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BOOK EIGHTEEN

CHAPTER SIX

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER, 1992

## HELLO, OUT THERE IN RADIOLAND!!

This is always a great time of the year for our broadcasts of the vintage radio shows and we have some interesting programs lined up for you during the next two months.

We'll have some special Halloween programming in store for you. This year Halloween falls on a Saturday so we have four hours in the afternoon on WNIB and two more hours in the evening on WBBM. It'll be a great day for old time radio tricks and vintage treats, so be sure to mark your calendar.

We're going to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the first talking picture, *The Jazz Singer* when we play the Lux Radio Theatre version of the story on *TWTD* (Oct. 3). And be sure to read Bob Kolososki's *Film Clips* column on the subject.

On *TWTD* we'll wrap up our 50th anniversary salute to "radio's outstanding theatre of thrills" when we play the last show in the series (Oct. 17). And our look at Radio and World War II continues through October and November with many appropriate shows, including the radio broadcast of the opening night at the famous Hollywood Canteen (Oct. 24) and a special 1942 Armistice Day Ceremony (Nov. 7). We'll

celebrate Thanksgiving with appropriate seasonal programming on *Old Time Radio Classics* and *Those Were The Days* and we "officially" begin the 1992 holiday season on November 21 when the first of 26 consecutive episodes of *The Cinnamon Bear* begins on WBBM.

We hope you'll enjoy all the great material we're planning to send your way during the next two months.

Our *Those Were The Days Radio Players*, now perform "live" old time radio recreations on the second Sunday of each month in the Radio Hall of Fame Studio in the Museum of Broadcast Communications at the Cultural Center. These radio recreations are faithful versions of vintage scripts and you're invited to be in the audience. The program begins at 2 p.m. and after the performance, members of the audience are invited to participate in comedy and dramatic scenes from the radio days. It's all free and no reservations are necessary.

And, of course, you're always welcome to visit our *TWTD* broadcast any Saturday at the Museum.

Thanks for listening.

*Chuck Schaden*



## All That Jazz

By BOB KOLOSOSKI

October 6, 1927 is a date that should be in every history book next to historical events as June 6, 1944 and July 4, 1776. The impact of the 6th of June and July 4th on world history is known to millions of people. However, the impact of what resulted on October 6, 1927 is enjoyed by the entire world but remembered by few. On that date *The Jazz Singer* opened at the Warner Theatre in New York City and from that day forward movies would talk.

Movies would talk so that Adolf Hitler could spread his doctrine of hate, and movies would talk so that Bob Hope could chatter through some witty dialogue and make millions laugh.

Popular singers could croon their songs of love and symphony orchestras could introduce the masses to classic music. The technology of the first talkies would be enhanced and redefined over and over and lead to the development of stereo and Dolby systems. Sound changed the way movies were made and the way people perceived the movies and everyday life. If Al Jolson had never said "You ain't seen nothing yet" millions might have never heard a talking movie.

The series of events that led to the making of *The Jazz Singer* are as dramatic and intriguing as a good movie script. The Four Warner Brothers, Albert, Sam, Harry and Jack started out helping their father with his butcher

business. Sam left home and got a job as a projectionist in Chicago and immediately saw the potential of the new kinetoscope. The year was 1903 and he went back home and persuaded his father, mother and brothers that the future was the motion picture. The family sold some prized possessions and rented a copy of *The Great Train Robbery* and went on tour renting storefronts and showing the film to who ever would pay five cents to see it. They went through ups and downs but always managed to land on their feet and by 1909 they had film exchanges in several cities. In 1910 Sam Warner bought the rights to a film named *Dante's Inferno*. They took the film on tour and while counting their earnings they decided to produce their own two-reel films. They rented an abandoned foundry in St. Louis and began cranking out westerns.

By 1917 the brothers Warner were firmly settled in California and making money exhibiting trite films. Sam wanted to raise their goals and spent \$50,000 for the rights to a Civil War drama called *The Crisis*. It created a crisis for Sam and his brothers because America's entry into World War I killed the Public taste for historical dramas — they wanted to take their minds off of war. They lost their investment. They rolled up their shirt sleeves and worked even harder to stay in business. The next few years would be hard on them.



"THE JAZZ SINGER" premieres October 6, 1927 at Warners' Theatre in New York.

The roaring twenties saw Hollywood boom with studios expanding and movie stars salaries doing the same. The Warners were holding on — just barely — to their meager studio by producing low-budget films. Sam knew that since he and his brothers couldn't afford the salaries of big stars they would have to find a gimmick to propel them out of poverty to the big show. He had a vision of producing a sound film process to record the big symphony orchestras that appeared live in the big-city theatres. He wanted the small-town patrons to enjoy the same kind of quality sound.

Sound films were not new to the movies but earlier efforts were mostly crude attempts at sound effects rather than at music or spoken dialogue. In 1921 D.W. Griffith made a film called *Dream Street* that employed a sound process. However the public wasn't buy-

ing and the 15,000 theatres in the U.S. had no sound equipment. Sam's dream was going to be costly to develop and hard to sell to theatre owners who would have to spend about \$25,000 to convert their theatres to sound. Sam convinced his brothers that they should sign an agreement with Western Electric to fund research into synchronization of sound to film.

The Vitaphone Corporation was formed on April 20, 1926. To push his dream a little closer to reality Sam began to direct short films at the First National studio in Brooklyn. The Warners had purchased the First National studios in 1925 and they were ideal for Sam's experiments. Sam had to go out on the road with his short films to convince theatre owners that the investment in sound equipment would be a sound investment. The shorts were meant to

## FILM CLIPS

accompany a silent feature and be a double bill program (something new in 1925).

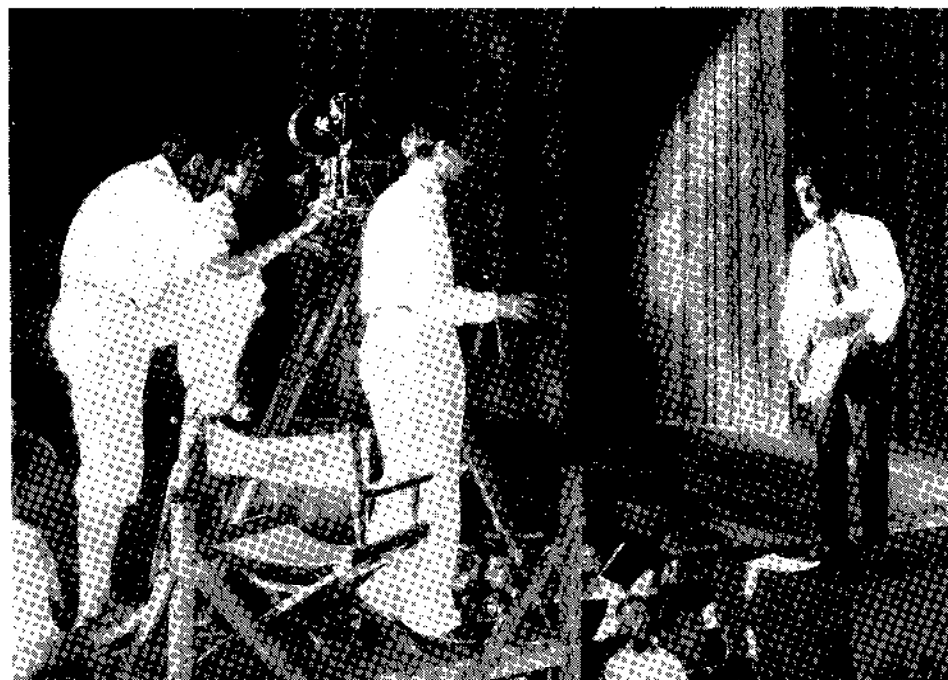
The shorts were not attracting much attention so Sam conceived a bold plan. When Warners bought First National they also acquired the services of John Barrymore. He had a contract with First National and had a couple movies left on his contract. Barrymore went to Hollywood to star in Warner Brothers new film — *Don Juan*. The new Vitaphone process was used to record the music and sound effects for the film. The film was a success but was not a runaway hit.

Sam was disappointed but he was no quitter. He continued to produce the short films and go around the country persuading theatre owners that sound was the next frontier to conquer. Jack Warner had purchased the rights to the

Samson Raphaelson play *The Jazz Singer*. The Broadway production had starred George Jessel and Jack wanted him to star in the film version. Sam saw this as a chance to add music to the film and fulfill his goal of a movie with music. The decision was made to add a couple songs but shoot the majority of the movie as a silent. When Jessel heard about the songs he doubled his fee and Jack said no thank you.

Sam was quick on the rebound and went right to Al Jolson. Jolson had been in one of Sam's short films and was a legend as an entertainer. Jolson wanted more money than Jessel but was willing to forsake part of his salary in order to secure a percentage of the profits of the film. All the brothers liked the arrangement and Jolson was signed.

The Warner theatre in New York was wired for sound as the film was being shot. The premier was set for October 6, 1927. All the brothers were in New



**DURING THE FILMING** of "The Jazz Singer" director Alan Crosland discusses a scene with star Al Jolson.



**AL JOLSON**, the "Jazz Singer" serenades his mother, May McAvoy in a classic scene from the now-famous "talkie."

York except Sam who stayed in California for some final editing. On October 5th he was taken to Californian Lutheran Hospital where he died of a cerebral hemorrhage. Jack, Al, and Harry rushed back to California and missed the premier of *The Jazz Singer*.

The film was a huge success, but to the Warner brothers it was a hollow victory because of Sam's death. Sam had been the one to push his brothers toward the Vitaphone process and his passing overshadowed their eventual success.

The public loved the film and the critics raved about Jolson. He was the single biggest factor for the success of the film. His presence on the screen was dynamite. Al was billed as the world's greatest entertainer and he believed it and his confidence came through in his performance. What electrified the audiences was Jolson's singing and the ad libs he threw out during his songs. The

rest of the film was silent but the Jolson chemistry was there.

For the Warners there was no turning back. They were committed to producing sound films and the other studios saw the handwriting on the wall and began to convert slowly to their own sound processes. Vitaphone was a disc system with a disc cut simultaneously with the film. It worked well but presented problems in cutting the film.

William Fox came up with a process of putting the soundtrack right on the film itself. He named it Movietone and eventually that technology was used exclusively by the studios. By the end of the decade sound was king and the studios were experimenting with music and sound to enhance the films they produced.

\* Sam Warner's vision was reality and the movies, and the world they portrayed would never be the same. ■

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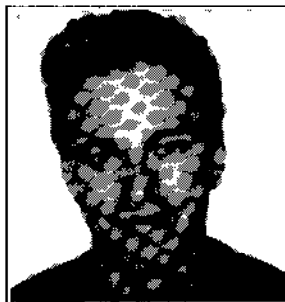
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## TECHNICAL INNOVATIONS

### *The Coming of Tape and Improved Phonograph Records*

BY TODD NEBEL

While glancing back to the mid to late 1940's, we have already looked at the impact of the coming of television as a break-through innovation which had a major impact on American society. But two other innovations — tape recording and improvements in home and broadcast music recordings—broadened the horizons of the home entertainment market in a more subtle but equally important way during the period.

