

S P E R D V A C

RADIOGRAM

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Dan!

Volume 19, No. 9 The Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy September 1993

"Dedicated to man's imagination—the theatre of the mind"



The cast and crew of the first **CBS Radio Workshop**, Jan. 27, 1956. Standing are three unidentified CBS musicians, Ivan Dimars, assistant director Bob Shue, director Bill Froug, orchestra conductor Bernard Herrmann, sound effects men Bill James and Ray Kemper and audio engineer Bob Chadwick. Seated is a CBS secretary (first name Patty), Gloria Henry, Sam Edwards, Bill Idelson, Lurene Tuttle, Jack Kruschen, Vic Perrin, William Conrad, Charlotte Lawrence, Joe Kearns and Byron Kane. Can anyone tell us the names of the unidentified people?

Bill Froug tells us he kept this photo, taken following the live airing of "Brave New World, Part I," on his office wall "for many, many years because it represented to me the highlight of my radio career; my peak moment, creatively and joyfully." Froug wrote us some kind words about each cast member. "When I wrote 'CBS Radio presents the CBS Radio Workshop, dedicated to man's imagination; the theatre of the mind' I had William Conrad's voice in my head," he said. About Gloria Henry, later tv mom to Dennis the Menace, he recalled: "Gloria was nervous about doing Brave New World because she hadn't acted in some time, but she was exactly right for the lead part. I couldn't have cast it better."

Of sound men Bill James and Ray Kemper, Froug noted: "They did miracles on Brave New World's sounds of incubating babies, pre-taping their sounds and then playing them backward. We were all thrilled and delighted with their immensely creative work. Even Beanie [Bernard] Herrmann joined in the laughter and applause when we all first heard it during rehearsal."

PHOTO COURTESY RAY KEMPER

MEMOS FOR MEMBERS

Congratulations to radio writer-producer-director Norman Corwin! He will be inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame Nov. 7. The event will air live on a radio broadcast hosted by Larry King. The Radio Hall of Fame is located in the Museum

of Broadcast Communications in Chicago.

Member Joseph Sordetto is producer-director for a volunteer group which presents re-creations of OTR broadcasts free of charge at convalescent homes, hospitals, etc. They're looking for qualifying organizations interested in having them appear. The performers dress for the occasion wearing authentic garb of the era. Andrew Lloyd Webber

recorded organ music for use in some of their shows. If you can provide leads to new audiences, please contact him at 2742 Kenneth Road, Burbank, CA 91504. Phone: (818) 843-5802.

Some of our members aren't using our library services — for a variety of reasons. If our instructions are confusing, we'd like to hear from you. Drop a note to Editor Dan telling us what's confusing and we'll clarify for

you in the *Radiogram*.

Don't forget the catalog index Chester Allen prepared for us. You can use it to look up specific programs and find out where we have recordings of your favorites in our various catalogs. Just send 98 cents *in postage* to Carolyn Rawski. Her address is in the directory on page 5.



SPERDVAC FRIENDS

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(In memory of Dick Mack)

Dorothy Geiger

(In memory of Milton Geiger)

Hy Averbach

(In memory of Bob Sweeney and Jerry Hausner)

Tyler McVey

(In memory of Lou Krugman)

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(In memory of Jerry Hausner & Carlton Morse)

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(In memory of J. C. Lewis)

Mary Jane Croft

(In memory of Elliott Lewis, Howard Duff, John McIntire & Jerry Hausner)

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Betty Lackow

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Bob LeMond

Ivan Cury

Joan Banks Lovejoy

SPERDVAC is very grateful to these individuals who have contributed \$50 or more to our organization during the past twelve months. Donations, made payable to SPERDVAC, should be mailed to membership chair Carolyn Rawski. (See SPERDVAC Directory.)

Join us at 12:45 pm for our Sept. 11 meeting with actor Norman Lloyd

It's an unusual meeting time for SPERDVAC, but our Sept. 11 gathering will begin at 12:45 p.m. Actor Norman Lloyd, best known for his regular role on the tv series *St. Elsewhere*, will be our special guest.

Mr. Lloyd's radio credits include occasional appearances on Rudy Vallee's *Fleischmann Hour* beginning in 1935. He was also a performer on *Columbia Workshop* and CBS Radio's *Columbia Presents Corwin* (where he appeared on "The Undecided Molecule" and "The Plot to Overthrow Christmas").

He was a performer on *Cavalcade of America* with Bud Collier and Jackson Beck. Lloyd was also a regular on *Arthur Hopkins Presents* and acted on *Suspense*.

His book *Stages of Life in Theatre, Film and Television* is now on sale. It covers his career from his first stage appearance in 1932 to a film being released this month. We will have copies available at the meeting. We will meet at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, 15520 Sherman Way in Van Nuys. The meeting is open free to the public.

Archives releases more shows

SPERDVAC's Archives Library is releasing catalog page 127-128, with a variety of vintage radio broadcasts recorded directly from transcription discs.

We have added more than 30 hours of previously unavailable programs. Comedy fans will enjoy the Sweeney and March broadcasts (especially the audience warm-up on tape 1640 and several dress rehearsal recordings). Members who enjoy dramas will want the shows donated by new honorary member Rita Lynn (tapes 1625-1627) and the *Romance and Theater of Ro-*

mance programs now available.

We have already recorded some of the programs which will appear on the next Archives Library catalog page. The shows listed below, all from the *Romance/Theater of Romance* series, are also available:

Tape 1650: "Elizabeth of Austria" 1-25-44 & "Seventh Heaven" 2-22-44; Tape 1651: "A Lady in Love" 2-29-44 & "Petticoat Fever" 4-25-44; Tape 1652: "Love Song" 5-23-44 & "Pride and Prejudice" 6-13-44. Tape 1653: "Good-bye, Mr. Chips" 7-4-44 & "My Man Godfrey" 7-11-44.

Post script on Morse

Those interested in ordering Carlton Morse's books should contact Seven Stones Press, 3109 Panama, Carmichael, CA 95608.

