

The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

# The Illustrated Press

Number 398

March 2012





# The Illustrated Press

## Membership Information

Club Membership: \$18.00 per year from January 1 to December 31. Members receive a tape library listing, reference library listing and the monthly newsletter. Memberships are as follows: If you join January-March, \$18.00; April-June, \$14; July-September, \$10; October-December, \$7. All renewals should be sent in as soon as possible to avoid missing newsletter issues. Please be sure to notify us if you have a change of address. The **Old Time Radio Club** meets on the first Monday of the month at 7:30 PM during the months of September through June at St. Aloysius School Hall, Cleveland Drive and Century Road, Cheektowaga, NY. There is **no** meeting during the month of July, and an informal meeting is held in the month of August.

Anyone interested in the Golden Age of Radio is welcome. The **Old Time Radio Club** is affiliated with the Old Time Radio Network.

## Club Mailing Address

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All Submissions are subject to approval prior to actual publication.

**Deadline for The Illustrated Press is the 1st of each month prior to publication.**

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Send all articles, letters, exchange newsletters, etc. to: **The Illustrated Press**

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### **Library Rates:**

Audio cassettes and CDs are \$1.95 each and are recorded on a **club supplied cassette or CD** which is **retained** by the member. Rates include postage and handling and are payable in U.S. funds.



## The Illustrated Press



### Editor's Two Cents !

Happy Spring to all. Actually, as I'm writing this, it is still February. It's cold out now, but nobody can complain about this winter. I sure hope this doesn't backfire on me. I like to thank Dominic and Frank Boncore for some nice articles included in this edition of the newsletter. Frank Bork also has a review of the latest Sherlock Holmes movie. Since this is the month for the Irish I have placed Charlie McCarthy on the cover. How much Irish can you get. We also have Mercedes McCambridge. Next month I have an article on Clem McCarthy. Clem who? When you see it next month you'll find out. Dominic has sent me an article on "big bands" which I will insert next month. As I have said previously I welcome all articles from members and all correspondence favorable and unfavorable. I do have a few correspondence from a few people also. So as Dean Martin use to say "Keep them cards and letters coming. Just a quick mention; Rich Olday will be going in for some knee surgery later this month. We wish him a speedy recovery. Now we have to worry about someone getting the doughnuts next month. Until next month Happy Radio listening and Happy St Paddy's Day.

From Alan Glaser of Staten Island:  
*Just a note to tell you how much I enjoyed the January Illustrated Press.*

*First Burns & Allen. As a kid they were one of my favorites. The article about Jimmy Durante was great. Thanks for keeping Old Time Radio alive. Keep up the good work. Alan.*

*Hello everyone. I grew up with old time radio and listen each evening after supper to at least two shows. I may never get to a meeting but I appreciate you keeping it alive. Jim Kocher, Greenwood Indiana.*

*From Jerry: Hello Jerome, I was wondering if you could help or direct me. I grew up in Rochester, NY and am looking for recordings of the OTR programs rebroadcast in 1979-80 by WSAY in Rochester or those played by WPXN in, I think 1980-81. I was a kid when these aired and would love to hear them again, especially as both stations no longer exist. It would be great to hear the shows complete with station WSAY and WPXN IDs and all that. By any chance would you have any of these broadcasts or possibly direct me to someone who may? Thanks very much, Robert.*

*From Dr. Robert Brown. If anyone out there can help please send info to Jerry.*

### FOR THE LOVE OF PETE 10 P. M.

The new comedy show with the lovable Irish clerk.



**BASEBALL  
10:30**

Sturgis Hedrick broadcasts the Buffalo - Jersey City baseball game.