During the late 1940's, magnetic recording arrived in the domestic professional and consumer market. In 1947, for the very high price of \$170 (minimum wage was 15 cents an hour), Sears Roebuck introduced in its catalog a military-developed model with thin wire as its recording medium. This device was intended mainly for business use, mostly because the fidelity was poor for musical recording and the recording wire was extremely difficult to edit and repair. The machine was also heavy and cumbersome, but was far more portable than earlier devices of comparable sound quality. In the same year the first tape recorders went on sale, using a ¼ inch wide paper base tape allowing 15 minutes of sound recording on a seven inch reel.

If necessity was the mother of invention, then laziness, it could be said, was the mother of necessity for Bing Crosby and his interest in these devices. Bing wanted to record his program rather than follow the usual network practice of doing two live shows in one night to



BING CROSBY

cover different time zones. His interests were in direct contrast with the networks' long standing tradition of prohibiting recordings because of their inferior quality (even refusing to break the rules for on-the-scene news coverage during World War II). It was NBC's ban on recordings which kept him from pursuing other interests which included for the most part — golf! Bing had seen tape recorders in use in Europe when he was entertaining troops during the war and his Crosby Research Foundation, which eventually amassed many patents on magnetic tape recording, developed

## THE COMING OF TAPE

recording techniques and equipment of superior quality. He took his program, changing sponsors from Kraft to Philco, along with his high ratings to the brand new upstart network, ABC, which welcomed him and his ideas. New techniques and devices, including plastic tape, soon followed, and by the 1950's reel to reel tape recorders were standard equipment at most broadcasting stations. Time zone differences could now be handled by a simple replaying of a tape, and in recording studios, networks and stations, the Magnecord, or later Ampex, recorder became a programming stand-by.

For nearly fifty years, the 78-rpm record had been a mainstay of home entertainment and broadcast music. In the late 1940's many radio stations had to depend on commercially available 78's for much of their daily musical programming. The 78's had many drawbacks. They were heavy and breakable. The sound quality was mediocre. Any musical selection that ran longer than four or five minutes usually took more than two records. The constant need to change and turn records also disrupted the appreciation of any extended piece of music. In an attempt to overcome the problem, RCA tested a 33 1/3 rpm stand-

ard groove record for the home market in the early 1930's. However, because it had to play only on a new style record player, the project folded within a few months as the depression worsened.

In 1947 and 1948, engineers at CBS invented a disc system with the 33 1/3 rpm speed and microgroove recording which had many more recording grooves per inch of diameter. These two factors allowed 20 to 25 minutes on each side of a 12 inch disc. CBS introduced the long playing (LP) record in 1948 to an enthusiastic public in the form of a slower recording speed, finer grooved, vinyl record base, better stylus and higher quality microphones and recording amplifiers system. This all resulted in a high improvement in the fidelity of sound and convenience of records. The average music lover could now hear superb reproductions of their favorite music at their own convenience.

A few months later RCA introduced an extended play (EP) disc specifically intended for popular music. The new lightweight seven inch disc with a 1 1/2 inch hole in the middle required a different reproduction system while still revolving at 45 rpm and offering better sound quality than that 78 rpm record. Competition tightened for many months while RCA was issuing symphonies and operas in the 45 rpm format, destroying the convenience in the number of discs and extended play. Eventually the public protested the concept of having three separate systems in order to play available records. The RCA 45 then became the standard format of popular music while 33 1/3 was the standard for classical recordings. Overall, the 78 faded from the recording arena except for collectors and record players capable of all three speeds. The standardization proved beneficial to all involved and established a home entertainment system that has lasted until compact disc recordings became popular in the 1980's. ■

### NOSTALGIA DIGEST AND RADIO GUIDE

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## Ken Alexander Remembers . . .

### Our Song



The year I graduated from Austin High, "Peg o' My Heart" by Jerry Murad's Harmonicats was a record that was being played on all the radio stations and all the juke boxes in town. Decades later, when I was working with Eddie Hubbard at the original WAIT, Eddie told me that he had been the first disc jockey to play record on Chicago radio.

Eddie told me another interesting fact about "Peg o' My Heart": The record was made at Universal Recording Corporation, whose studios were then on the top floor of the Civic Opera Building. The Harmonicats wanted to achieve an echo effect, and, since Universal had

no echo chamber in those days, and since the electronic reverb unit hadn't been invented, the recording engineer had to improvise. He had the group play the song in a dead-sounding studio. The music was piped into the men's washroom, down the hall, where it was reflected off the hard surfaces and bounced around the room — the same effect you get when singing in the shower. By mixing the sound from the studio with just the right amount of echo from the washroom, the engineer came up with the sound the Harmonicats wanted. The public, too, took a liking to the sound, and the record became a monster hit.

But I have a story of my own concern-

Jerry Murad's  
Harmonicats.  
Their big  
record hit was  
"Peg o' My Heart."





## OUR SONG

ning the Harmonicats' recording of "Peg o' My Heart":

My story took place at a high-school dance, although the dance wasn't held at the school; it may have been held at Austin Town Hall, at Central and Lake. The music at these dances was often supplied by a band or a combo, but in this case there was no live music — just a juke box. I attended the dance with a small group of school chums — fellows and girls — who hung around together. We didn't go to the dance as couples, just as a group. Some of us would dance, although I never did; I didn't know how. Besides, I was very self-conscious. I went to the dances just to socialize with my friends.

Half way through the evening I found myself in conversation with a girl who was a stranger to me. No one had introduced us, and I lacked the initiative to start talking to a girl I didn't know; yet, there we stood, at the edge of the dance floor, just the two of us, talking. She was about my age at the time: seventeen.

A few minutes later we were dancing — rather, she was dancing; I was moving around the floor with her, trying my best to avoid treading too heavily or too often on her toes. I'm sure I hadn't invited her to dance — I was much too shy for that. She must have asked me, although she certainly was not the aggressive type. But there we were dancing, and I was perfectly at ease.

The juke box was playing "Peg o' My Heart" by the Harmonicats.

The girl's appearance was not striking. Her hair was not raven or platinum or copper. I don't recall the color of her hair, or of her eyes. There was nothing eye-catching about her clothes. She was not especially pretty but she was pleasant-looking. I took to her immediately.

"Peg o' My Heart" finished; it started again.

It was her personality that impressed me. She was a quiet girl — kind, polite, feminine, and amiable without being familiar. I found her very congenial and I sensed that she felt the same way toward me. She was a nice, old-fashioned girl — the kind of girl I would have been proud to introduce to my family.

Someone put another nickel in. Again, "Peg o' My Heart."

I don't recall what we talked about. We just made small talk, I suppose. Any other fellow in my position would have asked her for her telephone number, or inquired where she lived. As it turned out, I didn't ask her so much as her name — even her first name — not wanting to be thought forward. As a result of my shyness, she probably thought I wasn't interested in her. Oh, but I *was*!

Twenty minutes after we first met, we parted — each of us moving to a different part of the floor. I never saw her again. I suppose that she forgot about me in an hour or so, but after forty-five years I haven't forgotten her. That twenty minutes we spent together was a very pleasant interlude. I'll even go so far as to call it one of the little highlights of my life.

I think of her now and again, especially when I happen to hear the Harmonicats' recording of "Peg o' My Heart" on one of the stations that specializes in the music of that era. I hope that she's alive and well and happy. She would be in her early sixties now, and probably a grandmother.

If she is a grandmother, it's entirely possible that she has a granddaughter who is seventeen years old. And I sometimes find myself wondering if that granddaughter — if, indeed, she exists — is anything like her grandmother was at seventeen. She may be, but I tend to doubt it. ■

## BELA LUGOSI *The Man of Our Dreams*

BY CLAIR SCHULZ

There probably was no other actor whose film career showed more promise at the beginning and ended more ignominiously than Bela Lugosi. Possessor of one of the most distinctive voices in the history of cinema, he found that accent to be a stumbling block in the way of better parts. Even when a choice role presented itself he sometimes rejected it or bypassed it for inferior work. His Hollywood career was one of missed opportunities, poor decisions, and uneven performances. Yet he remains a charismatic figure who is still capturing new admirers decades after his death. Surely this was a man who may be scorned but not ignored.

The person most associated with Transylvania was indeed born near the Transylvanian Alps in Lugos, Hungary (now Romania) on October 20, 1882. He retained his real name of Bela Blasko until shortly after the turn of the century when he changed his last name to Lugosi and then finally about ten years later he converted the *y* to an *i*. Incidentally, his name is still one of the most commonly mispronounced. It is Bay-la Luh-gauche-she, not Bel-a La-go-sec.

After his father died in 1894, Bela tried his hand at odd jobs involving manual labor, but nothing appealed to him until he saw some traveling acting troupes perform and he seemed to sense instinctively that he belonged on the other side of the curtain. He began with small parts in plays and operettas, earned his way into leading roles in Shakespearean productions, and finally became a member of the National Theatre of Hungary at the dawn of World



BELA LUGOSI

War I. After serving in the army for two years, he returned to the stage, but by that time it was not the play that was the thing; it was the films that people now wanted to see.

Lugosi appeared in seventeen Hungarian and German movies before deciding in 1921 that America would not only be more politically stable than his native land but that it would also be a more fertile field for an experienced actor. By the time he played a slimy spy in his first American picture, *The Silent Command*, the die had already been cast: here was a man audiences would love to hiss.

He was active in both plays and movies throughout the twenties. 1927 and 1928 were particularly busy years for him as he was not only making films

## BELA LUGOSI

but also starring as the lead in *Dracula* on Broadway and on tour. 1929 was also a significant year, for it marked his first appearance in a talkie (*Prisoners*), his only chance to play a criminal investigator instead of a criminal instigator (*The Thirteenth Chair*), and a part in a film whose title described his screen persona perfectly (*Such Men Are Dangerous*).

It offended Lugosi to know that other actors were being considered to portray Dracula in the film version of "his" role, but once chosen he played the part enthusiastically and in so doing put his indelible stamp on the vampire legend. If an actor ever carried a picture, Lugosi carried *Dracula*. The sets of the castle in Transylvania and the abbey in England showcase the most forbidding staircases and crypts ever filmed, but, because the screenplay was based on the play and not the novel, the movie becomes stagebound and static after Dracula reaches England. Only the scenes in which the Count confronts the groveling Renfield and the sly Van Helsing crackle with the intensity presented in the supernatural tale Bram Stoker created. Lugosi never looked more aristocratic or powerful than he did in *Dracula*, and that was no mean feat for he was forty-eight years old and had already passed the age when he could play swashbuckling or romantic leads convincingly.

*Dracula* was released in February of 1931 and was so successful that Lugosi was naturally groomed to play the monster in *Frankenstein*, which was to begin filming that summer. A number of reasons have been given for his withdrawal from the production: that there wasn't enough dialogue for him, that the make-up was too heavy and took too long to apply, that his image would be hurt by the role. Whether all or none of these were valid excuses, one

fact remains clear: Lugosi alone purposefully removed himself from *Frankenstein* and by stepping aside he gave Boris Karloff the role that started a career which eclipsed his.