Karen Spiegel of Copper Beech Productions has acquired the television and motion picture rights for *I Love a Mystery* and *I Love Adventure*, hoping to bring several of Morse's stories to the big and small screens. "I'm talking to as many people as I can," she says. Spiegel hopes America will enjoy Morse's creations as much now as the nation did half a century ago.

Member Joe Thompson wrote the lyrics of "The Dream in My Heart," a song used in the story line of some *One Man's Family* shows. They almost got Bing Crosby to sing it on the show, but it was recorded by The Musical Muskateers instead. "If Bing had recorded it we'd be rich," Thompson told us.

The gift: Carlton's trust

by Conrad Binyon

I'm writing this, having just returned from attending a memorial service for Carlton E. Morse, the creator-writer-producer-director of the famous radio dramas *One Man's Family*, *I Love a Mystery*, *Adventures by Morse* and many more. The service was about an hour long and conducted by the Reverends Arthur Chang and Ken (Peters) Fagerlin and various other speakers who very eloquently eulogized Mr. Morse.

When it was over I was asked by some why I didn't mount the podium and offer a few words of my own as Reverend Ken invited any member of the audience to add to what was already said. My reaction was that I could not mention a quality

possessed by Carlton E. Morse that wasn't already mentioned, one of which was his generosity, his willingness to give.

I realize now that what I could have talked about was what Carlton E. Morse, in his generosity, gave to me.

I first met Carlton when I auditioned for him for the role of "Hank," one of Hazel's twins on *One Man's Family*. I was eight years old and I didn't have a lick of radio acting experience.

The atmosphere of the radio studio itself — Mr. Morse, a talkback microphone in front of him, several assistants by his side, the engineer working the gain knobs of the various studio microphones — all this behind the vast expanse of the control booth glass window overwhelmed me.

How could I possibly play this role for Carlton E. Morse with all that to contend with? A few days later he called my mother saying he wanted to see me. Then was when he asked me if I would do the show as he very much liked how I had read for him.

I realize now — then I didn't — that he was giving me his trust to do something for him. His trust was that he thought I could play the role . . . and would I do it for him? I know now how important that trust was to him and that he was willing to give it to a young, eight-year-old, inexperienced actor.

What I gave in return was all I could do to live up to that trust given me. From his giving it evolved all that I ever did in my acting career for the next 12 years.



by Barbara J. Watkins

A suggestion comes from member Bill MacDonald to put together the names of the old time radio stars who are now doing voiceovers for tv commercials. He'd also like the names matched with their early radio work.

He finds it interesting that for over 50 years their voices have remained unchanged and as powerful as ever, and adds, "they don't make voices like that anymore."

One of the voices Bill describes as "another voice which dates to the forties and fifties...deep, rich, and in looking back to my radio days, resemblance of a hood, gangster or mob leader." Without hearing the voice, I would guess it may be that of Ralph Bell, who did play those roles on many shows coming from New York. He was an integral part of the acting pool for Himan Brown's **CBS Radio Mystery Theater**, also.

Here is the challenge to you readers. Whenever you hear a golden age of radio voice on television commercials and can identify it, jot it down along with the name of the product and send it to this column. And if there is a voice that is driving you crazy trying to identify, send the information and with the help of the nationwide membership, maybe we can help you.

For those of you who are *doing the voices*, let us know which commercials and we'll pass that along, too. Okay, everybody, you have your assignment. Happy listening and good luck!

Daniel Victor inquires about a new book on **Space Patrol** which he heard about on a *Same Time, Same Station* broadcast featuring a **Space Patrol** special (see General Library tape 1410). According to Larry Gassman, the book has not yet been published. SPERDVAC will announce in a future issue when this book is published and how you may

Those radio voices on the tube

obtain a copy.

Shoestring Radio Theatre airs weekly on Wednesday evenings at 9 p.m. over KUSF 90.3 FM in San Francisco. It has been distributed nationally over the Public Radio Satellite Network since July 2. Over the last five years it has produced comedies, mysteries, noir-style melodramas, science fiction, horror and fantasy stories as well as historical dramas. Call your local public radio station to see if it is being carried in your area. The programs are fed via satellite channel 11 on Fridays 1:30-1:59 a.m. ET.

Calling all clubs!

NARA, the *North American Radio Archives*, has just published their latest supplement to their cassette lending library, adding another 448 cassettes to make a total of 8347 available to members to borrow. Tom Monroe has built the NARA cassette library from scratch since he took over the volunteer job around 1985. To join NARA, send \$20 to Janis DeMoss, Membership Director, 5291 Jacks Creek Pike, Lexington, KY 40515.

The *Radio Collectors of America* (RCA) reports in their August newsletter that the Boston Public Library collection of FRED ALLEN radio material is now available on cassettes for the public to listen to in the library listening rooms, but not to be taken off the premises for any reason. You must have a library card usable at the Boston Public Library to listen to these recordings. A good way to stay abreast of what is happening in Boston concerning radio-related activities is to join RCA if you live in the nearby area and can attend their monthly meetings. For membership information contact them at 8 Ardsely Circle,

Brockton, MA 02402.

Where are they now?

Marsha Hunt informs us that the picture-book she told SPERDVAC about when she spoke to us last year has been published. Her book, *The Way We Wore - Styles of the 1930s and 40's and Our World Since Then* should be in the bookstores in September. One chapter in particular she mentions we'll find interesting is called "On the Air" with nine pictures beside various radio show partners, broadcasting away.

Florence Williams (Marshall), who played Sally Farrell on radio's **Front Page Farrell** opposite Richard Widmark sends news of her recent stage appearance in the Camden Civic Theatre's production of "The Madwoman of Chaillot" by Jean Giraudoux.

Of her performance in the title role, one critic wrote, "As the Countess Aurelia, stage and radio star Florence Marshall creates a universe in which her characterization and timing are so exceptional that the audience is swept into believing that her plot to get rid of phony oil prospectors is far from mad. With a bat of an eye or the slight tipping of her head towards any number of her fellow actors, she had the audience in gaiety and laughter."

