

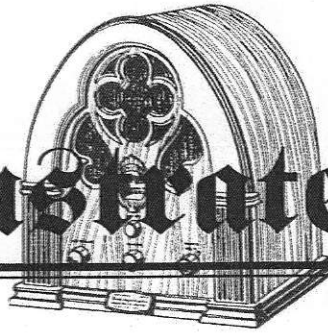
The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

The Illustrated Press

Number 364

November 2008



WHO IS HE?

The "Mystery Tenor" singing for
MONARCH FOODS

HEAR THE LION ROAR

NBC NETWORK

WWSZ - Boston, Mass.	WISD - Chicago, Ill.	WTOG - Birmingham, Ala.
WZZA - Springfield, Mass.	WWSW - St. Louis, Mo.	WWSA - Nashville, Tenn.
WYAM - Rochester, N. Y.	WWSB - New York, N.Y.	WWSR - New York, N.Y.
WWSA - Philadelphia, Pa.	WWSM - Miami, Fla.	WWSM - Miami, Fla.
WWSB - Cleveland, O.	WWSL - Orlando, Fla.	WWSL - Orlando, Fla.
WWSN - New York, N.Y.	WWSM - Miami, Fla.	WWSM - Miami, Fla.
WWSN - New York, N.Y.	WWSM - Miami, Fla.	WWSM - Miami, Fla.

SUNDAY AFTERNOONS 1P.M. CENTRAL 2P.M. EASTERN

The Illustrated Press

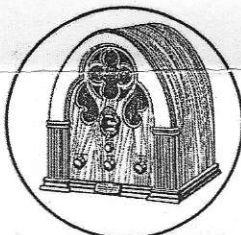
Membership Information

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.

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All Submissions are subject to approval prior to actual publication.

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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.



Abbott and Costello

By TOM CHERRE

A while back a few of my buddies and I were hashing over the good old days of the '50s. Candy bars were only a nickel, lemon cokes were also a nickel at Bargar and Wright's soda fountain. Going to the North Park Show on a Saturday afternoon got you a full day's entertainment. This included two full length features, a serial, a "Three Stooges", cartoons, news of the world, and previews. All this and it only cost 15cents. Most of the movies were westerns, like Randolph Scott, Wild Bill Elliott, or maybe a Lash LaRue. In between the oaters once in a while we got to see a comedy, including the likes of Abbott and Costello. Martin and Lewis were getting more popular at the time, but Bud and Lou were still fun for the younger-set.

Abbott and Costello both got their start, much like many of the old comedians, in the field of burlesque. Bud started working out of Coney Island in his own touring burlesque company. He first started playing straight man to his wife Betty. Lou grew up in Patterson, New Jersey, and tried to make his fortune in acting out west. With just a few bit parts and no money he headed back for

New York and got into the burlesque scene on the New York circuit. As luck would have it, his straight man was too sick to go on stage one night. Lou asked Bud, who was on the same bill, but a different act, to fill in for him. History was made that night in 1936, and they formed a partnership that would last for twenty years. They continued to enjoy great success in burlesque, minstrel shows, vaudeville, and movie houses. They got their real big break when they made a guest appearance on the then, very popular *Kate Smith Show*. They did their "Who's on First" routine. This led to a job on Broadway which led to a movie contract with Universal. The rest as they say is history.

Abbott and Costello made 36 movies between 1940 and 1956. They were the most popular and highest paid entertainers during the war years. They were voted number 1 at the box office, and made ten million dollars in 1942. They also raised millions for the war effort in their bond drives. People enjoyed the antics of Abbott and Costello alongside the Andrews Sisters during the drudgery of World War Two. Their service films often portrayed them as bumbling clowns. A footnote to this is that the Japanese Government showed these films to the Japanese soldiers to demonstrate how inept American soldiers were.

Abbott and Costello had their own popular radio show presented by Camel cigarettes. It was a funny show that had the two doing a skit with their guests. Vocals were handled by Connie Haines and The Delta Rhythm Boys. Other regulars and semi regulars included Artie Auerbach (Mr. Kitzel), Mel Blanc, Verna Felton, Frank Nelson, and old time pitch man Sid Fields. Announcer host, Ken Niles also got into the fun with the boys regularly. They also had numerous big bands providing for the instrumentals.

During those war years the Camel company would award free, 300,000 cigarettes to a different service unit over seas every week. They usually used their same routines and got to plug their movies each week. I listened to a few of their shows, and for the most part you always got a few chuckles.

In the early '50s they were rotating hosts for the Colgate Palmolive Hour. They also had a syndicated TV show for two years. I thought the show was hilarious. The show featured Hilary Brooke, Sid Fields, Joe Besser, Mike The Cop, and Mr. Bochagaloup. They used all their routines from their movies and radio shows. Doing the "Who's on First", "Heard of Cows", and "Step-by-Step" gags were too often repeated and eventually lost their zest. Their writers said they apparently didn't want to do any new material. This decision ultimately shortened their career. In 1956 they were charged with failing to pay

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back taxes. They wound up broke and had to sell their homes and give up other assets. They decided to call it quits in 1957. In addition to tax problems they had other problems throughout the years. Abbott had to battle alcoholism for years. Lou contracted rheumatic fever and could not work for a year. Once in 1946 Abbott hired a domestic that Costello had fired and the pair did not speak for a year except for lines in the movies and on radio. It was evident in two movies that they were very distant from each other. Right before Lou's son Lou Jr.'s first birthday, he drowned in the family swimming pool. Lou who appeared good natured and gleeful was often short tempered with Bud and the producers, often quibbling over money and who was the boss. Abbott was more laid back and took much abuse. Like most big duos they had their quirks, but they were professionals and put most of their troubles aside.