Even though he had overlooked a peach there were still some choice plums to be picked from the Poe tree. Bela made the most of his first chance to play the mad scientist in *Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1932), then teamed with Karloff in *The Black Cat* (1934) and *The Raven* (1935). These three features are not very scary or faithful to the works of Poe, but they do have great atmosphere and at least an aura of malevolence about them. It is still great fun to see Karloff and Lugosi glaring at one another and exchanging dialogue fraught with veiled threats. Those two actors really knew how to smile and smile and be a villain.

One of the most effective horror pictures Lugosi made was *White Zombie* in 1932. It was a landmark "living dead" film that presented Bela as the aptly-named Murder Legendre, a sorcerer who had an army of walking corpses to do his bidding. These creatures, with their fixed stares and rigid movements, are some of the most frightening yet tragic figures from the early sound era. Much has been made of the poetic aspects of the dialogue, of the symbolism inherent in the white and black clothing, and of the fairy tale nature of the plot. But once again it was Lugosi's film all the way. The widow's peak, those hypnotic eyes, and the delicately-trimmed beard (no actor ever looked more sinister when bearded than Lugosi) made him the satanic figure without peer.

Bela kept delivering the shivers in film after film during the thirties, even in those movies in which he was just a red herring. He also found time to appear in five serials, the best being *The Phantom Creeps*. But during 1937 and 1938 pickings were slim because Universal



had ended their first horror cycle and the British Board of Censors had become critical of such motion pictures. Lugosi was forced to go on relief. It was already clear then that the doors in Hollywood would open wide for him only if he said, "Boo!"

Fortunately in 1939 Universal resurrected the Frankenstein saga with *Son of Frankenstein*, and Lugosi was eager to be hired to play the crippled Ygor even though he was only receiving the same salary he had earned for *Dracula* (\$500 a week). He didn't have much to say in the film, but his gestures and

expressive eyes provided action enough to make his on-screen time memorable. When he reprised the role in *Ghost of Frankenstein*, he stole the picture with his portrayal of Ygor's feverish desire to have his brain placed inside the monster's head.

Anyone looking at a list of Lugosi's credits through 1940 would see the names of stars like Lorre, Garbo, Rathbone, W.C. Fields, Lionel Barrymore, Loretta Young, Laughton, and Hardwicke; directors like Browning, McCarey, Le Roy, Kenton, and Lubitsch; and the studios of Universal,



## BELA LUGOSI

Paramount, MGM, 20th Century-Fox, and Columbia. Beginning with *The Devil Bat* made in 1941 for Poverty Row's Producers Releasing Corporation, he appeared principally with second-rate casts in low budget films churned out by journeymen directors like William "One Shot" Beaudine. Rather than take what amounted to cameos in better movies, Lugosi chose the lower road that offered meatier parts with cheesier surroundings.

That he had slipped from doing A films was obvious, but it is also apparent that to rate his minor features a B-would be an act of kindness. Few campier scenes have ever been filmed than the one of a hairy-faced Lugosi walking bent over like a lycanthropic Groucho Marx in *The Ape Man* or the one in which Bela as *The Voodoo Man* speaks mystical gibberish while George Zucco chants "Ramboona" in the background to the accompaniment of John Caradine playing the bongos like a demented Desi Arnaz. Yet Lugosi seemed more at ease in these unintentionally silly movies than when he had to endure the antics of the East Side Kids twice for Monogram and the tomfoolery of the rather obscure team of Carney and Brown in a pair of RKO programmers.

Lugosi managed to pull himself out of the quagmire of schlock a couple of times during the war years. In 1943 he portrayed the character he had refused to play twelve years earlier, that of the monster, in *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man*. Unfortunately, the make-up did little to disguise his features and, because the creature is blind and mute, his part consisted mainly of stumbling around with his arms out as if he was looking for the light switch. He was more convincing as the gypsy/fortune

teller/werewolf who inflicts Lawrence Talbot with the ailment in *The Wolf Man* (1941). He also had his last opportunity to play a vampire in a serious role in *The Return of the Vampire*, a 1944 Columbia release.

Because no film offers came to him after the middle of 1946 Lugosi took his show on the road, playing in *Dracula* to half-empty houses in places light years from Broadway. A few years later he was little more than a side show attraction as he toured theaters with a gorilla. That he had fallen so low must have hurt his pride, but he always kept the stiff upper lip for the press and the public. In March of 1948 he told an interviewer that he had not been asked to do anything in the new Abbott and Costello picture that was unbecoming to *Dracula's* dignity. "There is no burlesque for me," he said. "All I have to do is frighten the boys, a perfectly appropriate activity. My trademark will be unblemished."

*Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* was Bela's last hurrah, although it took some persistent arm-twisting by his agent to secure the part for him. The darkening of his hair and the layers of make-up were very obvious, but so was the realization that no one else should be playing *Dracula*. He was right; *Dracula* was his trademark. He seemed to relish every word he spoke, and he even took an extra beat on the pauses so as to increase their ominous significance. His performance might have been a fitting swan song, for there are worse ways to exit than by going into the sea in the clutches of the wolf man.

Alas, in the name of earning money, Bela found some of those worse ways. One was to meet Old Mother Riley in England. Another was to meet a Brooklyn gorilla along with a bargain basement version of Martin and Lewis. But when Lugosi met Ed Wood Jr. he had reached the bottom of the abyss.



That Wood directed and wrote some of the most execrable films of all time is a truism; that Bela Lugosi was in three of them is profoundly sad. In *Glen or Glenda?*, a picture about a transvestite, Lugosi sat in a room that resembled a fun house chamber of horrors and intoned cryptic warnings about green dragons and little boys. In *Bride of the Monster* he wrestled with a rubber octopus that had less animation than a bowl of oatmeal. Lugosi had no dialogue in his final film, the infamous *Plan Nine From Outer Space*, because he died on August 16, 1956, just a few days after shooting had begun. We are left with the impression that if Lugosi had lived and Wood had presented him with more

scripts, Bela would have answered the call of the clapboard again and again.

Bela Lugosi was a trouper in every sense of the word. He quietly fought his addiction to morphine and methadone for years and was finally cured when he committed himself for treatment in 1955. The failure of four marriages did not diminish his jest for life or dissuade him from making it five in August of 1955. But, most importantly, acting was in his blood (and vice versa). He virtually threw himself into the parts he played, even to the point of overacting in some of the dreadful rubbish in which he found himself. He seemed to be saying to us, "I know this is bad, but look at me. I'm acting my heart out."

Why Lugosi remains such a powerful presence today is due in part to the fact that he is inextricably connected with the main creatures of the horror mythos. He was the definitive *Dracula*, the best of the deformed and mildly deranged helpmates to the monster and the Frankensteins, and the spark that ignited the legend of the wolf man. No one played a madder mad scientist than Lugosi did and, after a dozen appearances as such, it is doubtful that anyone played it as often. He knew where his niche was. That was his blessing and his curse.

Even with all his faults Bela Lugosi remains the purest symbol of menace and evil Hollywood has yet produced. It is he and not Karloff or the Chancys or Jason or Freddy who is our boogeyman. He is the one who in sundry forms haunts our sleep with those piercing eyes, that commanding voice, those clawlike hands. And even while the nightmare is fresh and the sheets are still clammy some voice inside us cries out with the plea that perhaps Bela was answering all those years: "Go ahead. Scare me again." ■

# OCTOBER

**Old Time Radio Classics – WBBM-AM 78**  
**MONDAY thru FRIDAY MIDNIGHT to 1:00 A.M.**  
**SATURDAY and SUNDAY 8:00-10:00 P.M.**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>PLEASE NOTE:</b> Due to WBBM's commitment to news and sports, <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> may be pre-empted occasionally for late-breaking news of local or national importance, or for unscheduled sports coverage. In this event, vintage shows scheduled for <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> will be rescheduled to a later date. All of the programs we present on <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> are syndicated rebroadcasts. We are not able to obtain advance information about storylines of these shows so that we might include more details in our <i>Radio Guide</i>. However, this easy-to-read calendar lists the programs in the order we will broadcast them. Programs on <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i> are complete, but original commercials and network identification have been deleted. This schedule is subject to change without notice.</p>				<p><b>1</b> Scarlet Queen Vic and Sade</p>	<p><b>2</b> Sherlock Holmes Lum &amp; Abner</p>	<p><b>3</b> Screen Guild This Is Your FBI Lone Ranger Guest Star</p>
<p><b>4</b> <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i></p>	<p><b>5</b> Nick Carter Easy Aces</p>	<p><b>6</b> FBI In Peace &amp; War Theatre Five</p>	<p><b>7</b> The Shadow Bill Stern</p>	<p><b>8</b> Boston Blackie Charlie McCarthy</p>	<p><b>9</b> Red Skelton Strange Dr. Weird</p>	<p><b>10</b> Fort Laramie Fibber McGee Gangbusters Jack Benny</p>
<p><b>11</b> <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i></p>	<p><b>12</b> Life of Riley Fibber McGee</p>	<p><b>13</b> Texaco Star Theatre Lum &amp; Abner</p>	<p><b>14</b> Nightbeat Fibber McGee</p>	<p><b>15</b> Lone Ranger Guess What?</p>	<p><b>16</b> Murder By Experts Fibber McGee</p>	<p><b>17</b> Great Gildersleeve Guess What? Hopalong Cassidy Burns and Allen</p>
<p><b>18</b> <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i></p>	<p><b>19</b> Lone Ranger Tarzan</p>	<p><b>20</b> Here Comes McBride Pepper Young's Family</p>	<p><b>21</b> Sgt. Preston Easy Aces</p>	<p><b>22</b> Exploring Tomorrow Lum and Abner</p>	<p><b>23</b> This Is Your FBI Vic and Sade</p>	<p><b>24</b> Lone Ranger Scarlet Queen Sherlock Holmes Sgt. Preston</p>
<p><b>25</b> <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i></p>	<p><b>26</b> Duffy's Tavern Guess What?</p>	<p><b>27</b> Nick Carter Tarzan</p>	<p><b>28</b> Baby Snooks "Drop Dead"</p>	<p><b>29</b> Fibber McGee &amp; Molly "Drop Dead"</p>	<p><b>30</b> Life of Riley "Drop Dead"</p>	<p><b>31</b> Mercury Theatre: "Dracula" Charlie McCarthy Sealed Book</p>

