

# RADIO STARS

OCTOBER

10¢



Ruth  
Etting

**YOUR RADIO  
FAVORITES REVEALED**

Is any Star Worth \$5,000 a Week?

**THE LIFE  
AND LOVE OF  
BURNS AND ALLEN**

Ed Wynn—Harry Richman—Bing Crosby—The Boswell Sisters

NAMES! . . . NAMES! . . . NAMES! . . . ALL THE LEADING  
STARS OF THE AIR . . . DRAMA . . . ROMANCE . . .  
ENTERTAINMENT . . . TEN SHOWS IN ONE GREAT SHOW!

Directed by  
**FRANK TUTTLE**  
Based on  
**WILLIAM MANLEY'S  
ROMANTIC LAUGH-  
HIT "WILD WAVES"**

**KATE SMITH**  
**BURNS AND ALLEN**

**STUART ERWIN**

**BOSWELL SISTERS**

**ARTHUR TRACY**  
**DONALD NOVIS**

**BING CROSBY**

**CAB CALLOWAY**  
**THE BIG BROADCAST**

**MILLS BROTHERS**

# THE BIG BROADCAST

*A Paramount Picture*

# RADIO STARS



## YOUR RADIO FAVORITES REVEALED

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### NEXT MONTH

The most misunderstood woman in radio. A fascinating story revealing how a famous radio star's honest sympathy for those in suffering has been misunderstood by the public and dubbed a publicity gag.

The continuation of Jack Foster's "The Inside Story of Radio Salaries." Information you can't afford to miss.

Faith Baldwin, Adele Whitely Fletcher, Curtis Mitchell, Walter Ramsey—they'll all be in the second issue. High-powered stories from each and every one.

And you mustn't miss the ending of the Burns and Allen love story. That, too, will be in the second issue.

There'll also be a number of thrilling stories on radio personalities, stories which take you behind the scenes of radioland—bring you the radio players' loves and hopes, disappointments and heartbreaks. Among them will be features on Stoopnagle and Budd, Seth Parker, Myrt and Marge and Ford Rush. And that's only a few of the many you'll find in that next issue. It'll be dated November. Don't forget.

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Editors: Ernest V. Heyn and Curtis Mitchell

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# THE LIFE AND LOVE OF BURNS and ALLEN



The famous team of Burns and Allen. Above you see them as they appear in the Paramount production, "The Big Broadcast." To the right, as they look during their broadcasting.

By WALTER  
RAMSEY

**A**LONG about the beginning of the twentieth century, a skinny kid named George Burns was just starting to waddle down Pitt Street—in the lower and very poor section of the East Side, New York. He was number nine in a robust, excitable Jewish family that was later to boast twelve members—seven girls and five boys. His father made pants but only very occasionally sold them. In fact, until George began earning his own money in vaudeville many years later, he never had a new pair of pants. His were always inherited from an older, "rich" brother out in Ohio. From his first to his eighth year he was a welcome burden on an already child-

What a charming story, this tale of the beginnings—yes, the very earliest beginnings—of the famous team of George Burns and Gracie Allen. George was born in lower Manhattan. Gracie in San Francisco. Yet their paths crossed, with dramatic consequences

(Below) Gracie Allen in what was then considered a pretty snappy pose. She was five at the time.



(Left) Little Gracie—a nine-year-old Gracie. (Above) In costume for a Colonial play she did at school. She was fifteen at the time this was taken.

burdened family. At eight he acquired a career! He and three other kids formed the "Pee Wee Quartet" and began singing in every available saloon. They took turns passing the hat.

It would have surprised him very much to have learned that the dark, little girl with the "funny little voice" who was later to become his wife, had just received a tiny diamond ring for her third birthday . . . which she promptly planted in the back yard in the fond hope that it would grow into a diamond-ring tree. But George didn't bother his head about far-away places like San Francisco, and that was where Gracie Allen lived. Gracie was an optimist! At the age of ten, she met Charlie Chaplin who was on location near the Golden Gate. From that moment she planned to grow up and marry Chaplin.

"A fortune teller had told me that I was going to marry a rich man," relates Gracie, "and Charlie was the only rich man I had ever met!" When Charlie married Mildred Harris, Gracie was *that* humiliated!

Instead of becoming the "child bride" of Chaplin, she consented, after many stormy sessions, to become a pupil in dancing school. The Allens (there were five little Allens . . . four girls and a boy), were a family of dancers, and Gracie, the youngest, was the only one who

ever hated the family talent! Once, at the age of four, when she was performing an "Interpretive Irish Dance," she grew so weary of the whole idea that she pulled off the chin-whiskers she was wearing and carried them on her arm while she finished. No one in the family understood Gracie. She was rebel in the clan. Yet she sang and danced as a child performer in San Francisco almost from the moment she could totter onto the stage.

**T**O the Burns group, three thousand miles away in New York, George, "the go-getter" was no mystery. The kid was out to make money and as much of it as possible!

The highlight of George's young career, however, was the night that the Pee Wee Quartet made eighteen dollars! Each kid in the group would get almost five dollars. But they lost the money on the way home!

When George was seventeen years old, he decided that the professional opportunities of Pitt Street were too confining—so he attempted to move up to Broadway. The best he got was the outskirts! Under the assumed name of Williams he teamed up with a fellow under the assumed name of Brown and somehow they managed to get the act booked as SINGING—DANCING—SKATING! The fact that neither of them could sing, dance nor skate may have had something to do with the early failure of "Brown and Williams"! George immediately switched to a comedy act called MacFry & Co. Just as bad! "Two



Another picture of them doing their radio stuff. The gentleman picking the card is Guy Lombardo.

people can be twice as lousy as one!" said George as he started out as a "single." But it seemed that even *one* person can be pretty bad, and it wasn't long before the single folded as well.

He finally came to the conclusion that assumed names were at fault. He was right! "Burns & Lorraine" was really a funny act . . . and it was George's first real step towards recognition. Lorraine stuttered when he talked . . . but never when he sang. This oddity led to a very funny gag that was later put in the act. It seems that Burns was dining at a swanky café one night when Lorraine rushed in excitedly and began stuttering so rapidly that George couldn't understand a word. "Sing it!" he finally commanded. And to the tune of "Over There," Lorraine warbled "We've been robbed!" (Try it, it's sure fire!)

It was while George was playing in Union City, New Jersey, with "Burns and Lorraine," that he met Gracie Allen!

**A** LOT of water (most of it non-sparkling) had flowed under the bridge of Gracie's life. She insists hers is the least exciting feminine life since "Little Women." When she was sixteen, the only thing that had ever happened to her was a vaudeville booking as part of a dancing act with her sisters. At eighteen, a vaudevillian named Larry Reilly had asked her to team up with him.

The act went fairly well until "Reilly and Allen" landed in New York. Then somebody got the idea that Reilly was funnier alone! Gracie was stranded in the Big City . . . and the worst part of it was that Reilly had always done the business end of the act alone. Gracie didn't know where to look for stage work and hadn't the faintest idea what she was going to do. So she took up the study of stenography. Right in the middle of the course, she quit. No reason.

**J**UST as she was about to give up New York as a bad job, she met Ben Ryan, a vaudeville actor and song writer, and fell in love with him. It was a good excuse for remaining in New York, so she stayed. Through Ryan, she met other actors and it wasn't long before she was rooming with a couple of vaudevillians—Rene Arnold and Mary Kelly. Rene was on the road most of the time and one day Grace received a call from her to come to

Union City where she was playing. She wanted Gracie to see the act called "Burns & Lorraine."

"They're planning to bust-up as a team," explained Rene. "Maybe you could team up with Lorraine . . . he's awfully funny."

Gracie reluctantly trekked over to Union City. She wasn't keen on teaming up with anybody, . . . except Ryan *for life*." But he had insisted that the wedding be postponed until he had finished his twenty weeks' engagement. Grace saw "Burns & Lorraine" at the matinee performance and returned again in the evening. Rene Arnold was fairly convulsed over the antics of Lorraine. "Gee, he's the funniest guy I ever saw," she laughed. "Wouldn't it be grand if you could team up with him?"

Gracie said nothing. She was watching with vast interest the performance of the other member of the team, the comedian who got the laughs. When she finally spoke she said "If I were to team with either of them, I would choose Burns!"

Two weeks later a newly-formed team of "Burns & Allen" was purring over the midnight electricity in Gracie's small apartment in New York figuring out gags for their act. Burns was to be the comic and Allen was to "feed" him the gags in an act called 60-40. "Although, you know something, kid," said Burns fondly, "maybe we've got this backwards! Everything you say is funny. It's not what you say . . . it's the way you say it!"

**G**RACIE was so delighted with this compliment that she immediately wrote Ben Ryan about it. Ryan answered her letter by telling her to stay away from all "hoofers" and especially George Burns! Gracie must have thought her sweetheart was kidding because she showed the letter to George! Both laughed loudly (Burns a bit louder than Gracie thought necessary) and the next day the team of "Burns & Allen" played their first matinee! After their first performance, Gracie wondered if the act would last until Ben Ryan returned to marry her.

Do not fail to read the continuation of the Burns and Allen romance in the second issue of RADIO STARS. Read how Burns and Allen landed in big time. And what happened to Gracie's romance with Ben Ryan. You'll love this human tale. Don't forget. The next issue of RADIO STARS on sale October 1, where you bought this copy.

# W O M A N - H A T E R ?

You'd almost think so—because Harry Richman cannot seem to discover his ideal girl. Perhaps his ideal is a little too impossible to realize



"I must be her ideal, as she will be mine. We'll know it when we meet, and the search will be ended. I'm going to keep on looking until I'm seventy . . ."

By D. C. O'FLAHERTY

**H**ARRY RICHMAN is still looking for his ideal girl. He still believes in her, and he expects to find her, if he has to go on looking until he is seventy years old. He has sung about her, he has written songs to her (all of them hits), and he has done something else which proves how strong is his faith that the dream will come true: he has built a magnificent home for her, at Beachurst, on the beautiful south shore of Long Island, at a cost of half a million dollars.

He has been building that home for eight years, and he is looking forward to the day when he will be married and live there, and have a lot of kids.

The handsome, debonair star of the musical stage, motion pictures and the radio, who was recently crowned "King of the Radio" by fans in a nationwide voting contest, specifies a lot of kids. When he finds his ideal romance, he expects it to last a lifetime, and no marriage, he believes, would be "ideal" without children.

The truth is that Richman, who is known as one of America's most famous bachelors, is just an old fireside benedict at heart, and his vision of true happiness has nothing to do with the bright lights.

That seems strange—until you talk to Harry Richman. Then you know why.

His success has meant much to him. Back of him are years of a lonely and single-minded struggle toward that success, years of heartbreak even. When he was obscure and unknown, he alternated poorly-paid jobs with theatrical engagements which required him to give *sixteen* performances a day. He lived the hard life of the trouper whose home is a trunk. Sometimes he wasn't even a trouper, and during temporary periods of discouragement he took anything else that came to hand, as being a chauffeur, a lifeguard, a piano player in a Chicago musical factory, a sailor in the United States Navy.

Throughout those years he cherished the same dream: success, and marriage with his dream girl in the big house

which has now become a reality, though the dream girl is yet to be realized.

His success is a reality, too; it is a record of tremendous ascent to popularity in the short space of eight years.

**E**VERY now and then Richman's name has been coupled with that of some glamorous beauty, so that the newspaper boys were at last sure that the famous bachelor was about to "step off" with that ideal girl. The fact that he halted short of the altar has also given rise to reports that he was "carrying the torch" for someone.

That isn't true.

Harry Richman has been disappointed. He admits it. But he is not disappointed in love. He perhaps has demanded too much of it. He still has faith that he will find her, and he is looking hard. He thought at times that the quest was ended, notably in his romance with the beautiful, tempestuous Clara Bow. That was a stormy love affair which set both New York and Hollywood agog.

"I thought Clara Bow was my ideal girl," he admitted with a frank smile, as he loafed comfortably in his dressing room, while a stream of radio and theatrical celebrities streamed in and out (his popularity makes it tough on interviewers; he almost has to shout to make himself heard). "and I found out, after a year, that I was mistaken. That is the truth of our break-up."

Radio's newest royal personage has a very definite idea of what that ideal girl, that "not impossible She," as Kipling called her, will be like, but he doesn't give any specifications which would enable the Missing Persons Bureau to find her in a crowd. He feels that it would be foolish to do so.

"The ideal girl will not be merely the girl I think is the acme of perfection. An ideal romance is one in which both persons kinde in each other the idea that the other is pretty swell; one in which each person is the other's ideal. I must be her ideal, as (Continued on page 48)

# The Inside

Do you realize the value of the talent to which you casually listen whenever you tune in on the air? The radio editor of the N.Y. World-Telegram gives you the low-down

By JACK FOSTER



Kate Smith gets \$2,200.00 for three quarter-hour broadcasts, a tremendous sum for her vaudeville appearances, so much apiece for three records a month. And for her appearance in "The Big Broadcast" she received, for one song—but read this fascinating article and find out.

