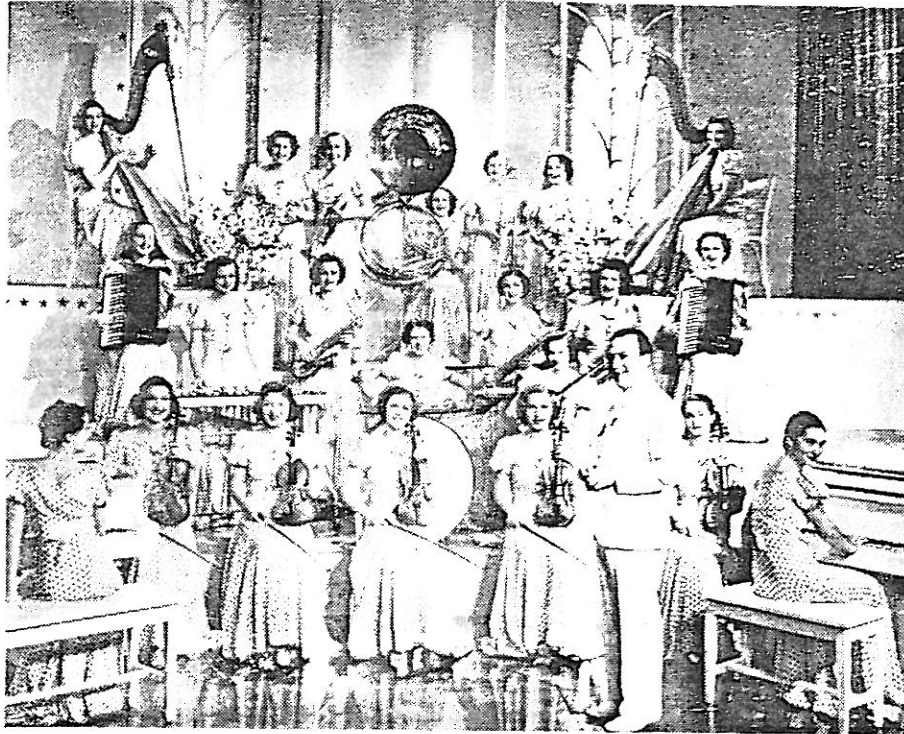


Return with us now...

Published by The Radio Historical Association of Colorado

may 1977
vol. 2, n. 11



PHIL SPITALNY'S ALL-FEMME ORCHESTRA

FEATURES

WE OFFER YOU...ESCAPE!

Nearly 30 years after its initial broadcast, CBS' Escape series boasts a remarkable popularity from which, it would seem, there is no...ESCAPE!

Its excellent reputation is well deserved. Escape produced 230 broadcasts of extremely high caliber beginning with "The Man Who Would Be King" (7/7/47) through "The Heart of Kali" (9/25/54). The inventive and exciting stories heard throughout the series contributed greatly to its success, as noted by a NEWSWEEK reviewer in 1947:

"The purpose of this show is all too rare in radio: to take a good story and tell it well... it is a good program and a welcome relief from what radio tries to pass off as 'original program ideas'."

This recommendation of years ago rings true today. The Escape series is a vibrant set of shows that deliver the promise made in their introduction: "Tired of the every-

day grind? Ever dream of a life of romantic adventure? Want to get away from it all? We offer you...Escape! --designed to free you from the four walls of today for a half hour of high adventure."

Many favorites emerged from the run, in particular "Three Skeleton Key", previously heard on Suspense. (The two shows occasionally traded scripts.) Another favorite is "Leinengen vs. the Ants." Both are excellent in regard to script, acting, sound effects and, of course, adventure. "Three Skeleton Key", which was produced three separate times on Escape, relates the frightening tale of three men trapped in a lonely lighthouse as rats swarm over the island. The show holds the listener in suspense from start to finish, with a chilling reminder at the end that the rats may return at any time. Elliot Reed, Harry Bartell and Bill Conrad starred

(Turn to next page)

(Continued from p. 1.)

in the first production. Vincent Price starred in another of the broadcasts.

"Leinengen vs. the Ants" with Tudor Owen concerns a plantation on the banks of the Amazon which is being threatened by an army of ants. The creatures each measure an inch long, and like the rats above, are ravenously hungry! Leinengen, the plantation owner, has confidently set up defenses, but as each of them falls to the ants, Leinengen's fight to save his land-- and his life-- becomes all the more desperate.