# NOVEMBER

**Old Time Radio Classics – WBBM-AM 78**  
**MONDAY thru FRIDAY MIDNIGHT to 1:00 A.M.**  
**SATURDAY and SUNDAY 8:00-10:00 P.M.**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>1</b> <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i></p>	<p><b>2</b> Lights Out Unsolved Mysteries</p>	<p><b>3</b> To Be Announced</p>	<p><b>4</b> Lone Ranger Tarzan</p>	<p><b>5</b> Nick Carter Lum &amp; Abner</p>	<p><b>6</b> X Minus One Charlie McCarthy</p>	<p><b>7</b> This Is Your FBI Sgt. Preston Murder By Experts Our Miss Brooks</p>
<p><b>8</b> <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i></p>	<p><b>9</b> Milton Berle Unsolved Mysteries</p>	<p><b>10</b> Lone Ranger Hop Harrigan</p>	<p><b>11</b> Gangbusters Pepper Young's Family</p>	<p><b>12</b> Jack Benny Unsolved Mysteries</p>	<p><b>13</b> Sherlock Holmes Sgt. Preston</p>	<p><b>14</b> <i>RADIO HALL OF FAME SPECIAL PROGRAM</i></p>
<p><b>15</b> <i>RADIO HALL OF FAME SPECIAL PROGRAM</i></p>	<p><b>16</b> Damon Runyon Theatre Fibber McGee</p>	<p><b>17</b> Six Shooter Easy Aces</p>	<p><b>18</b> Lone Ranger Fibber McGee</p>	<p><b>19</b> Fred Allen Lum &amp; Abner</p>	<p><b>20</b> Lone Ranger Fibber McGee</p>	<p><b>21</b> Cinnamon Bear Damon Runyon Theatre Fibber McGee &amp; Molly</p>
<p><b>22</b> Cinnamon Bear and <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i></p>	<p><b>23</b> Crime Photographer Charlie McCarthy</p>	<p><b>24</b> Milton Berle Night Editor</p>	<p><b>25</b> Abbott &amp; Costello Burns &amp; Allen - Pt. 1</p>	<p><b>26</b> Aldrich Family Burns &amp; Allen - Pt. 2</p>	<p><b>27</b> Cavalcade of America Third Man</p>	<p><b>28</b> Cinnamon Bear Jack Benny Theatre of Romance Vic and Sade</p>
<p><b>29</b> Cinnamon Bear and <i>Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night</i></p>	<p><b>30</b> Lone Ranger Tarzan</p>	<p><b>THE CINNAMON BEAR RETURNS!</b>                      The exciting holiday-time adventures of Paddy O'Cinnamon and the search for the silver star for the top of the Christmas tree begin at 8 p.m., Saturday evening, November 21st on <i>Old Time Radio Classics</i>. Three cliff-hanging chapters will be presented each Saturday and Sunday evening until all 26 thrilling episodes have been played. Be sure to tune in for the fun with Judy and Jimmy, the Crazyquilt Dragon, the Wintergreen Witch, Queen Melissa and all the other characters from Maybe Land.</p>				

# THOSE WERE THE DAYS

## WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1-5 P.M.

# OCTOBER

**PLEASE NOTE:** The numerals following each program listing for Those Were The Days represents timing information for each particular show. (9:45; 11:20; 8:50) means that we will broadcast the show in three segments: 9 minutes and 45 seconds; 11 minutes and 20 seconds; 8 minutes and 50 seconds. If you add the times of these segments together, you'll have the total length of the show (29:55 for our example). This is of help to those who are taping the broadcasts for their own collection. **ALSO NOTE:** A ★ before a listing indicates the vintage broadcast is of special interest during the 50th anniversary of World War II.

### SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3rd

★ **NATIONAL BARN DANCE** (10-3-42) From the Old Hayloft in Chicago. Joe Kelly emcees the ninth anniversary broadcast of the popular program. Featured are the Dinning Sisters, Pat Buttram, Lulu Belle and Scotty, the Hoosier Hot Shots and Eddie Peabody. Alka Seltzer, 1-A-Day Vitamins, WLS/NBC. (7:34; 14:15; 7:25)

**LUX RADIO THEATRE** (6-2-47) "The Jazz Singer" starring Al Jolson. It's the radio version of Warner Bros. 1927 film classic with the star who brought voices to the screen 65 years ago. The son of a Cantor goes into show business rather than follow in his father's footsteps. Cast includes Gail Patrick, Ludwig Donath, Tamara Shane. William Keighly is the producer. John Milton Kennedy announces. Lux Soap, CBS. (19:15; 18:22; 21:00)

★ **TREASURY STAR PARADE #12** (1942) Paul Lucas appears in scenes from the film. "Watch on the Rhine." Frederic March is host. U.S. Treasury Department. (14:30)

**SUSPENSE** (4-20-58) "Alibi Me" starring Stan Freberg as a murderer seeking an alibi. Cast features Cathy Lewis, Jack Krushen, Vic Perrin, Dick Beals, Eddie Marr, Larry Thor. AFRS rebroadcast. (24:00)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (10-4-42) After many years on the air for Jell-O, it's the first Benny program sponsored by Grape Nuts Flakes and the first show of the 1942-43 season. Jack drives the gang to the studio in his Maxwell. Mary Livingstone, Phil Harris, Dennis Day, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Don Wilson, Verna Felton, Percy Kilbride, Frank Nelson. Grape Nuts, NBC. (12:55; 15:45)

### SEND FOR TAPE LIST

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**HALL CLOSET CASSETTES**  
Box 421  
Morton Grove, IL 60053

### SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10th DISCOVERING COLUMBUS ON RADIO

★ **CAVALCADE OF AMERICA** (10-12-42) "Admiral of the Ocean Sea" starring Orson Welles in a dramatized documentary of Columbus' discovery of America. . . DuPont, NBC. (28:05)

★ **FIRESIDE CHAT** (10-12-42) President Franklin D. Roosevelt in a Columbus Day talk, reports on the Home Front after a trip across the country. CBS and all major networks. (31:00)

**CHARLIE MC CARTHY** (10-12-47) Edgar Bergen and guest Linda Darnell have some Columbus Day fun. Charlie plays Columbus, Linda is Queen Isabella, and Ray Noble is King Ferdinand. Mortimer Snerd, Anita Gordon, Pat Patrick. Remote broadcast from Whittier, California. Chase and Sanborn, Royal Puddings, NBC. (13:20; 16:20)

**THEY MET THE BOAT** (1950s) Gary Cooper and Linda Darnell appear in a special Columbus Day program presented by A.R.R.O.W., the nationwide committee for American Restitution and Righting of Old Wrongs. It's the story of Columbus' arrival in the new land and the results of his discovery from the point of view of the American Indian. Fascinating story-telling technique: In modern-day America (the 1950s), an Indian who witnessed Columbus' arrival confronts the explorer and takes him on a trip through Indian history. ABC. (28:30)

— PLUS —

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (10-11-42) Second show for Grape Nuts is a remote broadcast from the Army Air Base as Santa Ana, California with Mary, Phil, Rochester, Frank Nelson, Elliot Lewis, and guest Barbara Stanwyck. Two cadets from the air base want to meet Miss Stanwyck. Grape Nuts, NBC. (9:00; 7:25; 12:10)

**SUSPENSE** (2-22-59) "Star Over Hong Kong" starring Marie Wilson (of "My Friend Irma") as a movie star from America. Producer William N. Robson introduces the program by saying, "Tonight we murder no one . . . we let the light of laughter into the dark corridor of Suspense." Participating sponsors, CBS. (23:35)

### SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17th

**SUSPENSE** (2-14-60) "Sorry, Wrong Number" starring Agnes Moorehead in her eighth and final appearance on the program in the classic radio drama by Lucille Fletcher. A woman accidentally hears a telephone conversation of death. Cast includes Jeanette Nolan, Virginia Gregg, Joe DiSantis, Byron Kane, Norm Alden. Participating sponsors, CBS. (23:30)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (10-13-42) Jim and Marian Jordan star with Isabel Randolph, Bill Thompson, Gale Gordon, Harlow Wilcox, the King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. McGee decides to change the furnace from oil to coal heat to beat the fuel shortage. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (8:45; 12:35; 8:45)

★ **FRIDAY EVENING WITH TOMMY DORSEY** (10-16-42) The Sentimental Gentleman of Swing and his orchestra with Jo Stafford, Dick Haymes, the Pied Pipers and Ziggy Elman in a broadcast from Hollywood. U.S. Treasury Department, NBC BLUE. (11:00; 6:45; 9:10)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (10-18-42) Jack and the gang in a remote broadcast from Williams Field, Arizona. Jack decides to do his part for the war effort: he donates his Maxwell to the scrap drive. Grape Nuts, NBC. (9:50; 6:25; 12:55)

**SUSPENSE** (5-15-60) "Dead Man's Story" starring Kevin McCarthy with Rebecca Sand and Sam Grey. Late on a foggy night on New York's West Side, near the docks, an ex-con hides out, knowing that 10,000 men are looking for him. Sustaining, CBS. (22:15)

★ **SCREEN GUILD PLAYERS** (10-19-42) "Yankee Doodle Dandy" starring James Cagney, Joan Leslie. Walter Huston in musical highlights from the 1942 screen success. This is the first show in the new Lady Esther sponsored series. Cast features others from the original film: Jeanne Cagney, S.Z. Sakall, Richard Whorf. Lady Esther Cosmetics, CBS. (15:30; 13:45)

### SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24th

★ **HOLLYWOOD CANTEEN OPENING** (10-3-42) Radio covers the opening night of the famous home-away-from home for servicemen with an all-star cast: Bette Davis, Eddie Cantor, Ginny Simms, Bud Abbott and Lou Costello, Dinah Shore, Kay Kyser, Betty Hutton, and Rudy Vallee and the Coast Guard Band. Sustaining, NBC. (17:30; 11:50)

**SUSPENSE** (9-17-61) "The Green Idol" starring Parker Fennelly ("Ajax Cassidy" on the Fred Allen Show) with Abby Lewis, Mercer McLeod, Luis Van Rooten. A pair of tourists from Maine, traveling in Arabia, are warned of the power of the Curse of Ramcar. Sustaining, CBS. (23:45)

★ **BEN BERNIE WAR WORKER'S PROGRAM** (10-23-42) The Old Maestro and all the Lads in a program for workers in defense plants and other vital war-time industries. Ben and Gail Robbins sing "We'll Pull Through." Wrigley's Gum, CBS. (14:20)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (10-25-42) Jack and the whole gang, a week after he turned in his Maxwell to the wartime scrap drive. In a sketch, Jack takes the roles of Charles Boyer, Charles Laughton and Edward G. Robinson in his version of the 20th Century Fox film, "Tales of Manhattan." Grape Nuts, NBC. (9:40; 8:10; 11:30)

★ **GI JIVE #881** (1940s) GI Jill spins the tunes for military listeners. Music by Benny Goodman, Connie Haines, Harry James and Lionel Hampton. AFRS. (13:57)

**JUDY CANOVA SHOW** (10-18-47) An actor has made a big impression on Judy and so she wants to use him on her radio program. Cast includes Mel Blanc, Joe Kearns, Ruby Dandridge, the Sportsmen. Colgate-Palmolive, NBC. (12:00; 18:25)

★ **COMMAND PERFORMANCE #33** (9-29-42) Host Bob "Bazooka" Burns presents an all-star cast of entertainers: Dinah Shore, Count Basie, Spike Jones, Lionel Hampton, Tommy Dorsey and his orchestra. AFRS. (10:30; 8:50; 9:00)

### SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31st HALLOWEEN!

**INNER SANCTUM** (10-31-49) "A Corpse for Halloween" with Larry Haines, Barry Kroeger and Mercedes McCambridge. A man responsible for the death of his buddies on an expedition is haunted by their ghosts on Halloween. AFRS rebroadcast. (24:10)

