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# RADIO REVIEW

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## *Radio and Motion Pictures*

The history of the motion picture and of radio parallel each other in so many respects that it is difficult to understand why broadcasters are not profiting by the experience of the motion picture industry.

For several years, when the motion picture was in its infancy, film companies produced inferior pictures with little or no artistic merit until the intelligent public became articulate and today the most severe critics of movies concede that more and more exceptional motion pictures are being produced annually.

The radio broadcasters are now going through a particularly difficult period. While obviously it is not always possible to stage a radio show which has any relationship to the article being advertised, it is possible to have dignified programs; to eliminate the coarse and vulgar; and to make a contribution to the cultural life by presenting programs of higher quality.

Motion Pictures seemed to run in cycles—one gangster film was a box-office success, and every company immediately threw together a similar story, produced the film which joined the parade. The first variety program on the air was successful, and now a dozen or more variety shows are in prospect for this winter when everything from whistling to dancing will

be broadcast. Even variety hour fans can be surfeited with too much variety.

Response from many radio listeners in a recent survey indicate that few take the time to protest about programs they do not like—it is easier to twist the dial, while the sponsor does not realize that an enormous radio audience is lost because of the character of the program. Those who appreciate programs of high quality are not the letter writing fans, as a general rule. Yet, they constitute an intelligent audience whose interest should be sought by sponsors of radio programs.

For a moment, consider more specifically the problem of children and the radio. It is conceded that children listen to more programs intended for adults than ones designed for their entertainment. Instead of using this as an argument for lowering the standards of all programs for children, it should tend to raise the standards of adult offerings presented at hours when children are sure to be listening in. Here again, the same points raised by film companies are being advanced by broadcasters. Western pictures were among the favorites with children in the early days of the movies. This conclusion was reached after scanning the box office returns at the theatres. However, as years went on the same box office returns proved just as conclusively that boys and girls liked finer pictures too. In other words, just as appreciation of music is successfully taught, so appreciation of the motion picture has been included in the curricula of many schools, and why not now, a course in radio appreciation! Because surveys have shown the preference of many children for types of programs which educators and psychologists feel are harmful, is no justification for the continuance of the program. Rather, it is proof of the need of eliminating these inferior programs and substituting better ones which, coupled with a sincere effort to create a real appreciation of better entertainment, would increase the number of listeners for all good broadcasts.

The radio audience interested in finer entertainment is lost completely to many of the sponsors at present, just as a large potential motion picture audience was out of the reach of the theatre manager until he had better films to offer and unless the advertiser is reaching the public to which he is catering, his money is being wasted, whether it is spent in newspaper, magazine or radio advertising.

dislikes of radio listeners. Through this means, the station learned the average number of listening hours per day, the percentage of programs tuned in mornings, afternoons and evenings; how many of the listeners were professional or business people, how many owned automobiles, the number of home-owners, "to show that the audience is firmly established economically, settled in habits and locale, and highly responsible." "The majority," writes Mr. Ames, "voted for instrumental music of the highest type. Unqualified approval was registered for the Shakespearean cycle." These western stations doubtless proved that there is a radio audience keenly interested in high class music and finer programs, but this audience is not articulate. In May, KECA's magazine commented: "It is necessary that lovers of fine music thoroughly and permanently convince advertisers that the best way to gain their good will and custom is to provide them with the programmes they prefer. A rising graph in the sales chart is the most convincing argument. No merchant of sagacity and judgment will hesitate, in face of such a demonstration, to preserve and sponsor fine music and to restrain his advertising to the smallest duration and frequency."

Concluding his article, Mr. Ames writes: "If the majority of our discriminating listeners express themselves, they will do more to improve the standards of American radio programmes than any number of commissions and committees. Evolving programmes that are wholesome, entertaining and of cultural value amounts to a large order. Slow progress, trial and error, active cooperation between anxious broadcasters and every element of their vast audience, must precede standards of uniform excellence, which lie a long way ahead. My hope resides in the dialing fingers of every responsible listener, reflecting the quality of his tastes as well as the probity of his indignation."

