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3 Unite for Radio Show Encore

Author Studs Terkel, jazz musician Oscar Brown Jr., actor Fred Pinkard re-enact performance of 50 years ago

By John C. Ensslin © 2000 John C. Ensslin
Denver Rocky Mountain News
Friday, September 22, 2000

A fragment of the past from Chicago's South Side resurfaced in a Five Points radio studio Thursday night.

Acclaimed author Studs Terkel, musician Oscar Brown Jr. and actor Fred Pinkard reunited at KUVU-FM for a performance of a radio play they had first performed 50 years ago.

The three men were all part of the original cast of *Destination Freedom*, original radio dramas that celebrated black history.

Before Thursday's show, Denver resident Dorothy King waited quietly in the studio. She knew all three men back then and recalled hearing the show on Sunday mornings in the late 1940s.

King wondered whether Terkel would remember. She and her husband met him back then at a jazz club.

"My God," the 89-year-old writer exclaimed, recognizing King and the name of the club. "We're talking about something 53 years ago. You look great."

It was a nostalgia-laden evening as the three men performed parts in a show titled "Poet of Bronzeville" — The story of Gwendolyn Brooks.

The shows were written by one of Terkel's old colleagues, the late Richard Durham. The two men met during the Depression when they were in the Writer's Project of the Works Progress Administration.

The show's current producer, donnie betts, has been wanting to stage a reunion of the original cast since he acquired the rights to Durham's scripts from his widow, Clarice.

It came together by chance.

Terkel is in Denver to give a speech today to the Colorado Endowment for the Humanities at the Marriott City Center.

Brown is performing his Brazilian-influenced jazz at Vartan Jazz Club tonight and tomorrow night.

During the show, Terkel hit all his lines, as he played a prissy literary society type who tries to interview Brooks over the roar of the elevated train outside her apartment.

"Hey Oscar, good narrating," he told Brown as they broke from rehearsal.

Brown recalled the shows they had done together.

"We cut it up pretty good," Brown recalled.

"Oh yeah," Terkel replied. "And he (Pinkard) looks just like he did 45 years ago."

Pinkard winced. Time, however, had changed his appreciation of the show they were performing.

"We enjoyed doing it," he said. "But we didn't have any concept that it was a monumental, historic event. I don't know if black people have ever been treated with such dignity then or now."

For more information on *Destination Freedom*, see page 6.

RADIO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF COLORADO

Dedicated to the preservation of old time radio programs and to making those programs available to our members.

RHAC Board Meeting Thursday, December 7, 2000 - 7:30 PM

At: TBA

KLZ 560 AM Music of the 1930's - 60's with John Rayburn 2 PM - 6 PM, Weekdays
KRMA Channel 6 Secondary Audio Program, *Tribute to OTR* Sunday 2:00 PM
KEZW 1430 AM *When Radio Was* weekdays from 7:00 - 8:00 PM.
KFKA 1310 AM *Radio Memories* Sundays 6:00 to 12:00 PM
KUVU 89.3 FM *Destination Freedom* Tuesday, November 28th at 9PM "The Making of a Balladier - The Story of Lonnie Johnson" - **BROADCAST LIVE!!!!**

RHAC WEB SITE The RHAC web page and catalog is on the World Wide Web:
<http://www.old-time.com/rhac.html>

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President:	Larry Weide, 5270 E. Nassau Cir. Englewood, CO 80110 E-Mail: lweide@attglobal.net	303-758-8382
Vice-President:	Esther Campbell, 4128 W. 50th Ave. Denver CO 80212 mesther@uswest.net	303-477-2257
Secretary:	Kathy Melies, 1280 Dayton St. Aurora CO 80010 oslc915@juno.com	
Treasurer:	Maletha King, address below	303-761-4139
Newsletter Editor:	Stewart Wright, 8120 W. 26 th Ave. # 17, Lakewood, CO 80215 E-Mail: stewwright@worldnet.att.net	303-237-4055
Historian:	Vacant	
Players:	JoAnn Bantin, 1290 Dayton Street, Aurora, CO 80010	303-343-7508
Talking Newsletter:	Mike Fields, 243 S. 1100 E., Greentown, IN 46936	
Membership:	Dick King, PO BOX 1908, Englewood, CO 80150 E-Mail: dickking@ecentral.com	303-761-4139
Tape Donations:	Bill McCracken, 7101 W Yale Ave #503, Denver, CO 80227 Herb Duniven, 4184 S. Syracuse St., Denver, CO 80237	
Directors at Large:	David L Michael, 1999 Broadway, Lowery Suite, Denver, CO 80202 Herb Duniven See Above Dick King See Above	