Those of us who have had the privilege to see this fine actress performing in the many old time radio re-creations at the Friends of Old Time Radio convention in Newark, NJ will wish we had been there in Camden to see her, too.

Send your comments, questions and news for this column to Information, Please, c/o Barbara J. Watkins, P.O. Box 561, South Pasadena, CA 91031.

SPERDVAC Remembers

■ Alice Reinheart ■ Sam Rolfe
 ■ Herb Perdum ■ Jean King



McGee's Closet is a free service to our members and honorary members. Send your wants in OTR-related material to McGee's Closet, c/o Barbara J. Watkins, P.O. Box 561, South Pasadena, CA 91031. Please specify desired taping format (cassette or open reel).

WANTED: Cartridge for Gray 16" tone arm. Contact: Ken Ackerman, 730 Butterfield Road, San Anselmo, CA 94960.

FOR SALE: Fairchild studio console 16" turntable. Contact: Ken Ackerman, 730 Butterfield Road, San Anselmo, CA 94960.

WANTED: "Theatre of the Imagination" — The Mercury Theatre Remembers, narrated by Leonard Maltin; interviews with John Houseman, William Alland, others. 40 minutes, audio, on cassette or open reel. Contact: C. Huck, 4 S. 230 River Road, Warrenville, IL 60555.

WANTED: I would like to get in contact with individuals with Buddy Clark **Contented Hour** programs and radio transcription recordings. Contact: Wallis Antuck, 3815 Waverly Hills Road, Lansing, MI 48917; (517) 484-8607.

WANTED: Anybody want to part with a dead RCA 44 mike? Gutted housing OK, too! Contact: Bob Sabon, 308 W. Oraibi Dr., Phoenix, AZ 85027.

WANTED: Looking for complete run (about 600 episodes) of **Aunt Mary** on open reel and in very good/excellent sound only. Have 30,000 shows to trade. Contact: Ted Davenport, 1600 Wewoka, North Little Rock, AR 72116; (501) 835-0465.

WANTED: Doing Robert Taylor radio research and need Taylor programming from 1934-1969. Along with any dramatic (or comedy) appearances, I'm searching for interviews with Taylor (radio or tv audio) done locally or nationally. Typed list or printout preferred. Contact: Paul Doherty, 6967 West 85th St., Los Angeles, CA 90045; (310) 670-6202.

WANTED: **Whitehall 1212** episodes (except M. Ashleigh). Also, bio data on **Whitehall 1212** and **Black Museum** series, also SABC shows all types (have some), cassettes, VG sound only. Will trade on 1,000+ hours catalogued lists (US/UK, etc.) or supply blanks/postage only. Will reply courteously to all. Contact: Ray Smith, 2229 Bedford Ave. East, Regina, Canada S4N 0H1.

SPERDVAC Directory

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SPERDVAC INFORMATION AND OFFICIAL BUSINESS: P. O. Box 7177, Van Nuys, CA 91409-9712. (310) 947-9800.

MEMBERSHIP AND RADIOGRAM SUBSCRIPTIONS, CATALOG PAGES AND LIBRARY ORDER FORMS: Carolyn Rawski, 7430 Gaviota Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91406-3041.

RADIOGRAM EDITOR: Dan Haefele, 4366-D 136th St., Hawthorne, CA 90250-7108 (310) 973-5060.

LIBRARIES:

GENERAL LIBRARY - Cassettes 1-500: Bob Steinmetz, P. O. Box 669, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266-0669.

GENERAL LIBRARY - Cassettes 501-1000: Gene Ward, Box 635, Tujunga, CA 91043-0635.

GENERAL LIBRARY - Cassettes 1001+: George Lovas, P. O. Box 3757, Crestline, CA 92325-3757

GENERAL LIBRARY - Open reels 1-500: Don Keith, Box 5861, Glendale, CA 91221-5861.

GENERAL LIBRARY - Open reels 501 +: Jim Allen, Box 500, N. Hollywood, CA 91603-0500.

ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Cassettes 1-500: Richard Karman, 2515 NE 37th Ave., Portland, OR 97212-2916.

ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Cassettes 501-1000: Gary Mollica, 135 N. Meredith Ave., Pasadena, CA 91106-2207.

ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Cassettes 1001-1500: Bruce Miller, 1616 Harper Ave., Redondo Beach, CA 90278-2725.

ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Cassettes 1501+: Bruce Miller, 1616 Harper Ave., Redondo Beach, CA 90278-2725.

ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Open reels 1-1000: CLOSED

ARCHIVES LIBRARY - Open reels 1001+: Barbara Watkins, Box 628, S. Pasadena, CA 91031-0628.

HOLLYWOOD MUSEUM LIBRARY - Cassettes only: Glenda Kelly, 2323 Ralston Lane, Redondo Beach, CA 90278-5219.

PRINTED MATERIALS LIBRARY: Jon Hughes, 7119 Owensmouth Ave., Canoga Park, CA 91303-2094.

AUDIO RADIOGRAM: Send C-90 cassette in returnable mailer to Stuart Lubin, 627 N. Fuller Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90036. (213) 653-2548. (For blind members only.)

AUDIO SPERDVAC CATALOGS: Contact Bob Herman, 1329 Garrison Ave., Port Orchard, WA 98366-3321 (206) 876-5850. (For blind members only.)

MEMBERSHIP BADGES: Send \$5.00 each to Don Keith, Box 5861, Glendale, CA 91221.

ACQUISITIONS: (Discs, tapes & printed materials): John Gassman, Box 1163, Whittier, CA 90603. (310) 947-9800 for both General and Archives Libraries.