**Charlie McCarthy (No Dummy)**  
By Tom Cherre

OK, now truthfully who wouldn't want to be Charlie McCarthy? He dressed to the nines, he got carried around everywhere. He had the best lines, and he got to meet the cutest girls in the entertainment world. Sure, I'm kidding, but ole Charlie led the good life. Edgar Bergen, who had a little to do with Charlie's career, was more or less an extension of Charlie's alter ego. Bergen could make Charlie say anything he liked and never get in trouble. We all know it's no big deal being a radio ventriloquist. You don't have to keep your mouth closed in the process. Your lips can move all the time and you look and sound great. Bergen did just that and had a top ten radio show for over ten years. *The Chase & Sanborn Hour* was a winner. Along with Charlie and Edgar



they had regulars such as Don Ameche, Dorothy Lamour, W.C. Fields, Nelson Eddy, and music conductor Ray Noble. They had many popular guests on every week. The most notable show was the episode that featured the very famous and voluptuous Mae West. It was about two weeks before Christmas (12/12/37) to be exact when Arch Oboler wrote a script especially for that show about *Adam and Eve*. The skit while considered ho-hum in 2012 caused quite a stir back in 1937. Oboler recalled years later that in rehearsal, West read the script normal, but during the live broadcast she performed it with her sultry voice and may have added some double entendres. I listened to the skit and also a skit with Charlie later in the show. It was, well, Mae West doing her thing. The network was flooded with calls condemning the dialogue. Even Don Ameche said he was a little uncomfortable. Anyway West was banned from radio and didn't appear again until the 1950s when she sang a song with Rock Hudson on an Academy Awards Show. Of course she became even more popular than before. Even without the Mae West episode, Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy still had a great show. Bergen also had another puppet called Mortimer Snerd. He was a lovable country-bumpkin who's light wasn't burning too brightly. There was also Effie, who never got much air time, but she was funny too. Of course what made them funny was the man behind the voices, and that was Mr. Edgar Bergen. While maybe not an expert in ventriloquism, he was a master in the world of comedy entertainment.



## Mercedes McCambridge : She Made You Love Her!

By Dom Parisi

Orson Welles once called her "The World's Greatest Living Radio Actress." Mercedes was indeed a great actress. She was a most talented radio and big screen star of her time. Born on March 16, 1916 in Joliet, Illinois of Irish

### Mercedes McCambridge



Catholic extraction. She received her education attending Catholic schools. In one of my favorite Mcambridge movies, "Johnny Guitar" where she played opposite Joan Crawford, and guitar man Sterling Hayden, a film so corny that it was great. Mercedes played a real S.O.B. She said that Crawford was a mean, tipsy, powerful, rotten egg lady. Now really Mercedes!..... You were no angel! In 1939 McCambridge married her first husband William Fifield. She was 23 years old. They had a son John Lawrence Fifield. Mercedes divorced William in 1946 after seven years of marriage. In 1950 at age 34, she again tried marriage when she tied the knot with Canadian Fletcher Markle, a radio detective. Miss McCambridge had a real

bad drinking problem. She struggled with alcoholism and ended up in the hospital a few times after some severe bouts of heavy drinking. Her marriage with Markle ended in 1952. In 1969, after years with Alcoholics Anonymous, she achieved sobriety. One of McCambridge's sadist downtimes of her life was the time her son was fired from his job as a futures trader, for mishandling funds. A five million dollar lawsuit was filed against her and her son John. Mercedes, who was active as power of attorney for her son John. She was cleared of all charges. John, however, was not so lucky. He ended up killing his wife and their two daughters, ages 9 and 13. He then killed himself in this tragic murder/suicide affair that happened in 1978. John left two notes. One taking full responsibility for his crimes, and the other note to his mother, (contents unknown). Mercedes McCambridge's career was unstoppable. She started out in early radio in the 1930s. All her credits are too numerous to mention in this article. Listed here, in no special order are a few:

- Abie's Irish Rose 1942-1944
- Adventures of Bill Lance 1944-1948
- Big Sister 1936-1946
- Defense Attorney 1951-1952
- Family Skeleton 1953 1954
- The Guiding Light 1937-1956
- I Love A Mystery 1939 1952 (played many character roles, often as a fiery hellcat)
- Lights Out 1934-1947
- Murder At Midnight 1946-1947
- The Whistler 1942-1954 (Hollywood radio role players who appeared so often, were known as Whistler's Children. Mercedes was one of these)
- And of course, The CBS Mystery Theater 1974-1978. Mercedes appeared on this broadcast at least 25 times.