LIBRARIES

Reference Material:	Bill McCracken, address above	303-986-9863
Logs & Scripts:	Fred Hinz, c/o RHAC, P O Box 1908, Englewood, CO 80150	
Open Reel Tape Librarian:	Maletha King, 900 W. Quincy Ave., Englewood, CO 80110	
Cassette Tape Librarians:		
#1 (1-499)	Ron Gallagher 888 South Dexter #607, Denver, CO 80426	303-692-0531
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#4 (5001 up)	Mika Rhoden 3950W Dartmouth Ave., Denver, CO 80236	303-937-9476

Election Results

The results of the RHAC Officers election held on October 26th are as follows:

President: Larry Weide
Vice President: Esther Campbell
Secretary: Kathy Melies
Treasurer: Malettha King

RHAC Activities Planning Meeting

Thursday, November 16th at 6:30 PM.

As you know, recent membership meetings have not been very well attended and we would like to change this situation.

This meeting at the Country Buffet Restaurant in Englewood, CO will be a planning session where all members can have input for club activities and policies. We will have an open discussion of ideas and plans for club activities and direction. We're particularly interested in what members would like to see presented at regular membership meetings.

So, plan to attend to have dinner at the Buffet's very reasonable prices and enjoy no less than an evening of camaraderie with your fellow RHAC'ers. Oh, and bring your ideas for better RHAC meetings! Our meeting will be at the:

Country Buffet Restaurant
301 W Girard Ave.
Englewood, CO

This is two blocks north of Hampden, and two block west of Broadway. We will be in their private dining room. See map on the Back Page. If you have any questions, contact Larry Weide at 303-758-8382 or E-Mail: lweide@attglobal.net



By JoAnn Bantin

RHAC Christmas Party & Players Christmas Production

The clock is ticking away the time until our production on Tuesday, Dec 12, 2000 takes place. Our dinner theater will be the same as last year at the Country Dinner Buffet located at Villa Italia, In

Lakewood. Reception is at 6:00 p.m., dinner 6:30, following announcements and drawings, the production of "A Christmas Carol" will begin. The only cost to you is the price of your dinner. Please invite all of your friends and neighbors. Also please check your calendars because the original production date was mentioned as Wed, Dec 20th. This date has been changed to **Tuesday, Dec 12th**. Hope to see all of you there for an evening of fun, enchantment, and Yule-tide cheer.

Bah Humbug! Scrooge and Marley and all the RHAC *Players* are working toward the Dicken's classic, "A Christmas Carol."

Where: The Country Buffet at the Villa Italia shopping center

7200 W. Alameda Ave., Lakewood Colorado - between Sheridan and Wadsworth

* Lots of close in, well lit free parking

When: Tuesday, Dec 12th - 6:00 reception, 6:30 dinner

Flyers will be going out to those within reasonable driving range of this event. Be sure to make your reservations early. For further information contact, Larry Weide, RHAC President at 303-758-8382 or lweide@attglobal.net

Radio's Moments Of The 20th Century *The One Hundred Greatest Moments in Old-Time Radio*

By Elizabeth McLeod

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20. Death and Funeral of FDR 4/13-15/45

For a generation of Americans, he was simply "the President." Millions loved him -- millions hated him. But all Americans are stunned at his death, when on the afternoon of April 12th, children's adventure serials are interrupted by the sudden announcement of Franklin D. Roosevelt's passing. Radio helps express a nation's grief with detailed coverage of the funeral procession on all networks, including a memorably emotional description by CBS's Arthur Godfrey.

19. 8MK Becomes KDKA 11/2/20

It wasn't the First Radio Broadcast -- experimental stations had been on the air for over a decade. It wasn't the first Scheduled Broadcast: some of the experimenters had been operating on a scheduled basis before the first World War. It wasn't the First Radio Election Coverage -- Lee deForest had offered detailed coverage of the 1916 returns over 2XG, New York (and got the results wrong). In other words, many of the "firsts" claimed for this famous broadcast have their basis in the Westinghouse publicity department, not in reality. So why is it important? Well, the Westinghouse publicists did a good job. A very good job. They make an essentially regional event into headline news all over the

country -- and in doing so help make Americans radio conscious. KDKA would go on to be an important laboratory for future radio developments -- as would Westinghouse's second station, WJZ in Newark (later, in New York)