The Life of Charlie McCarthy

Script by Zeno Klinker

From the broadcast of April 12, 1942

... as told by Don Ameche

- BERGEN: Charlie, you know there's an old friend of yours here today . . . Don Ameche.
- CHARLIE: Don Ameche? The name's vaguely familiar . . . Isn't he connected with pictures in some capacity? . . . Prop man, perhaps.
- BERGEN: All right, Charlie, you're begging for it - and you know that Don always could handle you.
- CHARLIE: He'd better not try any of that ribbing around her today, that's all . . . he and that mustache of his!
- BERGEN: (CALLS) Well, here he is, Don - your old side-kick, Charlie.
- AMECHE: (FADING IN) Hya, Charlie - I'm glad to see you in spite of the fact you're not doing so well lately.
- CHARLIE: I'm doin' all right! But why have you stopped making pictures?
- AMECHE: I haven't stopped. Didn't you see me in "The Life of Stephen Foster?"
- CHARLIE: No, I was spared that one. But I did see you invent the telephone in "The Life of Alexander Graham Bell." Whose life are you doing now?
- AMECHE: Temporarily, they're calling it "The Magnificent Jerk".
- CHARLIE: So you finally got around to doing "The Life of Don Ameche".

Continued on next page

The Life of Charlie McCarthy *continued*

- AMECHE: It isn't exactly the life of anybody, Charlie. And that's really why I'm here to see you today.
- CHARLIE: What do you mean?
- AMECHE: This may come as quite a surprise to you, Charlie. I don't know if I ought to tell you.
- CHARLIE: Oh, come now . . . I can be brave.
- AMECHE: The studio wants to make "The Life of Charlie McCarthy".
- CHARLIE: A splendid idea! True genius! They're going to do it, of course.
- AMECHE: Well, I don't know.
- CHARLIE: Don't you think it'll get by the Hays Office?
- AMECHE: No it isn't that. But up to now, it's been customary to portray only the lives of important people.
- CHARLIE: Well?
- AMECHE: Well?
- CHARLIE: I get that innuendo.
- AMECHE: Tell me this - what have you done to deserve fame?
- CHARLIE: How can you ask?
- AMECHE: How can you answer?
- CHARLIE: I see what you mean . . . Is there anything I can do to help out? Perhaps touch up the script? . . . Color it up a bit?
- AMECHE: No. As a matter of fact, it's all written.
- CHARLIE: Who wrote it?
- AMECHE: I did.
- CHARLIE: Then, of course, what you want to see me about, is playing the title role.
- AMECHE: No, they want me to play it.
- CHARLIE: But my dear boy! In order to portray the life of such a vibrant character, you must be able to act. And the question is - can you act?
- AMECHE: Can I act! (DRAMATICALLY) "Look at me, Julie . . . look at me! Let me read your answer deep in those glorious, wonderful eyes . . . answer me, Julie . . . let me know the truth - or else I shall go mad! Mad, I tell you! . . . Stark, raving mad!"
- CHARLIE: This place can be emptied in four minutes, and you're the guy who can do it.
- AMECHE: You didn't care for that, huh?
- CHARLIE: Well . . . maybe the story is good.
- AMECHE: I'll let you hear it to give you an idea . . . A chord, please, Mr. Noble.
(MUSIC: CHORD)
- AMECHE: Presenting "The Life of Charlie McCarthy" - or - "It Shouldn't Happen to a Dog-wood."
- CHARLIE: Now, none of that stuff, Ameche!
- AMECHE: All right, Charlie, I won't mention it again . . . a little appropriate music, if you please, Mr. Noble.
(MUSIC: TREES)
- AMECHE: Thank you.
- CHARLIE: Oh - they're ganging up on me.
- AMECHE: Scene one - As the curtain slinks up on this turkey, we see a shot of Bergen's doorstep. From the distant sky, comes a whirring sound - the sound comes closer . . . closer . . . closer . . . Listen!
- CHARLIE: What is it?
- AMECHE: Look! Look! It's a big bird.
- CHARLIE: You should be used to a thing like that by now.
- AMECHE: No - it's the stork.
- CHARLIE: Ah, hah!
- AMECHE: He circles around Edgar Bergen's house. Gently, he drops a basket on the doorstep.
- CHARLIE: A tisket, a tasket, what's in the basket?
- AMECHE: A baby!
- CHARLIE: No! . . . I'll bet it was cute.

Continued on next page



PHOTO COURTESY VIRGIL REIMER

The Life of Charlie McCarthy *continued*

- AMECHE: There he was - snugly wrapped in warm blankets . . . the little sapling. He was sleeping like a log.
- CHARLIE: Now, wait a minute!
- AMECHE: Sorry, Charlie, I didn't mean to go against the grain.
- CHARLIE: All right. Don't let it happen again. Now what about the baby?
- AMECHE: There he was - just a little foundling, waiting to be found. Wood someone find him, or wood they not? He cried as if his little heart splintered.
- CHARLIE: This picture should be well worth missing.
- AMECHE: At last, the door opened. Out stepped a man . . . It was Edgar Bergen!
- CHARLIE: Boooooo! Ssssss!
- AMECHE: No coaching from the audience, please. Edgar Bergen saw the basket. He knelt down in the bitter cold, with the wind whistling about him . . . Gently, he pulled back the blanket . . . And the little baby uttered his first words . . .
- CHARLIE: Put that blanket back, or I'll clip you, so help me, I'll mow you down!
- AMECHE: Edgar Bergen was enthralled. The little tyke's face was in the full bloom of ugliness . . . And every time he opened his mouth - there, gleaming like pearls, were no teeth . . . Bergen looked at the little shaving - I mean, shaver - He lifted the bundle in his arms, and announcing his good fortune to the world, he yelled . . .

