



FEB 21 1936

RADIO REVIEW

PUBLISHED BY: WOMEN'S NATIONAL RADIO COMMITTEE, 113 WEST 57TH STREET, NEW YORK CITY

VOL. II, No. 2

LUELLA S. LAUDIN, EDITOR

FEBRUARY, 1936

Standard-Bearers of Tomorrow

One of the less-publicized programs which is meeting with considerable success is the NBC series entitled, "Music Is My Hobby." Non-professionals come before the microphone weekly to share with the radio audience their joy in creating music. They perform for the sheer love of playing and some of this spirit is communicated to those who listen. While many cheap, highly press-agented programs parade under the name of "amateur" only this series is entitled to use the word in the sense that Webster defines its meaning; but unfortunately so distorted has the true definition of "amateur" become in the minds of the radio audience that it would immediately cheapen the "Hobby" series if NBC were to label it "amateur."

The factor which accounts to a great extent for the popularity of these programs is that they stimulate a desire to play for the fun of it. Doubtless many old pianos have been tuned and countless books of finger exercises have been taken down from attic shelves since Walter Koons began this commendable series.

However, it must not be forgotten that the generation which is enjoying these and other good programs has had the benefit

of some experience in playing music. These men and women grew up in an era in which most children took music lessons of some kind. Because there is a strong bond between the creation and appreciation of good music, it is they who now constitute a large portion of the concert audiences and listen to serious music on the air.

To insure a continuation of our musical life, children of today must learn music appreciation as their parents did,—by playing as well as listening. Radio offers an excellent medium of education and fortunately has made a slight beginning in this direction. However, one hour of Walter Damrosch a week or a limited series of Junior Philharmonic concerts during the Winter is not sufficient to create another generation of music-lovers. Not only is the amount of time devoted to broadcasting music appreciation inadequate but in its present form it fosters only one phrase of it—passive listening.

We need the cooperation of radio to inspire children with the same spirit that "Music Is My Hobby" imbues in adults. Of course the programs for children should not take the same form as the listeners would be annoyed rather than stimulated by hearing precocious young amateurs on the air. It would probably be best to work out something which will encourage participation of the junior audience in the home at the time of the broadcast. The purpose of the programs would be to give children a desire to play for their own amusement, under the guidance of private music teachers. With proper direction such a series could become the most valuable contribution radio has to make to the future of music.

We encourage unusual talent to become "professional" but we do not keep pace by providing outlets for our gifted young people. Radio itself cannot absorb the continual outpouring of music schools and yet hundreds of additional artists yearly dedicate their lives to music. We must look ahead to provide audiences for them, and the children of today are the best prospects. We should therefore begin now by developing music appreciation in both active and passive forms to build discriminating concert and radio audiences in the future.

It is food for sober reflection that our children are the standard-bearers of the future cultural life of our nation. All agencies available should combine to contribute to the essential training for this grave responsibility, and of these, radio

There seems to be a deliberate attempt to promote closer relationships between smaller stations and their audiences, and we note that some seem to have the listeners practically sitting in their laps. The usual method is to invite those who wish to become "palsy-walsy" to phone in requests for their favorite selections. We tried it one night, asking for "Passepied" and were told that "on account of the restrictions—you know, the rumpus with Warner Brothers—" they couldn't play it. We were so abashed to think we never knew Delibes wrote for Warner Brothers that we hung up in hasty confusion.

We find that some small educational stations are doing a good job without the benefit of much publicity. WHA in Wisconsin has some excellent features in its School of the Air and the State Department of Public Instruction makes use of them, too. Station WOI in Iowa has a program our friends out there turn handsprings in describing, boasting there is nothing quite like it on the air. The name of it is "The Music Shop" and we gather that it is a program featuring recorded music with the addition of some individual touch the Iowans love. WSUI in Iowa City has all the clubwomen of the State tuned in regularly for its educational features.

WNYC's Master Works hour every morning between nine and ten offers entire concertos, sonatas, symphonies and other works recorded by distinguished artists. We find that most people would rather listen to good records than "flesh-and-blood" inferior musicians.

Why women use soap: "Women have paid me thousands of dollars for treatments with Milk of Magnesia Cream which you can give yourself even more effectively" (WOR).

