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RADIO REVIEW

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LUELLA S. LAUDIN, EDITOR

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Echoes of the Radio Poll

The awards for outstanding radio programs have been presented and as was to be expected, both bouquets and brickbats have been thrown in the direction of the Committee on Awards. We have turned an attentive ear to the criticism as well as the praise, and another year we shall profit by this year's experience.

The poll which was used as a basis to guide the judges uncovered some illuminating facts. Nearly all who voted used the space reserved for comments to point out reasons for their selections or omissions, and a few suggested that next year the ballots include a provision for "the worst program on the air."

Approximately twenty-five per cent of the returns were only partially completed, with such explanations offered as, "Never listen to anything but music", or "Don't know much about children's programs." A small percentage of those who voted indicated that only news broadcasts interest them, and another group ignores everything but talks on current affairs.

Local pride played a considerable part in breaking down the votes in each classification, as many were scattered among programs heard only on local stations. This in part explains the poor showing made by nationally known news commentators, as many sections supported their own favorites.

Some strange quirks were revealed. For instance, many of the Leslie Howard fans mentioned "The Amateur Gentleman", although that program has been off the air for several months, and the sponsor withdrew it on the ground that it was not popular. People who selected the loftiest type of musical program and decried "cheap" entertainment saw nothing unusual in picking as the best non-musical program a trashy daytime serial of the Bertha M. Clay school. To some, Wayne King represents "serious music" and to others "One Man's Family" is an educational broadcast. The high standard of the children's programs chosen puzzled us until we recalled that in this instance adults were making the selection and would naturally pick those they would want children to hear.

Clearly evidenced is the public's interest in news broadcasts, music, comedy, variety, drama, human interest serials, current affairs, and other educational programs. The criticisms most frequently expressed were that too many commercially sponsored features sound alike and that too many programs of the same kind are on the air at the same time. On the other hand, a great many people expressed their gratitude for the joy radio brings into their lives.

On the whole, the attitude of radio listeners may be summed up in this fashion: They see the defects of the present system and are thinking about its potentialities without losing sight of the worthwhile things radio is doing. They heatedly criticize programs they do not like and yet realize other people may enjoy the very program with which they find fault. Since there will always be a difference of opinion concerning what is good and what is bad, continuation of varied entertainment is automatically insured, with the edge always in favor of the most vocal portion of the radio audience.

At the luncheon which was the occasion of the presentation of awards there was ample evidence of the interest in the work of the Women's National Radio Committee. The Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, Anning S. Prall, pledged the support of the government agency which exercises jurisdiction over radio. The men who represented the radio industry expressed a willingness to cooperate with us. And we, the Women's National Radio Committee, renew our promise to be constructive—to encourage the good and to point out the "sore spots" of radio broadcasting, but always from a dispassionate standpoint.

England about five hundred years ago, giving opportunity to paint a word picture of the customs and history of many sections of the world during this period, and to introduce dramatic situations which make this an absorbing serial.

For our Things-We'd-Like-to-Have-Explained Department: When a foreign statesman's address, delivered in native language, is translated into English for the purposes of our dramatized news programs, why is an accent added?

Richard Maxwell's "Songs of Cheer and Comfort" is quietly building a large audience, now that early morning listeners have discovered him. We find that many people like to hear hymns sung over the radio and Mr. Maxwell's sincere rendition of them is meeting with appreciation. CBS—9:30—10:00 A.M. E. S. T.

We have been waiting patiently for "Parties at Pickfair" to thaw out but they still lack spontaneity and warmth. To us these programs sound as if the sponsorship (ice and ice refrigerator companies) had cast a chill over them which even the approach of warm weather can not dispel.

Our Listening Groups Report—

- . . . that they like Lionel Barrymore on the "Swift" program.
 - . . . that they like Dr. West's Celebrity Night.
 - . . . that they like Tom Powers' Life Studies.
 - . . . that they will never forget the final Toscanini broadcast.
 - . . . that they don't like to have comedians read the commercial credits on their programs.
 - . . . that nothing falls so flat as unfunny comedy of which there has been too much lately on all the airwaves.
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New Programs in Review

HIT PARADE. Sponsored. CBS Network. Saturday, 10:00 to 11:00 P.M. E. S. T.

Freddie Rich's Orchestra playing melodic dance music in the feverish tempo which seems characteristic of all Lucky Strike programs, regardless of musical direction. The singing doesn't contribute anything to the program, and as for the commercial credits (time out for loud groans!)—we can hardly believe any one over six years of age will take them very seriously.

If you haven't heard any of Dr. Charles M. Courboin's organ recitals, tune in some Thursday night from 10:00 to 10:30 E. S. T. to hear some of the finest music radio has to offer. The programs are presented over WOR-Mutual, Yankee and Canadian Radio Commission networks.

One of the things we have never been able to figure out is why "Contented Hour" has some one singing lullabies at 10:00 P.M. Most little ones of our acquaintance have retired long before the Lullaby Lady appears before the microphone. Is this just a cute idea to sing Mommy and Daddy to sleep?