**OUR MISS BROOKS** (10-30-49) Eve Arden stars as the English teacher at Madison High school. Walter Denton (Richard Crenna) and the gang want to have a Halloween party at Miss Brooks' house. Cast includes Gale Gordon as Osgood Conklin and Jeff Chandler as Mr. Boynton. Colgate, CBS. (9:35; 20:10)

**SUSPENSE** (9-30-62) "Devilstone" is the final show in the long-running series that began in 1942. A wealthy man inherits property from a long-forgotten uncle. Cast includes Christopher Carey and Neal Fitzgerald. (This concludes our 50th Anniversary salute to radio's outstanding theatre of thrills.) Sustaining, CBS. (23:30)

**ROY ROGERS SHOW** (10-30-52) The King of the Cowboys co-stars with Dale Evans, "Queen of the West," plus Pat Brady and Cliff Arquette. Dale buys a map to the Halloween Gold Mine in Boulder Canyon. Post Cereals, NBC. (8:25; 8:25; 6:45)

**ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET** (10-31-48) David and Ricky insist they saw a ghost in the old McAdams place. Ozzie decides to go into the "haunted house" to disprove their fears. Cast features John Brown, Janet Waldo, Jack Kirkwood. International Silver Co., NBC. (14:05; 15:55)

**MYSTERY HOUSE** (1944) "The Thirsty Death" starring Bela Lugosi with John Carradine. A disease drives animals wild in darkest Africa, changing domestic dogs to wild demons. Cast features Lurene Tuttle. Syndicated. (15:25; 13:30)

# THOSE WERE THE DAYS

## WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1-5 P.M.

# NOVEMBER

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7th  
50 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (11-1-42) Jack and the gang broadcast from the U.S. Marine Base at Camp Elliot, California. Mary Livingstone reads a poem to the Marines, then goes to the Marine Base Rifle Range with Jack and Phil Harris. Grape Nuts, NBC. (9:25; 10:30; 9:45)

**PHILLIP MORRIS PROGRAM** (11-3-42) Unique variety program with announcer Nelson Case. (Smilin') Jack Smith, Ray Bloch and the orchestra, and Una Merkle in a comedy sketch, "Nancy Bacon Reporting." First show in the series is interrupted on local New York station WEAJ for the latest mayoral election returns: LaGuardia vs. O'Dwyer. Phillip Morris Cigarettes. NBC. (9:35; 11:50; 6:10)

★ **FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY** (11-3-42) Jim and Marian Jordan as the couple from Wistful Vista with Gale Gordon, Bill Thompson, Isabel Randolph, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Fibber and Larrivia go duck hunting in Mud Lake. At the conclusion of the show, Norm Berry reports on gubernatorial election returns from around the country. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (10:20; 11:00; 8:55)

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★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (11-8-42) John Daly anchors from New York with CBS correspondents reporting via shortwave direct from world capitols and from the leading newscasters of the USA: Winston Burdette, Larry Lesueur, Bob Trout, Webley Edwards, Lee White, George Fielding Elliott. "The American invasion force has made landings at Oran and Algiers on the north coast of French North Africa..." Also news of Commanders Eisenhower, Doolittle, Clark and Patton. Admiral Radios, CBS. (13:10; 11:05)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (11-8-42) During the recent election, Jack ran for "Sidewalk Inspector" of Beverly Hills. Andy Devine drops in with a horse for Jack to use in place of the Maxwell he donated to the scrap drive. Grape Nuts, NBC. (9:45; 9:30; 9:45)

**TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT** (11-8-42) Excerpt from the popular quiz show with Jack Benny as a contestant going for the \$64 question with quizmaster Phil Baker. Eversharp, NBC. (7:49)

★ **ARMISTICE DAY CEREMONY** (11-11-42) All Networks cover this special broadcast from 10:59 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., Eastern War Time. At the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery, the nation pauses for one minute of silence at exactly 11 a.m. We hear the U.S. Army Band and an Armistice Day address by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Lucy Monroe sings "My Buddy." CBS. (30:15)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14th

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (11-15-42) Jack, Mary, Phil, Rochester, Dennis, and Don with guest Dorothy Lamour from the Naval Air Station, Terminal Island, California. Rochester has news about Jack's horse, Leona, the replacement for his Maxwell. The cast does a sketch with Jack as a house-husband, while Mary, his wife, is a welder in a defense plant. Grape Nuts, NBC. (8:30; 10:30; 10:10)

★ **CBS WORLD NEWS SPECIAL** (11-11-42) On Armistice Day, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt speaks via shortwave at the opening ceremony of a new club for American Merchant Seamen in Glasgow, Scotland. Robert Trout reports and interviews the president's wife. CBS. (15:00)

★ **TEXACO STAR THEATRE** (11-15-42) Fred Allen stars with Portland Hoffa, Alan Reed, John Brown, Minerva Pious, announcer Arthur Godfrey, Al Goodman and the orchestra, and guest Gracie Fields. Talk about wartime shortages and restrictions, plus a skit about how American radio programs would sound in England. Texaco Gasoline, CBS. (10:30; 9:35; 8:00)



MARIE WILSON as Irma Peterson in "My Friend Irma"

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (11-15-42) John Daly from New York, Charles Collingwood from Algiers ("The Germans are trying to consolidate in Tunisia"), Bob Trout in London. Webley Edwards in Honolulu ("Admiral Chester Nimitz and his staff are calm, confident and very busy.") Admiral Radios, CBS. (14:40; 9:40)

**MY FRIEND IRMA** (4-27-54) Marie Wilson as Irma Peterson, Mary Shipp as her friend Kay, Alan Reed as Mr. Glyde, Irma's boss, who has a problem: his wife wants a divorce. White Rain, Bobbi Home Permanents, CBS. (10:50; 9:20; 7:45)

★ **HERALD-TRIBUNE FORUM** (11-17-42) President Franklin D. Roosevelt (in Washington) discusses the government policy on war news before the New York Herald-Tribune Forum (and to the U.S. public on radio) and recaps the events of the past few weeks. FDR makes an unusual confession regarding military secrecy. Sustaining, CBS. (15:00)

★ **VICTORY PARADE OF SPOTLIGHT BANDS** (11-19-42) Duke Ellington and the orchestra broadcasting from Fort Dix, New Jersey. Vocals by Jimmy Britton and Betty Roche. Selections include "Perdido" and "Don't Get Around Much Anymore." Coca Cola, NBC Blue. (14:16; 7:46)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21st  
ANNUAL THANKSGIVING SHOW

**MR. PRESIDENT** (1940s) Edward Arnold stars as the country's chief executive who is asked to establish a national day of thanksgiving. Sustaining, ABC. (15:33; 13:41)

**MEL BLANC SHOW** (11-26-46) A Thanksgiving party at Mel's Fix-It Shop is not going well. Cast features Joe Kearns, Mary Jane Croft, Hans Conried, Bud Heaston, Sportsmen Quartet, Halo Shampoo, Colgate Tooth Powder, CBS. (10:40; 13:10)

**CAVALCADE OF AMERICA** (11-24-47) "Us Pilgrims" featuring George Tobias, Mercedes McCambridge and Ralph Bell. The story of an immigrant's idea of a first Thanksgiving. DuPont, NBC. (14:15; 13:25)

★ **GREAT GILDERSLEEVE** (11-22-42) Hal Peary stars as Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve, who invites Judge Hooker to Thanksgiving dinner, while Leroy has to portray John Alden in a school play. Walter Tetley, Earle Ross, Lillian Randolph, Shirley Mitchell, Dick LeGrande, Frank Nelson, Verna Felton. Kraft Foods, NBC. (14:25; 15:45)

★ **THANKSGIVING DAY SERVICE** (11-26-42) Excerpt from the nation's first wartime Thanksgiving service since 1918. From the White House, President Roosevelt reads his Thanksgiving Day proclamation. Choir sings "Onward Christian Soldiers." CBS and all networks. (9:50)

**JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (11-22-42) His Maxwell donated to the scrap drive. Jack takes his horse and buggy to a preview of his new film, "George Washington Slept Here." But Leona the horse (voiced by Mel Blanc) is a problem. Grape Nuts, NBC. (11:20; 8:40; 9:25)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28th  
RADIO TO GET INTO  
THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT BY

★ **KRAFT MUSIC HALL** (12-24-42) Bing Crosby with Fay Bainter, Jack Carson, Andrew Thomas, Janet Blair, Music Maids and Hal, Charioteers, Ken Carpenter, John Scott Trotter and the orchestra. It's Bing's seventh Christmastime show for Kraft. In a "Time Marches Back" sketch, it's Christmas morning, 1776. Kraft Foods, NBC. (14:05; 15:50; 12:15; 16:20)

**IT'S TIME TO SMILE** (11-25-42) Eddie Cantor tries to avoid guest Jack Benny who keeps calling on a big business deal. Cast features Bert Gordon, Dinah Shore, Hattie McDaniel, Harry Von Zell. Dinah sings "White Christmas." Ipana, Sal Hepatica, NBC. (19:35; 8:40)

★ **ALDRICH FAMILY** (6-18-42) To earn money for the war bond drive, Henry and Homer order Christmas card samples so they can take orders. But the card samples have been lost in transit. Ezra Stone is Henry, Jackie Kell is Homer Brown, with House Jamison and Kathryn Raht as Mr. and Mrs. Aldrich. Postum, NBC. (16:00; 13:25)

★ **WORLD NEWS TODAY** (11-29-42) John Daly and CBS correspondents from world capitols give reports from the political and battle fronts. "The fighting west of Moscow demonstrates beyond all doubt that the Red Army is strong enough to sustain a winter offensive." Admiral Radios, CBS. (11:35; 10:45)

★ **JACK BENNY PROGRAM** (11-29-42) Jack, Mary, Phil, Dennis, Rochester, and Don from the Plaza Theatre in Palm Springs, California before an all-military audience. Jack and the gang appear in a drama, "Three Men in a Tank" about soldiers in Africa. Dennis portrays Rommel! Grape Nuts, NBC. (13:40; 14:50)

## EDGAR BERGEN

### *The Man Behind the Fun*

BY BILL ELWELL

I discovered something recently that really caught my attention. Ironically, I spotted it in a place I rarely visit, an antique store.

At first glance, the item seemed to be only an old copy of an aviation magazine that appeared on the stands in January 1941. When I focused on the cover, however, I found myself looking at a picture of Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy. Both were wearing flying clothes and were standing in front of a new 1940 single-engine Stinson airplane.

What was this all about? Why was Edgar Bergen, a top radio personality, on the cover of this magazine? What did this famous comedian and ventriloquist have to do with aviation? I hoped there was an explanation inside.

I carefully removed the magazine from its plastic envelope and found the cover story. As I scanned the article, I spotted fascinating, little-known facts about Edgar Bergen. I saw the reasons the 37-year-old entertainer liked to fly, his experiences as a student pilot, his ideas for improving the content of flying lessons, and an account of the financial help he gave to needy fliers.

