

N. Y. Philharmonic Symphony Program Offers High School Students Special "Week End With Music"

Voice Recordings Help Judges Make Final Selection of Musically Talented Students

The New York Philharmonic Symphony program, broadcast every Sunday afternoon over CBS stations, offers an unusual musical opportunity for talented high school students all over the country.

Every week, three students are given a two day trip to New York City, including the "rounds" of the finest operas, ballets, musical theatres, and concert halls—as guests of the Standard Oil Company (New Jersey), sponsor of the Philharmonic broadcasts. These fortunate and talented students are given an opportunity to meet some of the most celebrated artists of our time, and their week-end of exciting behind-the-scenes adventures in New York's musical life is climaxed by an "on the air" interview with Mr. Deems Taylor, noted composer and commentator. This interview is a 10-minute feature of the New York Philharmonic Symphony broadcasts, giving America's most talented musical students an opportunity to tell the vast CBS radio audience about the high points in their "Week End With Music," and about their own musical experiences and accomplishments.

The "Week End With Music" National Advisory Board has adopted the following plan for the nomination and selection of the student participants in the program. Any student, 16 years of age or over, enrolled in the 10th, 11th, or 12th grades of any U. S. public, private, or parochial high school is eligible. Each high school in the United States is invited to nominate the student or students who are best qualified to appear on this program. After reviewing the official Nomination Forms sent in by the school principals, the Board selects a group of candidates—with the advice and assistance of the experienced Scholastic Awards staff of "Scholastic Magazine."

The chosen candidates are then requested to visit their nearest CBS or other local radio station for a voice recording. These

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Above: Deems Taylor (right) conducts Philharmonic broadcast discussion with guest students—left to right, Ervin Fennel, DuBois, Pa.; Carolyn Stanford, Chester, South Carolina; and Dorothy Jones, Shreveport, La.



At Right: Lauritz Melchior (left) of Metropolitan Opera, radio and screen, entertains Philharmonic's guest students—left to right, Thora Vervoren, West Green Bay, Wisc.; Joyce Ristine, Maple Falls, Washington; and Dorothy Ruddell, Parkersburg, West Va.



W. C. Speed

RADIO'S No. 1 PROBLEM

by William C. Speed, President
Audio Devices, Inc.

As competition begins to stiffen between broadcasters, managers naturally turn a watchful eye on unnecessary expenditures. Yet, at the same time, it is in their own interests, as well as the interest of their sponsors, to maintain or increase their listening audience. The obvious conflict between these two factors—maximum operating economy and audience appeal—is probably the basic cause of

radio's No. 1 problem. For when "economy" is carried to the point where it affects the listening pleasure of a program it ceases to be economical. Worse yet, it not only cuts down the listening audience it may reflect unfavorably on the broadcasting industry as a whole.

Any normally critical listener today knows that the general trend of program quality (as far as fidelity and easy listening are concerned) is definitely not upward. In fact many specific instances could be cited where transcribed program material

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Radio's No. 1 Problem

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in particular is far from satisfactory. This situation is doubly unfortunate—and doubly questionable—when we consider these facts. A broadcast station's transmitting equipment represents an investment of several hundred thousand dollars and is fully capable of sending out fine, distortion-free programs. The sponsor invests perhaps hundreds of thousands of dollars in obtaining the finest talent and program material. But somewhere along the line, the quality of the entire program has been sacrificed in the name of economy.

This, of course, is no news to the station engineers. They know where the trouble lies, but are not in a position to do anything about it—for they do not hold the purse strings. No engineer, for example, likes to use worn out music recordings—to see appropriations for transcription pickup heads and good points become tighter and tighter—or to have to use the same so-called permanent point pickup day after day interchangeably on shellac pressings, lacquer and vinyls. Yet it too often has to be done. Nor does the engineer like to use cheap wire recorders to delay a top quality program which cost a small fortune to produce. Because a good tape machine, costing around \$3,000, can do an unusually fine job, it is too often the custom to use any tape on any machine with any bias, ignoring the end result—listening discomfort!