Throughout their twenty years they gave us many laughs and enjoyment. Slapstick is long gone now, and no one gets slapped in the face 20 times like Costello did. Jerry Seinfeld, a big fan of Abbott and Costello did an episode "When Abbott and Costello Meet Jerry Seinfeld" in 1994. He said "If it wasn't for Abbott and Costello many of the vaudeville and burlesque routines would be lost forever". Their radio shows and movies will preserve them for generations to come. Slapstick may be gone, but it can be revisited again by listening to "Hey Abbbbootttttttttttt."!



Librarian's Notes

By FRANK BORK

I have no replacements to report for last month. Now that summer is over and we all have a little more time to listen to our favorite radio shows, how about checking your personal library for some of the Club's missing cassettes. Then make a copy to replace the missing ones in the Club Library.

Here's the list for this month

- #852 -Guy Lombardo
Harry James
- #859 -Candy Matson - Symphony of Death
Sleep No More - Waxwork/The Man & the Snake
- #871 -Gildersleeve - Mae Kelly becomes Engaged
Wild Bill Hickok - The Tinker's Revenge

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- #889 -Scarlet Queen - David Malone
The Shanghai Secret
 - #910 -The Falcon - Case of the Dirty Dollars
Case of the Vanishing Visa
 - #942 -Mr. Keen - The Absent Minded Professor
The Glamorous Widow
 - #967 -Commuter's Tales - Tales of C.O. Director
Short Study - Skeleton Coast Incident
 - #970 -Burns & Allen - Planning A Barbeque
with Jane Wyman
 - #973 -Hermit's Cave - Author of Murder
House With A Past
 - #984 -Jack Carson - Jack Buys A Radio Station
Smile Time - Steve Allen
- Well gang that's it for this month
Till the next time, Happy Radio Listening.*

A Sherlock Holmes Mystery

Could The episode entitled "The Traitor" go under any other name? It's familiar to me but, I can't find it in my holdings. Was it on the series with Rathbone and Bruce?
Signed Jim Powers

Jim it was not among the Sherlock Holmes with Rathbone and Bruce Movies and I could not find any listing of it among their radio programs. I can come up with three possibilities:

- The Bruce Parting Plans - by Sir A.C. Doyle
 - The Dreadnaught Papers - Imagination Theater
 - The Naval Treaty - Granada Television Theater
- I think that in our Club Library it's "The Bruce Parting Plans"

P.S. Thanks for the two cassettes of *Sherlock Holmes* to replace the missing cassettes in the Club Library.

*The Games Afoot and it's always 1895
Fulworth-Blue*



BOOK REVIEW

Radio by The Book
Adaptations of Literature and Fiction on the Airwaves
by TIM DeFOREST

Reviewed by Richard Olday

If you are looking for a book on OTR music shows, comedy, sports and news, this is not the book for you. However, if you want the background on mystery favorites such as *The Saint*, *The Shadow*, *The Avenger*, *Flash Gun Casey* and adventure shows such as *Tarzan* and *Escape* along with western favorites, Science Fiction

and even anthology programs, this book is for you. For example, did you know that the Falcon appeared in only one short story, *The Gay Falcon*, but was featured in thirteen movies in addition to his radio series or that *The Lone Wolf* first saw print in 1914. Much more information on these shows and others such as *Hopalong Cassidy*, *The Cisco Kid*, *Dimension X*, *Buck Rogers* and anthology shows like *Mystery In The Air* and *NBC University Theater* are all here. This book may be read at your leisure as each show is like a separate chapter allowing you to read in any time available to you.

RADIO BY THE BOOK

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Jefferson, NC 28640

Orders 800-253-2187 — www.mcfarlandpub.com

The Mid-Atlantic Nostalgia Convention

September 18-20, 2008

By JERRY COLLINS

After traveling for hours through the beautiful New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland countryside my wife and I finally arrived at the Clarion Hotel in Aberdeen, Maryland. Why did a similar trip to Baltimore some twenty years ago seem so much shorter?

Thursday was to begin with Terry Salomonson's presentation on the history of *Sergeant Preston*. When Salomonson was unable to attend, convention chairman Martin Grams substituted a presentation on the *Green Hornet*. This was followed by Neal Ellis' presentation on Edward R. Murrow and his fellow wartime reporters. Mike Nevins then presented his first of two multi media presentations. The first was on *Hopalong Cassidy*. This was followed by a Friday afternoon presentation on the *Cisco Kid*. Nevins has written books on both of these fictional western heroes. Thursday afternoon began with Jim Rosen's presentation on one of TV's best early shows, *Wagon Train*. Rosin returned Saturday afternoon with a presentation on the *Naked City*. Rosin a retired television actor has written books on both shows. I was then pleasantly surprised with an interesting presentation on "Glass Sides from the Silent Era." Although

these slides were used mainly for advertising or promotional purposes, they were quite enjoyable to watch.