We wish Columbia Broadcasting System weren't so stingy with its time allowance for the "Understanding Opera" broadcasts. Twenty-five minutes for explanatory remarks and music isn't half enough to accomplish the purpose of the program.

Our Listening Groups Report

- . . . that they are fed up with the box-top racket and are going to do something drastic about it.
- . . . that they like those Harold Sanford Light Operas on NBC.
- . . . that the level of the "Magic Key" has gone steadily downward, though it began with a great hullabaloo.
- . . . that they wish Columbia would make "Poet's Gold" a permanent institution.
- . . . that they like the Velvetone Music program Sunday evenings.
- . . . that they don't like "swing" music.
- . . . that they like the "Magic of Speech."
- . . . that they like Robert Ripley.
- . . . that they are disappointed in General Motors this winter.

Most frequently complained about last month: The advertising on "The O'Neill's" and the "bait" on the Tom Mix program.

A highly exciting program guaranteed to produce goose flesh on marble statues is WOR's "Witch's Tale." Weird, macabre stories which make your blood run cold are presented weekly, and they are well done, though we could dispense with the annoying Witch's cackle at the beginning of the program. Caution: Decidedly not for Junior nor for Aunt Hattie if she faints easily. In fact, we'd feel more comfortable about the whole thing if it were on at a very late hour when all children are safely tucked in bed.

Ho hum! We wish the automobile companies didn't contain so many orators. Their music speaks for them so much better than they do.

NBC has a new children's program which is charming, but you'll have to hurry up if you want to hear it, as it is on for a limited time only. "The Old Puppet Maker" is written by someone who knows what little children like to hear. To tell the truth, we enjoyed it ourselves. We hope NBC will change its mind and let it continue indefinitely as it is much needed. After all, Mr. Wing, young children have only "The Singing Lady" to fall back on and fifteen minutes a day is hardly enough.

For the benefit of those in the East who crave dinner music we have this cheering note: You can tune into W2XR (1550 kilocycle channel) at six o'clock from Monday through Friday and leave the dials set for two solid hours of beautiful music with practically no interruption. The standard of the selections has given W2XR the title of "The Quality Station" which gives you a faint idea of what to expect. Tune in some evening and give yourself a treat.

Our idea of a sympathetic announcer is Kelvin Keech. On those Sloan's programs you have the feeling he would gladly come over to massage a lame arm if you really needed his services.

One of the most amusing "stooges" on the air is McGillicuddy who is briefly heard on Walter O'Keefe's program. We'll trade the unconvincing talk about Camel's effect upon enervated athletes for a few extra minutes of McGillicuddy and for good measure throw in Deane Janis.

Do you remember the Fannie Kilbourne "Dot and Will" stories which used to appear in the American Magazine? Someone with rare taste and good judgment has brought them intact to the NBC Blue Network and we are still shaking our head in astonishment. You can hear them daily at 1:45 P.M. EST.

Well, it seems both Columbia and National were serious when they promised to clean up their advertising. We note it is definitely improving on both these networks. We wish we could say as much for the other companies but some of the programs rejected by the "big two" are now going over to less discriminating stations. Have you noticed that even Fleischman's Yeast has become refined and no longer places the accent either on intestinal tracts or blemished complexions? And that Feenamint has left Columbia? Janet McRory of NBC and Gilson Grey at CBS deserve the credit for the purified copy of their organizations. Nice work, J. and G.!

can do the greatest good. While music is but one form of culture it is related to all the arts and supplements several.

We hope radio will think seriously about its responsibility and do its share.

Twisting the Dial—News and Comment

Choicest fan letter of the month: The one received by W1XAL in Boston, praising a program which featured "too recordings of Chickovskie's Nut Cracker's Sweets." Another interesting comment came from a school teacher in Johannesburg, South Africa, who enthuses about W1XAL's excellent educational programs, adding that she gets up at two-thirty in the morning to hear them. In this country we go to bed to avoid listening to an endless parade of jazz in the early hours of the morning.

We timidly tuned in one night to WOR's "Soldiers of Fortune" with the guilty knowledge that we were poaching on men's preserves, as this series is dedicated to the alleged stronger sex. It's all right, girls—it's safe to listen. Swashbuckling tales featuring he-men, and music preferred by barrel-chested males give this program a true masculine finish, but you may like it. We imagine the Casper Milquetoasts will get a kick out of it vicariously experiencing the adventures of Tex O'Reilly as they listen.