Economy-minded studio executives may say—"After all, what difference does it make. The vast majority of radio sets are miniatures and you can't tell the difference anyway." The fallacy of such thinking is obvious to the engineer. In the first place, it simply isn't true. Distortion added to distortion spells listener discontent even if he doesn't know just why. Moreover, it's the big set owners who often represent the highest purchasing power in a community—and they will unconsciously dial over to a "more agreeable" station. No broadcaster can afford to economize on his recordings if it means compromise with fidelity. It's not fair to the artists, the sponsors, the engineers, or to the public.

All broadcasters know that recording is a most important link in program presentation. They also know that high quality recording equipment is available—equipment that represents but a small percentage of the total station investment. But do they

REPRODUCTION QUALITY GETS "PSYCHOANALYZED" AT ROCHESTER FALL MEETING

C. J. LeBel, Vice President of
AUDIO DEVICES, INC., Presents
Paper on "Psycho-Acoustics"



C. J. LeBel

The topic of high quality reproduction was attacked from a new viewpoint at the RMA Rochester Fall Meeting on November 10 in Rochester, New York. This forum where radio set designers discuss their problems included a symposium on "What Constitutes High Fidelity," with the following speakers: Messrs. Harvey Fletcher of Bell Telephone Laboratories, John K. Hilliard of Altec-Lansing Corp., and C. J. LeBel of Audio Devices. All three speakers stayed well away from that badly abused term "high fidelity," concentrating instead on the more significant problem of practical home reproduction.

The subject of Mr. LeBel's talk, "Psycho-Acoustic Aspects of Higher Quality Reproduction," was admittedly a challenging one. For it is a subject which seems to have been avoided, intentionally or otherwise, by all too many of the country's radio set designers.

In his talk, Mr. LeBel applied scientific principles in a frank appraisal of the ever-present but seldom recognized problem of *listening fatigue*—what causes it, how to measure it, and what can be done to minimize it.

The quality of sound reproduction which is considered as "acceptable" to the average radio listener is a far cry from the sound quality that assures easy listening. And in designing to such minimum standards, radio and phonograph manufacturers are inadvertently limiting the use of their product. For when the listener gets tired, he simply turns off the set without realizing why he has ceased to enjoy the program. The cause is not immediately apparent for the reason that listening fatigue does not occur in the ear itself, but in the understanding centers of the brain.

According to Mr. LeBel, experienced

realize how seriously a *poor quality* recording can affect their listening audience? If they don't, the problem is simply one of education. If they do—and still insist on "cutting corners" to cut costs,—they must recognize that they will eventually be cutting down their own income. There's no future in that.

To some of you, this may seem like an unfounded complaint. It's not. Here's a typical example. Not long ago, while traveling through the midwest, I called on the chief engineer of a station just recently on the air. I was shown a beautiful new 10-kw transmitter—a splendidly treated studio—excellent and expensive audio input equip-

ment. By this time, I expected to see equally modern and excellent recording apparatus. But no—here was economy. Two wire recorders costing less than \$150 each! Later, I checked with many of the local listeners. The general opinion was that a lot of this station's programs "didn't sound so good."

merchandisers believe that the reproduction quality of a radio, phonograph, or hearing aid has a definite effect on product sales, as well as on the extent of their use. Certain particularly successful manufacturers have had designs which consistently have been less fatiguing than competitive designs in a comparable price class. The inexperienced listener, who never heard of "psycho-acoustics," expresses his appreciation for sound quality of reduced fatigue factor by such expressions as: "It sounds very natural," "The announcer seems right here in the room," and "This is very easy to listen to."

In the hearing aid field, it has been demonstrated that a drastic reduction in fatigue effect, with no visible change in the instrument, doubled sales within a period of months. The listener response to a hearing aid, however, is more positive than to a radio set, since the former must be used twelve to sixteen hours a day—and it cannot always be turned off when the listener becomes fatigued.

There are many factors that contribute to listening fatigue. Mr. LeBel listed extraneous "noise" as the worst offender, followed by harmonic and intermodulation distortion, artificially peaked loudspeaker response, and inadequate frequency response. As to the practice of slightly attenuating high frequencies, he stated that this was an effective interim way of rendering slightly distorted wide band reproduction

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We are all in this radio broadcast business together. Set sales mean more listeners, improved transcribed shows mean more listeners, distortion free recordings mean more listeners. Radio's economic health depends on more listeners. These all important listeners cannot be held with poor programs whether poor in material or ruined with poor fidelity.