The afternoon's session ended with Derek Tague's interview of Edd "Kookie" Brynes and Larry Storch. In my opinion these two were the hits of the convention. The day concluded with the drive-in viewing of "It came from Outer Space," starring one of the convention's guests, Kathleen Hughes. Friday morning began with a presentation about bloopers in movies. This was followed by one of the more interesting and riveting segments of the convention, Paul Adomites presentation on baseball. Adomites is not only an expert and a big fan, he is also a member of SABR, the baseball research society. The audience was made up primarily of baseball fans. They had numerous questions and they quickly gobbled up all the printed material that the presenter made available.

Derek Tague concluded the morning session with an interview with Kathleen Hughes. Consistent with the 70th anniversary of Orson Welles' *War of the Worlds*, the next presentation was aptly titled "War of the Worlds: A Retrospective." One of the presenters noticed my radio club shirt and asked me a series of questions about WKBW's adaptation of the show. Donald Ranbow then produced a re-creation of "Diamond in the Rough" a newly released *Green Hornet* episode. A charity Auction was held to benefit the John Hopkins Comprehensive Cancer Center. Derek Tague concluded the afternoon session with interview of two special child stars, Jon Provost (Timmy from the *Lassie Show*) and Margaret Kerry from *Our Gang*, *Little Rascals* and *Peter Pan*. Their presentations were both very fascinating. Following the dinner break Martin Grams discussed his recently published and highly popular book on the *Twilight Zone*. The book has been so successful that none were available for sale at the convention.

Neal Ellis began the final day of the convention with his discussion of the MP3 format. Ellis, who is an audio engineer for NPR, is an expert on the MP 3 format and other new technologies. He also broadcast over the internet throughout the convention.

Following an excellent dinner the crowd was treated to an episode of *The Bickersons* as well as a performance by Abbott and Costello impersonators.

Few People attended all the presentations, I attended 13 of 20. There were so many other things to do. Films and TV shows were broadcast around the clock. I regret that I only made it to the room twice, both times to view parts of the *F Troop* marathon. The dealer's room was quite busy with people selling MP3s, DVDs, books, comic books, magazines, posters and many other forms of media memorabilia. What was noticeable in its absence

were audio cassettes and conventional audio CDs with the exception of boxed sets sold by Radio Spirits.

The crowds and the facilities were smaller than those that I had become accustomed to at other conventions. Still this convention provided a great deal of variety. There was something for everyone. The presentations were generally well done and the dealer's room was full and offered a variety of products. Almost as important the convention was run by Martin Grams and almost everything done by this young man has been highly successful. He remains very relaxed, is flexible and a great problem solver. If he was not available his wife and other family members were always there. Everyone was very helpful and cooperative.

The quality of our Club's audio library is greatly dependent upon donations from quality dealers in the field. When our members are in attendance at OTR conventions we normally request donations. We were very fortunate to receive donations at the Mid-Atlantic Nostalgia Convention from the following dealers:

Bob Gardner
312 Fenwick Dr.
New Carlisle, Ohio 45344
937-846-1504

Neal Ellis
1505 Puffin Ct.
Pasadena, Maryland 21122
410-294-5158

FRANKLY SPEAKING

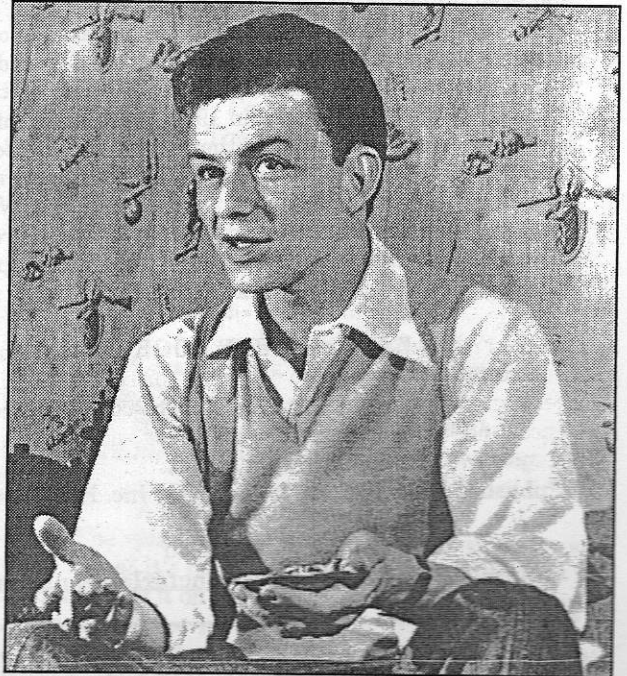
by *FRANK SINATRA*

Fate plays strange tricks. When I was a writer, my one ambition was to get a "byline" in the local paper. But the city desk had different ideas about that, and I never did see my name in print—not then, anyway.