Concluded on next page

The Life of Charlie McCarthy *conclusion*

- BERGEN: Timber!
- CHARLIE: Oh, Bergen - not you too!
(MUSIC: TREES)
- AMECHE: Time mooches on! We find young Charlie McCarthy at the age of twenty-two months. . . blowing the foam off his formula. He was a happy child - half Irish and half white pine.
- CHARLIE: Please, Ameche - don't make an ash of yourself.
- AMECHE: As the years passed, Bergen forgot his own cares to nurse the boy through most of his childhood ills . . . such as measles and mumps - not to mention acorns on his toes, acute dry rot and a bad case of hickory blight.
- CHARLIE: Mr. Ameche . . .
- AMECHE: Yes, Charlie?
- CHARLIE: Did anybody help you with this story, or did you louse it up yourself?
- AMECHE: To get on with the story . . . Bergen loved the little boy, and the little boy loved Bergen. All through his life, we find little Charlie looking up to his foster-father as a tiny sparrow on fragile wings looks up to the might eagle.
- CHARLIE: In this case, it was a bald-headed eagle.
(MUSIC: TREES)
- AMECHE: Time drools on.
- TWISS: Ladies and gentlemen - Don Ameche is appearing by permission of 20th Century-Fox Studios . . . (YELLS) . . . They must be nuts!
- AMECHE: The boy grows older. We find Bergen giving him wise counsel . . .
- BERGEN: (SINGS) "Climb upon my knee, Sonny boy . . ."
- CHARLIE: What is it, dada?
- BERGEN: (SWEDISH) Ay bane want to talk to you, by jumpin' yiminy!
- CHARLIE: He was doing it back in those days, too.
- BERGEN: Today is your birthday. Do you know how old you are?
- CHARLIE: I don't know whether I'm four or five.
- BERGEN: Have you been out with any girls?
- CHARLIE: No, dada.
- BERGEN: Then you must be four.
- AMECHE: But on little Charlie's fifth birthday, a great change took place in his life. . . He learned to whistle. Listen. . .
- CHARLIE: (WHISTLES) Hya, babe . . . going' my way?
- AMECHE: Then he met his first girl - Maple . . . I mean, Mable.
- CHARLIE: Not that episode, please.
- AMECHE: All right, Charlie . . . Next, he met Gwendolyn . . .
- CHARLIE: Better skip that one, too.
- AMECHE: Then one beautiful day, the most wonderful thing happened to Charlie McCarthy. It was the most exciting, the most wonderful experience he'd ever known.
- CHARLIE: For goodness' sake, what happened?
- AMECHE: Charlie McCarthy met Don Ameche.
- CHARLIE: Then obscurity set in.
- AMECHE: On the contrary. This tall, dark, romantic young actor was . . .
- CHARLIE: Oh, cut it out, Ameche . . . Who makes your teeth for you now?
- AMECHE: How do you think the story sounds so far, Charlie?
- CHARLIE: I don't like it. If that's the way you do the life of me, it'll be the death of me. Why don't you build me up instead of tearing me down?
- AMECHE: Well, I have to live. I have to do the life of some famous figure.
- CHARLIE: You have nothing to worry about, Don . . . there's still Gargantua.
- AMECHE: Gargantua!? Why, you hat-rack in the hall of fame!
- CHARLIE: Why, you wart on the hand of progress! (PLAYOFF)
- AMECHE: Why, you . . .!
- CHARLIE: Why, you . . .! (APPLAUSE)

Editor's note: This is the text of a routine written by Zeno Klinker, based on his file copy. The script was revised and some gags were changed on the actual broadcast.

What's happened to Tony Wons?

The clock ticking off the seconds on the air drove Tony Wons to - violins!

by Carl Prentiss

His thousands of listeners haven't forgotten the sound, kindly philosophy of Tony Wons. It is because of these listeners that Tony will return to the air this fall, thrice weekly, beginning October 4. But the question his listeners have been asking is this—What has he been doing in the year he hasn't been on the air? RADIO GUIDE answers this question by bringing you his story.

—THE EDITORS

Precise, sedate, inevitable as death and taxes, the second-hand of the big clock on the studio wall moves toward the hour. Seventy-five people are watching that clock, and no prisoners at the bar ever stared at a stern-faced judge more intently than they stare at the ruler of their lives—a clock! Ten seconds, five, two—click! You're on the air! Not a second before, not a second after—but dead on the hour!

That's radio, the fastest business in America and the world today. Not even the incredible bustle of newspaperdom moves

at a more frenzied pace than radio.

Here, time travels like a rocket. A program may be conceived, written, rehearsed and broadcast in an afternoon. New stars catapult into prominence overnight, plummet into obscurity just as quickly.

Radio waves move faster than light! Click! You're on the air! Whatever you do, do it fast! You'll have to, because, that's radio!

Tony Wons pulled slowly at his battered pipe, stared out of the window for a minute. The smooth, white top of the violin he was making turned slowly in his hands.

"That's radio," he said. "The maddest rush in the world, bar none. I often wonder how some of the old timers manage to stand that kind of life—and what they think they get out of it."

He stopped for a minute, as men will when they have become used to being much alone, searching for the grain of truth in a word.

"I sometimes think radio needs a dictator," he said. "Sometimes I even think I'd like to be that dictator myself. Radio stars don't seem to



After more than a year's absence from the airwaves, Tony Wons returns with new faith, new philosophy — gained during quiet hours making "fiddles" in his barn-studio in Wisconsin.

understand that a good thing can be overdone; that the public is entitled to a rest once in a while—to a change, at least. No, they keep on, pounding away at the same old stuff, reaching farther and farther for effect—and wondering why there isn't any kick any more. They ought to be made to take vacations—try forgetting radio for a while. It would do them good. And do the public good too."

Tony Wons himself hasn't been on the air for

over a year. On April 26, 1936, he faced the microphone for the last time, folded up the last script for his "Tony Wons Scrapbook" show, walked out of the studio his own man once more, free to do as he liked without regard for the caprice of the crowd or the jerky march of the hand of a clock.

That was a year ago. What has he been doing since? He'll answer simply enough: "In the winter, making violins and

Continued on next page

Reprinted from *Radio Guide Magazine*
August 14, 1937

What's happened to Tony Wons? conclusion

playing them. In the summer, taking care of a little place I own on an island up north—and making violins. Oh, I've been happy!

"Yes, sir, I just walked out of the studio that day, took a good, deep breath, picked up a block of century-old curly maple that I'd been saving for 20 years, and started making violins. I've made fourteen violins, and most of them are right here."

The violins, as beautiful as any I have ever seen, were scattered all over the little shop. This was in Kenosha, Wisconsin, in the early spring. Tony Wons got up and closed the door leading to the rickety stairs that climb up to his "studio."