(Below) Ed Wynn, the Texaco fire chief, shown here with Graham McNamee, gets exactly five thousand dollars for each and every one of his half-hour broadcasts!

FIFTY MILLIONS listen in on Ed Wynn every Tuesday night. And when he pulls a choice pun, fifty millions lean back in their rockers, shaking with laughter, and on the next morning half of them repeat the gag to the other half who were ready to tell it themselves. Then the program is promptly forgotten—so casual, so matter-of-fact is radio listening.

But the sponsor doesn't forget that quickly, for he must foot the bill. And it takes him a small fortune to produce this single half hour—enough for a middle class family to buy a modest home, an automobile, take a vacation in the mountains and live comfortably through a whole year. To be specific: \$14,450. Think of it!—\$481 a minute, \$8 a second. So if you get up to go in the kitchen for a glass of water during the program, you're likely to waste enough entertainment to buy yourself that motor boat you've been longing for.

Ed Wynn today is the highest paid entertainer on the air. He receives \$5,000 for a single half hour appearance—almost four times as much as the president of the United States, if he should broadcast for an entire year.



# Story of Radio SALARIES

Is any star worth \$5000.00 a week?

Will Rogers holds the all-time record for high salaries—he received \$15,000 for a single broadcast, two years ago. He recently received an unbelievable sum for four six-minute talks. (Right) How much do Gene and Glenn receive for each morning program?



never supposing that this new gadget would become the greatest source of income of all entertainment mediums.

TODAY the salaries of radio stars rival those of the ruling kings and queens of Hollywood. No single broadcaster, it is true, receives as great wages as, for example, Greta Garbo. But the microphone opens so many other means of revenue—such as talking picture shorts, records, personal and vaudeville appearances—that a diligent performer can make the gorgeous Greta's stipended seem paltry.

Mind you, the tremendous incomes I'm referring to are by no means general in radio land. Dear me, no! The singer-without-a-sponsor receives his mere \$15 to \$25 for a single network appearance, and is mighty glad that he can have his coffee and cakes for another week. Often he sings without being paid at all in the vague hope that an advertising agency might hear and want him. He, too, is the one who has had to take a ten per cent cut, for it is only the ordinary, day-in-day-out singer whose bank account has been affected by the depression.

Not the star, not the crooner with an irresistible "it" in his voice, not the performer with a distinctive personality! Indeed not! The advertiser counts himself lucky to sponsor an entertainer whom fate has made one of the nation's idols, and gladly and without question pays him well. In radio the rewards for a trick kind of talent are unbelievable.

Kate Smith, I suppose, has (Continued on page 46)



# THE ROMANTIC STORY OF JULIA and FRANK

By ADELE

WHITELY FLETCHER

TEN years ago in New York Julia Sanderson and Frank Crumit met for the first time.

The old Turnverein Hall was semi-dark and more than a little chilly. Only around the small stage where they were rehearsing was it more than half light.

Sitting with her mother, a script open on the little table beside her, was Julia Sanderson, the star of "Fangerine," then in rehearsal. Julia, fair and slim, with laughing gray eyes, and small eloquent hands.

Everybody in the company had the pleased air theatrical people wear when they're confident they're associated with a production almost sure to be a hit. For everybody, you see, knew the drawing-power of the star.

On the stage the leading man was singing one of his songs, strumming his ukulele. Crumit was his name. Frank Crumit. Julia Sanderson watched him intently. She marked many desirable things about him . . . the ease with which he played and sang—it was as if music fairly flowed from him . . . the proud way he carried his head on his fine, broad shoulders . . . the warm camaraderie

of his smile . . . the friendly way in which, already, he knew everybody's name.

"Mamma," said Julia Sanderson, laughingly, "Mamma, buy me that!"

"I wish I could." Her mother was casual. But she noticed, without seeming to, the way mothers will, that Julia's eyes flashed with a new, live interest.

It is strange, I think, the long way two people so often travel before they find one another. Strange—and yet logical. Perhaps they are really made for each other.



Charles Serrine

(Left) An old picture of Julia Sanderson taken when she was a famous stage personality. (Above) At the piano in their home. They called it Dunrovin', as a tribute to the fact that they were through living in trunks!

There's a bond—much stronger  
even than their joy in a mutual  
job—that holds Julia and Frank  
together



(Left) Julia. She's a little thing—weighs one hundred and twenty-six. She has golden-brown hair and dresses daintily. (Above) Frank's a big chap. The top of Julia's head just reaches his chin.



it remains a favorite of their's still, that even today it is a piece of music to be found on the music rack of their big concert grand.

The scene in which Frank sang "Sweet Lady" was all it should be. Tropical. With palms. And a deep blue back-drop. Julia sat in the doorway of a little straw house high up in a tree which was reached by a ladder. Frank stood below, strumming his uke, crooning:

"Sweet Lady, just make believe  
I've won your hand . . .  
Sweet Lady, just make believe  
A wedding grand . . .  
Oh my! See the parson  
At the altar . . .  
He'll tie a knot  
Strong as Gibraltar.  
Sweet Lady, just make believe  
We'll build a home  
With maybe some additions  
Of our own . . .  
If you'll make it true  
I'll not be grieving . . .  
Sweet Lady, must we keep on  
Make-believing?"

THERE were, before that day when Julia Sanderson and Frank Crumit met in the old Turnverein Hall, all those years when Frank had been back in Jackson, Ohio, making touchdowns, hitting home runs, snaring basketball goals, making hundred yard dashes. Years when Julia Sanderson had not known he existed. Even when he came closer to her orbit, playing in vaudeville with two Phi Delta Theta fraternity brothers in a sketch called "The Three Comedians," and later alone, singing, strumming, and talking as "The One Man Glee Club," she had known of him only vaguely.

For during these same years Julia had been occupied convincing her father, Albert Sackett, a stock actor, that she, too, belonged to the boards, that she, too, belonged to the world of grease-paint and cues, of entrances and exits. She gained her point and danced in the chorus from the time she was fifteen. She understudied stars and finally came under Charles Frohman's banner to play in "Sunshine Girl," "Rambler Rose," "The Canary" and all her other successes.

When they did meet—Frank and Julia—Frank fell head over heels in love right off, too. The run of "Tangerine" was for both of them a glamorous interlude. And "Sweet Lady," the song Frank sang to Julia during this engagement, was to prove prophetic. No wonder, then,

EVERY night," Julia Sanderson admitted to me, "particularly before Frank 'up and declared his intentions.' I used to live for that scene. I spent practically all my salary buying dresses for it, hoping eventually I'd find one in which Frank simply wouldn't be able to resist me. I did at last. I remember it well. A blue-gray chiffon, with a bunch of coral flowers at the waist."

Her face brightened, as women's faces will when they reminisce about gowns which were especially becoming and which brought them happiness.

"It wasn't until later, however, while Frank and Julia were playing together in "Oh Kay" that they finally



The Crumits at home with the purp. All those photographs are pictures of stage celebrities, friends of the Crumits.

stopped make-believing . . . and found that parson . . . and built that home. . . .

That home, incidentally, is at Long-meadow, Massachusetts. Of Norman French architecture. With a garden. And big trees—elms, and oaks and maples. And because, when Frank and Julia moved into this house they made up their minds that they were through with the stage and ready to settle down, they named it Dunrovin'.

They located at Long-meadow because Julia's mother and father live there. Dunrovin' is only about five minutes away from the Sacketts' early American house. All of which affords Frank no mother-in-law problem but, instead, brings Julia a decided father problem.

"I really have quite a time trying to bring up Frank the way all wives bring up their husbands whether all husbands realize it or not," Julia Sanderson explained. "If I say 'Frank Crumit, that tie is perfectly frightful with those socks!' father will insist 'You're all right, Frank. You look fine!' And mother's almost as bad."

Soon after the Crumits moved to Long-meadow, Frank became a stock broker. Five years ago people were buying stocks and bonds and there was a harvest to be reaped in commissions. However, he continued making phonograph records, too. And it was this work which brought him to the radio.

It wasn't money Frank and Julia needed. They had invested their savings wisely, in New York city bonds and other equally safe, secure holdings. It was an interest they wanted.

"Julie especially," Frank explained. "Julie grew very restless. A man can always find new interests so much easier than a woman can. I feel I acted wisely in bringing Julie into radio work," he said. "We both love it so much. It's such fun working together. Choosing songs."

"When Frank Crumit started going to an office every morning," said Julia, "I was lost. In the theatre, we'd breakfasted leisurely about eleven. Suddenly all this was changed. Frank had to jump up from the breakfast table, kiss me good-by hurriedly, and rush off. Whereupon days became longer than I would have believed it possible for them to be.

"I'm no good around a house. So I have clever people to run my house for me. You don't have to take care of a home to love it. For instance, I adore the evenings when Frank and I have our coffee together before the fire. I like to putter in the garden. And I love to go about touching things, thinking 'That's mine. And isn't it nice, that's mine, too.'"

"I tried golf. But I'm not naturally athletic. And during the years when most girls acquire a facility for such things I was busy in the theatre. I soon found that I simply haven't got whatever it takes to be a golfer.

"Ladies play bridge afternoons. And I like poker. . . . So where was I?"

ONLY those women who have been occupied for years and then suddenly have found themselves without anything to do can really appreciate the predicament in which Julia Sanderson found herself. She couldn't suddenly change. She couldn't suddenly become like those women who are her neighbors, women who always have led quiet, sheltered lives, and who are quite happy and content patterning their days with the small things of the moment.

Frank Crumit may very well feel that in interesting his beloved Julie in radio work he has done a good job. For the stage, which Julia Sanderson admits she was contemplating again, isn't always compatible with marriage and the home life by which she and Frank have come to set such store.

It's so much better the way it is . . . it's so perfect for them to have this work they do together and which doesn't jeopardize Dunrovin' or anything which that name implies.

Broadcasting, they use the same microphone. And since it is placed for Julie's convenience, and since her blond head barely reaches Frank's square chin, he must bend when he sings, and he does this, resting his big hand upon Julie's slim shoulder.

Their musicians, for the most part, are the same men who have for years accompanied Frank when he has made his records. Almost all have remained. So in the studio a warm, family feeling (Continued on page 49)

## RADIO STARS ALBUM



## Lowell Thomas attended no less than four universities

**L**OWELL THOMAS has probably traveled more miles—and paid his own fare—than any man in the world. Hardly a country has escaped his scrutiny, hardly a potentate or personage. He knows them all by their first names. That is the background he brings to his *Smoot* news discussions.

In Cripple Creek, Colorado, where he was reared, his companions and boyhood idols were miners who had tramped the world in search of gold. They fired his imagination with their strange stories.

Even as a college student, he became a rolling stone. The Universities of Valparaiso, Denver, Chicago, and Princeton became his successive alma maters as he worked his way along, going wherever jobs were most plentiful.

At twenty-one, he broke away from civilization with an expedition into the Arctic. Back from that at the year's end, he immediately financed and led another. Those trips made him an authority on the little explored northern regions and he began a lecture tour.

**W**HEN Uncle Sam entered the World War, he was appointed to make a motion picture history of the con-

flict. Twelve wealthy men financed the undertaking. And Thomas led his cameramen from Belgium to Beersheba in his search for history in the making.

After the Armistice was signed, he attempted to get into Germany. The authorities threw him out. He tried again and was arrested. He tried sixteen times, and finally penetrated to the heart of the Rhineland, the first person to accomplish it.

Of all the Allied newspaper reporters in Europe, he alone was an eye witness of the German revolution. Because of that, President Wilson ordered him to make a personal report to the American Commission at Versailles.

His greatest individual exploit was his trip into Arabia where he rode camels and blew up railroads with Colonel Lawrence, the celebrated Englishman who united the fierce Arab tribes against Turkey.

Then followed explorations in Malaya, Upper Burma, India, and Central Asia. He has written fourteen books about his own adventures and those of unusual men he has met. At thirty-eight, he looks back at a busy, crowded life and wonders impatiently how much longer this job of digesting the news must keep him from the out-trail.

Little Jack Little  
played a piano in  
the United States  
Navy



PEOPLE are always asking, "How little is Little Jack Little?" Well, he is just four inches over five feet tall. Not big enough for a Yale halfback, certainly, but his feet can reach those piano pedals and if there is a key on the pianoforte that he can't get at, nobody has heard it. That's size enough for anybody, isn't it?

Fate has chosen him for some of its choicest pranks. Just to show you, he is one of America's favorite balladeers—but he started life as an Englishman. His real name, instead of the litting double diminutive to which we are accustomed, is actually John James Leonard. The Little Jack Little was adopted after he went into vaudeville.

Then, there is the jolly business of his war record. When Germany's marching regiments trampled on Belgium, J. J. Leonard was just seventeen, a patriot, and a red-necked scrapper. He enlisted in the U. S. Navy and was assigned to the Great Lakes Training Station. And there he stayed until the war was over. A smart commander, you see, put the gay recruit in front of a piano and kept him there. John James Leonard became the camp's ace entertainer. His job was to amuse the gobs. And he did it well.