18. The 1924 Democratic National Convention June-July 1924

"Alilll-a-baaaaaama casssts twennnnnty-four votes for Oscarrrrr W. Un-der-wooooood!" That's the call, as delivered a total of one hundred and three times by Alabama Governor William Brandon during the Democratic National Convention, as broadcast June 24th thru July 9th, 1924. The eventual nomination goes to John Davis, who will of course be trounced by Coolidge in the general election that fall. Underwood was actually a pretty significant figure in politics at the time -- he had been Senate Minority Leader, and went on to become Governor of Alabama. But all anyone remembers about him is that he got those 24 votes at the convention. Eighteen stations make up the AT&T network for this broadcast, extending as far west as Kansas City -- and the RCA stations also join in. The broadcasters are Graham McNamee and Phillips Carlin for AT&T, and Major J. Andrew White and Norman Brokenshire for RCA, who together help to introduce millions of fascinated listeners to the intricacies of the political process -- and also spawns a national catch phrase that echoes across playgrounds and city streets for much of the summer.

17. Crosby In The Can 1946

Actually, it should be Crosby in a paper sleeve -- since Bing's first venture in to pre-recorded programming was done on disc, not tape. Excited by the potential for a flawless performance afforded by disc-editing techniques exploited during the war years by the Armed Forces Radio Service, the crooner finds himself a sponsor and a network willing to allow him to experiment with pre-recording his regular weekly series beginning in the fall of 1946 -- and *Philco Radio Time* proves a success. Among those who notice is an Army veteran named Jack Mullin - who had become interested in the tape-recording systems used by the German radio during the war years, and who convinces Crosby to invest in his fledgling Ampex Corporation. The Crosby program begins to be mastered on tape in 1947 --and with Crosby's support, Ampex becomes a major force in the development of broadcast recording technology, leading the way the in the early development of video tape in the 1950s. And Crosby's success in recorded form helps to bring down the unreasonable network barriers against the use of prerecorded programming -- already compromised in many areas, the walls come tumbling down for good in 1949.

16. The Dempsey/Carpentier Fight 7/2/21

What the KDKA Harding-Cox Election Broadcast was

in legend, the broadcast of the Jack Dempsey-Georges Carpentier Heavyweight Fight is in reality: the event which really makes the general public sit up and take notice of radio. While no more than a thousand hobbyists heard the KDKA Election Broadcast, advance publicity leads over two hundred thousand to hear the fight broadcast eight months later, and the resulting excitement draws many thousands of others into discovering what this new radio thing is all about. As was his custom, David Sarnoff greatly exaggerates his role in promoting this epoch-making broadcast -- the real man behind the scenes -- and behind the mike -- is Major J. Andrew White: who would go on to be one of the major figures in the early years of CBS

15. The inauguration of Coolidge 3/4/25

For the first time, Americans from coast to coast listen in as the President takes the Oath of Office and delivers his inaugural address. AT&T's Red Network and RCA's smaller Radio Group network broadcast all the pageantry as Calvin Coolidge begins his first full term -- and proves himself to be an adept radio speaker, well-attuned to the demands of the microphone. An estimated fifteen million listeners follow the proceedings, with Graham McNamee at the microphone for the Telephone Group and Major J. Andrew White and Norman Brokenshire on hand for the RCA/Westinghouse stations.

14. The Dempsey/Tunney Long Count Fight 9/22/27

If the twenties were truly the "Golden Age Of Sport," the second heavyweight title fight between Gene Tunney and Jack Dempsey at Soldier Field in Chicago may be the high point of that age -- and radio helps make it so. For the first time, all NBC's associated stations, Red, Blue and Pacific, are joined to broadcast a single event, with the exuberant Graham McNamee and Phillips Carlin at the mike. Was the final count improperly delayed? Debate still rages to this day.

13. McNamee, Carlin, Cross and Daniel broadcast the return of Lindbergh 6/11/27

It's the News Story Of The Decade -- the moment which seems to epitomize the mystique of the "Roaring Twenties." And when the twenty-five year old newly-promoted-to-Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh returns to the United States courtesy of the U. S. Navy, a team of NBC's top announcers turn out for day-long coverage of his arrival -- helping impress the moment forever on the national consciousness. And, to this day, recordings of the honest, overwhelming thrill in Graham McNamee's voice as he sees the aviator step down the gangplank capture the essence of that moment in a way the printed page never can.