The barn-carriage-house was the proper term when it was built in the '90's stands at the rear of Wons' rambling house on the outskirts of Kenosha. The Wisconsin winters have left their mark upon it and it looks lonely and neglected.

But inside, at the top of the creaking stairs, there is an astonishing little room, trim and bright. Wide windows flood it with light. Book shelves line one wall, and across from them a desk, a sturdy music-stand, and at the end of the room, dominating everything a solid work-bench, covered with shavings, half-finished violin parts, ranks of carving-tools. This has been Tony's haven for the last year and more.

Tony Wons is a thin, shy man whose graying temples make him seem much older than he is. Slight and retiring in appearance, he has the air of a man who knows what he wants, and means to get it. Typical of his attitude is the fact that when he felt that radio was asking too much of him, when he felt it was in his interest and that of his thousands of listeners—he walked out. Now, he's planning to go back. In the fall, the sound, kindly philosophy of Tony Wons will be on the air again.

He knows his fans haven't forgotten him, he knows they want him back. If they had forgotten, if they didn't watch for his return to radio with eager anticipation, he says, he simply wouldn't go back.

Typical, too, is his violin-making. Tony Wons is an artist, and creation of any kind is his especial delight. And he is wise enough to know that the happiest men in the world are craftsmen who find joy in good things. Wons has puttered with violin-making since boyhood. But he never had time enough for his hobby. There was always the insistent press of responsibility.

"So I decided I'd take time off to do it well," he says. "And I have!"

Tony Wons took a violin out of one of the cases on the table. In its construction this instrument was perfect, flawless. Modeled after Guarnerius, its classic lines were of the essence of beauty. A dark red in color, the perfect grain of its 100-year-old wood shone through the clear varnish like a sunset in a crystal mirror.

Tony Wons tucked the violin away in its case as if he were putting a baby to bed.

"I refused \$2,500 for that fiddle not long ago," he said quietly.

The offer had come from a Chicago violinist. In Kenosha, he had been brought to the workshop by a member of the "Wons quartet"—a group of men who make Tony's studio an exclusive club. They are an unusual group: a Russian priest, a millionaire manufacturer, a veterinarian, and a young, locally famous athlete. They play with Tony when the mood strikes them—all on Wons violins, of course; they discuss the comparative merits of woods and varnishes, argue, criticize, praise.

"The night this fellow from Chicago was here," Tony told me, "we were arguing about the old masters.

"The musicians'll see me hung for this," he went on, "but I can make as good a violin as anybody who ever lived, and I can prove it!

"I think I proved it that night. This fellow from Chicago had an Amati that he valued at \$25,000, and when I told him I'd made violins that were just as good, he hit the ceiling. He thought I was crazy. Finally I took his Amati and one of my fiddles to the other end of the room, had him turn his back and played 'em both, in rotation. He couldn't tell his own violin from mine!

"Whether my violins are good or not—all that's beside the point, of course," he went on. "The main thing is that this year I've had, working here, sometimes as much as ten hours in the quiet of this little room, has been a blessing. It has given me new strength, new faith, two things I needed badly."

"And all these violins—what are you going to do with them?"

"My fiddles? Well, I could sell them, but I'm not going to. I'm going to give them away, probably to young violinists who can't buy their own.

"I've had a good time here," he said. "My fiddles—and my friends. I've learned a lot, too. If I have a philosophy of life, I think it has come to me here, much of it."

Tony Wons has a philosophy of his own, all right, and I think I know what it is. I found it in a little verse he wrote:

*All men rate the same with me
The wise, the fool, the slave, the
free;*

*For no man on this earth does know
What made him thus, another so."*

Ten thousand drunk chickens

by Dan Haefele

One day a few decades ago when dramas were still a regular part of the radio broadcast day, CBS sound effects man Ray Kemper checked the script of an upcoming broadcast and found a most unusual request.

One scene required the sound of ten thousand drunk chickens.

Kemper and his noise making partner Bill James, like most of mainstream America, were unfamiliar with the sounds of inebriated poultry.

And they had another problem. Director William N. Robson had a reputation for being a little bit difficult to work with and the two sound men knew he would accept only top quality work.

"With Bill Robson, if the script called for the rattle of onion skin paper, you'd better damn well have onion skin

paper there, because he'd jump all over you if you didn't," Kemper recalls. "He wanted sound effects exactly right."

What to do?

"We found a couple of (sound effects) records with hundreds and hundreds of clucking chickens," Kemper said, adding that they also had the option of using recording tape.

The two sound men recorded the records onto tape, then made a separate tape of the two of them alternately clucking and hiccuping. "Then we speeded our little hiccups and clucks up a little bit, and we overdubbed that onto the (tape of) hundreds and hundreds of clucking chickens," Kemper explained.

There was still the problem of contending with Bill Robson.

"You know, he's not going to believe this," Bill

James told Kemper.

"I've got an idea," Kemper replied.

"We took the tape and went to the recording studio. We said to the engineer, 'transfer this to a 12 inch disc.' He did. Then he gave us a very official looking CBS label," Kemper continued. "I took that label and imprinted on it 'ten thousand drunk chickens.' Then I glued it onto the record."

During rehearsal, Kemper manned the sound effects turntables. When it came time for the unusual sound effect, they got the expected response from director Robson.

"He wanted to embarrass me so he hit the talkback so the whole world could hear," Kemper said.

"Ray, that's not ten thousand drunk chickens," Robson bellowed.

"I didn't say a word," Kemper explained. "I just took the record off the turntable. I walked over to the (director's) booth and I stuck the record up against the glass."

The point was clear.

"He didn't say another word for the whole show," Kemper reported.

Years later Kemper told Robson the story. "I remember that," Robson said. "I knew I'd been had but I didn't know how so I decided to keep quiet."

After doing some work as a stage actor in little theater productions, Kemper went to work in 1942 in the mail room at KHJ, the Mutual outlet in Los Angeles. Two weeks later he won an audition for an announcer's position at the station.

"They put me on the night
Continued on next page



Ten thousand drunk chickens *continued*

shift because I was so bad," he said modestly.