Some of her movie credits include: "All the Kings Men", her Hollywood break in which she won an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress. Plus she received an award for "New Star of the Year" actress. In 1956 Mercedes played Luz in the classic film "Giant" with Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson, and James Dean. Mercedes was nominated for an academy award again as best supporting actress. She lost to Dorothy Malone in the movie "Written in the Wind". In 1959 McCambridge appeared opposite Katherine Hepburn, Montgomery Cliff, and Elizabeth Taylor in "Suddenly Last Summer". She was right up there with the best of them! The voice of the possessed character in "The Exorcist" was Mercedes McCambridge. She was promised a screen credit for her part. It wasn't there. But with the help of the Screen Actor's Guild, she was properly credited. In the 1970s she toured in a road company production of "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" as Big Mama opposite John Carrodine who played Big Daddy. McCambridge appeared as a guest artist in college productions, such as El Centro College's 1979 play "The Mousetrap". She received top billing despite her character being murdered less than 15 minutes into the play. She also appeared in many television productions too numerous to list. The above mentioned is just a small listing of her work. There are many, many more of her credits that I've omitted. Those would make up another article. Sadly Miss McCambridge passed away on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2004 in LaJolla, California. Mercedes McCambridge - She made you hate her? I don't think so. I loved everything she did!


My late wife gave me the title for this article. I miss you Louise, Love Dom.

Mercedes McCambridge





Thank You Dom for the nice article. I thought Mercedes was great in "The Exorcist". That voice gave me chills for many months. Next month I will feature a multi-part article by Dom about Big Bands entitled "What a Time It Was".

*Old Michael*  
**WEBB**  
*1940 on your side*

 **BULLDOG DRUMMOND**  
in "The \$50,000 Murder."  
**7:30**

**SHERLOCK HOLMES**  
in "On to Flanders."  
**8:30**



 **THE BETTER HALF**  
**9:30**



## **Car Tunes**

**By Frank Boncore**

Intro: Nowadays everyone takes the car radio for granted. After we start the car the first thing we turn on (at least I do) is the radio. Actually it was probably never turned off. If we go back to the early car days, things were a bit different. Frank Boncore gives us a little insight on the simple thing we call the radio.

.....  
One evening in 1929 two young men named William Leer and Elmer Wavering drove their girlfriends to a lookout point high above the Mississippi River town of Quincy Illinois to watch the sunset. It was a romantic night to be sure, but one of the girls observed that it would be even nicer if they could listen to music in the car. Leer and Wavering liked the idea. Both men had tinkered with radios-Leer had served as a radio operator in the US Navy during World War I-and it wasn't long before they were taking apart a home radio and trying to get it to work in a car. But it wasn't as easy as it sounds; automobiles have ignition switches, generators, spark plugs, and other electrical equipment that generate noisy static interference, making it nearly impossible to listen to the radio when the engine was running.

### **SIGNING ON**

One by one, Leer and Wavering identified and eliminated each source of electrical interference. When they finally got their radio to work, they took it to a radio convention in Chicago. There they met Paul Galvin, owner of Galvin Manufacturing Corporation. He made a product called a "battery eliminator" a device that allowed battery-powered radios to run on household AC current. But as more homes were wired for electricity, more radio manufacturers

made AC- powered radios. Galvin needed a new product to manufacture. When he met Leer and Wavering at the radio convention, he found it. He believed that mass-produced, affordable car radios had the potential to become a huge business. Leer and Wavering set up shop in Galvin's factory, and when they perfected their first radio, they installed it in his Studebaker. Then Galvin went to a local banker to apply for a loan. Thinking it might sweeten the deal, he had his men install a radio in the banker's Packard. Good idea, but it didn't work – half an hour after the installation, the banker's Packard caught on fire. (They didn't get the loan.) Galvin didn't give up. He drove his Studebaker nearly 800 miles to Atlantic City to show off the radio at the 1930 Radio Manufacturers Association convention. Too broke to afford a booth, he parked his car outside the convention hall and cranked up the radio so that passing conventioners could hear it. That idea worked – he got enough orders to put the radio into production.