Certainly, the exciting stories, superb acting and convincing sound effects provide the basis for Escape's magnetism. But there is possibly another factor for its charm: The show's willingness to acknowledge human fallibility. In "A Shipment of Mute Fate", in which a dangerous snake has been accidentally lost on board a ship, the narrator has only a scrawny alley cat to thank for his rescue from death.

"Evening Primrose" illustrates this type of original thinking as well, particularly through its departure from the routine plot. The story describes the night life of a department store which, though seemingly innocent at first, grows increasingly gruesome with each detail. And there is an added attraction: The hero not only does not get the girl; he doesn't even escape! Elliot Lewis, Paul Frees and Pat Lowrey starred.

Although Escape did not use big-name actors, in contrast to Suspense and other radio features, some of its actors became quite well-known at a later date: Jack Webb, Frank Lovejoy, Van Heflin and Bill Conrad. It should be noted that when Gunsmoke finally replaced Escape in 1954, three of Escape's actors joined the new show: Conrad as Marshall Dillon, Parley Baer as Chester and Howard McNear as Doc.

Escape produced 193 different stories in the 230 broadcast. Most of the programs were sustained except for a short period in 1950 when Richfield Gas and Oil sponsored. Ford also sponsored an episode.

The reason so few shows were done over such a long period of time-- seven years and six months, beginning with its audition show, "Dead of Night" (3/21/47) through the Sept. 1954 Gunsmoke replacement-- is that most of Escape's runs were short. Three long runs, however, were enjoyed by the series. The first was from 10/1/47 to 9/19/48; the second from 7/7/49 to 8/26/50; and the third from 10/19/52 to 10/11/53.

At the moment, 205 Escape programs are in circulation. Fortunately, it seems certain that the rest of the broadcasts will appear in the next few years.

The Escape series ranks as one of radio's finest. One reason is this: It did what it said it would do. Listening to an Escape show makes one truly feel transported from "the four walls of today for a half hour of high adventure." And you'll wish it could be longer.

Thanks to Janet Chapman for the interesting story above, which first appeared in Airwaves.

KF/MIL

Here's John Dunning's schedule for May:

- 5/1 FRONTIER GENTLEMAN "Random Notes" 1958
SUSPENSE "Drive In" with Judy Garland
11/21/46
JOHNNY DOLLAR "The Hatchet House Theft
Matter" with Edmond O'Brien 6/27/51
- 5/8 OZZIE & HARRIET "Compliments" 3/27/49
X-MINUS ONE "Tunnel Under The World"
3/14/56
JOHNNY DOLLAR "The Independent Diamond
Traders Matter" 11/24/53 J. Lund
- 5/15 LUX RADIO THEATRE "The Voice Of Bugle
Ann" with Lionel Barrymore 7/6/36
JOHNNY DOLLAR "The Sidewinder Matter"
2/7/60 with Bob Bailey
- 5/22 JOHNNY MADERO: FOR HIRE "The Man Who
Was Chasing Himself" 6/23/47
CAMEL CARAVAN Vaughn Monroe hit parade
show 6/23/51
JOHNNY DOLLAR "The Ratpack Matter"
4/61 with Bob Readick as Dollar
- 5/29 THE LIFE OF RILEY "Riley The Milkman,
Flashback" 3/22/47
GUNSMOKE First of 5 1953 shows
JOHNNY DOLLAR "The Tipoff Matter"
9/30/62 Mandel Kramer as Dollar

Return With Us Now... is published monthly by the Radio Historical Association of Colorado. Subscriptions are \$6 per year and include membership in the Association. Address all manuscripts, inquiries and donations to: Dan Danbom, Editor, 2339 S. Ogden St., Denver, CO 80210.

MEETING

The next RHAC meeting is Sunday, May 22 at St. Barnabas Church, 1280 Vine at 2 pm. That's the fourth Sunday of the month, instead of the third Sunday, which is our usual meeting date.

TRIVIA

RADIO LINKS.....BY JOHN LLOYD

1. Who was the Lone Ranger's nephew?
2. Who was Baby Snooks' "Daddy"?
3. Who was Corliss Archer's boyfriend?
4. Who was Henry Aldrich's sister?
5. Who was Bill Davidson's daughter?
6. Who was Gildersleeve's maid?
7. Who was Amos Jones' daughter?
8. Who was Lorenzo Jones' wife?
9. Who was Stella Dallas' daughter?
10. Who was Vic and Sade's uncle?