Yet, now that I'm a singer, the editors of TUNE IN are not only publishing my article in their national magazine but giving me a generous byline! It just goes to show that you can't even tell how your own life is going to work out until you find what you really want.

I used to be a newspaperman once—on the Jersey Observer, as a sports writer. I covered ball games, fights, wrestling matches and six-day bike races. I made twenty-five dollars a week, and I loved it. At that time, I also used to sing at school parties. But, if anyone had told me then that I would one day earn my living as a singer,

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I would have laughed out loud. Then, one night, my girl friend (now Mrs. Sinatra) and I went to see Bing Crosby in person at a New Jersey theater. When I saw the warmth he brought to the people in that theater, the happiness he gave them, I decided then and there that I wanted to be a singer more than anything else. Crosby to me will always be a world apart from everyone else. He paces his league the way Joe Louis and Whirloway do theirs.

I never believed, in sitting back and waiting for things to happen to me. I wouldn't say that I was a "go-getter," exactly, but I never could do things halfway. When I decided to become a singer, I walked into the editorial office and served notice the very next day.

I knew that it wouldn't be easy, that success is never handed to you on a silver platter. I also knew that, if I put my mind to it, if I was sincere in my attempts to learn, I would get somewhere. Sincerity in your career just about lays the basic foundation for a good start. But to get started was a job in itself.

Nowadays, I receive many letters from ambitious young people who want to get into the entertainment world, asking how they should go about it. Giving advice isn't easy for me, and it isn't any easier to put down in words my emotions about the past few years. All I can do is just reminisce. Those who want to take it as an example can go right ahead and do it. I only hope that, in some ways, they have an easier time of it than I did—and that, in other ways, they get the same lucky breaks.

Though I'll admit my career has hit a pretty hectic pace within the past year, and perhaps I may be new to a lot of people, I had my share of the heartaches and grief so many beginners have to face. There were almost five years of sleeping in broken-down hotels, tourist camps and busses, and of eating rotten food—when I had the dough to buy any at all. I've known the disappointment of working day and night, only to find at the end of the week that there was no salary and I was stranded.

Getting into trouble was something. I'd had a knack for, even 'way back when I was "little Frankie," aged six. "Little Frankie" couldn't understand why a hobby horse on a carousel shouldn't be equipped for bronco-busting. Getting my head caught in the merry-go-round roof convinced me it wasn't. Playing "cowboys" with my cousin was just good, innocent fun—until I tried to leap on his back and found myself going headfirst into the cellar!

Even then, it was never the first hurt that I minded so much. It was the inevitable licking that I got from Mom that seemed to do the damage. I guess I could easily stand the physical pain, but it was the scolding and humiliation that hurt the most.

Just the same, I think that all these experiences—the little hurts then, and the big disappointments later—are what rounds out one's philosophy and sense of appreciation. Even though at times, early in my career, I felt the difficulties were too much to bear, I am grateful for them because they gave me the seasoning every performer should have. I don't believe that one could fully appreciate the good fortune and breaks that come to him, unless he has known what it is to do without things, what it means to be lonesome and heartsick, to feel that you want to chuck it all and catch the next train home.

The thing that kept me going then, and the thing that makes me happiest now, is that little group of friends who are always there, ready to give a helping hand to beginners in any field. They are the ones who hold the ladder of success steady while you climb.

In my case, that little group included my wife, parents, personal friends and business advisors. They picked me up when the going was tough and bumpy, buoyed me up with encouragement and good advice, and helped me push along the right road. Those seconds in anyone's corner are tremendously important.

One person who has won my ever-lasting gratitude is Harry James, who belies all the stories they tell about bosses. Harry was my first band employer and rates all the compliments the dictionaries can hold. I sang with his band after the Rustic Cabin date and Major Bowes



CLOSEST TO HIS HEART ARE HIS WIFE, NANCY,
AND HIS DAUGHTER, NANCY SANDRA

tours. It was a new venture for both of us and we were fighting hard for success.

That was when Harry proved himself a right guy, I had received an offer which would give me an opportunity to make more money. I didn't want to leave the James outfit, but I mentioned the other offer to Harry and he advised me to take it, since he felt it would be a greater chance for me. I had a year and a half to go on my contract with him, when I left, but Harry released me with no strings attached.

Maybe—the names of some of my other "seconds" won't mean so much to you, on the other side of the mike, but I'd like to mention a few of them, anyway, and give credit where credit is due. One guy who was in my corner from the start was Axel Stordahl, one of the most versatile arrangers in the music world. Axel kept throwing encouragement at me from the very beginning, and when I went out on my own he gave up assured security with a name band to throw in with me, whatever might happen. Here I hit the jackpot in luck, for not only is Axel a swell and loyal friend but his musicianship is incomparable.

In the field of recording, I shall always be grateful to Manic Sachs, Columbia Records executive, who has given me so much sage advice and friendship. I have another debt of gratitude to the staff of Columbia Broadcasting System, who gave me the chance to "showcase" my talents just when and where it would do me the most good. And I'd like to say thanks to George Evans,

not only for his work as publicist, but for his faith and enthusiasm as a friend. Then there's Henry Sanicola, now my personal manager. In the days when a "break" was only a vague something to me, Hank took time out from his own work to help me develop style and run down new music and arrangements. Together, we had a fair success with a tune we collaborated on, "This Love of Mine."