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## *Our Listening Groups Report*

- ... that they like the dignified advertising of sponsors presenting news commentators.
  - ... that Wilderness Road continues an enjoyable feature for young people.
  - ... that they enjoyed the broadcasts from Salzburg during the summer.
  - ... that they would be happy to dispense with the singing of choruses of popular songs on the dance music programs.
  - ... that they enjoy the political broadcasts this fall.
  - ... that they enjoyed the Lewisohn Stadium Symphony Concerts from New York City, the Robin Hood Dell Symphony Orchestra broadcasting from Philadelphia and the Chautauqua Symphony Concerts from Chautauqua.
  - ... that they are getting bored with so much repetition of the same musical selections by popular orchestras.
  - ... that they enjoy the animal stories by Don Lang.
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## *Twisting the Dial*

The first concert of the fall by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra on the Ford Sunday night hour was hailed with delight. The improvement in the orchestra color and quality was very noticeable, as was the precision which the orchestra utterly lacked last year.

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The General Motors broadcast with Stokowsky and John McCormack was very good indeed. John McCormack's voice sounded better than in years and his diction was superb.

## *Books on Radio*

TALKING ON THE RADIO. By O. E. Dunlap, Jr., Radio Editor of the New York Times. Published by Greenberg, Publisher.

It is probably safe to say that everybody is interested in radio. The interest of some is confined to its entertainment value, others are concerned with its place in the educational and cultural life of the country, others speak on the radio from time to time, and others have a technical interest in this invention. No matter what your particular interest in radio may be, you will enjoy this new book "Talking on the Radio" by Mr. Dunlap who summarizes practical "Do's and Don'ts" for broadcasters, and sets down fifty rules for preparation and delivery of radio talks. Probably Mr. Dunlap, too, has become annoyed with the rasping voices of amateurs on the air, with the lack of conciseness of many speeches, and with the many faults of novices on the air. For the listener it will be particularly helpful in developing the art of criticism.

Much has been written and said about advertising on the air. The radio public expects the commercial sponsors to use adequate time to properly advertise their wares, but it is strongly contended by many that the very nature of the advertising frequently antagonizes. In his book Mr. Dunlap, speaking especially of sales talks on news programs writes:

"It is a distinct error to open the sponsored news program with a blast of sales talk, just as it would be to have the front page of a newspaper covered with advertising and no news. The sponsor's name and product may be briefly and quite naturally mentioned at the beginning, but to preface the news with a minute or more of talk about breadmor headache pills annoys the listener, who is almost certain to get another dose in the middle and at the end of the program."

Radio listeners as well as radio speakers will enjoy Mr. Dunlap's book.

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CHILDREN AND RADIO PROGRAMS, written by Dr. Azriel L. Eisenberg, of Cincinnati, and published by the Columbia University Press, is recommended for the use of all persons interested in this general subject. Following an exhaustive research, during which Dr. Eisenberg had questionnaires filled in by approximately 3,000 children in all walks of life living in Greater New York; interviewed many of the pupils personally, and followed up a questionnaire to the parents with personal interviews with hundreds of them, the facts have been so correlated that the reader gets a clear picture of children, their likes and dislikes in radio programs.

Future issues of the RADIO REVIEW will comment in detail on some phases of this survey and the implications of these findings. Here in one concise volume is all of the material and ammunition necessary for those groups who are interested in raising the standards of children's programs. Here is conclusive evidence that the programs designed for children are a minor factor in the problem, and that more attention must be given to the character of the programs on the air during the listening periods of the young boys and girls.

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THE ART OF PLEASING EVERYBODY. In the current issue of the "Atlantic Monthly," an article on "The Art of Pleasing Everybody" by Richard Sheridan Ames discusses many interesting phases of radio broadcasting today. Mr. Ames gives facts about programs and radio response over two large California stations which have carried out interesting programs, giving Shakespearean plays and classical music to the exclusion of practically everything else. One of the stations had a monthly magazine, and from the subscribers received a twenty-five per cent return on a questionnaire sent out by the station to ascertain the likes and

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For years when intellectual groups asked for better motion pictures, they were told the "public" liked the fare being served daily in the theatres, and box office receipts were cited as proof of the contention. Only after twenty years were the motion picture companies convinced that finer pictures, intelligently produced, will not only please the public but will be box office successes as well.

