

Hollywood Turning to Radio for Talent

THE DECADE-LONG battle between motion pictures and radio, with film exhibitors doing most of the shouting, is rapidly fading and the two industries today are working closer together for mutual benefit.

There is an occasional flareup on the part of some film producer who threatens to bar his screen talent from the air as a means of appeasing exhibitor groups. But representatives of both industries understand the motive.

Hollywood screen production units that once scorned radio as a bad showcase for their contracted talent today look to the broadcasting industry for new ideas and talent. They find it a fertile field. Writing, acting and production personnel of radio are getting an increasingly attentive ear from the films.

Loudspeakers Scouted

This is evidenced by the practice of many motion picture concerns who make almost continuous checks on local and network releases. Story departments of major film studios and independent units too, have radio sets blaring throughout the working day, hoping to find potential entertainment leads or story material for picturization. As a result, during the past few years scores of radio dramatic and comedy serials as well as half-hour sketches and musicals have been bought by film studios.

In addition, the motion picture industry has made, and is still making extensive raids on the personnel of many network shows, signing producers and announcers, as well as writers and popular personalities. The film industry, constantly in need of and on the alert for new faces, has its scouting talons reaching out to virtually every broadcasting studio in the country.

Most of the major Hollywood film studios have installed "intelligence boards" in the larger cities. They look over and pass temporary judgment on local station talent and also check possible story material. Agencies too have been requested to submit available story material for possible screening. A survey of author's representatives reveals that all story properties are being carefully perused as possible vehicles for the films. Film studios today take no chances. They make it a practice to look over all radio scripts submitted. As a result, many valuable stories have been obtained for picturization. Some already have been filmed and released. Some are now in process of being made into motion pictures. Still other stories, taken from radio, have been filed for future use. Film studios in many instances buy only title rights of radio sketches and serials, preferring to build their own story around them.

Several dramatic sketches used on the CBS *Big Town* series, featuring Edward G. Robinson and sponsored by Lever Bros. (Rinso), have been taken up by the film mar-

Feud Turns to Friendship as Two Industries Work Together

By DAVID GLICKMAN

THEY MADE GOOD IN MOVIES



HANDSOME IS AS HANDSOME DOES, and it took more than mere good looks to win stellar playing roles in Hollywood for these two radio announcers. At left is Truman Bradley, who gave up law to become a CBS Chicago announcer, made good and got Hollywood offers. He has feature roles in Paramount's "A Night at Earl Carroll's" and RKO's "Millionaires in Prison" and was a supporting star in "Northwest Passage". At right is Ronald Reagan, ex-sportscaster of WHO, Des Moines, Warner player.

ket. *Silver Theatre*, sponsored by International Silver Co. on CBS has also been a source of picture material for the movies. True Boardman, a writer on that series for several seasons, has sold a couple of his original radio dramatic playlets to film studios. He also collaborated with Grover Jones in writing "Son of the Navy", used on that program. The sketch was later bought by Monogram Productions Inc., as a vehicle for James Dunn and Jean Parker.

The film was released several months ago for national distribution. Then, too, film interests have acquired many a dramatic and comedy opus from the weekly half-hour NBC *Woodbury Hollywood Playhouse* sponsored by Andrew Jergens Co. (soaps), which stars Charles Boyer. The NBC *Don Ameche Show*, sponsored by P. Lorillard & Co. (Old Gold), is another mine of potential film material.

A Radio History

Irving Reis, formerly a CBS *Workshop* writer-producer, and now an RKO-Radio Pictures director, some time ago sold his "Meridian 7-1212", to 20th Century-Fox. That studio, incidentally, about three years ago based a motion picture, titled "Wake Up and Live", around the Walter Winchell and Ben Bernie radio feud.

The film, "Sing and Be Happy",

which featured Tony Martin, also produced by 20th Century-Fox, was built around a radio community sing program. That film company has in its future file, scripts of *Cavalcade of Radio*, a history of the industry, which Ted Sherdeman, NBC Hollywood writer-producer, and Major J. Andrew White, one of the founders of CBS, collaborated in writing.

Patterson McNutt, a prolific writer, several years ago sold his radio script, "Happy Journey" to Paramount Pictures Corp. for a reported \$10,000. It had previously been used on the CBS *Texaco Star Theatre*, with John Barrymore and Lurene Tuttle featured. There have been scores of such individual sales made, with a variety of prices reported for scripts. A Hollywood picture concern is reportedly negotiating for film rights to *Court of Missing Heirs*.

Another major studio is said to be negotiating for film rights to the *Professor Quiz* program, and plans a series of short subjects centered around the show. Because of the popularity of the NBC *Good News of 1940*, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios is planning to make a new short subject based on that radio title. MGM acquired film rights to the *Passing Parade*, a couple years ago, and also put John Nesbitt, commentator, under contract as writer and producer. He is currently sponsored once weekly

on seven NBC-Pacific Blue stations by Bank of America, San Francisco, using the *Passing Parade* as the title of his quarter hour commentary.

Universal Pictures is currently shooting a sequel to last year's *Green Hornet* series. Based on an episode of the radio serial, the current film will be titled "The Green Hornet Strikes Again." The famous Charlie McCarthy - W. C. Fields feud featured a few years ago on the NBC *Chase & Sanborn Show*, sponsored by Standard Brands, resulted in Universal making the picture, "You Can't Cheat an Honest Man". "Charlie McCarthy, Detective", was another Universal release of last year. That idea was also taken from the radio program which features Edgar Bergen and his dummy.

Many Shows Filmed

Easy Aces, sponsored on NBC by Anacin Co., was acquired by Warner Bros., who made a serial film based on the program. *Hollywood Hotel*, formerly sponsored by Campbell Soup Co. on CBS, was also made into a feature film by that studio. The entire radio cast was used in the production. Pathe Inc. has film rights to *Information Please*, sponsored by Canada Dry, on NBC-Blue, and has made a series of short subjects under that title, releasing through RKO. There is *March of Time Inc.*, also an RKO release, which gets its title originally from the former radio program by that name.

Paramount Pictures expects to reap a national gross of nearly \$1,000,000 from the last Jack Benny picture, "Buck Benny Rides Again", built around comedy sketches from the NBC program, sponsored by General Foods Corp. (Jell-O). As result of its success the film company is shooting a motion picture based on the Jack Benny-Fred Allen radio feud. It is titled "Love Thy Neighbor". Besides the two comedians, other well-known radio talent artists are featured.

Another for Aldriches

Paramount has produced two films built around the NBC *Aldrich Family* series, also sponsored by General Foods. A third is planned. Early this year Paramount acquired use of the radio program name, *I Want a Divorce*, and made a full-length feature starring Joan Blondell and Dick Powell, building it around the title. The program, sponsored by Food & Beverage Broadcasters Assn. on NBC last season, shifts to CBS under continued sponsorship of the cooperative group on Oct. 5. The "Big Broadcasts" of 1936, '37 and '38, suggested yearly by radio, and featuring well-known radio talent, were produced in feature length by Paramount.

Columbia Pictures is currently shooting a film built around the weekly half-hour Mutual-Don Lee network program, *Nobody's Child*

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