What a great find! I returned the magazine to its envelope, paid the cashier, and hurried home to savor every detail of the story.

A short time later, I settled into the easy chair in my living-room and once more took the magazine from its plastic covering. Now, why was it Bergen wanted to fly? I turned to the article and began to read.

Edgar Bergen took his first flight in the shaky old plane of a barnstorming pilot in the sky over Kentucky. The thrill

of that experience stayed with Bergen and eventually led him to take flying lessons.

There were other factors, however, that also attracted Bergen to flying. First, he liked machinery, and to him an airplane was almost the ultimate machine. In addition, flying helped him relax from the strain of working in radio and motion pictures. Finally, Bergen was fascinated by the fact that he was able to fly and enjoyed taking to the air.

Bergen's flying lessons were usually scheduled around three variables: his free time, his extra money, and his confidence in the instruction available. Consequently, his lessons were often separated by months and sometimes years.

The first lesson took place in Kansas City in 1932, four years before the appearance of Bergen and McCarthy on radio. Later in 1932, Bergen took time off from a vaudeville engagement in Toledo for another lesson. While he was in the air, the top blew off an engine cylinder, and the plane was forced to glide back to the airport. At that point, Bergen began to question the practicality and safety of flying.

The year 1937, however, was kinder to Edgar Bergen. Not only did Chase and Sanborn give him his own radio program, but he also found a flying instructor who gave him the best lessons he ever received. Unfortunately, they ended prematurely when the instructor left to participate in a series of flying exhibitions.

Although Bergen's fascination with flying kept him coming back for more



lessons, there was one time he nearly gave up. On that occasion, he found himself in the coldest place on earth, an open plane in winter. Bergen persisted, however, and soloed successfully on May 31, 1940.

On July 27, 1940, Bergen purchased the new Stinson "105" airplane pictured on the cover of the magazine. This canary-yellow high-wing monoplane was ideal for the short trips and relaxation flights he enjoyed.

The small wood, metal, and fabric Stinson, which listed for \$3,370.00, had an 80 horsepower engine, a speed of 109

miles per hour, a range of 398 miles, and a ceiling of 12,000 feet. In addition, it accommodated three passengers and 24 pounds of baggage.

The Stinson's carrying capacity was more than enough to allow Bergen's "partner," Charlie McCarthy, to accompany him on trips. When asked if Charlie was also going to take flying lessons, Bergen replied that his partner was too "wooden-headed" to learn anything that difficult.

As a student pilot, Bergen often looked for ways to improve the content of flying lessons. For example, while he

## THE MAN BEHIND THE FUN

prepared for complicated examinations on meteorology and navigation, he got the idea of filming cloud formations. The film could be shown to students while an explanation of cloud formations and their characteristics was given. This approach would make the information easier to understand and remember and would be entertaining as well. Bergen subsequently expanded this idea to include filming everything from take-offs to landings in order to facilitate the learning process.

During the years he was learning to fly, Bergen became aware of certain needs associated with the airline industry. On one hand, he learned of commercial airlines that needed qualified pilots. On the other, he learned of experienced fliers who wanted to work for these airlines but were not fully qualified. Although many of these individuals had logged considerable time in the air, they had never been trained to fly an airplane solely by instruments. Moreover, they had no money to pay for this kind of training.

Bergen discussed the situation with officials of TWA and United Airlines and worked out an arrangement with them. He would send needy, deserving fliers to them for examination, and the officials would tell Bergen which ones would make good airline pilots if they received instrument training.

As a result of this arrangement, in 1939 Bergen quietly set up a foundation to finance the necessary training for approved fliers. He directed these individuals to a flying school in the Los Angeles area and told them to draw upon the foundation for funds. After graduating and finding work, they were to reimburse the foundation by making payments of ten percent of their salaries until the loans were repaid. There was no interest charge.

By 1940, four pilots were placed with

TWA and United Airlines, seven were in training, and several others were being examined. Bergen's foundation was so successful that he decided to extend its scope beyond the Los Angeles area to enable others to take advantage of his financial assistance.

Edgar Bergen believed that flying, whether by small plane or commercial airliner, was the best way to travel. And, to back up this belief, he encouraged its development in every way that he could.

I looked up from the magazine and reflected on the remarkable story I had read. No wonder Edgar Bergen was on the cover of an aviation magazine. Then it occurred to me that, although both airlines and individuals benefited from Bergen's efforts, the latter gained in an unusual and unexpected way. His assistance not only helped needy fliers train for the airline industry, it also readied them for more vital work. The new skills these pilots learned also prepared them, in effect, to step forward and help America on its day of need, December 7, 1941.

I closed the magazine and continued to think about this little-known side of Edgar Bergen. Like many others, I had only been aware of him as a talented comedian and quick-witted ventriloquist. After reading the article, however, I also saw him as something of an adventurer, as a person of intelligence and innovation, and as a sincere humanitarian.

What a fascinating individual, I thought. Then, as I began to put the magazine away, I realized that the article was too good to keep to myself. I would tell others about it and share the enjoyment.

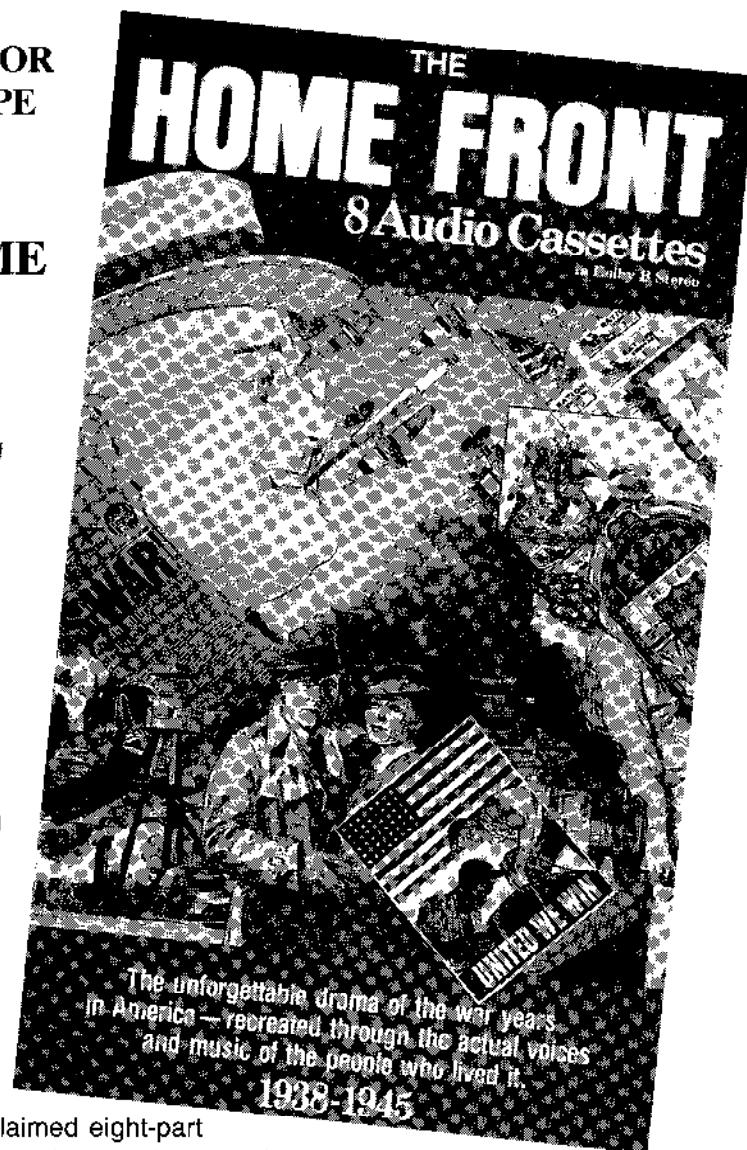
I returned the magazine to its plastic envelope and thought how lucky I was to have found this long-forgotten story. And how lucky we were to have had this gifted and generous person among us. Edgar Bergen . . . "the man behind the fun." ■

## A MUST FOR YOUR TAPE LIBRARY! WW II AT HOME

This poignant radio series from 1982 brings together the complex events of the war years in America. For those Americans who were part of *The Home Front*, to hear again the actual voices and songs, together with the re-creation of the events of those years, will evoke countless memories . . . sad and joyous memories. For those Americans then unborn, *The Home Front* will bring to life a time and a place and a people that should never be forgotten.

This highly acclaimed eight-part radio series was written and narrated by Edward Brown, Frank Gorin, and William B. Williams.

- |                                |                              |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. NAZIS & MARTIANS (1938-39)  | 5. GIVE TILL IT HURTS (1942) |
| 2. LONDON CALLING (1940)       | 6. GI JOE (1943)             |
| 3. ARSENAL OF DEMOCRACY (1941) | 7. LIBERATION (1944)         |
| 4. THE U.S. AT WAR (1942)      | 8. VICTORY (1945)            |



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Museum of Broadcast Communications

## museum pieces

Reported by Margaret Warren

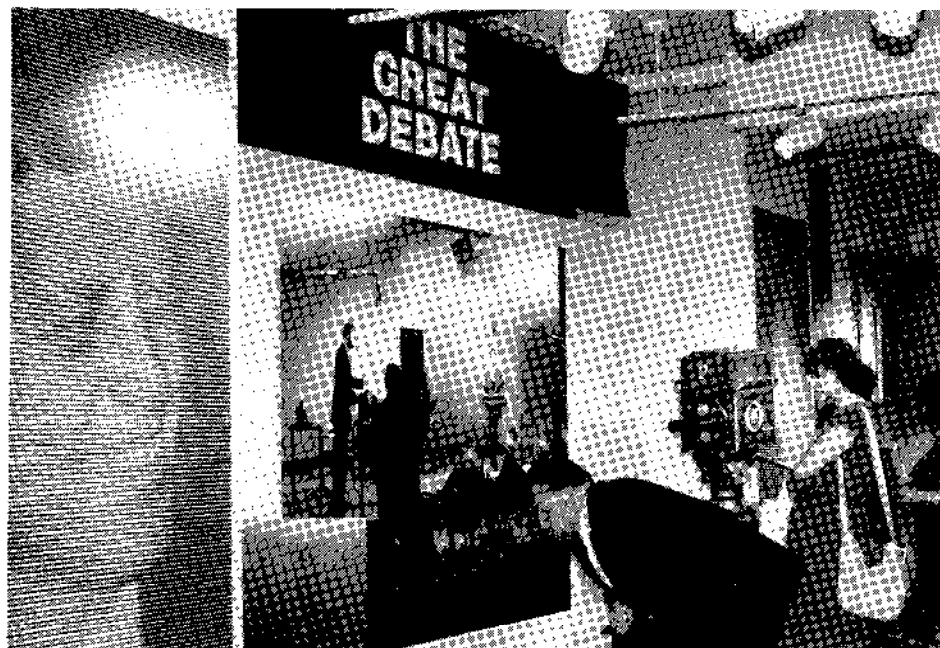
**WEEKENDS** at the Museum of Broadcast Communications are probably the liveliest. There's Chuck Schaden's WNIB-FM broadcast to watch on Saturday afternoons and all the other special weekend seminars and guest star appearances. But, attention weekday Loop workers. These fall days are the perfect time to get out of the office and take a noontime walk over to the Cultural Center at Michigan and Washington for drop-in visit at the Museum. Admission is free and there's always something going on.