Most of all, there are the thousands of kids and grown-ups who have hung around the stage doors and are the ones who really made success possible. People often ask me how I can be so patient with them—particularly the occasional over-enthusiastic ones who attract so much attention. The answer is easy. When I was in my teens, I had my own favorites in the entertainment world. Like any normal kid, I would go to the theaters, and wait around for a glimpse or an autograph.

So I know how they feel. Truthfully, I believe that these well-wishers are asking very little and giving much. A pat on the back from the foreman in the mill, or a kind word from the boss in the office, is a great stimulus to better effort. It's no different with the performer. His audience is, after all, his boss, and encouragement works just the same, coming from them. I'll always be grateful for those pats on the back—just as long as I get them and as long as I try to deserve them.

(Article originally published January, 1944)

BEING THERE: Collecting Radio Broadcast Admission Tickets

By **RICK PAYNE** (All Rights Reserved 2008)

During the golden age of radio, networks and sponsors invited the general public to attend live performances of many popular programs. For the performers, the presence of the studio audience provided encouragement, laughter and appreciation. For the audience, the experience was an unforgettable opportunity to see their favorite entertainers at work. Tickets from some broadcasts survive today . . . waiting for collectors like me.

Before the advent of radio, musical entertainment in most American homes came via sheet music and scratchy 78s playing on the family Victrola. National broadcasting transformed the family radio into a non-stop jukebox suiting every musical taste . . . from hillbilly bluegrass to grand opera and everything in between.

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Lusty male baritones, Irish tenors, sad-eyed crooners and silver-throated heartthrobs were in high demand during radio's prime years. Unburdened by limitations of their physical appearance, a whole new array of impassioned entertainers found fame and fortune through the ether. The Groaner, The Voice, The Velvet Fog, The Irish Nightingale, Singin' Sam, The Vagabond Lover, The Street Singer and Monarch's Mystery Tenor are but a few of the male vocalists who became radio legends.

An adoring public clamored for tickets to broadcast performances of these musical giants. It's only fitting that we take a closer look at studio audience tickets for the great musical men of the airwaves.

Let's begin where we left off in our last visit . . . with Hoboken's favorite son, Frank Sinatra. As the lead singer of "The Hoboken Four", Frank first gained national attention by winning on *Major Bowes' Amateur Hour* in 1935. After participating in one of the Major's national vaudeville tours and taking a turn as a singing waiter in New Jersey, he got his big break in 1939 as vocalist for the Harry James and Tommy Dorsey bands. He appeared with the bands on many remote broadcasts from hotels and dance halls, but it wasn't until he became a solo artist in 1942 that he found himself before the microphone as star of his own program, a local program titled *Reflections*. But Sinatra wouldn't be out of the national spotlight for long.

And if you received one of these envelopes in 1943 or 1944, you owned the hottest ticket in town.

*The Makers of Lucky Strike Cigarettes
Welcome You to
"YOUR HIT PARADE"*

Frank joined the CBS program *Your Hit Parade* on February 13, 1943, shortly after his famous eight-week engagement at New York's Paramount Theatre. Within three months, he was doing double-duty for CBS as he launched his own *Broadway Bandbox* program. But it was on *Your Hit Parade* that he really built his national stature. I feel it my duty to share one of those tickets with you in this series.



CBS THE COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM RADIO THEATRE NO. 3 1697 BROADWAY, NEW YORK CITY <small>(at 53rd Street)</small>		CBS RADIO THEATRE NO. 3 GOOD ONLY SATURDAY EVE. JUNE	251 12
JUNE 12	LUCKY STRIKE <small>PRESENTS</small> YOUR HIT PARADE		
SATURDAY EVE. 9 TO 9.45 PM. • DOORS CLOSE AT 8.50 PM.		1943	3

The program had originated in 1935 on NBC and recapped the nation's top-selling songs based on a mysterious compilation of regional record and sheet music sales and input from bandleaders and disk jockeys. *Your Hit Parade* used a variety of formats and an ever-changing list of vocalists during its 19 years on the radio, yet it always achieved high ratings. It held that fame when it transitioned to television in the 1950s. But *Your Hit Parade's* highest Hooper ratings were achieved during 1943-44 when Sinatra held court.

During this period, the program primarily originated from New York but would occasionally broadcast from Hollywood. In fact, the weekly *Frank Sinatra Program* that debuted in January 1944 (sponsored first by Vimms Vitamins and later by Max Factor Cosmetics) usually originated from the CBS Radio Playhouse in Hollywood throughout its 16-month run. During this same 1944-45 period, Sinatra was a frequent guest on *Command Performance* broadcasts at the CBS Columbia Square Studios. I suspect it was all those coast-to-coast trips that kept him so thin. In 1947, he rejoined the cast of *Your Hit Parade* in Hollywood for two additional seasons.