Psycho-Acoustics

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more palatable. He estimates that while only 50% of the listeners would be satisfied to have available an upper cutoff frequency of 5 Kc, 90% would be satisfied with 8 Kc, and 99% with 10 Kc. This, of course, assumes a system relatively free from fatigue factors—and without distortion or attenuation in the upper frequencies. It also recognizes that unwanted high frequencies could be removed by a tone control, whereas insufficient high frequencies to begin with, could not be later increased in bandwidth.

With reference to the recording aspects of the problem, Mr. LeBel stated that lacquer disc recording quality has, for the past 10 years, been more than adequate to meet the demands of the most critical ear with minimum listener fatigue. Much improvement, however, is still called for in improved consistency of manufacturing quality of higher quality pressings, and the improvement of amplifier circuits and speaker designs of reproducing equipment in the medium price radio field.

Mr. LeBel summarized his remarks by saying that "the typical set engineer is very wrong in thinking that the auditory system is easy to deceive, and that perpetrating an acoustic fraud upon it will have no repercussions. The auditory system is inarticulate, not uncritical. Whereas the eye rebels very fast at unsatisfactory conditions, the ear is slow to anger. Even when very angry, it does not directly reveal the cause of its rage. Yet, in the end, it enforces its desires surprisingly well. Every time a listener yawns and turns off his set his ear has won a victory."

Week End With Music

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recordings are submitted to the National Advisory Board to help in determining the final selection of the students. This phase of the selection helps the judges to decide on those students whose "voice personality" will assure maximum interests in the broadcasts. As it is obviously impractical for the judges to hold personal interviews with each candidate, the voice recordings provide a very effective substitute.

Any high school principals who are not already familiar with this "Week End With Music" program, can obtain nomination forms and complete details by writing to the National Advisory Board, "Week End With Music," 485 Madison Avenue, New York 22, N. Y.

I.D.E. OFFERS NEW SERIES OF TRANSCRIBED DRAMAS

**Top-Flight Artists and Authors
give "STORIES TO REMEMBER"
Outstanding Audience Appeal**

The Institute for Democratic Education has recently completed thirteen new 15-minute recordings, in a series entitled "Stories to Remember." This is the 12th presentation of I.D.E.'s famous "Lest We Forget" series, which has been aired by leading independent and network stations from coast to coast.

"Stories to Remember" feature such outstanding artists as Raymond Massey, Geraldine Fitzgerald, Melvyn Douglas, Vera Zorina, Alan Baxter, Ralph Bellamy, Bambi Lynn, and Jay Jostyn, in radio adaptations of stirring, down-to-earth stories by such well-known authors as B. J. Chute, MacKinlay Kantor, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Irwin Shaw and Carl Glick. These widely read works have been adapted for radio by ace script writers Sigmund Miller, Milton Wayne, Jack Bentkover, and Harold Franklin. All programs were produced by Harold Franklin, program director of the Institute, under the skillful direction of Earle McGill.

Recordings were made at Columbia Records, Inc., in New York, on 1 1/4 inch master AUDIODISCS, at 33 1/3 rpm. The initial production includes 600 16-inch Vinylite pressings of each of the 13 programs. Additional pressings will be made as required, to keep pace with the demand.

This new series is offered free of charge to the nation's radio stations and networks as a public service, to help remind all Americans that prejudice and discrimination have no place in our truly American way of life.

Mr. Franklin states that, as in the past, the new "Stories to Remember" recordings will be made available to schools and colleges as soon as the radio broadcasts have been completed. I.D.E.'s previous series, "THE AMERICAN DREAM," is currently being prepared for special release to schools and colleges as an audio-education aid. For this purpose, it is planned to follow the procedure used so successfully by many radio stations in broadcasting these programs. The 15-minute transcriptions were followed by a 15-minute live panel dis-

ussion, in which prominent local citizens expressed their opinions, with particular reference to local problems and conditions. These panel discussions were recorded by the radio stations, and it is planned to include them on the reverse side of each of the "AMERICAN DREAM" pressings.

Since the Institute is a non-profit organization, devoted to the improvement of human relations, these discs are being offered for school use at cost. The thirteen recordings in previous series, together with a teachers' handbook, can be obtained complete for \$15.00, by writing direct to the Institute for Democratic Education, 415 Lexington Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.