It's the perfect time to check out Jack Benny's vault or open Fibber's closet or relax in the Radio Hall of Fame Studio with the continuous film presentation on early radio broadcasting. Or stop in the Archives and the Arthur C. Nielsen, Jr. Research Center and enjoy a program from the past. Pick a half hour favorite and you'll still get back to the office in plenty of time. The Museum is open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday and Sundays from noon to 5:00 p.m.

**STOP IN** Commercial Break, our Museum store. With the holidays fast approaching, a few noontime trips to Commercial Break could widdle your gift list way down. Mugs and tee shirts, books, key chains, pins, toys, program cassettes — lots of neat stuff that will really hit the spot with the folks on your list who are broadcasting buffs. Remember, Museum members get a 10 percent discount. And what about a Museum membership as a gift. Only \$30 for a full year that will give your family member or friend (or you) advance news of Museum activities, dozens of discounts, and a real stake in the success of the Museum of Broadcast Communications. Phone the Museum for full details.

For the most up-to-the minute news on what's going on at the Museum, dial our member 24-hour hotline, (312) 629-6020.

**WITH POLITICS** on the front burner these days and getting hotter as we approach the Nov. 3rd Election Day, a reminder of our current special exhibition, "Politics on TV: Changing Channels in America." On Sunday, Oct. 25th at 2:00 p.m., the subject will be negative advertising. It's long been a part of political campaigning in America, but it's come under criticism and much greater scrutiny in recent elections. Bash'em or defend'em, a panel of political experts will take on the task that afternoon. Phone the Museum for reservations. On Sunday, Nov. 22nd after the ballot are counted and the winners announced, this day's panel will explain and second-guess what really happened on Election Day.



**MORE POLITICS.** One of our permanent exhibits well worth a special look right now is the Nixon/Kennedy Debate exhibit. It's been 32 years since those two candidates had at it in the CBS WBBM-TV Studios in Chicago. That evening marked a turning point in television's impact and influence on the political process. You'll see TV footage of the debate plus analysis.

**AND REMEMBER** that Bruce DuMont hosts his lively "Inside Politics" discussion with contemporary political types every week from the Museum. His nationally-syndicated WBEZ-FM program originates from the Museum's Radio Hall of Fame Studio 7:00 p.m. every Thursday. If you'd like to be part of his in-studio audience, phone (312) 629-6019 for tickets.

**HOLIDAY VIEWING** at the Museum. Look ahead to the holidays and your opportunity to enjoy again some of those wonderful television specials from a few years ago. There will be playbacks of many of the terrific Christmas specials we all looked forward to every year. Remember the Perry Como and the Andy Williams programs? Both special favorites at the time and a real treat to see again. We'll also have holiday classic programs with Liberace, with Judy Garland, John Davidson and more. Phone the Museum to find out when your favorite will play on our big screen. Or drop by for a private screening in the A.C. Nielsen, Jr. Research Center.

**Member Hotline**  
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For the latest information  
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# NOTES FROM THE BANDSTAND

## Coca Cola's Big Band Legacy: Victory Parade of Spotlight Bands

BY KARL PEARSON

It was fifty years ago this fall that the most ambitious big band program of all time made its debut over the airwaves.

"The Victory Parade of Spotlight Bands" was first heard September 21, 1942, over the Blue Network at 9:30 p.m. Eastern War Time. The 25-minute program, sponsored by Coca-Cola, was heard six nights a week, Monday through Saturday. Each program featured a different orchestra broadcasting from a military installation, war plant, or service hospital.

The first show featured Harry James and his Music Makers broadcasting from the Parris Island Marine Base in North Carolina. The balance of that first week featured the orchestras of Freddy Martin, Horace Heidt, Kay Kyser, Alvino Rey and Glenn Miller. Miller's appearance on the Coke program was a momentous one, as this was his last civilian broadcast before joining the United States Army.

A radio series of this magnitude devoted strictly to big band music was virtually unheard of. Some bands (such as those led by Guy Lombardo, Freddie Martin and Tommy Dorsey) had prime-time sponsored shows of their own, yet the majority of big band airtime was of the sustaining (unsponsored) late-night or early-morning variety. The "Victory Parade" series, however, was something completely new in that each broadcast featured a different band!

"The Victory Parade of Spotlight Bands" proved to be a popular program

with servicemen, listeners, and the band-leaders themselves. For the war worker it was a morale booster. For the serviceman it brought back memories of better times. For the radio listener it was a chance to hear a wide variety of favorite orchestras. For the bandleaders themselves "The Victory Parade of Spotlight Bands" provided a major prime-time network spot for their orchestra. With a recording ban in effect and transportation for most bands next to impossible (due to travel restrictions and gas and tire rationing), the "Victory Parade" series provided orchestras with an opportunity to reach a huge audience.

Within the first three months alone "The Victory Parade of Spotlight Bands" featured the following bands and leaders: Louis Armstrong, Les Brown, Bobby Byrne, Bob Chester, Bob Crosby, Xavier Cugat, Tommy Dorsey, Duke Ellington, Ted Fio Rito, Jan Garber, Benny Goodman, Glen Gray, Lionel Hampton, Horace Heidt, Richard Himber, Harry James, Art Jarrett, Dick Jurgens, Herbie Kay, Sammy Kaye, Stan Kenton, Gene Krupa, Kay Kyser, Ted Lewis, Jimmie Lunceford, Abe Lyman, Freddy Martin, Frankie Masters, Glenn Miller, Vaughn Monroe, Russ Morgan, Will Osborne, Tony Pastor, Joe Reichman, Leo Reisman, Alvino Rey, Jan Savitt, Charlie Spivak, Dick Stabile, Jack Teagarden, Claude Thornhill, Tommy Tucker, and Ted Weems. And of course, that list



HARRY JAMES and his Music Makers on the Coca Cola Parade of Spotlight Bands.

grew and grew over the next four years!

While the "Victory Parade" series featured many big-name leaders and their orchestras, an equal number of unknown or lesser-known bands were also included on the program. For every appearance by a Sammy Kaye, Harry James or Tommy Dorsey, a Chuck Foster, Johnny "Scat Davis" or Chico Marx was also featured. Other bandleaders and bands who were also featured on the "Victory Parade" included Ina Ray Hutton, Joe Sanders, Skinnay Ennis, Andy Kirk, Jerry Wald, Bob Wills, Lawrence Welk, Lou Breese, Carmen Cavallaro, Ozzie Nelson, Bobby Sherwood, Shep Fields, Jan Savitt, George Olsen, Boyd Raeburn, Teddy Powell, Vincent Lopez, Noble Sissle, Will Hudson, Mal Hallett, Louis Prima, Frankie Carle, and Del Courtney.

The "Victory Parade" was a massive undertaking as well as a massive expense

for the Coca-Cola Company. Each band's appearance had to be worked around its touring schedule. Announcers and production staff had to be arranged for each broadcast. Broadcast lines had to be set-up at each remote location. Transportation for all parties involved had to be arranged. This was a gigantic task that was repeated six times a week for nearly four years!

On Christmas Eve, 1942, a special twelve-hour "Victory Parade of Spotlight Bands" broadcast was heard over the Blue Network. Titled "Uncle Sam's Christmas Tree," the special program was heard from 12 Noon until 12 Midnight Eastern War Time. An impressive coast-to-coast lineup of 42 orchestras were heard broadcasting from various war-related locations.

In the spring of 1943 the program was able to reach an even larger audience of troops overseas via overseas shortwave

## NOTES FROM THE BANDSTAND

installations, initially through the Special Services Division and later through the Armed Forces Radio Service. Each program was edited down to fifteen minutes and was then pressed onto 16-inch radio transcriptions which were shipped to military shortwave stations overseas.

As the war progressed, the "Victory Parade" continued marching across the country, bringing servicemen and war workers their favorite bands. In June of 1945, one month after the surrender of Germany to the Allies, the program switched from the Blue Network (which had recently been renamed the American Broadcasting Company) to the Mutual Broadcasting System, where it would remain for the rest of its run.

As World War II ended and the troops started coming home, Coca-Cola dropped the "Victory Parade" title from the shows' name; however, it still broadcast the program from military bases, defense plants and service hospitals. On March 29, 1946, Ray Herbeck and his Orchestra were featured on the very last "Victory Parade" broadcast. The program format was changed on April 1 of that year. The rotating bands (Guy Lombardo, Harry James and Xavier Cugat) were featured on a three-nights-a-week series. This "Spotlight Bands" series continued until November 22, 1946.

The Coca-Cola Company should be commended for its effort in entertaining the troops and war workers. Exactly 979 "Victory Parade" programs were broadcast, and over one million miles were travelled between the various installations.

Although Coca-Cola did not preserve these programs in their archives, a number of them have been preserved by collectors, and they do provide for enjoyable listening nearly 50 years later. ■

## WE GET

**FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA** — We are transplanted Chicagoans living in the Washington, D.C. area and we just wanted you to know that we miss your broadcast. We do, however, get it occasionally when the air waves are just right! However, we are fortunate to have an old time radio show here in Washington on Sunday evening. Anyway, we do miss your Saturday afternoon show — we used to do our household chores listening to your program. Now we have to tape Sunday evening for Saturday!  
— **GEORGE & JOAN HANOVER**

**NAPERVILLE, IL** — Just want to say thanks for bringing back those memories. Usually writing checks is not a pleasant experience, but this one is an exception. I've been subscribing since September, 1976 and really enjoy the *Digest* and also your shows plus the Metro Golden Memories store. It is hard to say which shows I like best, but it is hard to beat "One Man's Family." The new location for the Museum of Broadcast Communications is great. I especially like Jack's vault and Fibber's closet. I hope we can enjoy another 16 years together. Keep the memories coming.  
— **JERRY MAUPIN**

**WONDER LAKE, IL** — It is with great pleasure to write this check for the renewal of the *Digest*. I've been listening to you for over 17 years now, and I introduced my wife to your programs when we first started dating. Although we're only in our late 20s, we find the radio programs much more enjoyable than TV. We were quite upset with WBBM for the program change and still hope that they wake up. Anyway, thanks for the enjoyable Saturday afternoons and evenings.  
— **BILL & JENNIFER REFFKE**

**BURLINGTON, IOWA** — I continue to enjoy *Old Time Radio Classics*, especially the Saturday and Sunday night two-hour shows. After receiving my first two copies of the *Nostalgia Digest*, I had to write and tell you I'm very impressed. What a neat magazine! So many interesting things to read, and priceless photographs, such as those Laurel and Hardy pictures. *Your Those Were The Days* section brings back memories of things I had forgotten. I was so hooked on radio as a child that I wanted to be a part of it when I grew up. For 36 years now I've been head Copywriter at KBJR-AM and KGRS-FM here in Burlington.  
— **BOB STRUCK**

**KENNER, LOUISIANA** — On page 26 of the June-July issue of the *Nostalgia Digest*, Bob Kolososki made a boo-boo in his "Movies Go To War" article. He mentions the movie "Back to Bataan" with John Wayne and mentions that Wayne is a rugged Army captain. Wrong. John Wayne was a full bird colonel. A winged eagle

## LETTERS

on each shoulder and the front of his helmet. He even gives one to the little Filipino boy tortured by the Japs. I'm looking at the video at this moment and there it is. I hope you print the correction and tell Bob Kolososki to get with it.

