



## AGNES MOOREHEAD

by Martin Grams, Jr.

The opening night for the *March of Time* program shift to NBC studios found the cast of 30-odd decked out in white ties and the women in formal evening gowns. After the gala la-de-dah, the show went back to its' hair-down norm. An audience of about fifty at getaway was also largely in formal attire. Though the *March of Time* program had been on the air for more than six years at CBS, tension was relaxed by a wag asking, "Where's Mr. Paley?" The cast of the radio drama laughed.

A control room was specially rebuilt for this program, which was directed by Bill Spier, who would later become synonymous with *Suspense* and *The Adventures of Sam Spade*. Covering eight news subjects, the *March of Time* program revealed the versatility of the stock company, most notably Agnes Moorehead, bedecked in furs, playing a Yiddish East Sider, a gangster's (Baby Face Martin) mother, a customer in Bangor, Maine sports shop, Wally Simpson, Signorina Mussolini and the Queen of England. And this was all in the same 30-minute broadcast!



Agnes Moorehead was a gifted character actress who ranged easily from being elegant, assured and arresting and comical in a wide variety of stage, screen, radio and television roles. She was nominated for five Academy Awards, appeared several times on Broadway and toured for years with three other stars in a dramatic recital of George Bernard Shaw's *Don Juan in Hell* during the early 1950s.

Miss Moorehead was born in Clinton, Mass., December 6, 1906 and attended school in Reedsburg, Wis., where her father was a Presbyterian minister. It was in church, she once said, that she learned to act, mimicking members of her father's congregation. It was also in church, she recalled, that she made her first public appearance, at the age of 3, singing "The Lord is My Shepherd."

After study at Muskingum College in Ohio, Moorehead took a job teaching public speaking and English at the high school in Soldiers Grove, Wis., where she also coached the town drama group. In addition, she appeared for three seasons as a dancer and singer with the St. Louis Municipal Opera Company during its outdoors festivals. Once she had earned enough for expenses, Agnes Moorehead, who had determined for years on a stage  
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