Little Jack began to play the piano when he was quite a little jack. Age four, to be exact. At six, he was a star student in the London Conservatory. Then came Waterloo—in Iowa. His parents moved there from England when he was nine. Immediately, he displayed a flair

for entertainment for the record reveals that his classmates made him the school cheer leader.

And to that, believe it or not, he owes his present ingratiating style of entertainment. You see, there was a certain Thanksgiving football game. Master Leonard, in the full fury of his unleashed enthusiasm, went into a zip-boom-ah at full speed—and skidded. Something happened to his throat. As a result, he couldn't speak above a whisper for months. When his voice finally returned, it was just about as you hear it now on your loudspeaker, partly melody, partly conversation, and partly little lullabies of joy.

He's on the air in the early morning and late in the evening. Those morning programs are tuned in upon by housewives, who find that it helps them with the housework. The evening programs are a great aid to romance. Well, there are no statistics on the subject, but we're sure all engaged couples will check with us on the idea.



Ann Leaf wears overalls when she plays the organ

was such a tiny thing—only four feet and eleven inches tall—that people wanted to shield and protect her. They were afraid New York would overwhelm her. Their worries were wasted. Little Ann overwhelmed New York, and then left it flat to seek her bright fortune in the west.

In Los Angeles, she went to a theatre manager and applied for a job. He looked at her tiny size and thought he would scare her off. "We want somebody big enough to handle the Wurlitzer," he said.

"I'm big enough," she answered, and before the surprised manager could refuse, she had accepted the job. She made a hit, too. Audiences never ceased wondering how that little bit of a thing could control that huge volume of sound. She investigated other musical fields as well. There was the radio, for example. And wasn't she glad when the talkies turned so many musicians out of the theatre, that little Ann had a foothold in the broadcasting business.

ONE of little Ann Leaf's coziest memories is of the parlor that held the family's old "box of whistles."

But for that magic box, she might have become a school marm or steno instead of one of the world's finest organists.

That old "box of whistles" was an organ of the sort grandmother used. To play it, one employed both hands, both feet, and both knees. Ann was just five when she decided to master it. Just imagine her, sitting on the edge of a stool, her tiny feet doggedly pumping, pumping, pumping. It must have sounded something like the "mighty gas-pipe" of Colonel Stoopnagle and Budd.

All that was in Omaha, Nebraska. Her first public appearance was at the age of eleven when she, a white-faced, wide-eyed little girl in white, sat down at a piano and played a Mozart concerto.

Her reward for that was the experience of studying in New York. She still remembers that leave-taking. She

answered, and before the surprised manager could refuse, she had accepted the job. She made a hit, too. Audiences never ceased wondering how that little bit of a thing could control that huge volume of sound. She investigated other musical fields as well. There was the radio, for example. And wasn't she glad when the talkies turned so many musicians out of the theatre, that little Ann had a foothold in the broadcasting business.

That was the beginning of her meteoric climb. Now she plays over the Columbia network as often as fifteen times each week. Always, she wears overalls in preference to pajamas or skirts. And always she manages to get some of the gaily and gladness of her spirit into her music.

She gets a great deal of kidding in the studio about her size. But she just gives the same answer she gave to the Los Angeles theatre manager.

And the kidders readily admit she's right.

Ben Bernie sold  
violins—until he  
was fired

THE story of Ben Bernie is a success story. It starts in the shadow of the Brooklyn Bridge and runs a star-tudded path up fortune's ladder. He calls himself "the old maestro." And he laughs as he says it. You know that laugh. He has been laughing like that since his first job in a department store.

His post was at the violin counter. This day, we find him standing before a group of amused spectators with a fiddle in his arms. He is explaining that the life of a violinist is a very low one, but if anyone insists on becoming a fiddler, here is a \$4.98 special that is just as good—or as bad—as anything else in town.

One of the men in that group was Joe Schenck, now a great motion picture producer. Another one was Ben's boss. Ben was fired on the spot. As he left, Joe Schenck said, "Buddy, I'd try vaudeville. Come over to my office and I'll fix you up."

And there was launched the famous line of chaff and chatter that was to make him famous.

Ben Bernie was born Benjamin Ansel. His boyhood on the sidewalks of New York brought to him experiences that he doesn't like to remember. Perhaps that is the reason his own programs are always bright and happy. Part of his childhood was a struggle against the determination of his father that he should be an engineer. Ben wanted to play the violin. It was the only argument his family ever had. Eventually, he settled it by becom-



ing much more famous as a violinist and band leader than he ever could have as an engineer.

Bernie went to Cooper Union when he was old enough. He joined all the dramatic clubs he could find. When he left the school, he organized a dance orchestra as a means of making money. Even then, he was a good old maestro.

He's been in vaudeville with the one and only Phil Baker, Phil's one of his boyhood friends. So is Eddie Cantor. The three of them roamed New York's East Side together, back in those old days.

Not many people who have heard him will believe that he has a serious side. But he has; oh, a very serious side. For one thing, he mistrusts horses that are born in August. He won't bet on them—not a sou. And here is another thing: if ever you see him get up from a restaurant table and sit somewhere else, there can be only one reason. It is this: he won't be served by a left-handed waiter. It's bad luck, he says. And he is very serious about it.



## Vaughn De Leath learned to sing from a windmill

**D**ID you ever listen to a windmill? Did you ever hear the music of its spinning blades? Vaughn De Leath, whose father was a maker of windmills, was a bare-legged girl in Mount Pulaski, Ill., when she first heard it.

Music of the Windmills. It sounds like the name of a song, doesn't it? Vaughn heard it and loved it—and sat under them for long hours while her young voice rose and fell with the soft sound wind through metal. When friends asked, "What in the world are you doing?" she always answered, "Just a-hummin'."

Today she is still a-hummin'. She was just seventeen when she made her debut on the Los Angeles concert stage. Since then her voice has reached hundreds of thousands who have thrilled at its unusual tonal quality. A voice from the outdoors, it pours from the loudspeaker in a joyful torrent. When she sings people begin to *live*.

There is one, a fan of hers, to whom she has become something of a goddess. For eleven years he has written

her, sent her gifts, his tribute to her art. Evidently he is a seafarer for she receives presents from every part of the world. Once it was a magnificent birthday cake . . . and then a Persian cat. When he is ashore, he sends roses three times each week. His card, which comes with each offering, gives no name, no address, just two initials. She has never found out his name.

Always she has attracted warm friends and admirers. An illness took her away from the microphone several months ago. The reason for her ab-

sence was not announced and hundreds and thousands of admirers became alarmed. Letters and telegrams poured in to the studios. And then a thick sheaf of paper, bound and waxed with an official seal. It was a petition from a western town begging for Vaughn De Leath's return. Every single citizen in the place had signed it.

That was a hard struggle, that fight against sickness. For many years, Vaughn De Leath had known almost constant pain. But you'd never have guessed it to see her at the studio in the evenings. Always in evening dress, talking with friends before the program started—poised, essentially professional the minute the announcer called, "On the air!"

Vaughn De Leath says herself that she has a "trick voice." Its tones are the deepest of the deep—and the highest of coloratura trills. Often, she has wanted to use her "other voice"—to sing Mozart, perhaps, once in a while. But her fans like Vaughn's crooning voice best.



# BACK TO THE FARM

By CURTIS  
MITCHELL



Ruth Etting was brought up on a farm in David City, Nebraska. As a girl she dreamed of the big city with its excitement and glamor. Now she dreams of the farm—with its peace and quiet.



veals her secret anxiety to be done with the bright lights and gay places of Broadway.

I don't mean to say that Ruth is tired of it all. Not by any means. Life is still a great adventure . . . and every time she stands before a mike she thrills through and through at the tremendous force that flings her voice across continents. But she is wise with the wisdom of one who has climbed every rung of the ladder by her own efforts, and she knows how fleeting is fame and how calm and comforting is a place called Home.

That is why she plans, in all seriousness, to go back to the farm.

Her farm that she owns is near her old home town of David City. It is a level sweep one hundred and fifty acres broad, and it grows bumper crops. When she was all a year or so ago, she went there. Its clean air soon washed all the city soot from her lungs and gave her back health. She picked a place then where she will build her home. It will stand on a rise with a road winding past it. There will be barns in the back and endless acres of growing grain. The very thought thrills her.

ALL of her life since she left David City, I think, Ruth Etting has been homesick. It is a thing that she doesn't admit. But the sound of it is in her songs. In every song. Remember "Shine On, Harvest Moon," the grand old favorite she revived for the Follies? She made that her own . . . and her singing of it was a panting of her own loneliness.

To begin with, she wanted to be an artist. Her earliest

RUTH ETTING is an amazing person. Her life has ranged from hectic Chicago cabarets where she sang for tips to stardom in the Ziegfeld Follies, yet all that has scarcely touched her. She is still as unspoiled and sweet as the little country girl who left David City, Nebraska, in search of a career.

To me, she belongs in a church choir. I have heard her sing a hundred songs, some hot and some blue and one ten-cents-a-dance songs. Part of them would have tickled her grandmother, but her voice is triumphant over any song. In it one hears the throb of an understanding heart . . . and that, to me, belongs not in a theatre but in a village choir.

She really sang in one once, you know. In the David City Congregational Church. Some day, she says, she is going back. And she says it with a wistfulness that re-



With all Ruth Etting's love of bright lights and glamor she still remembers—and longs for—her peaceful days on the farm where she was brought up

(Left) Ruth Etting in the sort of costume which she likes really better than any other. When she became ill it was the farm which built her up again. (Below) In the studio with Norman Brokenshire, announcer of announcers.

idol was Nell Brinkley who worked in those days for an Omaha newspaper. Little Ruth copied those Brinkley drawings, holding them tight against a window pane and tracing them. How they inspired her. When she graduated from the David City high school, her father reluctantly sent her to Chicago to study in the immense Academy of Fine Arts.

Those care-free, tremendous years of youth. She remembers the dusty train ride . . . a room in a YWCA with an aunt for a chaperone . . . letter from home warning her against the pitfalls of a big city . . . tedious hours in school . . . designing fashions for theatrical producers.

One of those producers was in charge of the show at the Marigold Gardens. His chorus girls were the slimmest in the city. He had bought Ruth's drawings and suddenly he noticed that she was slim.

By now, she was supporting herself by working for a dressmaker. Her salary was \$15 a week. The chorus job that he offered paid \$25. She took it and kept the other one—and drew \$40 a week by working both day and night.

It took her just a year to learn that she could sing. The break came when a young man who was a baritone joined the show. All the other young men had been tenors—and they sang too high for Ruth. This one sang in a low key and she discovered herself humming the choruses with him. So great was her enthusiasm for the new-found gift in her throat that the manager presently came back to ask which girl was singing so loudly.

It happened that a few nights later, the baritone failed to appear. So the manager came again and bundled Ruth into a polo costume and sent her on in his place. That was her first performance as a vocal soloist. And her last appearance in any chorus. For soon her new kind of low-voiced crooning made her the darling of the town.

Big Jim Colisimo's famous spaghetti palace was one of the many places in which she sang. Her pay there was the tips that customers tossed into her apron. One night, a famous gambler named Nick the Greek tossed her \$50.



She accepted it and shared it with the other entertainers.

Then she moved to the College Inn at the Sherman Hotel. On the hotel roof was radio station WLS. She went upstairs and became Chicago's original sweetheart of the air. Her pianist for those broadcasts was an unknown lad named Glenn who had a pal and partner called Ford. Today, those names are household words in a lot of communities. Ford is the same Ford Rush who is WLW's favorite son and Glenn is half of the immensely popular team of Gene and Glenn that still broadcasts from Chicago.

THOSE were gay, surprising months. One night, after she had broadcast "What Can I Say After I Say I'm Sorry?" an executive from a phonograph company rushed into the studio and signed her up to a five-year contract. She began to make big money—really amazingly big. The Shuberts tried to (Continued on page 41)

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# Could YOU Win this VICTORY...?

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If I were Bing Crosby's wife or mother, I should be so proud of him.

All wives and mothers are proud of their menfolk—but in this case there's a special meaning you won't get until you know the tragic story that I know about Bing Crosby.

It isn't a pretty story—but it ends in a blaze of glory. And that, I think, is the important thing to us women who, in victory or defeat, stand by our men.

Not long ago, certain men were asking, "Whose fault is Bing Crosby?"

Now that isn't a friendly question. It meant that those people considered Bing something of a nuisance. They were the ones who were responsible for his appearances on the air. And Bing, with a flaming youth's grand disregard for the inflexible schedules of radio, came and went as he pleased. And often, even though he reached the mike in time, he was in no condition to sing.

One night—this story comes from Hollywood where he sang in the celebrated Cocoanut Grove—he broke down in the middle of a song and fell straight forward like a man in a faint. Out on the Cocoanut Grove floor—cold.

The bold, unpleasant truth is this: Bing Crosby drank.