In his excellent and highly-recommended book "Music Radio", author Jim Cox reports that the squeals of Sinatra's bobby-soxer fans so disturbed the sponsor that a change was made to restrict audience admission to only those at least 21 years of age. It's a great story, but all of the many tickets I own indicate a minimum admittance age of 16 for New York City and 12 for Hollywood. How would you like to have been one of the CBS ushers trying to enforce that rule out of the blue with a hysterical teenager?

Radio's musical road to fame and fortune was blazed by a young man from New England . . . a saxophone player whose unique vocal stylings made him the pioneer of crooners.

 NATIONAL BROADCASTING CO., Inc. RADIO CITY STUDIOS RCA BUILDING ***** NEW YORK ENTRANCE ON 49TH OR 50TH STREETS, BETWEEN 5TH AND 6TH AVENUES					
WED.	PREVIEW OF	FLOOR			
10	THE SEALTEST PROGRAM	8			
JUL. '40	starring				
9:55 PM	RUDY VALLEE				
VOID IF SOLD			1940	SEE REVERSE SIDE	


After graduating from Yale in 1927, Rudy Vallee created his own band (which he christened "the Connecticut Yankees") and set up shop in the newly-opened Heigh-Ho Club in Manhattan. When a local radio station WABC offered to broadcast their performances locally, he jumped at the opportunity . . . and, with a stroke of genius, won permission to introduce the band's tunes

himself. With his megaphone and signature greeting, "Heigh-ho, everybody," Vallee quickly became a local sensation. Seizing the opportunity of a new medium, he signed on to host a weekly variety show on the fledgling NBC network in 1929.

Within weeks, Rudy Vallee's *Fleishman's Yeast For Health Hour* was the second most popular program on the air (lagging only behind *Amos 'n' Andy*). One of the hardest-working men in the entertainment business, he exploited his popularity through records, films and personal appearances. He opened his own New York nightclub: Villa Vallee (eventually renamed The Cocacabana). He had an incredible understanding of the potential power of his position and used it to great advantage.

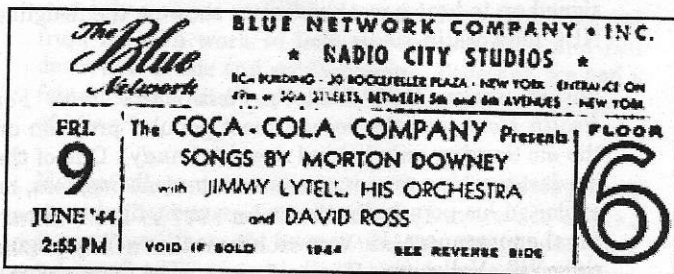
He also set out to use his radio show as a forum for new talent. He was the Ed Sullivan of his day and brief appearances on his program helped launch the careers of Joe Penner, *The Aldrich Family*, Frances Langford, *Baby Snooks*, Milton Berle, Burns and Allen, Alice Faye, Phil Baker, Joan Davis and Tommy Riggs (of Betty Lou fame). In 1937, he insisted that Louis Armstrong host a 12-week summer series for Fleishman during his vacation . . . reportedly the first network-sponsored show starring an African-American (certainly among the first).

His program remained high in the ratings through most of the decade. In 1940, he changed sponsors to launch *The Sealtest Program*, a half-hour show represented by the preview ticket shown above. His unlikely co-star was the legendary hard-drinking John Barrymore, who proved to be popular for his ability to poke fun at himself. This particular broadcast is from the summer series, listed in radio logs as *Vallee Varieties*. The series showcased his talent discoveries.

NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, INC. HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS SUNSET AND VINE		
Tues.-Oct.	PHILIP MORRIS PRESENTS The New RUDY VALLEE Show with Edgar Bergen, Charlie McCarthy and Ersel Twing Bennie Krueger's Orchestra and Chorus ★ CHILDREN UNDER 14 WILL NOT BE ADMITTED ★	STUDIO  A Doors Close 8:20 p.m.
1 See Reverse Side		

His most famous discovery returned as a guest star on Rudy's second post-war NBC series, 1946's *The New Rudy Vallee Show*. Defying conventional wisdom that a ventriloquist couldn't succeed on radio, Vallee booked Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy on a 1936 broadcast. His performance was such a hit that Vallee immediately signed him on to appear for 13 more shows; two months later, *The Chase and Sanborn Hour* starring Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy debuted for Standard Brands on NBC. It was Rudy Vallee who resis-

ted the pressure to keep Bergen off the air and changed radio history. I'm sure Charlie McCarthy might say it better, but I don't want to put words in his mouth.



Morton Downey was one of the more durable of the early tenors gracing the airwaves. His first CBS series debuted in 1930 and his last series closed down in 1951. His son (TV loudmouth Morton Downey Jr.) might be better remembered today, but his success paled in comparison that of his father.

Radio's Morton Downey first found success as a singer with Paul Whiteman's orchestra in the 1920s. He rejoined him briefly on *Paul Whiteman's Musical Varieties* for Woodbury Soap on NBC in 1936. The ticket shown above is from his most famous program, *Songs By Morton Downey* (later known as *The Coke Club*). The 15-minute program aired daily on the Blue Network. This particular ticket is torn in half; fortunately, the bearer retained both halves. As mentioned in earlier articles, studio ushers tore tickets for very few programs in radio's heyday. This is a real rarity . . . made all the more desirable by the fact that this broadcast aired just three days after the D-Day invasion.