12. Radio Transforms Itself 1931-33

Two factors change the face of radio programming during the lowest ebb of the Depression -- a disastrous season on Broadway in 1931, and the desire of

advertising agencies for better bang for their bucks. The collapse of the Live Theatre drives many of the top names of musical comedy and vaudeville into broadcasting -- Eddie Cantor, Ed Wynn, Jack Benny, Fred Allen, Burns and Allen, and many others all turn to radio during these years, and in doing so, forever shift the emphasis in programming away from radio-grown talent and toward Big Names. Agency control of program development builds on this trend -- taking the responsibility for program building away from the networks, and placing it under the control of sponsors: firms interested more in selling product than in encouraging real creativity. The result, from the mid-thirties forward: a compulsively cautious attitude toward innovation in programming that dominates the medium until the rise of television

11. Andy sued for breach-of-promise by Madame Queen January-March 1931

Movie theatres really do interrupt their screenings to play *Amos 'n' Andy* over the sound systems. Department stores really do broadcast the show over their public address speakers. Water consumption really does take a drop for fifteen minutes, six nights a week. And when Andy Brown is taken to court by his beautician fiancée Madame Queen in early 1931 -- the climactic event in a storyline that's been brewing for over a year -- an estimated 40 million listeners hang on the outcome of each night's episode. For a weekly show, that would have been an unprecedented audience -- but for a nightly show, it's a stunning accomplishment. The secret of the program's success is readily apparent to anyone who digs back into the early scripts: a gallery of finely-drawn, fully-realized, and all-too-human characters, and an instinctive, near-Dickensian grasp of serial storytelling technique. What also becomes apparent is that by and large, listeners don't tune in to laugh at the characters. They tune in because they truly care about what happens to Amos, Andy and their friends -- fictional characters who are as real to Depression America as the people next door.

Elizabeth McLeod is a journalist, researcher, and freelance writer specializing in radio of the 1930s. She is a regular contributor to *Nostalgia Digest* magazine and the *Internet OldRadio Mailing List*, maintains a web site, Broadcasting History Resources, and is presently researching a book on Depression-era broadcasting. Elizabeth is always looking for 1930s radio recordings in all formats -- uncoated aluminum or lacquer-coated discs, vinyl or shellac pressings, or low-generation tape copies.

You can contact her at:

lizmcl@midcoast.com

The article in its entirety can be found at *The Nostalgia Pages* Web site at:

<http://www.lofcom.com/nostalgia/columns/century.php3>

Abbott and Costello

By Dr. Charles A. Beckett

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"Hey, Abbott!" What wonderful memories those two words bring back. The short, moon-faced man in the derby and his tall, dapper partner in the snap-brimmed hat. What a contrast in looks, backgrounds, and personalities. But what a comedy team!

Bud Abbott, the straight man of the team, was born William A. Abbott, Oct 2, 1895, in Asbury Park, New Jersey. The son of circus performers, he grew up on Coney Island. His repeated attempts to break into show business were unsuccessful.

Lou Costello was born Louis Francis Cristillo, March 6, 1906, in Paterson, New Jersey. Before a first and unsuccessful trip to California in 1928 to break into the movies, he worked as a newsboy, soda jerk, and was prize fighter under the name of "Lou King." While in Hollywood, he worked for MGM and Warner Brothers Studios as a laborer, and a part-time stuntman at MGM. After going back East, he worked in vaudeville and burlesque. In 1931, while working as a cashier in a Brooklyn theatre where Costello was performing, Abbott was asked to substitute for Costello's sick straight man. This was the start of a team that later became head liners on the vaudeville and burlesque circuits.

In 1938, the team got their first break in radio. For two years, beginning February 3, 1938, they were regulars on *The Kate Smith Hour*. Although their "Who's on First" routine was originally performed on the stage, its first radio performance was on Kate Smith's show. "Who's on First" is now inscribed on a plaque in the Baseball Hall of Fame. Abbott and Costello were Fred Allen's 1940 summer replacements, and during the 1941 season, they were regulars on Edgar Bergen's *Chase and Sanborn Hour*.

The Abbott and Costello Show premiered October 8, 1941 and ran through June 9, 1949. During 1941-46, they were heard on Thursday nights (NBC). During 1947-49, they aired on Wednesday nights (ABC). Their *The Abbott and Costello Children's Show* (ABC) was broadcast on Saturday mornings from December 1947 through March 1949.

Abbott and Costello were one of the most successful comedy teams in show business history. In addition to radio, they enjoyed highly successful movie and television careers. The pair parted in 1957, after nine years on radio, 35 feature films, and two seasons on television (1952-54.) After the team broke up, Costello made one film without Abbott, *The 30-Foot Bride of Candy Rock*, in 1959. In addition, he performed in dramatic roles on television on *Wagon Train* and *General Electric Theatre*.