The use of top-flight talent—artists, authors, scripters, and directors—has always characterized the I.D.E. productions, and has contributed largely to their outstanding success and audience appeal. Last year's series, for example, won a special award in Variety's annual Showmanagement competition—received another first award at Ohio State University's 18th Institute for Education by Radio—and was honored by a Citation of Distinguished Merit from the National Conference of Christians and Jews.



Director Earle McGill, actress Geraldine Fitzgerald, and Harold Franklin, Program Director of I.D.E., prepare to record "The Lesson," by Mary Leslie Harrison—one of the thirteen transcribed dramas in the Institute's new series, "Stories to Remember."

ATTENTION

The Editors of Audio Record welcome contributions from its readers. Any news concerning your recorded programs or other recording activities, that you believe will be read with interest by recordists, can

be used. Photographs, drawings, or graphs needed to illustrate your material will be appreciated also. Address all contributions to:—The Editor, Audio Record, 444 Madison Ave., New York 22, N. Y.

How To Get the Best Out of Student Scripters

by Prof. George D. Griffin
N. Y. University



George D. Griffin

(Ed. Note: This is a subject on which Professor Griffin is well qualified to speak, for he tutored all three Special Class Winners in the 1948 AER National Script Writing contest.)

In the course of reading some three thousand radio scripts written by students at New York University, I have discovered a fact which should have been obvious but was, for a time, obscured by the routine of trying to give personal attention to the problems of many individual writers—that my students do their best work when confronted with obstacles.

Beset with an eager group of young talents enchanted with the medium of radio and completely fascinated with the idea of being writers for that medium, I have found that my goals for them are reached most quickly, with less wear and tear on me as an individual and writer, if I see to it that they have little opportunity to indulge themselves.

For instance, told to write a commercial, they flounder about in their freedom and wind up with something entirely too reminiscent of a well-known advertisement. Assigned a public service announcement, they tend to write about matters which are obviously of little interest and importance even to them. And given the assignment of writing a thirty-minute dramatic script on subject matter of their own choice, they go off on the familiar tangent of the visitor to or from Heaven, they get on a soap box and philosophize (in very poor radio) about the faults of mankind, or they throw themselves with great relish into the psychological abyss and wallow about with various kinds of demented souls—usually the variety seen on the local movie screen last week.

Worse yet, they repeatedly make every error in the radio writing tradition: lack of self-identification, long sentences and speeches, multi-directional plots, ineffective characterizations, weak tag lines, overloading of sound cues, and so on ad infinitum. In short, they waste both their time and mine.

But—forewarned that the budget for a show necessitates restricting the cast to four or five characters, they produce a tight script with clear-cut conflict and characterizations. Assigned a script about a country doctor to be played by Jean Hersholt, they analyze the program in great detail and are reasonably effective even if they have a healthy disgust for such personalities. Supposedly transported to a community whose

radio programs are produced by amateurs with no sound effect records, they quit asking for the sound of a whipporwill heard above the roar of an airplane engine. The result: the development of real feeling for the special characteristics of the radio medium.

One of the most successful assignments I have given has been a script for the contest conducted by the Association for Education by Radio, and in particular that classification sponsored by AUDIO DEVICES, INC. Writing an interesting five-minute

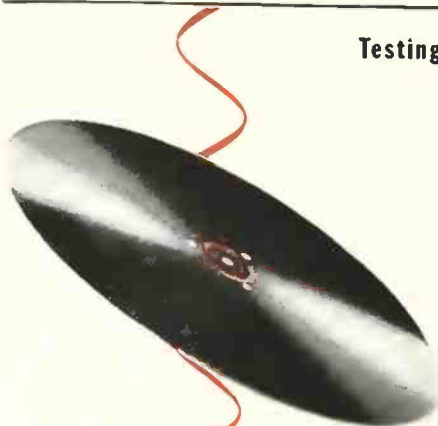
dramatization designed for production in the home or school is a real challenge, requiring, as it does, great economy and clarity of expression, simplicity of production demands, and single direction of plot. It makes almost impossible the most common faults of the student writer. And I cannot recommend it too highly to other teachers whose students have talent but are prone to ignore the fundamentals of practical radio writing in their enthusiasm to ape Oboler and Corwin.

Testing—1, 2, 3

Testing—1, 2, 3

Testing—1, 2, 3

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