### **WHAT'S IN A NAME**

The first production model was called the 5T71. Galvin decided he needed to come up with something a little catchier. In those days many companies in the phonograph and radio businesses used the suffix "ola" for their names – Radiola, Columbiola, and Victrola were three of the biggest. Galvin decided to do the same thing, and since his radio was intended for use in a motor vehicle, he decided to call it the Motorola. But even with the name change, the radio still had problems. When Motorola went on sale in 1930 it cost about \$110 uninstalled, at a time when you could buy a brand-new car for \$650, and the country was sliding into the Great Depression. (By that measure, a radio for



a new car would cost about \$3500 today). In 1930 it took two men several days to put in a car radio---the dashboard had to be taken apart so that the receiver and a single speaker could be installed, and the ceiling had to be cut open to install the antenna. These early radios ran on their own batteries, not on the car battery, so holes had to be cut into the floorboard to accommodate them. The installation manual had eight complete diagrams and 28 pages of instructions.

### HIT THE ROAD

Selling complicated car radios that cost 20 percent of the price of a brand-new car wouldn't have been easy in the best times, let alone during the Great Depression—Galvin lost money in 1930 and struggled for a couple of years after that. But things picked up in 1933 when Ford began offering Motorolas pre-installed in the factory. In 1934 they got another boost when Galvin struck a deal with B.F. Goodrich tire company to sell and install them in its chain of tire stores. By then the price of the radio installation included, had dropped to \$55. The Motorola car radio was off and running. (The name of the company would be officially changed from Galvin Manufacturing to "Motorola" in 1947.) In the meantime Galvin continued to develop new uses for car radios. In 1936, the same year that it introduced push-button tuning, it also introduced the Motorola Police Cruiser, a standard car radio that was factory preset to a single frequency to pick up police broadcasts. In 1940 he developed with the first handheld two-way radio- the Handie-Talkie-for the US Army. A lot of the communications technologies that we take for granted today were born in Motorola labs in the years that followed World War II. In 1947 they came out

with the first television to sell for under \$200. In 1956 the company introduced the world's first pager. In 1969 it supplied the radio and television equipment that was used to televise Neil Armstrong's first steps on the moon. In 1973 it invented the world's first handheld cellular phone. Today Motorola is one of the second largest cell phone manufacturer in the world. And it all started with the car radio.

### WHATEVER HAPPENED TO.....

These two men who installed the first radio in Paul Galvin's car, Elmer Wavering and William Lear, ended up taking very different paths in life. Wavering stayed with Motorola. In the 1950s he helped change the automobile experience again when he developed the first automotive alternator, replacing inefficient and unreliable generators. The invention led to such luxuries as power windows, power seats, and eventually air-conditioning. Lear also continued inventing. He holds more than 150 patents. Remember eight-track tape players? Lear invented that. But what he's really famous for are contributions to the field of aviation. He invented radio direction finders for planes, aided in the invention of the auto-pilot, designed the first fully automatic aircraft landing system, and in 1963 introduced his most famous invention of all, the Lear Jet, the world's first mass-produced affordable business jet. Not bad for a guy who dropped out of school after the eighth grade.

### ATTENTION MEMBERS:

For Sale: 2 large speakers, 2 medium speakers, 2 dual cassette decks, VHS player, video audio control, TEAC graphic equalizer, video processor, RF Modular, 8 track player, 3 reel to reel decks, 3 speed turntable, boxes of 78s & 45s reel to reel tapes, boxes of 40s on cassette & some with big band 40s-60s music. Contact Adreen T Mills 2-A Top Flight Dr Norton MA 02766-1245



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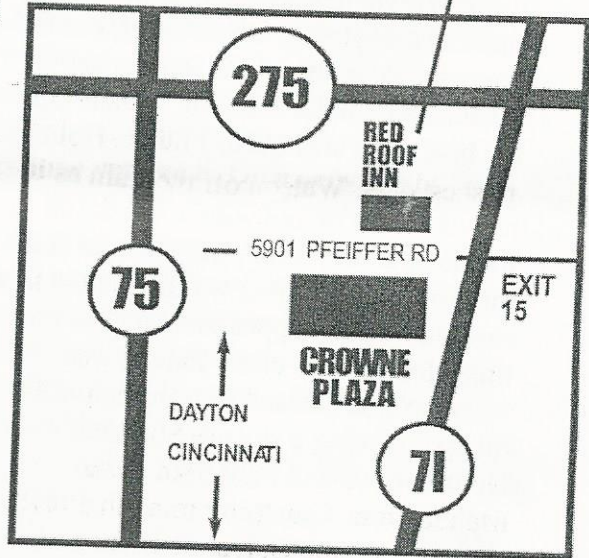
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## Movie Review of Sherlock Holmes "A Game of Shadows"