PLEASE try to understand this thing. He was the cleanest kind of boy when he left college. Yet, within a few years, he was—different. How did it happen? Did life come upon him when he was unprepared? Well, perhaps that was part of it—but there was another reason.

His boyhood was much like that of any other boy born in the west. Tacoma, Washington, was his home, and May 2, 1904, was his birthday. His childhood was composed of games where he ran endlessly shouting "bing, bing, bing,"—which gave him a name considerably more picturesque than the conventional Harry Lillis Crosby that had satisfied his parents.

And there were sports. Baseball and football, clean outdoor pastimes that he played as hard and as well as anyone. At college, it was much the same.

There, one of his pals was Al Rinker. Together, they organized a seven-piece orchestra. A local theatre manager booked them into his vaudeville house. The town turned out to hear them. When Bing and Rinker began to think of careers, everyone advised them to stick to music and the theatre.

Have you ever heard Mildred Bailey with Paul Whiteman's orchestra? She is Al Rinker's sister. It was she

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By MARY  
STEWART

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Globe Photo

(Above) As he looked in football garb during his school days. (Right) And in baseball garb. Bing was plenty athletic in school. It wasn't until after his school days that his fatal bad habit began to develop. On the opposite page he's with Stuart Erwin. They both appear in "The Big Broadcast" for Paramount.



Globe Photo

who got the two boys an engagement to sing in the old Tent Gate owned by a brother of the orchestra conductor, Abe Lyman. That was their first professional work, and it led them to other jobs.

When Paul Whiteman heard them, he brought them to New York, introduced them to a chap named Harry Barris—and the Famous Rhythm Boys were created. Three brilliant years of that, remember? Until they went back to California and split up, each to make a name for himself.

It was then that we first began to worry about Bing.

If we had known him better, perhaps we would have understood. We would have known, for instance, that he was terribly nervous—and that a drink or two steadied him. We would have learned that a stage and a house full of white faces stowing through the gloom beyond the footlights still terrified him. We should have known that always he has had a ravenous hunger for friendship. In the past, he had been too busy to enjoy more than a few intimates. But now, with the world at his feet, he found himself surrounded from getting-up time until the smallest morning hours by the cleverest men and prettiest women in the land. It was a heady wine, believe me. It made it so easy to "have just one more"—and to forget singing appointments. It's easy to understand, isn't it?

Bing Crosby had conquered fame, success, people—everything but himself. And when it came to that—well, it took the little woman to show him how

Did you know that certain powerful interests in the motion picture industry even tried to break up his romance and marriage with brown-eyed, blond Dixie Lee? One never knows who is right in these affairs that wrench at the heart, but this must go into the record in indelible ink. Little Dixie Lee defied the powers (which meant her employers and her family) to marry Bing. And she defied them again to *keep* him.

She alone knew how badly he needed her, and that shaped her decision. So she told Bing that she was going to get a divorce.

It brought him face to face with the first tragedy in his meteoric career. Why, Dixie had been his anchor to windward, but now . . . now . . .

I think Bing took inventory then for the first time in his adult life. He was honest enough to realize that he was not the man he had been, not the cheery, dependable youngster who had sung his way to the top. And he understood why.

Oh, it took some painful sessions, believe me. He believed, quite honestly, that liquor helped his voice; he thought he needed it to overcome his natural shyness.

You must know the glorious answer. For Dixie is still with him, more in love than ever. And Bing is rocketing to new heights on the air and in a great talking picture called "The Big Broadcast." And he's "on the wagon."

## LET'S GOSSIP ABOUT



(Left) Meet Tito Guizar, that delightful chap who sings Spanish songs to the accompaniment of the guitar—over WABC. (Right) A scene during the broadcasting of the Tish series. (Left to right) Lizzie, Helen Lowe; Aggie, May Buckley; and Tish, Marion Barney.



**BING CROSBY**, who happens to be in Hollywood at the moment playing a feature role in "The Big Broadcast," got the well-known stage fright the other night for the first time since he began his career with Paul Whiteman's "Rhythm Boys."

He took his wife to the movies . . . you know, one of those houses where they have an organist who plays for the audience to sing? Well, the slides (with the words of the song) began to flash on the screen and the crowd began singing. Bing liked the tune, one of his favorites as a matter of fact, and so he joined. By the time the timid and feeble-voiced crowd got through the first chorus, they sensed that Bing was leading the way. So the second chorus was left for Bing to do alone. Believe it or not, he got half way through and quit!

You can hardly blame the crowd for trying—after all, it costs real dough to hear Crosby in a personal appearance!

**LATEST** rumors from the Don Lee division of the Columbia network spell **ROMANCE** in big letters! It seems that Paul Rickenbacher, assistant production manager of KHJ, Los Angeles, is that way about that beautiful, blond blues singer at the San Francisco station of the NBC studios. Her real name is Winnie Parker . . . but you know her as Mona Lowe. The gang are looking for them to "middle aisle" it any day now . . . despite denials!

Burns & Allen got rather tired of Hollywood towards the last. With only two more days of shooting on "The Big Broadcast," George and Gracie ups to the management and tells 'em that they will work just one more day . . . and that's that!

**AND** now Raymond Page, that orchestra leader you hear from California every Sunday, has up and got himself tied! His sweet little wife is better known around New York than she is in Hollywood—but the gang out here are well pleased with Mary York!

The newest radio couple on the Pacific Coast met about a year ago . . . and the other day they walked slowly up the aisle of the Hollywood Methodist Church. A mysterious and well-guarded honeymoon followed to parts unknown. But you'll be hearing from them soon . . . the show must go on.

Everett Mitchell, the National Farm and Home



Whispering Jack Smith and his three charming assistants of the Absorbine, Jr., program. Those three charming assistants are Margaret Speaks, Dorothy Greeley and Katherine Cavalli.

## YOUR FAVORITES



(Left) Ralph Dumpe and Eddie East as they appear when, for the purposes of radio, they become Sisters of the Skillet. Got a new recipe for us, b-girls? (Right) Sylvia, late of Hollywood, showing how one of her exercises should be done.



Hour announcer, has a photograph of which he is very proud. It is a picture of his great-great-grandmother, a Penobscot Indian, sitting before her tepee smoking a pipe.

**HOT** weather does queer things to people. One of the boys up at the NBC offices went into a huddle with a sheet of paper and a pencil the other day and emerged hours later with these items to astound the world.

A lot of radio people, he discovered, are wandering through life with thirteen letters in their names. Among them are Freeman Goshen of Amos 'n' Andy; Eugene Carroll of Gene and Glenn; Raymond Knight, the

comedian who was responsible for the KUKU hour; Phillips H. Lord who is "Seth Parker"; Robert L. Ripley of "Believe It Or Not" fame; and Grantland Rice, the sports authority.

Among the announcers, we have Howard M. Caney, Bennett Grauer, Alois Havrilla, John W. Holbrook, Graham McNamee, and Howard A. Petrie.

**ONE** of the oddest things ever to happen to a radio team happened to Billy Jones and Ernie Hare, the Best Foods duo, several years ago during a broadcast. A steamship named the "Robert E. Lee" sent out an S. O. S. and they were cut off the air. The song they were singing when the engineers heard the ship's distress signal was "Waiting for the Robert E. Lee."

**ARE** you one of the new Flippen fans? Lots of people are. The giddy Broadway headliner with Freddie Rich's thirty-five piece orchestra is doing himself proud.

Jay is a direct descendant of one of the several tribes of Chickashaw Indians of Arkansas, his native state. Maybe that's how he came by that whoop. And he got his start in the show business by impersonating a negro. Minstrel work, you see. When a Chickashaw turns black-face and then becomes a radio star, does it mean the world is coming to something—or does it?

**REMEMBER** those "Easy Aces" programs? Or don't you play bridge? Well, it seems Mr. and Mrs. Ace make the same sort of blunders in life that they do in their skits. They were planning a trip to California from New York via the Panama Canal. So, the Aces ups to the mike and tell their gaga public that they'll send a postal to



The Mills Brothers, who can imitate an orchestra so well that even visitors to the studio swear its done with hidden instruments. You hear them on the fifteen-minute Crisco program.

All the latest news and chit-chat about your ether favorites and their doings.

Raymond Page, the California orchestra leader, has been and gone and done it.

## LET'S GOSSIP ABOUT YOUR FAVORITES



Ted Husing ready to broadcast a football game. 'Tis said that the Eastern colleges will prohibit the broadcasting of their games this year. Isn't that mean?



Alexander Gray and Sylvia Froos collecting their fan mail at the studio broadcasting. Have you heard their work recently? It's grand.



Billy Jones and Ernie Hare, whose clever jokes and amusing songs have kept you listeners-in happy these past years and years on NBC programs.

every fan who wants one. And did the fans lap-it-up? To date, Mr. and Mrs. Goodman Aces have had to buy, pay for, and mail over ten thousand of those cheery little "Having-a-grand-time-wish-you-were-here" pasteboards.

**M**ORTON DOWNEY and his wife, Barbara Bennett, are going to get a vacation some of these days. Just wait and see.

Last year, Morton was tied up with contracts and couldn't get away so the missus bought herself a new outfit and went to the South of Europe and North Africa. She had hardly landed before Morton keeled over with threatened pneumonia. So the missus turned her back on all the fun she had planned and rushed home to nurse him.

This year, Downey found he could get away but Barbara was tied up. So he crossed the briny to Gay Paree. Not many hours after he got there, a radio from New York told him that his wife was in the hospital. And poof! went another vacation.

He raced back to New York to find her somewhat improved, but as this is written she is still in the hospital. And Downey is with her, helping her to get well.

That vacation, if any, will have to come next year.

**I**T'S all very confusing. We mean this business of names. Just the other day we got the glad tidings that Virginia Rea would hit some high sopranos with Paul Whiteman's orchestra. Yes, the same Virginia Rea who used to be the Olive Palmer who thrilled us old tuners-inners who dialed the dear, dead Palmolive hour. And now we hear that her name isn't Virginia Rea either, though she does use it for radio work. What we hear is that the folks who knew her when she was just up to here-used to call her Virginia Murphy.

But we should worry 's long as she broadcasts again.

Homely jokes are the current radio vogue. Jokes that reach right into the home and titillate the housewives' funny-bone. In that line, it was Ralph Dumpke of the Sisters of the Skillet who said he was going to erect a monument to the naturalist who can grow a pea pod that's equipped with a zipper.

**W**HEN station WINS attempted to broadcast music by the grand orchestra of the Italian Line steamship "Conte Biancamano" recently they ran smack into the United States government. It seems there is a law against foreign musicians landing in America, the idea being if foreigners make music for America it creates just that much more unemployment. But the station got around it. It strung a wire to the dock and put a mike in the ship's music room and the day was saved—and Uncle Sam's law was upheld.

**Y**OU don't have to believe this but the smart boys up-town are saying that Rudy Vallee is going to stop playing the saxophone. It seems a wise man of medicine told Rudy that too much tooting might over-develop certain muscles so that his singing would be harmed. And that's the reason behind it all.

While we're talking about him, we might as well announce that Vallee has a new yen. Absolutely new. And so practical you can use it from early morning until late at night. It's this way, friends. Rudy is taking up the study of law.

His pals don't know the answer and his best friends can't guess. Is he planning to go into a law firm when his star as a singer starts to dim? Or is it just one of his moods?

**A**RTHUR BAGLEY, the chipper chap who says, "Bend down, sister," every morning in the Tower Health Exercises bounded in recently with the glad tidings that

It seems that Rudy Vallee is giving up the saxophone. To save his voice.

## LET'S GOSSIP ABOUT YOUR FAVORITES



The four Lombardos whose concerted efforts have made Guy Lombardo and his orchestra world famous. That's Guy sitting down with the fiddle.



Phillips Lord, better known as Seth Parker, visited the New York Bowery not long ago and gave cheer to some of the unfortunate derelicts.



Tony Wons searching through his scrap-books for something appropriate to the occasion. It isn't often Tony gets as stumped as he looks here.

5,000 new enthusiasts have joined his classes during the past month. Which brought him up to the point of explaining that a grand total of 881,245 exercise charts have been distributed by him since 1925 when he went on the air. And in return, he has received over a million letters.

**H**ERE'S another study in statistics. Only this time, the figures concern girls and not *billet douce*. Pat Barnes, the big he-man of Chicago broadcasting, draws so much fan mail to Swift and Company, his sponsors, that forty—count 'em—forty girls devote their entire time to looking after it.

Come to think of it, what would Uncle Sam's Post Office do without the jolly networks stirring up so many three-cent stamp customers?

**W**ALTER O'KEEFE, keeper of the Lucky Strike magic carpet, paused long enough the other night to remember a day when his performances drew more razzberries than posies. In his youth, he appeared on the stage in Worcester, Mass. The critic who saw the show was a man of very few kind words. He wrote:

"There are very few weak acts on the bill this week. Walter O'Keefe has this department all to himself."