He didn't stay long. He was drafted in February 1943 and spent three years in the service.

"After I got out in February of 1946, I went back to KHJ. An announcer's position was not open. There was a position available in sound effects," he said.

"There was a sound crew there, headed by Art Fulton, the supervisor of the sound effects department at KHJ. Tommy (Hanley) and Bill (James) had already been there when I came back (from the war). I learned a lot from them."

His other mentor/co-workers included Art Surrence, Norm Smith and Bob Turnbull, who later became a producer-director-writer for network radio.

"Sound effects were sometimes indicated in the script in detail, and sometimes not in detail. They were left up to our imagination as to what to do," he said.

The intervening years have washed many program titles away from the memory, but Kemper specifically recalls working on **Red Ryder**, **Cisco Kid** and **Casebook of Gregory Hood**.

"I cut my teeth on the **Cisco Kid** and **Red Ryder**. I learned a lot on those two shows," he explained. "That's where I met Tom Hanley and Bill James. We became quite a triumvirate. We worked well together."

They also established a good reputation for themselves. "When **Voyage of the Scarlet Queen** came in, Elliott Lewis wanted Bill and me to do the show," he said. "It could just as easily have been Tommy (chosen) but he was doing something else."

Often the **Scarlet Queen** scripts for the show called for such complicated sound effects that Tom Hanley was hired as the third sound man on some shows, if he was available.

"Elliott was a marvelous, marvelous talent," Kemper reflected. "He was a

brilliant person, a superb actor and a fine director. I have nothing but the greatest respect for him."

"I want the most realistic sounds you can give us," he said Lewis told them.

"He very seldom made suggestions to us," Kemper said. "He liked our work so well he did something that was unheard of in those days. He gave Bill and me a fee by writing in a little line occasionally (for us) and giving us an actor's check."

The Voyage of the Scarlet Queen was one of radio's top quality productions. It employed good writing, performances by Hollywood radio's most successful actors, and realistic sound effects.

"We used a lot of records for the winds," he said. "We experimented until we got what sounded like a creaking ship to us. Occasionally we built the smaller items ourselves because we were experimenting." Bigger items, such as a large platform, were constructed by the network's carpenter shop.

Another of the Mutual programs Kemper did sound effects for was **Count of Monte Cristo**. "Jaime del Valle was the producer-director on that show," he said.

Once during his days at KHJ-Mutual, Kemper was working a detective show with two other sound men one night when they needed to provide the sound of a knife going into a wall. Usually a sound

man would hold a piece of wood in one outstretched hand and jab the block hard with a knife.

"He got a little piece of wood and put it in the palm of his hand," he said. "On the air, he missed and the knife went right into his hand and he fainted."

Kemper remembers well the work sound man Bill James had to do on Jimmy Scribner's radio show, on which the star portrayed all the characters. "Jimmy Scribner never had a script. He ad-libbed the entire show," he said.

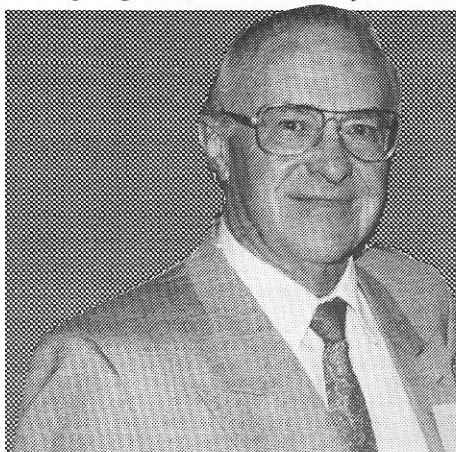
"Bill James had to ad-lib every sound effect on the show. He just brought up a bunch of stuff and told Scribner what he had. He brought up a door and a footstep board," he continued. "If Jimmy wanted something specific, he'd say, 'Bring a train whistle.' But Bill was hanging out there trying to figure out where he was going and what was going to happen next. It worked out very well."

Steve Allen and Wendell Noble's **Smile Time** was another of radio's ad-lib shows. And Bill James was also the sound man for that program.

Cisco Kid writer Bill Gordon, too, provided many last minute surprises for the cast and crew of his shows. "Bill couldn't write unless he was under pressure. He had a heck of a time getting to a typewriter and making himself write," he said.

"You have no idea how many times we went on the air (live) with the **Cisco Kid** and Bill, while we were doing the first act, was typing on a stencil the second act and running it off on a mimeograph. Then he would run in with the last pages as we were going. Sweat was running down Jack Mather and Harry Lang's (foreheads). But he never missed a show," he added.

"Bill would tell us what was going to happen, so we set up (sound effects) for everything," he continued. "We had standard equipment — footstep board, sand and gravel box for footsteps, triple
Continued on next page



Ray Kemper at SPERDVAC's 1990 convention.

Ten thousand drunk chickens *continued*

turntable with all kinds of possible effects and records we might need. All of these things would be patched into the audio board and ready to go. But Bill would give us an outline of what was going to happen. He didn't leave us dry."

Kemper left Mutual to work for an advertising agency—a job he hated. In March 1951 he was hired to do sound effects for CBS Radio. He encouraged his superiors to hire Tom Hanley later that same year and a few months later they influenced CBS' decision to hire Bill James.

After his move to CBS, one of Kemper's best remembered assignments was to work sound effects on **Gunsmoke**.

"There was a lot of fear on the upper floor about doing a show of realism. They were afraid of it. And Norm (Macdonnell) and John Meston insisted on this being realistic," he said.

"This is going to be a realistic show, guys," he said Macdonnell told the sound men. "Let's do it right. We will take all the time necessary for sounds effects."

Macdonnell was true to his word, Kemper said.

"One time we walked Matt Dillon along the board walk, crossed the street, into the Longbranch. Then he had to come back out of the Longbranch and cross the street back to the boardwalk again," he recalled.

"Ray, when you come back across the street, cut that down to about seven steps," Macdonnell told him.

Kemper took his headsets off and walked up to the director. "Norm," he replied, "it took him 23 steps to across there. It's going to take him 23 steps to get back."