Costello's personal life, however, was plagued by

problems – tax troubles, rheumatic fever (which forced him into temporary retirement), the tragic drowning death of his son, Butch, in the family swimming pool on November 4, 1943 – two days before his first birthday. In spite of his overwhelming grief, Costello insisted on performing on *The Abbott and Costello Show* scheduled that night on NBC. Somehow he managed to struggle through the show. Guest star Lana Turner was so upset that she was barely able to deliver her lines. At the end of the show, Costello could no longer hold back his grief, and broke down. Abbott went back on stage and told the radio audience about Butch's death. To my knowledge, that program is not available.

Costello died of a heart attack March 3, 1959, in a Beverly Hills hospital, at the age of 53. His last words were reported to have been – after his manager had brought him an ice cream soda he had asked for – "That was the best ice cream soda I ever tasted." He is buried in Calvary Cemetery, Los Angeles, California.

Bud Abbott, suffered from poor health for many years after his retirement, including recurring strokes. He died April 24, 1974, of cancer, at age 78. At the time of his death, he was penniless as the result of an eight-year audit of his back taxes. His ashes were scattered in the Pacific Ocean.

Sadly, these two entertainers, who in their public lives gave the gift of laughter to so many people, weren't nearly as fortunate in their private lives.

Destination Freedom Upcoming Show

Join No Credits Productions and KUVU 89.3FM LIVE! on a new night and time, Tuesday, November 28th at 9PM MT "The Making of a Balladier – The Story of Lonnie Johnson" at KUVU Studio 2900 Welton in Denver. Featuring our special guest Mississippi Charles Bevel, co-writer and star of the Tony-nominated musical "It Ain't Nothing But The Blues."

Blues guitar simply would not have developed in the manner that it did if not for the prolific brilliance of Lonnie Johnson. For more than 40 years, Johnson played blues, jazz, and ballads his way; he was a true blues originator. Johnson cut an estimated 130 Blues recording between 1925 and 1932.

Destination Freedom will now be able to spend more time with guests as their live broadcast is expanded to one hour. Joining *Destination Freedom* on its new night and longer format is Blues singer and songwriter Mississippi Charles Bevel. He will perform during the radio play and then an after show concert as Mississippi performs songs from his new CD. Producer donnie betts will also talk to Mississippi about his life, "It "Ain't Nothing But The Blues," and his future projects.

"The Making of a Balladier" is sponsored in part

by the Colorado Endowment for Humanities, The Paul Robeson Fund and NoCredits.com. Proceeds from the sales of Compact Discs of *Destination Freedom* performances are used to help pay series production costs. To find out more about the *Destination Freedom* series, including the availability of performance CDs', point your browser to:

<http://www.nocredits.com>

You Can Listen to *Destination Freedom* Live – on the Radio and on the Internet!



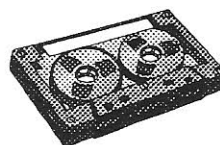
Our members who live in the Denver, CO area can listen to live broadcasts of *Destination Freedom* on KUVU, 89.3 FM. To be an in-studio guest for a *Destination Freedom* performance, call KUVU at 303-480-9272 Monday thru Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM. Watch the KUVU listing on Page 2 for the current month's performance.

Now our members with Internet access throughout the United States and Canada can listen to these fine live broadcasts. You can listen to Radio Drama LIVE! Denver's Jazz Oasis in The City, KUVU, is now broadcasting 24 hours a day on the Web. Point your browser to:

<http://www.kuvo.org/>

To listen you will need to use the *Windows Media Player* which can be downloaded right at the Web site.

While at the KUVU Web site, take a look around. KUVU features the best in JAZZ 24 hours a day and regularly broadcasts LIVE Jazz featuring local and national talent from their Performance Studio.



New in The Tape Library

By Maletha & Dick King

We have a great bunch of shows this month, starting with *December Bride*, *Meet Millie*, and *My Little Margie*. Some of these shows are new to us, but there were lots of shows we couldn't hear because were limited to one station or network to listen to at a time.

From *My Little Margie* we go on to the delightful comedy of *Our Miss Brooks* with Eve Arden as Miss Brooks and Richard Crenna as the ever-hungry high school student Walter Denton. This series of shows rounds out the offering of good, clean comedy that could be listened to by the whole family.

We then go to *Family Theater*, a continuation from shows in the regular library from last year. See Bill's description of this very successful series of shows with a moral. Refer to the Contributor's Library insert - page 174 in this month's newsletter.