  
9:45 AM Miracles of Magnolia (NBC)  
10:00 AM Sunshine Hour  
11:00 AM Gloom Chasers (NBC)  
11:15 AM Studio  
11:30 AM Organ Melodies (NBC)  
12:00 PM Shavers Musical Bits  
12:15 PM On Wings of Song (NBC)  
1:00 PM Stock Quotations  
1:15 PM Palais D'Or Orchestra (NBC)  
1:30 PM Hotel New Yorker Concert Ensemble (NBC)  
2:00 PM Wilder Radio Hour  
3:00 PM Ross Hall Feature  
4:00 PM Canadian Electrical Supplies  
5:00 PM Hartney's Eventide Music  
5:55 PM Weather Forecast/Program Resume/Time  
6:00 PM Twilight Hour  
6:45 PM Stock Quotations  
7:00 PM Amos and Andy (NBC)

7:15 PM Pepper and Salt – Zythophone and piano-popular music  
7:30 PM Phil Cook – The Quaker Man (NBC)  
7:45 PM Montreal Light Aeroplane Club – Aviation Charts  
8:00 PM Connor Washer Orchestra  
8:30 PM Mount Royal Hotel Concert Orchestra (remote)  
9:00 PM Melody Mike's Music Shop (CPR Network)  
10:00 PM Stromberg Carlson (NBC)  
10:30 PM Willard Robison Deep River Orchestra (NBC remote)  
11:00 PM Hotel Paramount Orchestra (NBC remote)  
11:30 PM Time Announcement – Sign Off

As can be seen, virtually the entire broadcast day was music, either local or network. Note the complete absence of scheduled newscasts ... one wonders if there were any at all. "Miracles of Magnolia" was heard Monday through Friday, as was Amos and Andy, already a national favorite. Downtown theatres deliberately slated their pictures to end at 6:30 and begin again at 7:30 to allow their patrons time to hear Amos and Andy! With the cream of the U.S. talent available to local listeners, new interest was generated in local programming. Every night, CFCF joined with stations in the Maritimes, CNRO in Ottawa, CFRB in Toronto, CKOC in Hamilton and CFPL in London to form the first regular Canadian broadcast network. It was a co-operative venture ... Canadians heard the Toronto Symphony and the Hart House String Quartet for the first time ... Imperial Tobacco, Canada Starch, General Motors, Imperial Oil, Dominion Linoleum and others began regular sponsorship of programs.

Of all the entertainment media, only radio managed to weather the Depression and the reason was that it was free. Every major record company, manufacturer of radio equipment, movie industry giants, etc., either went into receivership or tottered near the brink of bankruptcy, while radio enjoyed its greatest years, broadcasting to millions of people who had purchased their sets before the Depression and now could afford no other form of entertainment.

One of the world's largest airships, the "R100", came to Montreal from England in 1930 ... the radio network included fifteen stations across Canada and the full CBS network in the United States. Commentators were stationed in Quebec City, atop the still-unfinished Sun Life Building, and at the destination point in St. Hubert, where W.V. George, described the arrival for CFCF listeners.

Radio grew bolder in 1932 ... the Imperial Economic Conference in Ottawa was heard around the world. It was the first time the new dynamic microphone was used ... allowing the speaker to stand further away and project his voice naturally. The even more sophisticated condenser microphone was used for the arrival of the country's new Governor-General in Halifax. As His Excellency signed his name in the Guest Book, the scratching of his pen was heard clearly across Canada and on both the full NBC and CBS networks in the United States. Technically, radio had reached new heights. Still, the broadcasters plunged ahead....Marconi Day celebrated the 30th Anniversary of the first trans-Atlantic telephone message....CFCF acted as the anchor station for the broadcast in which five continents for a total of fifteen countries joined together in a world-wide broadcast. The first inter-Empire Christmas Broadcast brought listeners two-way conversations between London and Dublin, from the "Majestic" in Mid-Atlantic, from five cities in Canada, from New Zealand and Australia, from the "Empress of Britain" in harbour at Port Said, from Cape Town and Gibraltar. The program ended with a message from King George Vth. Even today, such a broadcast would be an accomplishment.

The Golden Age of Network Radio had begun and CFCF continued to balance the best of the U.S. shows with locally produced programs using Canadian talent. From New York came the voices of Rudy Vallee,

Kate Smith, Morton Downey, Helen Morgan and Fred Allen. From Montreal and Toronto came Rex Battle, the Montreal Symphony, pianist Reginald Stewart, the Imperial Oil Concert Broadcasts. It might be noted here that both CFCF and CKAC were bilingual at the time, CFCF carrying "L'Heure Francaise" and CKAC rebroadcasting programs from the CBS network as a full-time affiliate.

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