— **J. R. PAGE**

(ED. NOTE — Bob regrets the error, says he must have seen the film on a late, late show where a TV station editor must have cut Wayne's rank along with a few scenes to make room for commercials!)

**WORTH, IL** — I want to thank you for playing the Nelson Eddy Show with Jeanette MacDonald. When I saw the listing in the April-May *Digest*, I was delighted. And although I love Jack Benny and Fibber and many of the old timers, I also loved the many musical shows that once were a staple on the radio, especially the light operettas. Thanks for the many hours of good listening and the best of luck in your new location (at the Chicago Cultural Center). I received my Jack Benny vault tape and loved it!  
— **SHIRLEY PASERPSKY**

**PARK RIDGE, IL** — Your Saturday afternoon broadcasts on WNIB, commemorating World War II events 50 years ago, are of much interest to the veterans who listen to your program. Not only do the broadcasts trigger memories, but they remind us of a time when the nation was united for a common goal.

Fifty years ago, on July 30, President Roosevelt signed the Navy Women's Reserve Act that opened the door for 87,000 women to enter and serve in the Navy as WAVES — Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service. WAVES were to take over state-side jobs in order to release men for sea duty. They served in many capacities: as communication and technical specialists, pharmacist's mates, LINK trainers, storekeepers, aviation and auto mechanics, to name a few. They served with distinction.

The Illini Mariners, a unit of WAVES National, are celebrating their anniversary this year. At the half century mark, WAVE veterans still have their memories and are proud to have served. They look back with the thought, "Those were the days!"  
— **FRANCES J. VILIM, Historian**

**SCHAUMBURG, IL** — Just a note to tell you how much I and members of my family enjoyed your program with Joan Benny and George Balzer, one of Jack Benny's writers . . . and listening to some of the very special tape excerpts of his broadcasts. That was indeed a "golden age" in entertainment  
— **JULIE SEDA**

**NORTHBROOK, IL** — As I work for the schools I am lucky enough to get 10 weeks vacation and the oppor-

tunity to sleep late, so I can enjoy your midnight broadcasts on WBBM. I missed the June 12 gala re-opening of the Museum of Broadcast Communications, but greatly enjoyed your Saturday show on WNIB. It was a wonderful treat to hear Joan Benny and George Balzer as your special guests, as well as Danny Hu, the young violinist studying at the Jack Benny Center for the Performing Arts. Finally, the saga of the old radio donated to be auctioned for the vault exhibit was very heart-warming. Everyone who contributed to that project benefited, as did the vault exhibit, of course!

— **ANN CALLAWAY**

**CHICAGO** — I have to tell you how much of a thrill it was for me to be at the opening of Jack Benny's Vault Exhibit. And then to stay for the *TWTD* broadcast, seeing Joan Benny and George Balzer, and listening to their stories was quite an experience. The young man who did the impersonation of Jack was very good, as was the little girl (Benjamin and Jamie Spangler). My hat's off to you for a well-planned day.

In the course of the day I had a chance to talk to some of your staff. All were very kind and answered all questions in a polite manner. Ken Alexander is a real class act. I'm glad I had a front row seat to the festivities. The Museum of Broadcast Communications and its exhibits are all I expected and more. My congratulations to all of you who worked so long and hard to make it happen. I am a long-time subscriber and follower.  
— **JOHN T. HEGER, JR.**

**PORTAGE, INDIANA** — I am enjoying very much my first issue of the *Digest*. I am 83 years old and it has brought back many forgotten memories of so many things and places of my life in Chicago (it will always be "home") from 1914 to 1981. I loved "Trolley Song" and the picture of Elliott Lewis and my long-time favorite Ronald Colman. I was also pleased by the pictures and story of hero "Butch" O'Hare; my own dear and only brother John was killed in Germany, November 27, 1944. He was in the infantry. I am listening to WNIB as I write. It helps take my mind off unhappy memories.  
— **CLAIRE SAMUELSON**

**CHICAGO** — I listen to and enjoy the program at work every night. But prior to the dedication of the new home for the Museum of Broadcast Communications, you referred to the Chicago Cultural Center as the "original library." It was originally the library; but it was the fifth home of the main library which was started in 1872. The previous sites, according to *The History of the Development of Building Construction in Chicago* by Frank Randall, were:

1. Water Tower at the Rookery, not the current building but one that occupied the site before and served as City Hall after the fire.
2. Southeast corner of Madison and Wabash.
3. Southwest corner of Lake and Dearborn.
4. City Hall.

The Cultural Center, which was finished in 1893, was the first building that served exclusively as the library

## WE GET LETTERS

and was of course, followed by two other temporary sites.  
— CHARLES GREEN

**DALLAS, TEXAS** — I'm a full-time priest/teacher at Fenwick High School in Oak Park. Dallas is my summer "home" and I work in a totally air-conditioned parish there! Even though I'm a native Chicagoan, Dallas is my home-away-from-home. Saturday is my errand day and sometime, just to go out for a ride. I always listen to your Saturday program on FM and enjoy it very, very much. Been in the store several times and enjoyed that, too. I constantly marvel at the variety of material that you present on the program. I plan to come to the new Museum when I get back, before I have to face Year 36 in the business of teaching.

— FATHER JOHN GAMBRO, O.P.

**MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN** — I love old time radio and I'm glad to hear your programs. I was wondering one thing. I get the *Nostalgia Digest* which is helpful to me so I know what to record. I know you can't say specific programs that you'll play at midnight, but is there any way that you can mark those that are going to be clips of programs, especially when it's not obvious which is going to be the 15 minute program and which the half hour. That would help me with recording (and deciding what to record, 'cause I use a 90 minute tape. I have too much trouble with the 120 minute ones). Also why don't you list specifically what you'll play on Sunday instead of listing "Old Time Radio Nostalgia Night"? I'd like to know exactly what you play (like the listing on other nights). Thanks again for the great old radio.

— RACHEL

(ED. NOTE — On WBBM's *Old Time Radio Classics*, occasionally we feature two half hour shows, but usually we lead off with a half hour show, follow with a quarter-hour program, then conclude with a clip, time permitting. We wish we could meet the needs of everyone who listens and tapes, but it's just not possible. Regular "tapeworms," however, will quickly become familiar with the typical lengths of programs and will know how to prepare for taping. We don't list specific program material for our Sunday "Nostalgia Night" because — for at least one day a week — it allows us a certain degree of flexibility, permitting us to relax a bit and draw from the archives appropriate material for special tributes, salutes, themes and other historically topical broadcasts. Besides, we think it's fun to surprise our listeners once in a while. But for those who don't like to be surprised, or for those who like to know in advance, we try to announce our Sunday night line-up during our Saturday evening show on WBBM!)

**TINLEY PARK, IL** — Thanks again for continually giving all the old time radio fans the best listening ever. Also thanks for being such a caring person, as you have interviewed many radio celebrities and making each

one so interesting. Looking forward to another year of great reading through the *Nostalgia Digest*.

— AUDREY SUTENBACH

**CHICAGO** — We (three of us) have been listening to *TWTD* for several years. Over the past few years, we have noticed that our summers, as well as certain other portions of the year, have been ruined! In our book, a ruined summer or month is having to listen to One Man's Family or I Love A Mystery for the umpteenth time. In the case of programs like Easy Aces, Vic and Sade, Duffy's Tavern or Pepper Young's Family, it's having to listen to them at all. These are unbelievably boring programs. It's a miracle they were ever broadcast in the first place, especially Vic and Sade or One Man's Family. It is by far more entertaining to watch wallpaper dry or watch grass grow during a drought! Mercy, please.

— PHILIP K. SPRAGUE

(ED. NOTE — During the more than 22 years we have been broadcasting the vintage radio shows, we have learned that we can please some of the people all of the time, all of the people some of the time, but not all of the people all of the time. One of the reasons we publish this magazine is so that listeners may pick and choose the programs they want to hear and tune out the programs that do not appeal to them.)

**MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN** — On a local broadcast of Amos 'n' Andy on public radio, the announcer stated his reluctance to run these shows for the "obvious reasons." I grew up with Amos 'n' Andy on radio and TV and personally own many tapes of programs from both media, so I know first hand . . . that the jokes and gags are completely color blind. What we are really laughing at is ourselves. The fact that the characters are black simply lends personality to the material, as does any ethnic background.

(On another subject,) I would like to mention to your readers who have a problem listening due to time schedules, that programs can be recorded using a standard Video Cassette Recorder and any radio having an earphone jack. Simply make a connection from the jack on the radio to the audio input jack on the VCR. Have the radio turned on at all times (at a low volume setting) and set to the proper station. With the timer on the VCR set to the appropriate start and stop times, the recording will take place with very good results and plenty of playing time (up to six hours). I hope this will be a help to many who have problems with the schedule.

— RICK HAGERTY

**GLEN ELLYN, IL** — I've been listening since 1978 when I was in the seventh grade. I quickly became a BIG Jack Benny fan. I credit the old radio programs and especially Jack Benny for me meeting and marrying my wife. The imagination and the sense of humor I developed seemed to win her over, and I developed these traits from listening to the shows. Now I'm trying to explain the shows to her and getting her to like them also. She loses patience because there isn't any picture, but I think I will win her over. The Jack Benny Vault is a great idea.

— ROBERT HEMMELGARN

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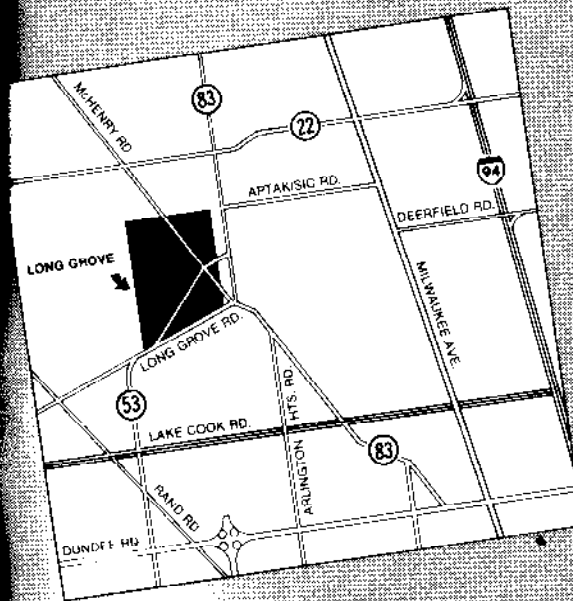
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**EDGAR BERGEN**

The Man Behind the Fun had an interesting hobby.  
See Bill Elwell's article, page 22.