



# RADIO REVIEW

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## *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 Musicale," 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.)

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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. . .

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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.

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## 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.*

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