The Boswell Sisters just can't make up their mind. Will they go to Europe or won't they go to Europe? To date, none of them has been abroad. They have been offered some juicy contracts—the figure, we hear, being on the sugary side of \$5,000 per week. And still they can't make up their minds. Ho-hum.

**A**ll these radio fellers. Just to show you what they can do when pressed, the Columbia Broadcasting System recently got itself into a situation when it booked Colonel Snopmagle and Budd for vaudeville appearances in Detroit. That meant, of course, that they would broadcast

from a Detroit studio. Simple—but what about Louis Dean, their announcer, who had work to do in New York? All right, what about him? Well, sir, Uncle Louis, the Dean of announcers, got himself on a train and rushed to Detroit, announced the program and got himself on a train that came right straight back. It took him the better part of three days, he traveled 3,000 miles, and he was on the air just four minutes.

**I**f you've been hearing "Lefty" and Nora in CBS' Midsummer Nights programs, maybe you don't know whom you've been listening to.

Nora Langhorne came from Virginia. One of her sisters is Lady Astor in England. Another is Mrs. Charles Dana Gibson, the original Gibson girl. During the war, she sang overseas to thousands of soldiers.

As for "Lefty," he is an old Yale football idol who went to Hollywood in the silent picture days, and then moved to England. While there, he met and married Nora. She is back in America for the first time in twenty-two years.

**D**O you want a monkey?

The comedy team of Olsen and Johnson didn't stop to ask that before they went on the air recently for the Fleischmann Hour. They bought monkeys—thirty of them—and sent them around to every radio writer in New York City. And what a howl the gag got.

Suppose you were planning to go away for a nice cool week-end, and an expressman lugged up a monkey in a crate. Would you know what to do with the monkey? Would you take it with you or would you try to board it out? Or would you get gray hairs wondering about a world that permits such things to happen to innocent bystanders?

Well, a lot of those monkeys ended up in various zoos.

(Continued on page 50)

Olsen and Johnson pull a monkey gag. There must have been a monkey fire sale.

# IF YOU MET



This famous author—whose novels and articles are appearing currently in America's leading magazines—gives you a fascinating interview with this important personality of the ether waves

By FAITH  
BALDWIN

**I**f you met Ray Perkins, you might discover, as I did, that he is a dual personality.

One of his personalities is the air personality; it is a very delightful one and one of which any young man may well be proud. The other is his own in-the-flesh personality and that one is quite different, but equally attractive.

Interviewing the radio stars is exciting. You see, when listening to them over the air you build up in your mind a very definite idea of each and every one of them. Then you meet them and you have to adjust yourself to something quite dissimilar. With the motion picture stars, you have no such problem; for they, at least must bear a resemblance to their screen projections. But the radio star builds himself up in your mind solely through the medium of his voice.

I had, of course, seen pictures of Ray Perkins. Nevertheless, I insisted upon thinking of him—or his voice—as short, rather plump, with a small dark mustache and twinkling dark eyes and a general aura of a radio Frank Morgan. Imagine my astonishment when, at the appointed hour, I was presented to a sturdy young man, looking younger than he is, which is young enough, very blond, with a round, smooth-shaven face and straight-forward, very blue eyes. Serious eyes, too!

Even his voice is different!

But there are two points of similarity between Mr. Perkins of the air and Mr. Perkins on the air: friendliness and wit.

Ray Perkins has had a rather extraordinary career. First of all he got himself born in Boston, but soon came to New York where eventually he graduated from Columbia University, making a name for himself there in music, writing most of the music for their show in his Junior year. From Columbia he went straight into the service, in '17, and was commissioned and attached first to the artillery and then to Military Intelligence. And during that service languished his life away at Camp Upton, up to his knees in mud. I didn't ask him, but I'm certain he was pretty darned popular, especially if there was a piano around! For Mr. Perkins makes pianos talk.

# RAY PERKINS

**A**FTER the war he started on his career of song writing; he was with the Shuberts, he was with George M. Cohan, he was a free lance. He even did a turn in vaudeville. He started broadcasting in about 1926, but couldn't really see it as a permanent career then. He left that job and was music editor of Dance Magazine for a time; and then took a flier in Hollywood. But he ended up back on the air again as a broadcaster—and what a broadcaster! He was, of course, "Old Topper," the gentleman who endeared himself to thousands, and since then he has been famous on the Three Bakers program, the Jurgen program, with Rudy Vallee on the Fleischmann hour and finally, at present writing, with the Barbasol program. In between, he does guest appearances and things.

Mr. Perkins is a humorist. He has the sort of humor that is fast, friendly, the humor which is amused at itself, which goes over so very well on the air and which employs a different technique from the humor of the stage.

Like all comics Ray Perkins, despite his quick wit and his occasional priceless nifties, is a serious person—away from the mike. He takes his work with earnestness. And it is work. He doesn't just stand up in front of that little gadget and be funny, you know. He has to plan and write each script, select his songs, dig around for his gags, keep his bright, quick patter up to date, and rehearse, rehearse, rehearse. And that is why he's so good.

I reproached him for causing me to sing his Jurgen theme song—"Soft White Hands"—even in my sleep and for then switching me to a new song, just as catchy, but one which is inappropriate for my purpose, as it has to do with shaving. He laughed and told me that the "Soft White Hands" waltz has been sold to a music publisher. I'm glad. I hope I hear it on the air again some day and that some orchestra leader will see it for what it is, a haunting, pretty melody, a charming lyric.

Ray Perkins really cares a lot about his work. It isn't just a job to him, it's something he can build up, improve every day, work over, agonize over. In short it's the sort of work a man takes to his heart and loves.

**RAY** is married. His wife listens in to his broadcasts, almost always coming to the studio with him. He says it's necessary to have *some one* tell you the truth! The rest of his family consists of a small son and a brand new baby girl, whom they've just adopted. He's crazy about children, and I'm willing to bet a cookie that the feeling is mutual.

He has, by the way, an interesting family. One sister is Bobby Perkins, who since her marriage has left the stage; another is Grace Perkins, the novelist, whose husband is Fulton Oursler, novelist, editor and playwright.

And I wonder if you have ever heard Ray sending a word of cheer to his mother via the air waves? Of course you have. That's as real as he is, too!

Ray smokes the brand of cigarettes I prefer. That was a break for me, wasn't it? And sometimes he chews gum.

He is a definite personality. Witty, serious, quick, very much in earnest about his work, and, I believe, beneath his rather placid exterior, sensitive and nervous.

I hear that he likes to garden, up in Scarsdale, New York. And since I possess a back yard which is the light of my life, that's still another bond between us.





Come with us and tour the National Broadcasting Company's New York studio during the Fleischmann Hour. It's just as if you were there in the well-known flesh



# BACKSTAGE AT

The sitting-room studio (above), where one can broadcast amid the comforts of home and without that bleak "studio" atmosphere. (Right) The studio control booth, with W. W. Redfern doing the honors. Kinks are taken out of voices here.



By OGDEN  
MAYER

If you have seen a broadcast, turn the page. If you haven't . . . well, this is a visit to the National Broadcasting Company's building at 711 Fifth Avenue in New York where you can see more famous people in five minutes than you would ordinarily meet in a life time. We're going to step into the first Rudy Vallee program ever to admit visitors, we're going to giggle at Olsen and Johnson's insanities, and we're going to have the time of our lives. Are you ready? Got on your best bib and tucker? Then, all aboard for the Fleischmann Hour.

We roll up Fifth Avenue to Number 711. We can't miss the building . . . an awning projects over the sidewalk to the curb and a crowd stands around the door. Day and night that crowd is there. Some of them are artists . . . look! The big guy who looks like a good-natured shot-putter . . . that's Ralph Dumpe, one of the Sisters of the Skillet. And hey! That's George Olsen and Ethel Shutta. Somebody's coming out so don't get

trampled. See how the crowd is staring. It's Whiteman, Maestro Paul, King of Jazz. And his wife, Margaret Livingston of the good old movies.

A half dozen men slide out of the crowd and follow him, all talking at the same time. They are song pluggers, men who are hired by music companies to exploit those companies' songs. They are trying to persuade Paul that his orchestra ought to feature "Moonlight and Dandelions," "I Give In, Dear," or "Who's Your Little Hoopla?" on his next program. They are offering him, no doubt, everything from a ten per cent cut of all copies sold to a castle in Spain if he will only play—and popularize—their songs. But they're wasting their time. Paul plays what he likes—and asks for nothing more than a real good tune.

**HEADS UP!** In we go—right through these golden doors. The man at the desk looks up inquiringly. He wants to see our tickets. Every visitor to the studio after office hours must have a ticket. We get ours by writing to the NRC and asking for them. Hundreds of



See what Graham McNamee does during a broadcast. And Rudy Vallee. Why can you see Rudy singing with his orchestra and yet not hear him, although the orchestra is clear?

# A BROADCAST



[Above] Studio D. This is used for quartettes and occasional orchestras. (Left) Mr. Graham McNamee, the announcer of the Fleischmann Hour whose announcerial duties are described in this article. (Double left) Rudy Vallee, the pet of the Fleischmann program.

visitors to New York do that same thing every day . . . just write the company, setting the date on which they expect to be in town.

Now we're in the elevator rocketing up to the studios. Two networks begin in this building, the blue network originating with station WJZ and the red originating with Station WJZ. Usually, there is a lot going on.

Studio L, for instance. It is called the "Sitting Room Studio" because it has a fireplace, a divan, a writing desk, and all the comforts of home. Nervous people love it because they feel at ease. When such personages as foreign premiers or world-girdling aviators talk to America, this is their room. And Lowell Thomas uses it every night for his news broadcasts.

Studio B on the 13th floor is called "The Cathedral." Lucky Strike Dance Hours originate in it. It is big enough for a full symphony orchestra. Not far away is Studio E, a medium-sized room. Amos 'n' Andy use it when they are in New York . . . just now it is the home of the "Rise of the Goldbergs."

Our own destination is the Auditorium Studio on the 15th floor. It is one of the largest, and it accommodates

a crowd. We get off the elevator into a sort of foyer that is jammed with people. Other guests, obviously, for they hold tickets. Rudy Vallee is the magnet. This is the first time he has allowed visitors to watch him perform.

**L**OOK at your watch! Seven minutes before nine. We'll get in soon. Those doors over there, see them? They will open and that blue-uniformed page boy will take our tickets and let us through. Wait! He's opening them now.

The seats are ordinary bridge chairs—ranged in orderly rows. Get as near the front as possible. And then look about. Look! There's Rudy wearing a black bow-tie. Somehow, he looks smaller than one would expect, even when he stands on the little wooden platform to direct his band.

At first glance, the studio looks like any big, two-story room. But glance at those walls. They're a special asbestos composition that deadens and prevents echoes. The guests—that's us—are all at one end. Tonight, we fill about half the floor space. The other half is occupied by Vallee's Connecticut Yankees.

And see the mikes, those square black boxes on stands

mat are sprinkled across the center of the studio floor.

Beyond that window in the opposite wall is the studio control room. Actually, it's a sort of a closet equipped with an instrument board and a loud speaker in which an engineer sits and "monitors" the program. That word, monitor, is a trick one. The radio people might just as well say "listens to a program," but they say "monitor" and there is nothing we can do about it.

Don't think that engineer isn't an important person. He can make or mar a program. It is his job to balance the sounds from the various mikes. For instance, an orchestra plays into one mike and a soloist sings into another. By turning gadgets on his control panel, the engineer varies the volume coming through each mike so that it mixes or "balances" perfectly; i. e., so the soloist can be heard perfectly with the orchestra not too loud in the background. That window is for his signals during the program to tell the announcer or the production man inside the studio if any particular instrument needs to be moved closer or away from the mike.

And there's the clock—right above that little cabinet that looks something like a tiny telephone switchboard. Every studio has its clock—there are over ninety of them in this building—and they are all checked twice a day to keep them correct. The announcer is glibbed by it and he uses that board beneath to switch the studio on and off the air.

**L**OOK! Some more people are coming in. That's Graham McNamee in the lead, fresh-shaven, wearing a double-breasted gray. And Olsen and Johnson, dressed in their antievil costumes. They're grinning—probably at one of Olsen's jokes.

McNamee glances at the clock and goes to the switchboard. Vallee stands on his platform, waiting. The minute hand is almost against the nine. On the air—almost! One minute," McNamee warns.

All the guests get a little tense, but the orchestra chatters right on. Vallee is turning over music. McNamee nods up one hand. He has a pair of earphones on his head, listening to the end of the previous program. It may come from another studio—from Chicago or Los Angeles.

"Fifteen seconds," he calls.

Vallee raises his baton. Everyone waits—on edge. McNamee is listening to his earphones. The seconds tick past. Suddenly, he throws a tiny switch and a red dot flows on his switchboard. That means the studio is on the air. He talks into a mike:

"Double-U, E, A, F, New York."

His hand moves toward Vallee. Rudy's baton swoops down and the Connecticut Yankees swing into the Fleischmann Hour theme song, *You Time is My Time*.