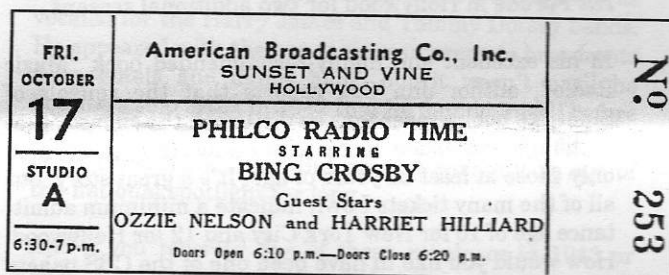


Radio's most famous singer was also an alumnus of the Paul Whiteman orchestra. Bing Crosby hosted various programs on CBS after chairman William S. Paley personally selected him after hearing one of his records on an ocean voyage. In 1935, fate intervened when the Kraft Foods Company decided that their *Kraft Music Hall* program featuring Whiteman wasn't meeting their expectations. They decided Crosby was their man, putting Bing in a very powerful negotiating position. He was able to gain unprecedented control and influence over the show's operation.

Ironically, Jim Cox reports that one of Bing's initial

demands was that there would be no studio audience! He felt that an audience injected a distraction factor that would interfere with getting the best performances from the artists (not to mention he would have to wear his toupee). Obviously, Bing wasn't considering the severe impact this would have on future ticket collectors. Fortunately, after a few shows with discomfiting silence, Crosby was persuaded to allow "friends of the staff" to enter the studio during the broadcast. It's amazing to listen to his relaxed and casual delivery on the show and realize what a control freak he really was!

You'll notice that the program named on the 1940 ticket pictured above is handwritten. Every Crosby-era *Kraft Music Hall* ticket I've seen has the same format . . . a line on which the program name is written or stamped. Perhaps the reason lies with the effort to restrict attendance. Bing's guest for this particular broadcast was actor Brian Aherne, who was nominated for the Best Actor Oscar for his performance in "Juarez." In 1945, Aherne would star as Simon Templar on the CBS radio series *The Saint*.



As time went by, Crosby sought a major concession from Kraft: the opportunity to prerecord his programs, thereby giving him greater freedom and great financial opportunity to leverage his investment in a recording company. When Kraft balked, he eventually won his freedom to end their association and create a new program for ABC.

Philco Radio Time offered him even more creative control and ultimately proved that if the entertainment was good enough the public would tune in to a recorded program. Unfortunately, it also meant that radio broadcast tickets could no longer be easily tied to specific air dates. As much as I love Bing, that fact has tested my loyalty. At least he had the decency to list the guest stars on the face of the tickets. That's how I know that this 1947 taping featuring Ozzie and Harriet actually aired on November 5.

Bing Crosby was also one several performers whose radio careers provided a foundation for later success in the movies. In fact, he was one of the most popular film stars of the 1930s and 1940s. Others took the opposite road.

The Illustrated Press

COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM COLUMBIA SQUARE PLAYHOUSE 6121 SUNSET BLVD. - HOLLYWOOD		Friday AUG. 15 1941 3:30-4 p.m. Doors Close at 3:25 p.m.	No 654
STUDIO A CBS	C.B.S. Presents "AMERICAN CRUISE" with Dick Powell - Frances Langford Lud Gluskin & His Orchestra		
CHILDREN UNDER 12 YEARS WILL NOT BE ADMITTED			

Dick Powell burst into the national spotlight as the young singing star in those great Warner Brothers Busby Berkeley musicals of the early 1930s. "Footlight Parade", "Flirtation Walk", "Gold Diggers of 1933" (and 1935), "Dames", "Shipmates Forever", "Broadway Gondolier", "42nd Street", "Twenty Million Sweethearts" and "Wonder Bar" helped establish him as a consistent box-office leader. While his on-screen leading lady was usually the similarly perky Ruby Keeler, it was in fact the worldly Joan Blondell who was his real-life bride. Keeler was married to Al Jolson.

CBS scored a major coup when Powell agreed to host the first national radio program originating from the west coast. A ticket for the *Hollywood Hotel* program was included in the March 2007 Illustrated Press. After that series ended in 1937, Powell appeared on other CBS shows. For most of 1939, he starred in Lifebuoy Soap's *Tuesday Night Party* with Martha Raye and Parkyakarkus (supported by "Lud and His Life Boys" . . . ouch).

For seven weeks in the summer of 1941, Powell and his *Hollywood Hotel* co-star Frances Langford headed up a unique musical variety program initially titled *Southern Cruise* or *Summer Cruise*. The ticket presented above is the last for the series, which was retitled *American Cruise* for the last three broadcasts. The series centered on a cruise ship that docked in a different Latin American port every week.

Dick Powell did his best radio work from 1949 to 1953, when he starred as the singing sleuth on *Richard Diamond, Private Detective*.