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| a) Mary | f) Fletcher |
| b) Belle | g) Laurel |
| c) Dan Reid | h) Arbadella |
| d) Hanley Stafford | i) Birdie Lee Coggins |
| e) Dexter Franklin | j) Nancy Donovan |

MEDIA

SPECIAL NOTICE: KFML HAS A NEW GENERAL MANAGER, WHICH COULD OR COULD NOT MEAN A CHANGE IN PROGRAMMING. TO ASSURE THAT OLD TIME RADIO STAYS ON THE AIR, PLEASE DROP THE STATION A LETTER, NOTE, POSTCARD, ETC. REMINDING THEM OF YOUR SUPPORT FOR O.T.R. WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, DO THE SAME FOR THE SPONSORS OF O.T.R.-- BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.

You can hear the "General Mills Adventure Theatre" Saturdays and Sundays at 4:08 pm on KOA, 850 AM.

The "CBS Mystery Theatre" is aired Monday through Friday from 10:34 to 11:27 pm, on Saturday from 11:07 to 12 midnight, and on Sunday from 6:07 to 7 pm.



OTR DENVER

We have approached the State Historical Society, and they have graciously agreed to run a story about the club and about OTR in Colorado in their fine publication, "Mountain & Plains History Notes." If you have any specific information about radio's beginnings in the state, please forward it to Dan Danbom.

This is a great opportunity for us to get some publicity, and we thank the Society for offering us their forum.

Anyone planning a vacation back East this fall might like to know there will be an OTR convention in Connecticut October 1. This about the fifth or sixth such gathering. The organizers always get big stars to appear and put on quite a convention. It is an all-day affair with lots going on. There is also a place of interest called the Radio Broadcasters Hall of Fame, which will open soon in Freehold, N.J., and an old time radio museum in New York City. Both should be well worth seeing.

Let's not forget an occasional tape for the blind. It's really a nice gesture to donate a tape from time. It's the unselfish sort of thing that we need to do more often. Give your tapes to Dick Mullins.

Anyone knowing where we could get some membership cards printed very inexpensively (dirt cheap) would really help us out. Please look into it.

Bargain Bookstore, on 15th St. across from May D&F, is going out of business. They have pretty good discounts and some books of interest to OTR buffs.

Don't forget to talk up our picnic. Be sure to bring the entire family, friends, etc. We just might get them hooked on OTR. Tentative plans are for all to BYOF & BYOB.

Please support the circulating library. A lot of work went into bringing the library up to date, so sign up for the old library shows if you missed them the first time around, and give the library committee your ideas on what you'd like to have in the new library. It will survive only with your patronage.

-John Lloyd

FEATURES

THE NETWORKS.....BY TOM DANIELS

THE RIVALRY OF THE NETWORKS

Competition of the networks is probably at its peak right now with the ABC Television Network knocking CBS out of its quarter century lead in the ratings just this past year. But this writer feels competition among networks must have been just as strong back in the early days of radio in its own way as it is now.

In some ways, the 1920's constituted a mad, crazy era. In addition to the serious firsts, there were stunts. When radio men found out how easy it was to do remotes, they took their microphones to the oddest places they could think of to do the weirdest pickups they or their special events directors could dream up. Some were pretty ridiculous: An interview with a monkey in a zoo, the sound of an egg being fried on a cement sidewalk on the hottest day of the year, an interview with a Pulitzer Prize winner from a hotel's men's room.

One network interviewed a French strip-teaser at great length of what she thought of nuclear science, which was not much, and a nuclear scientist on what he thought of strip-teasers, which was more complimentary. WOR broadcast a wedding from a plane circling New York City with the wedding march being played in the studio by a full orchestra and picked up on a radio in the plane.

Another network picked up deep-sea divers working at the bottom of Lake Michigan.

One station loaded two small pianos into a private plane and gave its listeners the first twin-piano concert ever broadcast from the air.

Even Stoopnagle and Budd were taken aloft, each in a different plane, to do their comedy act in the clouds for the benefit of the radio audience, not even within screaming distance of each other.

These were indeed the mad, crazy years. Radio was young and lusty. But radio was on its way, soon to become a force that would win the respect of good men, the fear of villains, and the dollars of those who had something to sell. They did some pretty wild things in those days to win an audience, but then I guess things really haven't changed much, have they?

(Tom Daniels' column is on summer vacation now, but it will return this fall. -Ed.)

COLLECTORS

Scott McCoy, who has been with RHAC since August, has managed to double the size of his collection since joining. He has one heck of a lot SUSPENSE shows and would like to get the complete run. His favorites are SUSPENSE, ESCAPE and LUX RADIO THEATRE, and he wants to collect complete runs of all in the best sound possible.

Scott's entire collection is on cassette or 8-track tapes, so if you know of others who collect on those media, get them in touch with Scott.

