



RADIO REVIEW

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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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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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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.

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: Tastyest's advertising.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 Tschaiowsky, Excerpts from "Die Walkure" by Wagner