Nelson Eddy, forever etched in our minds as the Singing Mountie, starred on screen in eight memorable musicals with Jeanette MacDonald. The fine baritone also starred in no less than eight radio series between 1931 and 1949. Alas, there is no known recording of *The Nelson Eddy Show* CBS broadcast on September 30 of 1942, but here's the ticket for the show.


Eddy's radio work is probably highlighted by his regular appearances on *The Chase and Sanborn Hour* with Edgar Bergen, Don Ameche from 1937 to 1939, including the infamous Mae West broadcast that nearly got the program shut down. His performance of "Song of the Vagabonds" opened the program of October 30, 1938, occupying the show's listeners long enough to let them miss the opening minutes of "The War of the Worlds" on CBS' *Mercury Theater On The Air* . . .

. . . which reminds me that with Halloween safely behind us, we have just enough time to present a radio ticket for a man who wrote one of the best-loved Christmas songs, appropriately titled "The Christmas Song."

NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, INC. HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS SUNSET AND VINE		
Tue., Aug. 24 See Reverse Side	Philip Morris presents "THE NEW MEL TORME SHOW" Starring MEL TORME with Sidney Miller, Barbara Eiler, John Brown, Dean Elliott's Orchestra, and the Meltons. ★ CHILDREN UNDER 14 WILL NOT BE ADMITTED ★	STUDIO C Doors Close 8:15 p.m. DAYLITE TIME

Young Mel Torme, dubbed "The Velvet Fog" by his publicist, first sang publicly with the Coon-Sanders Orchestra at the famous Chicago Blackhawk restaurant at the ripe old age of four. Like the multi-talented Mickey Rooney, Torme had an amazing variety of talents. After winning the children's talent competition at the 1934 Century of Progress, he became a regular on many Chicago-based children's radio serials, including *Little Orphan Annie*, *Captain Midnight* and *Jack Armstrong*. At age 14, he started writing songs. At age 15, Harry James tried to hire him as a drummer and recorded a Torme song. At 17, he was writing and playing with Chico Marx. And after the war, he started a solo singing career. NBC gave him his own show in 1948; the ticket pictured above is from the third program in the series.

Continued on Back Cover . . .

COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM CBS RADIO PLAYHOUSE 1615 NORTH VINE - HOLLYWOOD		 No 966
SEPT. 30 1942	OLD GOLD presents NELSON EDDY with NADINE CONNER ROBERT ARMBRUSTER and his Orchestra	
CHILDREN UNDER 12 YEARS WILL NOT BE ADMITTED		Wednesday 5-5:30 p.m. Doors Close at 4:50 p.m.

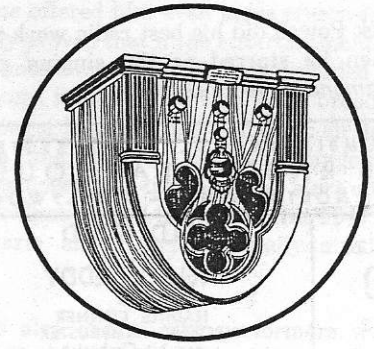


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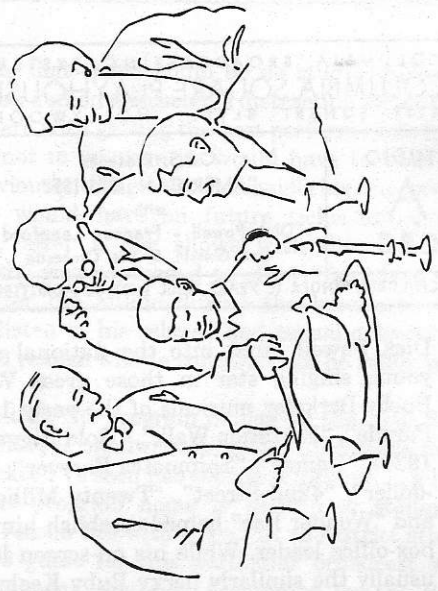


The Old Time Radio Club
73 Banner Avenue
Lancaster, NY 14086-1930

NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, INC. HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS SUNSET AND VINE	
10 5am Regular 5:30am	STUDIO  WILDROOT CREAM OIL PRESENTS The KING COLE TRIO
* CHILDREN UNDER 14 WILL NOT BE ADMITTED *	
UNDER CLOSURE 1:35 P.M.	

Although Mel Torme wrote "The Christmas Song", but it's most famous rendition was recorded in 1946 by Nathaniel Adams Coles... better known as Nat "King" Cole. John Dunning cites the NBC series for his King Cole Trio as being "reportedly the first black unit to gain sponsorship on network radio." I'm not sure how that jives with the aforementioned Rudy Vallee/Louis Armstrong story, but nevertheless it is clear that new ground was being broken in post-war America. This 1947 ticket is from the middle of the show's 18-month run.

And that brings another session of Being There to a close. In our next visit, we'll take a look at radio appearances by the top movie stars of radio's golden age. There won't be any turkeys in that lineup, so it's up to you to supply the bird for your upcoming holiday feast. Happy Thanksgiving!



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