An unusual series of program called "Understanding Advertising" is on WOR-Mutual Saturday afternoon. It presents an entirely new angle of advertising, giving its background and relation to the consumer. Roy Dickinson and Leonard Lewis of Printers' Ink appear in it weekly and do a good job before the microphone. You'll find this interesting.

Idly twisting the dial one morning our attention was arrested by the dramatic accents of someone who asked, "Would you like to have one of the great thrills of your life?" We listened with bated breath, and the "thrill"—believe it or not—was Kolynos Toothpaste. Looks as if we will have to go through life being bored with it all!

We highly recommend the new program on NBC's Red Network entitled, "The Constitution in the Twentieth Century." All phases of this interesting subject will be heard in the series which will continue weekly on Tuesday evenings until June 9th. Special note to our listening groups: Add this to your "must" list.

We are thinking seriously of switching to Maxwell House coffee now that "Show Boat" has introduced an excellent young singer who raises the level of the entire program by her contribution. Her name is Winifred Cecil and if you haven't heard "Show Boat" in a long time, try it some Thursday night. We think you'll be agreeably surprised.

New Programs in Review

FOREVER YOUNG. Sponsored by Camay Soap. NBC Red Network. 3:00 P.M. EST Monday through Friday.

We are quite willing to stake our all on the statement that this is the best serial on the air today, and we're not forgetting "One Man's Family," either. It is a well-written story with a boy and girl of high-school age as the central characters. The situations introduced are plausible and the dialogue is real. Anyone who has a high school student in the family will chuckle over the familiar phrases heard in this program. We feel almost apologetic in pointing out that the role of the fifteen-year old young sister should be played by someone who sounds younger than the present actress does. Warning: Tune in a few minutes after the hour to avoid the tiresome advertising. This is a program which doesn't need to say anything more than "Camay Soap presents—" to win friends, but of course it will be Sunday in the middle of the week before the sponsor will be convinced of that.

DAVID HARUM. Sponsored by Bab-o. NBC Blue Network. 10:45 A.M. EST. Monday through Friday.

This is not a dramatization of the book but is suggested by it. For purposes of radio David has become a very noble character but you'll like him. The parts are well-played even the "folksy" types sounding as if they had a full set of teeth apiece. We say this because most of the small town characters delineated on the air sound as if they were whistling their words between two teeth. The program is pleasant and you'll probably tune in again after you have once heard it. Bearing in mind that at one time Bab-o presented a child star who sang abominably we hasten to say this is a much, much better way of bringing the product to the attention of housewives, but goodness gracious, Babbit, you don't have to rub it in that way. We've heard of Bab-o before though you'd never think it, judging from the length of the spiel that goes with DAVID HARUM.

BING CROSBY. Sponsored by Kraft Cheese. NBC Red Network. 10:00 P.M. EST. Thursday.

Not a new program but a new master of ceremonies and a slight change in style. This is a variety program more on the order of Vallee than Al Jolson—praise be!—but it has a flavor of its own. Bing sounds as nonchalant as he appears in the movies and while we're not crazy about his singing, young people are, so that evens the score. Bob Burns is a regular feature and is really funny in a way reminiscent of Will Rogers. The Dorsey orchestra delivers smooth rhythm, and every program presents one musical artist of ability in addition to the other features. Advertising not bad.

Special Notice:

The American Legion Auxiliary will present an award to the sponsor of the best program on the air illustrating the fundamentals of true Americanism. Both commercial and sustaining programs will be considered, and children's, as well as adult features, will be studied.

The only other condition is that the program will have been presented at least once a week during the contest period, which is from March 15th to May 31st.

The Women's National Radio Committee has been asked to select the winning program and its decision will be final.

Mrs. William H. Corwith, representative of the Auxiliary on the WNRC, will cooperate in the arrangements.

Announcement of the winning program will be made in a later issue of RADIO REVIEW.

*RADIO REVIEW may be obtained on subscription only.
The cost is 75¢ per year, payable in stamps or coins.*

WOMEN'S NATIONAL RADIO COMMITTEE
113 WEST 57TH STREET
NEW YORK, N. Y.