Surprising things happen during a studio broadcast; surprising to the visitors, I mean. We see Rudy step

down from his platform and go to a mike. A rack holds an unfolded sheet of music and we are sure we are going to hear his voice. In a moment, we see his mouth move, his eyebrows peak together in the way he has made famous. He is singing, but . . . but we hear nothing. Here in the studio, the orchestra drowns him out. You see now, why that engineer beyond the window is so important? He has balanced the sound so that the person who listens to a loudspeaker gets it with Vallee's soft voice soaring over the orchestral accompaniment.

Then the solo is over and we hear an instrumental number. Those Connecticut Yankees are smart musicians—and Vallee is a clever showman. The tunes keep us on the edge of our chair. Graham McNamee goes to a mike with several sheets of paper. The orchestra's volume diminishes. Graham begins to talk, leaning toward the mike intimately as if talking to an old friend, smiling, gesturing as he reads his advertising message. It looks silly to us, his gesturing and grinning at a black metal box—but it isn't, for he is talking to twenty million people and he knows it.

**T**HEN Olsen and Johnson, those lumatic comics. The orchestra rests. The comedians huddle over a microphone. Olsen is reading his gags from a sheaf of papers. Johnson is laughing, that high, hyena-ish laugh that makes you laugh, too, whether you want to or not. Then they go into a furious bit of dialogue. The scene is a political convention. We begin to wonder what they will use for a crowd.

Look! That man with the big cardboard under his arms. He stands right in front of us. Olsen cries into the mike:

"Hear the applause!"

The man with the big cardboard lifts a sheet that has in foot-high letters, the word APPLAUSE. His face begs us to applaud. And we do, pleased as kids invited to act in the show.

Johnson cries, "They're beyond control. Listen to them roar."

The man with the cardboard raises another card and we obediently roar. Soon, we talk and we laugh, all according to the printed word on his enormous placard.

Then Olsen and Johnson are through. And Vallee resumes. Presently, more announcements are read—testimonials, too. And the comedians are back again.

We chuckle at their gags. We hear Olsen ask Johnson why a rabbit's nose is always shiny, and we hear Johnson answer, "Because its powder puff is on the other end."

As they finish, Graham McNamee rises from his chair and walks softly to his little switchboard. Rudy Vallee is watching the engineer through the window, watching McNamee, gauging the time remaining. These programs have to stop within ten seconds of the minute.

At its finish, there is an instant of silence. Then McNamee talks to the mike about yeast. At the end, he signals Rudy. The Yankees swing again into their theme song. McNamee takes a felt hammer and taps the NBC network signature on the chimes at his elbow. He says, "This is the National Broadcasting Company." Rudy's music continues. We sit, watching Graham as he listens to the ear phones again. He is waiting for the next program to come on. There! He hears it. He throws a little switch, puts down the earphones and turns to us.

"Party's over," he says.

And the Fleischmann Hour is ended.



Ole Olsen (lower) and Chic Johnson, those two funnee men whose antics keep you in those pleasurable stitches during the Fleischmann Hour.



**THE PICKENS SISTERS  
—FROM GEORGIA**

Jane, Patti and Helen Pickens—those harmony birds whose lovely voices are heard over the air in songs which laud the beauty of the Southern plantations—and occasionally ones in which they decry the heartbreaks of Broadway. But their greatest popularity is achieved in their renditions of those Negro plantation songs. They seem to be able to put them over in a fascinating style peculiarly their own.

# A WOMAN'S RIGHT

The Countess Albani has always wanted to earn her own living. But her royal background stifled any such ideas. But after she'd married, tragedy occurred, and now—



(Above) The Countess is frequently referred to as the most beautiful woman on the radio. (Right) The Countess Albani and her son, Guardo Angelo Medolago Albani. He's a count and a marquis.

By CURTIS MITCHELL



HERE is a message of hope for every woman whose life is clogged by the taboos of "I wouldn't do that" and "It simply isn't done, my dear." It is the valiant story of a girl who cut through every convention of royalty and society to prove that a woman is more than a graceful ornament to be exhibited in evening gowns or kept at home tending the children.

In these days, such an example means a great deal. In these days, it means that every woman in a similar position has an opportunity to do—in a lesser or greater degree—just what the Countess Olga Albani has done. Yes, it means that you too can do it. But first you must take some knocks and slaps before you can convince your sceptical men folks of your right to stand elbow to elbow with them.

When a girl baby is born into a royal family, particularly into a Spanish royal family, it is like a moth in a cocoon, wrapped and bundled in endless strings of tradition and convention. That was the handicap which Olga

# TO HELP HER HUSBAND



The Countess is a great believer in athletics. Can you imagine Royalty exercising in public on the roof? Another of her departures from old Spanish custom.

Hernandez—who is now the Countess Albani—faced in the early morn of August 13, 1905.

So many things were expected of her. Just to give you an idea, she was named Olga after a daughter of the Russian Czar. Her birthplace was a Barcelona castle where her ancestors had lived since long before the days of Columbus and Isabella. A grandfather was an admiral in the Spanish navy. Everywhere and at all times there was an immense amount of dignity.

AT five, her parents came to America, bringing all their Old World conventions. Little Olga, as she grew up, became known as the best chaperoned girl in New York. Even a visit to the corner grocery for candy could not be made without her duenna.

She was enrolled in the very best private schools and convents. Every earthly impulse was stifled—and every desire to do anything that would take her away from her shuttered home.

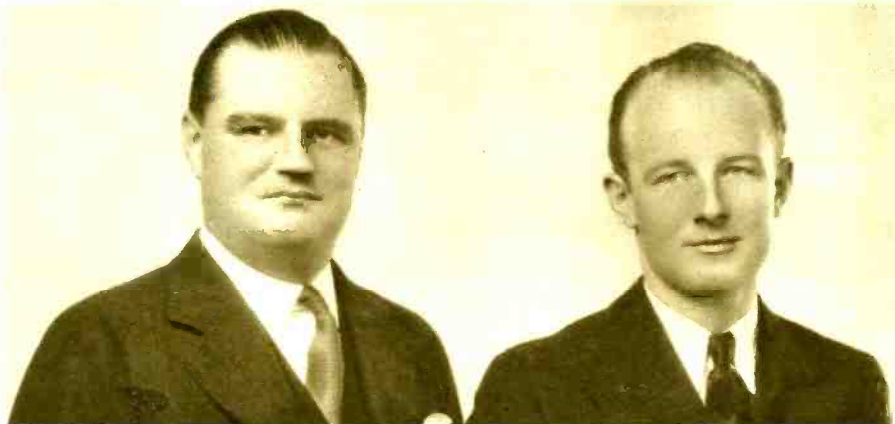
Once, when she voiced the wish that some day she might go on the stage, her father said, "I would rather see you dead before candles."

I am recounting these things in order to show what bonds and bars Olga Hernandez had to break in order to gain her freedom.

It must have been galling to possess an instinct for music and drama, and to find it blocked at every turn. Certainly, she might sing. Certainly, she might act. But only for the amusement of the Hernandez family and their friends. Anything more was an unladylike presumption. The daughters of a Hernandez did not make a show of themselves for the public.

Little Olga took refuge in her dreams. In them, she was always a great actress. In a convent that she attended, a long mirror stood at the end of a room. Before it, she acted play after play. Once, a nun caught her in the midst of a scene where her imaginary prince had left her and she was weeping from her window. Tears were streaming down her face. She was afraid to confess her snail pretending so when the nun, assuming that she was actually sobbing, attempted to comfort her, she buried her head on the friendly shoulder and wept some more. Such was the little thing's dramatic ability that the nun was convinced.

(Continued on page 19)



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## MEET STOOPNAGLE AND BUDD

Ever listen in to Stoopnagle and Budd? Do you get a chuckle out of their insane antics? We do. When their moment comes around we always turn to them. Did you know how they got on the air? There was a crisis—fifteen minutes ahead and no one to fill it! Budd was asked to do something to fill in. He was panic-stricken. He saw Stoopnagle passing through the corridor and called to him to help him out. Stoopnagle said he would if he could bring his harmonium with him. So he did. And they did. And the listeners-in ate it up. And Stoopnagle and Budd have been at it ever since. These pictures show them with and without their broadcasting make-up. Incidentally, don't fail to read our story on them in the next month's issue. Out October first.

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# Big Chief of the JESTERS

By MARY  
HOWELL



Meet Ed Wynn—and learn, among other interesting things, how his air career started

**E**D WYNN didn't want to be a radio star. He was very busy and very happy in his show, "The Laugh Parade," when a relentless advertising man cornered him and said, "How about going on the air?"

"Not in a million years," said Ed.

"There's money in it."

"Listen a minute," Ed said, "I've got four hundred rats, all of them too small for me. Could a radio audience see me in my funny hats? Could a radio audience see the old shoes I've been wearing since I bought them in 1908? Could it see my crazy costumes and funny face? No! Take all that away and what have you got left? Just a voice telling a funny story. It isn't enough."

"If I'm willing to take the gamble," said the man, "how much would you want for each broadcast?"

Ed Wynn chuckled, "I'll polish off this guy," he told himself, "I'll give him a price that will shut him up." Aloud, he said:

"Five thousand dollars."

The advertising man didn't even blink. He took out a fountain pen and a sheet of paper. "Just sign this contract," he said.

And that is how the perfect fool of the stage became the Lexaco Fire Chief.

"He will always remember that first air appearance for a scared man stiff. He had come to the NBC Times Square Studio in New York wearing his famous old shoes and a lumatic's costume.

"They made me feel funny," he explains, "and if I felt funny, I hoped I would sound funny."

**UNDERNEATH** the costume was an ancient undershirt that he has worn to each of his opening nights for a decade—his luck piece. He thought he would need it as he took the air.

Just before the program was switched on, Graham McNamee said, "Remember, Ed. You're playing to twenty million people tonight."

"That killed me," Wynn says.

Of course, the program made history for it definitely marked a trend toward a new sort of radio entertainment and established him as an outstanding favorite. Also, it taught him something. It taught him that he could get laughs without depending upon his hats and without the audience seeing his shoes.

This Simple Simon of radio is a man of parts. Few people know that he is a distinguished inventor. Beyond doubt, his mouse eradicator bears the stamp of genius. It is a mouse trap which is built so strongly that no mice can possibly get into it. Windows are provided, however, through which they can see all the dainties that the householder puts into the trap. It is Mr. Wynn's idea that the mice, seeing all those good things to eat and being unable to get at them, will become so disgusted at the whole affair that they will pack up and move to another locality.

**N**OT many years ago, he discovered that many people were irritated at having to dry themselves after taking a bath. So he plunged into a series of laboratory experiments that finally produced a rubber bathing suit that covers the entire body. A person wearing it can remain in the tub as many hours as he desires and yet emerge without being the least bit wet. Isn't that wonderful?

One of his hobbies is collecting jokes. Over 80,000 are in his files. When he tells them, whether they are old or new, he invariably succeeds in making them laughable. His last Broadway show had this choice bit. He was a waiter in a speakeasy. Upon serving an egg nog to a young lady, she berated him because the egg was old.

"You can't blame me for that," he retorted, "I only had the table."

I suppose you might call him a self-made man. Certainly, he has faced enough obstacles. Among them, his parents. Back in Philadelphia where he was born in 1880—yes, a Quaker City lad—he was just a skinny kid named Israel Edwin. (Continued on page 19)

# The Woman Behind the SOUNDS

Want to know how they make the sound for a fugitive from justice crashing through the forest? Or a horse climbing a glass mountain? A ginger ale bubble coming up for air? Read about Ora Nichols and the amazing sound magic she invents.

By OGDEN  
MAYER

**S**HE is Ora D. Nichols. She presides over an astonishing never-never land where things are very rarely what they seem, a realm of make-believe with secrets that must be zealously guarded.

We may call her the mistress of sounds—but she is really a sorcerer, a devotee of the blackest magic. In her own way, you see, she makes waves and avalanches and typhoons, she demolishes buildings and wrecks forests.

And, she does each thing with one of her little black boxes.

Those secrets of hers . . . what hours of labor and mental searching they represent. A sound engineer faces an extraordinary task. With whatever materials he can lay his hands on, he must reproduce every squeak and tumult in the world. I wonder, would you like to try it?

Suppose someone handed you a slip of paper that read something like this: "Sound effects needed for today: 1. A ginger ale bubble named Elmer coming up for air. 2. A horse climbing a glass mountain. 3. The squeaking of monkeys in a jungle. 4. A fugitive from justice crashing through a forest."

What would you do? Would you know how to make those sounds seem real to a million listeners? Ora Nichols does. Thus far, no one has ever asked her for a sound she couldn't furnish. That is a record—and the schedule above is simple compared to most of her assignments.

Or perhaps you don't think it would be simple to make a noise like a ginger ale bubble coming up for air? That was part of a Colonel Stearns and Budd program, if you remember. Well, the answer is a man with an educated mouth. He gurgles two or three seconds and then his lips explode gently and there you have the bubble bursting as realistically as any bubble that ever bursted.