Macdonnell laughed, "Damn you, you're right. Do it." Some dialog was cut instead. The realism remained intact.

Macdonnell's mandate for realism was taken so seriously that sound men Kemper, Hanley and James even used different sounds for the various drinks poured at the Longbranch.

"To pour the beer, we took a soda

"We were telling a story and painting a picture. Sound effects was what painted the picture. The voices and the actors held the drama. That, in concert with the sound effects, painted the portrait." — Ray Kemper

pop at room temperature and poured that into a glass. The bubbles formed by the soda pop gave it the soft sound that beer has. But (for) whiskey, we used plain water. It has a harder sound," he said.

At CBS, as had happened earlier at Mutual, Kemper and his comrades experimented with various ideas when they needed new sound effects. For a pot bellied stove needed on a **Gunsmoke** show they built a small wood frame and attached an old iron door.

"We just used our imaginations," Kemper explained. "A lot of times we tried many, many things before we found the right sound."

One of their many experiments provided the sound of a horse's saddle being mounted. They bound together cut up sections of old microphone cable. When the sound was needed, a sound man simply twisted the cable pieces near a microphone.

And once a rider had mounted his horse, it was time for Hanley, James or Kemper to grab the coconut shells so the horses could gallop away.

"We each had our own set of coconut shells that fit our hands just right," Kemper revealed. "Tommy had much smaller hands than I, so he used smaller coconut shells."

"We drilled holes on the side about half an inch from each hollowed out half coconut shell and attached a leather strap loosely on each side so it went over the top of that coconut shell. We could slip our fingers under that quickly," he added.

A wooden box filled with dirt provided the other necessary ingredient for the sound of horses racing to the rescue, but careful sound men like Kemper and his colleagues came prepared with a variety of surfaces.

"The 'hoofbox' was about 18 inches

square by about 4 inches deep. It was filled with a mixture of dirt, sand and very fine gravel," Kemper said. "Just before air time we'd sprinkle it down with water. It would give us a nice, clean dirt sound."

If a script called for a horse to travel from a dirt road to a wooden bridge, the edge of the "hoofbox" provided the perfect sound for the occasion. "If we wanted to move to cement, like Straight Arrow used to do on Fury in the cave, we'd have a little slab of cement off to the side. It echoes and it sounds real big," he said.

A four foot long, 18 inch wide board supplied the realistic sound of a boardwalk on radio westerns. "We used a one inch (thick) piece of Marine plywood and around the edge of the bottom side was about a two inch strip of wood that was carpeted so it wouldn't rattle around," he added.

On **Gunsmoke** there was one basic door used for most home and Marshall's office door sounds. "The only different sound that we got from different offices or different places was the way we would open the door," Kemper revealed. "We would handle it a different way: snap it open or give it a little extra rattle or something like that. It might sound like a different door, but it was not."

A smaller, framed set of bat-winged doors was used every time someone entered or left the Longbranch. "We'd hold one (door) and slap the other back and forth. It gave us the little rush of air and it sounded exactly like big bat-winged doors being opened," he said.

Likewise, a miniature jail door was employed any time Matt or Chester escorted an outlaw to Dodge City's jail house. Rusty hinges helped add to the effect, too.

Continued on next page



Ray Kemper (wearing headphones) and Straight Arrow producer Ted Robertson with two young Choctaw Indians. They were recording a segment for *Song of the Tom-Tom*, a special on Mutual honoring American Indian Day, Sept. 24, 1949.

PHOTO COURTESY RAY KEMPER

Ray Kemper *continued*

"My favorite producers and directors were Elliott (Lewis), Norm (Macdonnell), Tony Ellis and Jaime del Valle," Kemper said.

"Until people like Elliott Lewis and Tony Ellis, Jaime (del Valle) and particularly Norm really took over and pointed a major direction for the industry, sound was kind of a bastard child... That was true not just of drama but of comedy. The far-seeing people realized there was a great value there that (others) were missing," he observed.

"Tony was a fine, fine talent. I first met him when he was an actor. He had this soft, British accent," he said. "Then he began writing for *The Count of Monte Cristo*. He and Bill Gordon wrote for that show... But Tony was writing those shows like crazy. Then he sort of faded away from acting because he got busy writing."

He credits Elliott Lewis' 1947 productions of *Voyage of the Scarlet Queen* as the beginning of an era of true understanding of the importance of sound effects. "Elliott was very cognizant of that necessity and that need (for authentic

Concluded on page 16

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Sound effects memories *conclusion*

sound)," he said.

Later he encountered Ellis at CBS when the latter was associated with **Suspense**, **Romance** and **Escape**. "He was a fine writer and a fine director," Kemper noted.

Kemper and several other CBS sound effects artists occasionally wrote radio scripts. About ten **Have Gun, Will Travel** scripts were penned by Kemper.

He wrote an episode of **The Count of Monte Cristo** when he still worked at Mutual. Jaime del Valle bought his script. "That was the first script I wrote," he said. "I was 23 at the time and I was thrilled out of my skull."

Sound man Ross Murray wrote several **Suspense**, **On Stage** and **Escape** radio plays and Tom Hanley also wrote for some of the popular CBS dramas. "Tommy wrote quite a few **Gunsmokes** for both radio and television," he recalled. "He was quite an excellent writer. He wrote quite a few **Suspense** stories also and received a national award for best drama of the year for a **Suspense** he wrote. That story starred Bill Conrad."

Kemper credits the work of the radio engineers for part of the success of the sound effects teams. "It was important to have a good mixer—a good audio engineer who worked in concert with us," he said.

At CBS, Bob Chadwick was that engineer.

"He was an excellent mixer, very conscientious, and he always worked in concert with us," he said.

Looking back at the work he and his colleagues did, Kemper now views their efforts in artistic terms. "We were telling a story and painting a picture," he said. "Sound effects was what painted the picture. The voices and the actors held the drama. That, in concert with the sound effects, painted the portrait."

This article is based on an interview recorded by John Gassman in 1991.