Scott's also interested in radio premiums and logs. Maybe he'll favor us sometime by trucking some of his premiums to a meeting.

Scott's address is 1251 S. Sable, Aurora, 80012, and his phone number is 755-7585.

Steve Morris is almost an old-timer with RHAC, having been with the club since August 1975. He collects "everything except juveniles or some musicals." His collection has not grown much since becoming a member because "I have only one crummy recorder." And, not surprisingly, Steve got started collecting by "acquiring my crummy recorder." Steve thinks RHAC is "a great way to have access to old radio shows."

Reach Steve by calling 831-4579, or write him at 1306 Humboldt #6, Denver.

Jack Richards is looking for the GENERAL MILLS ADVENTURE THEATRE broadcast of "Three Swords", heard 4/16/77.

Get your ad in this space, handsomely typed, for a mere two bits. Send all ads to the Editor, whose address is listed in this newsletter.

Jack's also looking for "NBC: The First Fabulous Fifty" part 2. He's looking for the KDEN broadcast, but he'll take anything. Also, he needs the General Mills Adventure Theatre, "20,000 Leagues Under The Sea" and their broadcast of 3/20/77. He's not sure of the show title.

TRIVIA

ANSWERS TO TRIVIA QUIZ:

1-c, 2-d, 3-e, 4-a, 5-j, 6-i, 7-h, 8-b, 9-g, 10-f.

RADIO NEWS

CATALOGING YOUR WAY TO HAPPINESS

As the adage goes, "Do as I say, not as I do." I say this because my tape log is 1,000 reels behind. Believe me: It's impossible to keep 1,000 reels straight in your head. I've spent hours searching for a certain show only to give up in disgust, cursing myself for letting my log get in such pathetic shape. Here's how not to let the same dire fate befall you.

Simply, there are three ways to log your shows:

-On 3x5 index cards (as John Dunning does)

-On a list or log updated as you get new material.

-On a list of shows by date, artist and title.

The last way is the most practical way to keep your list or log as it is a quick reference for finding shows in your collection, as long as you list the reel numbers on which the shows appear. Here's a sample:

3/9/45 AMOS & ANDY SHOW "Income Tax Pt. 2" NBC, Rinso, Sound VG, Reel 152-1L2.

If you should acquire more than one show of the same date, this could be listed also by reel numbers and sound grade.

I feel the date is important and should be listed first because the dates all fall in line and are easy to find. As we all know, many shows never had titles and so would vary from collector to collector. But the date never changes. Listing your date at the end of your notations would require more effort to locate.

Try to allow at least a half page on each subject so you have room to add new shows.

You can never have too much information listed for a show. You may someday be looking for something special about a show, and if the information is there, you will save yourself a lot of time.

For instance, if you have a musical show you should list the songs heard on it. And don't forget to note any guests on the show.

While cataloging your shows, it's important to grade your sound quality, and to note is it is an AFRS show, network or excerpt. Even the running time is useful. You might even code a show for flaws like x-t (crosstalk), n/o (no opening), n/c (no closing), d/s (disc scratch, t/h (tape hiss), l/v (low volume) or any other code that lets you know at a glance the

quality of the show.

Using this code lets you be on the lookout for an upgrade of the show. (I hope you're always looking for upgrades.)

Be sure to leave enough space between shows when dubbing. In that way, an upgraded show can be added without losing part of the following show.

A helpful hint when adding upgrades is to find the start of the following show. Set your counter at zero, and then back up your tape to the start of the show you are replacing. Be sure to keep an eye on the counter for the zero mark, and don't go beyond it. If you wind up with any tape to go until you get to zero, you can run your machine to erase what was on the tape before zero.

If you're a new collector, start your listings now. And if you're already up-to-date with your list, come over and help me get mine in shape. BY JOHN ADAMS

Special thanks this issue to Steve Shumaker, who provided some free art in our last issue, to John Adams, John Lloyd and to Barb Danbon, whose deft fingers banged out this copy with blurring speed.

ALICE FAYE AND PHIL HARRIS WED

Hollywood, May 13.—(I. N. S.)—Alice Faye, popular blond film actress, and Phil Harris, the band leader, were honeymooning Tuesday in Hollywood following a romantic marriage in Mexico.

They climaxed a two-month romance by flying to Ensenada late Monday, accompanied by Sam Maschio of Texas, and Eddie MacHarg, Harris' business manager. In Ensenada, the ceremony was performed by Judge Jaime Pardo.

Before Harris and his bride left Ensenada to return to the film colony, they said they planned to remarry in California after Harris receives his final divorce decree.

TUESDAY, MAY 13, 1941