**T**HE horse that climbed a glass mountain presented another problem. It was part of a fairy story for children and the sounds had to be accurate . . . there had to



Mrs. Nichols. She and her late husband were playing in a theatre when talkies arrived. They had to find another job—and they did.

be the tinkle of breaking glass plus the slide and scrape as the horse struggled upward. Mrs. Nichols took a cigar box and poured a thin layer of sand into its bottom. Then, pressing an ordinary drinking glass into the sand, twisting it a little, all the glassy clatter was reproduced so well that even the most skeptical believed that, in the studio, a horse was actually climbing a glass mountain.

The chatter of monkeys in the jungle is comparatively simple. She wets one end of a cork and rubs it over the side of a bottle.

But now, what of this fugitive who breaks away and crashes through the thick growth of the forest? Listeners-

near non jangling away, near the crackle of breaking limbs and the straining of saplings. That is Mrs. Nichols, noting a whisk broom up against the mike and slowly turning her finger through the stubby straws.

Think this magician of sounds is still a little surprised at finding herself in the radio business. You see, she meant to be a musician. That was when she lived in Springfield, Mass. And even after she married Arthur A. Nichols of North Adams and came to New York with him.

They were playing in an uptown movie theatre—he was a drummer and she played the piano—when the first sound picture arrived from Hollywood. What excitement it brought to the silent screen! To the Nichols, it meant the end of their careers. For with sound on the screen, there was no need for a theatre orchestra.

Together, they began to invent devices for imitating various noises. Their plan was to make the sounds that went into those pictures. With amazing clarity, they saw that the future of a musician would be less promising than ever—but that here was a new field as inspiring as it was unexplored.

That was their beginning as sound engineers. Their inventions began to attract attention. They picked up a few odd jobs. One of the pictures they worked on was "The Big Parade." Inevitably, they gravitated to the radio studios and there, at WABC in New York, Mr. Nichols finally found the place of which he had dreamed. Mrs. Nichols was his assistant. Once again, life was happy—and secure.

**UNTIL** one black day over a year ago, Arthur Nichols was too ill to do his work. So Ora did it for him. Not many days later, he died. And she continued to do his work. Today, she is still doing it. But she is doing much more. For she has gone on, improving and perfecting her "effects" until her laboratory in the CBS studios is now one of the most complete in the world.

Two assistants, George O'Donnell and Henry Gauthier, are her helpers and share her secrets. One of them is the "effect" that makes a noise like an airplane. She showed it to me only after I had promised to tell not a single detail of its construction. In size, it is no larger than a week-end bag but when she starts its electric motor and turns

this gadget and that it raises the roof in a burst of sound that not only seems like but is the music of an airplane motor.

Yes that laboratory is a place of wizardry. Thunder can come from it—by means of a great piece of steer hide stretched over a frame five feet square. The sounds of machine guns—by means of a mechanism that causes paddles to strike in rapid succession upon a leather-covered pad. The tattoo of Joe Palooka's punching bag—which is a pair of drumsticks being tapped on an inflated football. The crackle of flame—just a sheet of cellophane crushed near the mike. Rain on the roof—pebbles dropping on a calf-skin. A building collapsing—which is a wooden basket of the sort in which you get your peaches or grapes being crushed near the microphone. Wind—which may be a man blowing against the edge of a card or a great box with a crank on it that is one of Mrs. Nichols' dearest secrets. It's really incredible the number of sounds this woman has created. (Continued on page 46)



[Left] A scene from one of the "March of Time" programs. Mrs. Nichols and her two assistants, George O'Donnell and Henry Gauthier, are standing behind the piano. (Above) You'd never guess that's a gangster play they're broadcasting, would you? But it must be, because Mrs. Nichols is all set with her machine-gun box. See it?



# HAVE YOU A HIDDEN T A L E N T . . . ?

Develop it, says Don Novis. He had a hidden talent and for years did nothing about it. Then, when he finally discovered his possibilities, he made good



By HECTOR  
VAUGHN

(Right) The young Englishman himself—although born in England, he's been in this country a pretty long time. (Extreme right) With his wife, Julietta Novis.



**D**ONALD NOVIS intended to be a school teacher. He thought singing was "sissy."

Just the other day, an executive of the National Broadcasting Company told me, "Don Novis has the best microphonic voice I have ever heard."

Four years ago, Don was just another athlete. California is full of them . . . young huskies raised in the sun. He sang a little but only for the fun of it. If a man hadn't made him mad, he would be teaching physical education in some western school today.

Instead—have you heard him? The Coast knows him as its grandest tenor. During the past summer, NBC has presented him several times each week, and their faith in his voice was great enough for them to take him to New York where he could sing for a national audience.

At first, eastern sceptics who had heard of his California reputation thought he was another crooner. They remem-

bered Crosby and Colombo in whose footsteps Don was treading. And they sat back, saying, "We've had enough of this. He won't last."

But he did last. For he was different.

All the Novises are singers. Today, Don's father is soloist in a Pasadena church. Two brothers and a sister are fine musicians. Of them all, Don was the one who seemed certain to select another career. Yet . . .

But go back to Hastings in England where Don was born on March 3, 1906. His father was a singer in the village choir and the town cobbler. Don doesn't remember what prompted his father to tear the roots of his family from that decent English community. Perhaps it was the natural unrest of one who could not be satisfied with the horizons visible from a cobbler's last. Whatever the cause, the Novis clan crossed the Atlantic to the famous land of fortune and opportunity. (Continued on page 44)

## THE MOVIES TURN TO RADIO



Paramount's radio picture, "The Big Broadcast," is going to be one of the biggest things of the new movie season. Bing Crosby, Leila Hyams and Stuart Erwin have the leading rôles—you see them above at the mike. In the radio group below the mike (all of whom are in the movie) you will find Kate Smith, Arthur Tracy, Cab Calloway, the Mills Brothers, Burns and Allen and the Boswell Sisters.

Irene Beasley  
taught seven  
grades and had  
eleven pupils

**I**RENE BEASLEY is the girl who twined her slim fingers around a comet's tail and let it lift her to the glamorous heights of radio fame.

Up to a point, she was much like you and you and maybe you. Just a country girl. Her birthplace was Whitehaven, Tennessee. In 1904 when she was born it consisted of a grocery store and a cotton gin—and Irene. Her early days sound Lincolnesque. She didn't split rails herself, but her father did.

At six, the family went to Amarillo, Texas. That was home until she was ready for boarding school. Then she went to Sweet Briar, Virginia. They tried to tame some of her Texas ebullience and make her into a gentle lady of the old, old South but Irene is a girl who doesn't tame easily. Her voice has already told you that.

After Sweet Briar, she elected to teach. There was an opening in Mississippi for a superintendent, a principal, and a teacher of seven grades. She took all three jobs and discovered, upon arrival at the little country school, that she had eleven pupils.

Eleven pupils doesn't sound like much work. But have you ever taught in a country school? If you have, you know how one teacher must keep the first grade supplied with busy-work while she drills the seventh grade in American history—meanwhile, keeping an eye on the fourth grade to see that it doesn't throw spit-balls and dip little Maggie McCoy's blond pigtails in the inkwell. One must settle feuds, assuage parents and be a pattern



of social decorum and an earnest church-goer. It isn't much fun.

From that rustic background to Broadway is a long and glittering rise. She rode up on a sheet of music, a song named "If I Could Just Stop Dreaming" that she wrote and published herself. To exploit and popularize it, she sang it over a small radio station near her school. It didn't help the song much—but it did help Irene, for somebody in a Chicago station heard her—and lady, lady, the comet began to soar. That Chicago station put her on the air. Then a station in Memphis. Complimentary letters deluged the broadcasters. Thousands were charmed by that something in her voice that takes one back to the old south of magnolias and darkies and banjos. It was inevitable that one of the great networks should claim her. Columbia was the lucky one. Since 1929, she has been singing over CBS. Count up and see for yourself how many others have lasted that long.



Alexander Gray  
sang in a stoke-  
hole of a trans-  
Atlantic liner

**A**LEX GRAY has led an incredibly busy life. Farmer, seaman, songster, he has ranged far and wide through every sort of scrape and adventure—and always he has landed on his feet.

His career is so full of surprises that it glitters. It abounds in action and thrills. That time he was deckhand on a British merchantman, for instance! It was right after college. He was working his way to Europe. Three old salts gathered on the poop deck and began to sing. Their chanty rose so gloriously to the sky that the skipper left his bridge to listen. They sang on . . . and he requested a number. The tars didn't know it, but Alex did. He sang it as a solo with the others humming an accompaniment. It won him a dimer in the captain's cabin.

All his life, Alex has been winning things. Ever since his birth at Wrightville, Pa. One of the most important was a contest sponsored by the National Federation of Music Clubs. Before that, he hadn't realized that he really

could sing. Perhaps it was because he had been too busy. For one thing, he wanted to be an industrial engineer. Toward that end, he attended Penn State until he graduated. After working his way to Europe, he attempted to sell stereoptical slides in London. And failed magnificently. So he worked his way home again, singing with the irrepressible joy of youth in the broiling heat of a sooty stoke-hole. Enjoyed it, too.

For a while, he taught school. Can you imagine it? His class was in a boys' school where he taught carpentry and wood turning. Then there was a term as instructor at Northwestern Military and Naval Academy. That must have been stodgy work compared to those carefree, song-filled days at sea. He admits that he didn't care for it greatly.

Of course, he abandoned it. It wasn't in him to teach. He came to New York, besieged Flo Ziegfeld in his office until the producer consented to hear him. It was a critical point of his musical career. Fortunately, Ziegfeld hired him—and Alex Gray stormed through the "Follies," "Sally," "The Desert Song," and a half dozen movies.

Singing pictures—overdone in the first flush of enthusiasm—lost their popularity. Which was too bad for those of us who enjoyed them. It meant that Alex Gray was out of a job. But it didn't matter a great deal, for he turned his thoughts to radio and worked up to his present triumphant position on the Chesterfield hour as a silver-throated maker of "music that satisfies."

Russ Colombo  
may be the next  
Valentino

A SORT of Cinderella luck has moulded the course of Russ Colombo's amazing career. Oh, he has worked and slaved and turned himself into a fine musician—all of which has been done by many another lad just as ambitious as he without receiving any reward—but great things have come his way with all the glittering inevitability of fate.

No one knew, back in Castrova, California, where he lived when a child, that he was born for the limelight. They thought him just one of the Colombos—and what a lot of Colombos there were—eleven other children beside Russ! It was an old Italian custom.

Almost all of them studied music at one time or another but it was Russ who outstripped all the rest. At fourteen, he was playing solos in the Imperial Theatre in San Francisco. Then came periods common to the lives of almost all orchestra conductors. He played and sang in Hollywood, did a little ghost-voicing for the talkies, and opened his own night club in Los Angeles. There was a steadily increasing regard for his voice among his patrons but even then, no one dreamed ahead to his conquest of the air.

Lady Luck wasn't especially kind during his first efforts in Hollywood. Why, no one can say. But remembering, too, how the golly Gable was buffeted through several years of refusal, we can understand Colombo's case.

Con Conrad was the man who lifted him from the



ranks. Con Conrad is one of our great song writers. He was visiting the West when he heard Russ sing and knew immediately that here was a radio "find." It was he who persuaded Russ to come to New York. It was he who sold Russ to the National Broadcasting Company—and who wrote most of the songs Russ sang. And soon Russ Colombo was a sensation and a name to conjure with.

His fan mail came into the studio in carloads. And there didn't seem to be a knock in a carload, either. Colombo was a hit, the like of which hadn't been seen since that chap from Maine, Vallee, first crooned through his megaphone.

And then—Fate again—the movies became interested. They learned that Russ was called the best-dressed man in radio. They learned that he was young and handsome and virile. So they gave him a Hollywood contract—and soon you may be remembering that other great Italian favorite, and predicting that here is a second Valentino.



Sylvia Froos was  
a leading lady  
at thirteen

**L**ITTLE SYLVIA FROOS" they call her in the broadcasting studios. But they are thinking, not of the girl of today, but of the tiny tot from New York City who was the Baby Rose Marie of ten years ago. Today, Sylvia is eighteen. She was barely seven when she filled her first theatrical engagement in South Norwalk, Conn., and toddled out of the theatre with the princely sum of \$62.50 for three days' work.

Little Sylvia was Baby Sylvia in those days and she was a sensation. Her parents thought her a miracle. Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Froos was exceptionally talented and neither was interested in the theatre, but their irrepressible bubble of a daughter was destined from the very first for a footlight career. Instinctively, she could mimic anyone. And the grand voice that has now found itself so magnificently was only a daring, childish challenge to a song.