By Frank Bork

To begin with, "A Game of Shadows", Was that Sherlock Holmes the first consulting detective that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle created? Jumping from second story balcony's with sword in hand dressed like an Oriental opium den proprietor, a Kung Fu and Judo Master?! Later at 221B Baker he drinks formaldehyde, care for some Watson? As I watched the movie I thought, Oh No ! Not another one of Guy Ritchie's ridiculous attempt at writing a Sherlock Holmes story. I had hoped he would follow Doyle's storyline and write the same as many other writer's did, but no. I guess maybe he envisioned himself a far superior author than Sir Arthur. On the boat-train enroute to France, Holmes pushes Mrs. Watson off the train as it passes over a ravine with about a 100 foot drop to the water, but have no fear for brother Mycroft is waiting below in a rowboat. What happened next. The only time Holmes was clean shaved was when he was dressed as a woman. At this point being a sincere Sherlock Holmes fan I will omit a lot of the useless parts. One more thing that really got me was when Mycroft in the nude joined Mrs. Watson for breakfast the next day. Can you top this? At the Diplomatic Ball in Switzerland, Holmes asked Watson "Care to Dance." I thought you'd never ask, Watson replied. Dance together they did. The best part of the movie was "The End".

Thanks for the kind words Frank. I'm sure Guy Ritchie will take your words into consideration if and when he does another Sherlock flick.

Frank and I will be seeing the new Three Stooges movie very shortly. I think he'll have kinder words for that one. The previews looked pretty good.

This is another note from fellow member Richard Nowack, which I forgot to print earlier:

*Just a note of appreciation for the December issue of the IP. I was a great fan of the Soaps back in the 1940's - Ma Perkins in particular - As well as the Andrew Sisters and enjoyed Mr. Kitzel on Jack Benny's show. I'd like to see more of the soaps in OTR catalogues, but very few seem available.*  
Richard W. Nowack

Thanks Rich ed.

## Basil Rathbone: Master of Stage and Screen

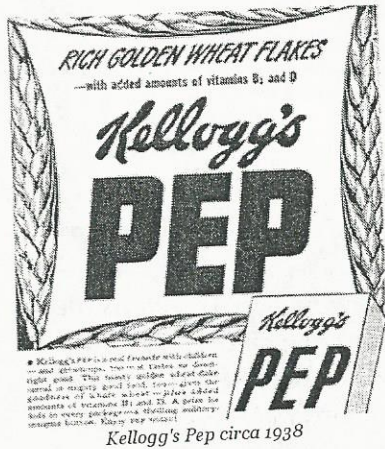
Updated February 1, 2012



Not Frank's cup of tea!



## Whatever Happen To Pep? By Tom Cherre



Kellogg's Pep was the rival to Wheaties. It was a brand of whole-wheat cereal introduced in 1923. It was the primary sponsor for radio's Superman. It also sponsored other shows such as Mark Trail, and Tom Corbett Space Cadet. Pep became one of the first fortified cereals with a spray of vitamins, beginning in the 1930s. Extensive advertising, from print advertisements to sponsorship of Superman, helped keep the brand popular. Pep was included in "variety packs" of serving-sized boxes of Kellogg's cereal. *I remember those!* Despite its popularity Pep eventually faded from store shelves as public taste changed, and the brand was discontinued.

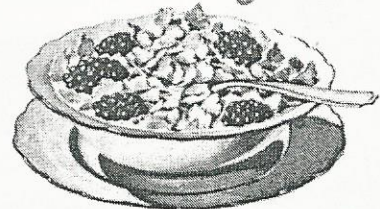
The Kellogg company has an interesting history. Dr. John Kellogg and his brother William Kellogg both worked in the food laboratories at the Battle Creek Sanitarium in Battle Creek Michigan. They were searching for a breakfast food alternative to the bland, tasteless breads they served to the residents. While experimenting with grains of wheat, they ran water soaked wheat over rollers and let them dry and