WMCA has hit upon an original idea in its "WMCA Salutes—". Living Americans who have made some valuable contribution to civilization or who have performed a unique service in public life are singled out for tribute. There have been only two programs thus far but the plan has possibilities for a good educational feature.

Among the high spots which radio listeners may look forward to this summer are the broadcasts of the Stadium Concerts which are sponsored by WOR-Mutual and broadcast as well by the Canadian Radio Commission. These programs given by the Philharmonic Orchestra and high-grade soloists, present some of the best orchestra concerts on the air during the summer months.

If your boy is one of the many thousands who have suddenly taken to howling like a dog upon the slightest provocation, blame "Renfrew of the Mounted". This program, by the way, is a definite success and next Christmas will probably find Santa Claus staggering under the burden of Canadian Mounted Police uniforms for young "Renfrew" fans.

Bing Crosby is to be commended for introducing at least one outstanding musical artist on his Music Hall program, but some of us would like it still more if Bing did not become so very familiar with his guests in an attempt to be friendly. There is a happy medium between overfamiliarity and formality and we hope Bing will achieve it soon. And speaking of movie stars as sponsors of great music, did you happen to hear Joan Crawford on the breathless occasion when she announced, "Of course, I don't want to claim Leopold Stokowski as my protege, but . . ."—?????? It's moments like this which reward us dial-twisters for our diligence!

We note with satisfaction a tendency to inject an educational note into programs which do not pretend to be anything but passive entertainment. "The Littleton Family" on WIXAL, Boston, is an outstanding example of this new trend. It traces the various branches of an imaginary family which lived in

Twisting the Dial—News and Comment

One of life's tragedies which has not yet been reported in the newspapers is that "Myrt and Marge" has come to an unexpected close, leaving many listeners in doubt as to the fate of some of the characters. One of them was ill with a heart attack at the time of the last broadcast, and a few little details were left hanging in midair, with the result that "Myrt and Marge" fans have been too upset to reach for a fresh slice of gum. Now it seems they will never know what happened unless Wrigley puts an account of the final chapter into every package of Spearmint. We can safely predict that if this tense situation is ignored many chewing gum addicts are going to retaliate by taking to candy.

Stoopnagle and Bud's delightful clowning is one of the brightest spots on the air. For people who are fed up with ancient "gags" and appreciate satire we recommend this team.

Nominated by parents as the three worst programs on the air: Dick Tracy, Omar the Mystic, and Buck Rogers.

Phil Spitalny's All-girl Orchestra offers a pleasing Sunday night program which seems to be very popular. As an ardent feminist our viewpoint may be different but we can only remark that some of the all-men orchestras succeed in sounding almost as good, despite the handicap of sex.

A few people have written us to point out the contrast between the hysterical dramatization of the Canadian mine disaster offered by "March of Time" and the unvarnished, dignified treatment by the Canadian Radio Commission.

We have discovered why many people never listen to broadcasts of baseball games. They do not know what it is all about, believe it or not, and therefore can hardly be expected to wax enthusiastic. A five minute explanation of the finer points of the game broadcast now and then during the season would probably be welcomed by those to whom it is a mystery. And while we're thinking about it, the same thing should be done during football season and in connection with tennis tournaments. There are plenty of sections of the country where nary a baseball, football or tennis ball is handled from one end of the year to the next. Did you ever think of that, radio men????

David Ross is back with "Poet's Gold", and we hope CBS will make up its mind to leave him on the air for a time. In the past he has been taken off suddenly and with no apologies, usually to make way for some inferior program. Emery Deutsch's Gipsy music furnishes the background for Mr. Ross' delightful readings.

MARION TALLEY. Sponsored. NBC-Red Network. Friday, 10:30 to 10:45 P.M. E. S. T.

A pleasant program of light music featuring Marion Talley's singing and, incidentally, her new shape. The former speaks for itself and the announcer calls attention to the latter, giving all the credit to Ry-Krisp.

EVERYBODY'S MUSIC. Sustaining. CBS Network. Sunday, 3:00 to 4:00 P.M. E. S. T.

An enjoyable program of good music under the baton of Howard Barlow. It is a thoroughly informal music appreciation hour with Henry W. Neely as commentator. Mr. Neely's approach to his subject is that of one who has found out that good music is not so difficult to understand, after all, and he makes his explanations brief, comprehensive and entertaining. Before the Symphony Orchestra has swung into the next selection, the listeners have been told enough about it to follow it with understanding. There is nothing original about the idea, as NBC through its Damrosch Appreciation Hour has been doing a similar thing very successfully for many years, and Columbia's own "Understanding Music" and "Understanding Opera" were of the same formula. However, this does not detract in any way from the value of "Everybody's Music" and credit is due Columbia for providing an entertaining hour of music on Sunday afternoon.

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113 West 57 Street,
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