Is it going to require twenty years to convince the radio broadcasters that intelligent radio listeners constitute a large percentage of the purchasers of the nation, and that they appreciate and demand programs of higher quality?

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## Comments

The Women's National Radio Committee commended the action of the Columbia Broadcasting System in restricting the time to be consumed by advertising on all programs, and in otherwise passing such rules as might tend to raise the standards of advertising on the air. The Committee has appreciated the cooperation of all companies in its efforts to insure dignified advertising. Although a great deal of progress has been made, there is yet much to be desired in some advertising. Members of the Radio Committee especially concerned with the advertising on the air will be interested in the following which is quoted from a recent issue of the New York Sun:

"Most radio programs are an insult to the average intelligence of the American public," said I. A. Hirschmann, vice-president of Saks-Fifth Avenue, at an address before the Sales Executives Club at the Hotel Roosevelt recently. "If newspapers presented their stories with the same saccharine, stupid, repetitious appeal for sales there would be few readers left," said Mr. Hirschmann. "While I hold no brief for some of the blatant, undignified appeals which appear in so much of our newspaper advertising, it at least has been forced to confine itself to publishers' standards which, on the whole, are intelligent.

"Americans deserve a better deal from the back-slapping, droning, repetitious, hard-hitting radio announcers. The taste of people can either be built up or regimented into cheaper standards. In this, the advertisers and sales managers of the country have an extra-curricular responsibility. I have never seen a well thought out campaign aimed at lifting the level and purchasing power of the people fail when it was well done."

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"A list of 2,053 names of songs learned over the radio are recorded by the children. Of these, 1,744, or 85% are popular dance songs; 135, or 7%, cowboy songs; 72, or 3%, theme songs; 58, or 3%, general and 44, or 2%, classical songs. Except for cowboy songs, the girls lead the boys in this activity generally, and in each category. *It is regrettable that so potent an instrument of musical education carries so few musical numbers of abiding value.*" So wrote Dr. Eisenberg in his book "Children and Radio Programs" published by Columbia University Press.

Eddie Cantor's program is one hundred per cent better than any he had before.

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And now comes a query from some listeners: "Why must every station broadcast baseball and football news for hours. Couldn't at least one of the NBC stations be kept open for the people who do not care for sports?"

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Congratulations to the large banking institutions which have arranged to present the Philadelphia Orchestra in a series of radio programs this winter. If the programs of the Orchestra are of the same high quality as usually presented in their concerts, the radio audience will have a rare treat.

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Why are George Burns and Gracie Allen, the clever comedy team, being completely drowned in tomato juice? By saturating the short broadcast with juicy tomatoes, even though ripened on the vine, many of Gracie's fans feel they cannot bear tomato juice—not even to "taste the difference."

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It was something of a shock the other night to hear a Metropolitan star sing "These Foolish Things." Nothing could really be more foolish.

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Radio fans will rejoice to learn that beginning on November 8th, the New York Philharmonic Sunday concerts will again be broadcast from 3 to 5 o'clock through the Columbia Broadcasting System.

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After a rip-snorting, hair raising, exciting episode in the series of stories on gang-busting, it comes as a ludicrous anti-climax to hear the merits of tooth paste advertised.

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During the summer months when so many substitute radio programs were on the air and while the listening groups of the Radio Committee were vacationing here and abroad, publication of the RADIO REVIEW was temporarily suspended. The RADIO REVIEW will now resume its place, voicing the ideas, and likes and dislikes of radio fans throughout the country who are especially interested in the activities of the Women's National Radio Committee.

*RADIO REVIEW may be obtained on subscription only.  
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