voila' they invented the first wheat flake. This occurred in 1898. When baked they tasted just like the cereal we eat today. This new cereal proved so popular with the patients at the sanitarium that many continued to request a supply, even after their time to return home approached. Inspired by the demand, the brothers started the **Sanitas Food Company** in 1898 to develop Corn Flakes cereal. William Kellogg, the manager of the company discovered that adding malt flavoring and using the grit or heart of the corn made it taste even tastier. In 1906 W. K. Kellogg along with brother John formed the Battle Creek Toasted Corn Flakes Company, which was officially named the Kellogg Company in 1922. The following year Pep was introduced. Along with Corn Flakes, Raisin Brand, Rice Crispies, Bran Flakes, and other brands the company has done very well. On a concluding note, in 1945 Kellogg's inserted a prize in the form of Pep pins in every box. There were 5 series of comic characters and 18 different buttons in each set. Those having complete sets in mint condition have become sought after collectables.

Daddy's girl, growin' big



on nourishing PEP

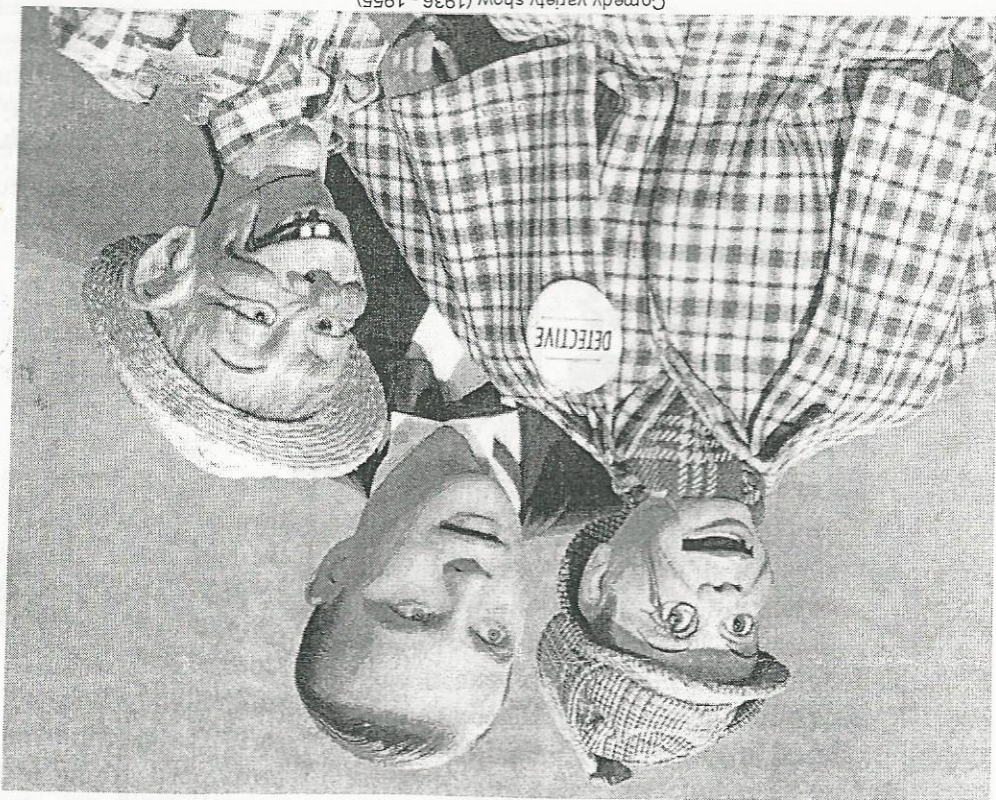


the "BUILD UP"  
WHEAT CEREAL

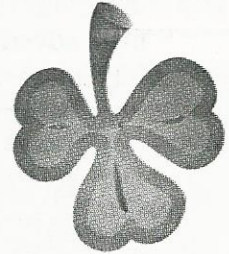
'Daddy's Girl, Growin' Big' circa 1950



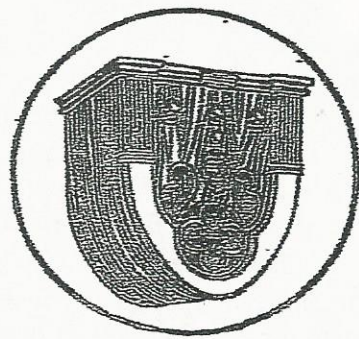
Comedy variety show (1936 - 1955)



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