Perhaps you yourself applauded her as she stormed city

after city and packed theatres with her rose-petal appeal. Or perhaps you saw her when she was thirteen, with the vastly amusing Chic Sale. Ah, there is a story. You see, Chic was making up a road company for his great musical comedy, "Gay Paree." But he was unable to find a leading woman. When the day set for the company's departure arrived he still had none. But he had a brilliant idea. He had known Baby Sylvia for years and he called her on the phone. "You're a big girl now," he said, "and I've got a

big job for you. Do you want it?"

Of course she wanted it. It starred her, that rôle as the ingenue lead with Chic Sale. And it made her the youngest leading lady in America.

Here is a surprising thing. She has never taken a music lesson or gone to school in her life. During all her travels, since she was barely seven, she has had her mother and a tutor. As for her singing—well, every note is natural. Just one of those voices that don't have to be trained.

Yes, Sylvia is a big girl now. And her voice has grown up with her. She is one artist who can make a "blue" song something to remember and a ballad impossible to forget. And she is one artist, with her soft brown hair and gray eyes and a figure that is the envy of artists' models, who is just as good to look at as she is to hear. She's one radio star, anyway, who won't be set on the shelf when television comes to town.

## Have You a Hidden Talent?

(Continued from page 38)

That is Don's first memory . . . walking the deck of a ship with his hand tucked in his father's strong one, watching the ocean.

They debarked at St. Johns, Newfoundland. A train took them into a white wilderness. At Chapleau, Ontario, they found a home. It was a village of five hundred persons devoted to mining and lumbering. A great hall stood in the center of the settlement. There, on a Christmas night, Don sang his first public song.

**DAVID NOVIS**, the father, was the man of the moment. His booming basso had filled the building with all the old favorites, but still the neighbors pleaded for more. It was then that he lifted little six-year-old Don to the center of the bare plank platform.

How Don sang! He wasn't embarrassed then—and he has never been embarrassed since. He can recall the silence while he tried to remember the words. No sound except his thin voice and the gay crackle of flames in a giant fireplace. When he finished, the rafters hummed with applause.

Months later, a traveling minister visited the village and happened to spend the night in the Novis home. Of course, he heard the father sing. He said:

"If ever you come to California, I want you as soloist in my choir."

Eventually, David Novis accepted that invitation and brought Donald to the state in which his name was to become a household word.

In school, Don was a natural athlete, and a fighter. The latter was occasioned by his English accent. More than once, he had to defend it. Later, he used his experience to become a college boxing champion. Once, he held a world swimming record for the quarter-mile. Busy years fled by, years filled with hunting and sailing and taking vagrant trips on his bike. He once won an important football game by a drop-kick.

That is the athlete . . . but what of the singer? To be honest, until he was nineteen, there was no singer. He didn't want to sing, remember.

His father had to take a drastic step. Somehow, he must have sensed Don's undiscovered talent. Calling a prominent voice teacher, he asked him to come to his home. Then he found Don and, in no uncertain words, expressed his wishes.

"You are going to study voice, son," he stated. "Your teacher will be here this afternoon."

Don was nineteen at the time. And he was rebellious. But here was an order. That afternoon, he met Allen Ray Carpenter, the voice teacher.

Perhaps Carpenter sensed the situation. He said, "To become a singer,

you've got to work. It's damned hard work. If you've got the courage to go at it that way, I'll work with you. If you haven't, we'll stop right now."

Imagine the affect that had on a scrapper like Don. It put singing on a different basis.

"I'll work," he retorted.

**EVEN** then, nobody realized how far he could go. For he only played at music. His real vocation was athletics—coaching. At Whittier College, he studied physical education—not harmony nor the history of the old masters.

It took the Alwater Kent auditions of 1927 to quicken his interest. At Mr. Carpenter's suggestion, he entered them—and was presently eliminated. Defeat does something to this sturdy songster. He has grown up in the tradition of the athletic field. He has an English doggedness that won't admit a beating. For a year, he worked like a Trojan.

The next audition was in 1928. The West Coast still remembers it. First, he was the state winner, then a sectional winner, and finally he crossed the continent to New York and sang his way into the glittering limelight of first place.

After that, he knew his future lay with things musical . . . with the radio. That hidden talent, you see, which was only an avocation at first—but look what it did to Don Novis' life and career.

## Back to the Farm

(Continued from page 19)

bring her to New York, an offer that she refused because she wanted to acquire more stage experience. Eighteen months later, she let a Ziegfeld agent persuade her to come to the big town.

When she went to Mr. Ziegfeld's office to sign a fluffies contract, he wouldn't listen to her sing. He had heard her records and considered that sufficient. But he did ask her to walk around the room so he might look at her ankles. "Splendid," he said, and the contract was signed.

In the world of the theatre, she has risen like a meteor. It took the Chesterfield program of music that satisfies to introduce her to all the rest of America and to bring her a vast new following of folk who like the friendly appeal of her songs and her deep, lovely voice.

She has tried very hard to please. I think that has become her only ambition. During her first thirteen broadcasts, she never repeated a song—singing eighty-seven different selections! When she is regularly on the air, she will not accept any outside work for she feels that she can give her best to only one thing at a time.

**H**ER way of living is less pretentious, probably, than any great radio favorite. Quite modestly and happily, she and her husband reside in a suite of hotel rooms just a stone's throw off Broadway. They met and were married when she was just beginning to sing in Chicago. They often talk, I imagine, of those broad acres out in Nebraska and wonder how much longer the golden

lure of fame will hold them. I'm certain her own thoughts go back more and more often to the little western town where a big red building beside the railroad track is the Elting Roller Mill, where her uncle is the mayor and her father is the banker, and where everyone she meets is her friend and she is his.

In a way, fate has played her a low trick. For she left David City in search of gaiety and fame and a career. She has found them all . . . but I wonder if she enjoys their reality as much as she did her own bright dreams? The answer is a secret that is locked in her heart. One might never guess it, were it not for her tell-tale voice. I have heard her sing a hundred songs . . . and I think I know what the secret is.

## IN OUR NEXT ISSUE!

Who is the most misunderstood woman on the radio—and why? A story of a famous personality whose honest generosity has been scorned by the public.

The continuation of Jack Foster's "The Inside Story of Radio Salaries." Jack Foster, you know, is radio editor of the N. Y. World-Telegram. His information comes right from the inside.

Fascinating stories on Stoopnagle and Budd, Seth Parker and Myrt and Marge.



# The Katzenjammer Kids of the AIR

By PEGGY  
WELLS

The Boswell Sisters—Martha, Connie and Vet—earned the nickname Katzenjammer by their pranks. They've never changed

**Y**OU ought to meet the Boswell Sisters. They're as *alive* as anyone I've ever met. And as different—just as their harmonies are different. The radio gives you only a part of them. In person, they're dark and small and electric. And they wear an air, all the time, of impending mischief.

"Pops used to call us the Katzenjammers."

That was Connie talking in a little room high up in the sky-scraping Columbia Broadcasting Studios in New York. Vet, the youngest of the three, smiled.

"We were scrappers," she said. "Connie particularly."

Martha wasn't there. Another appointment kept her away. But these other two, they were like fire in that little room. A nice kind of fire, of course. With the look of trouble in their brown eyes.

Back in New Orleans where they were born and raised, a neighbor had three sons and a daughter. The daughter was their pal. The brothers loved to torment their sister. More than once the tranquility of the Boswell household was shattered by the wide-eyed neighbor girl rushing into the kitchen, screaming:

"They're dropping lizards down my back."

**T**HAT meant war. Connie, Vet and Martha dropped whatever they were doing and charged into the backyard like a trio of furies. Invariably, the brothers learned, to their sorrow, that these little girls were scrappers.

Once, little Vet went to a neighborhood store for a lollipop. An overgrown kid slapped her. She reached home, hurt and tearful. Connie quietly got out her bike, rode away to the overgrown kid's house, and called him out on the sidewalk. And there, you lovers of music that satisfies, was enacted a juvenile battle of the century. In the end, Connie dusted her hands, remounted, and rode triumphantly home.

Their music teacher was a sober Frenchman who always drove to the Boswell mansion in a frock coat and gates-ajar collar. Each Thursday afternoon, his car parked opposite the Boswell piazza was a sign that the

daughters were being turned into artists and musicians. Connie always took her lesson first. After which she would repair to the porch swing and think up devilry. Usually, she and whatever sister finished after her would push the professor's motor down the slope to a place a quarter-mile away. Once, they stuck a pin under the horn button and the klaxon sounded off magnificently for almost an hour while the frantic music master sought to stop it. Finally, he had to drive away to the garage with his horn completely out of control and shrieking like a fire siren.

In their home today, which happens to be a breezy New York apartment near the CBS studios, they still are mad-caps. Their rooms harbor any number of innocent-appearing but alarming contraptions. Things that jump up off a table the moment they are touched . . . books that go off with a bang when opened . . . cigarettes that turn out to be stuffed with cotton sprinkled with sneezing powder . . . a certain chair that falls apart when a spring is pressed, to the everlasting embarrassment of guests.

It gives you an idea, doesn't it. No wonder Mr. Boswell called his daughters the Katzenjammers.

**M**USIC has been a part of their life since they were big enough to put red pepper in a rose and offer it to an unsuspecting adult. At four, Connie commenced to study the cello. Martha concentrated on the piano. Vet chose the violin. They were the wonder of the neighborhood.

At first, Vet didn't sing. She didn't know she could. She was the baby and, as usual with babies, she had to watch her sisters reap most of the early glory. There was the time Martha entered an amateur night competition. To make sure of giving the public what they wanted, she and Connie made a second entry as a singing duo. The judges, bewildered no doubt by southern smiles and sparkling personalities, awarded them both first and second places. They felt a little sorry afterwards—that they hadn't won third prize, too. (Continued on page 48)



# The Inside Story of Radio Salaries

(Continued from page 9)

earned more as a result of her radio appearances than any other singer. For her thrice-a-week fifteen minute program over the Columbia Broadcasting System she receives \$2,200. These broadcasts have made her such an attraction that today she insists on and gets a flat sum of \$7,500 a week for her vaudeville appearances. When she takes, as a sort of recreation, a night club date she receives \$1,600 a week. She makes three records a month and for each of these she is given \$750. But to me the most amazing of all these figures is the \$7,500 she will receive for singing a tune—just one, mind you—in the new Paramount picture, "The Big Broadcast." Her appearance in the film will not last over five minutes—\$1,500 a minute!

**MISS SMITH'S** rise to big money has been unbelievably rapid. Four years ago when she was a bobbed-haired girl of nineteen, she was singing in a Chicago night club at a salary of \$160 a month. In 1930 she was co-starred with Bert Lahr in George White's "Flying High" and that year she made \$19,000. Last year when she became a radio name, and her efforts to wish the moon over the mountain became something more than a secret, she netted \$186,000. This year her manager, Ted Collins, estimates that she will earn a half million dollars, since only one of her vaudeville appearances paid as low as \$5,000.

Miss Smith is a simple, unaffected, casual person. She dislikes formal dress and would much rather live a simple life than the more or less complicated one which her small fortune has made necessary.

Then there's a young singer from Maine who hasn't done half badly himself. Rudy Vallee—he's the lad. Each week he collects \$2,500 for his commercial broadcasting and when he appears in a Paramount theatre he goes home with an extra \$4,500. In addition to this, Mr. Vallee during the year has reaped a golden harvest with his role in George White's "Scandals," his talking picture and his records. Because Lee de Forest invented an audion tube many years ago Mr. Vallee today is a millionaire, or at any rate only a rung

below it. And those who know him intimately insist that he probably still has in his cash drawer the first penny he made on his first commercial program.

The radio, too, has made near millionaires of Amos 'n' Andy. Those Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll fellows, I mean, who five years ago, as a comparatively obscure comedy team in Chicago, thought they were mighty lucky to be earning \$100 a week. For three years now they have been joking over a National Broadcasting Company network on a guarantee of \$100,000 a year with a substantial bonus thrown in, based presumably on their effectiveness as toothpaste salesmen. They earned a flat sum of \$250,000 on their movie, "Check and Double Check," and fifty per cent of the net revenue from the film, which, while not a success in New York, was warmly received in smaller towns. Besides this they have a regular, though not great income, from toys, books, candy bars and school pads named after them.

**A**NOTHER comedy team, Gene and Glenn, passionately favored in Ohio and well considered by morning network listeners in the East, have grown spectacularly from hams, as far as salary is concerned, to rich men within a space of slightly over three years. This is a story of successful gambling.

Several years ago the team of Gene Carroll (who is a brother of Albert Carroll, the actor), Ford Rush and Glenn Rowell was amusing folks in Cincinnati through station WJAY. Rush later became an orchestra conductor and moved to Chicago. The remaining pair, not so sure of their continuing success without their erstwhile partner, moved to Cleveland to start all over again.

They wanted to sing for station WTAM, but the manager advised them to spice their warbling with comedy lines. They asked a pal, Cal DuVally, to write their continuity for them, and he agreed there was a possibility for success in the idea. Then the station manager offered them \$100 a week. But the boys were funny that way. No, they said, they would take only \$50 a week—enough for living expenses—for how were they to know whether they would click or whether they wouldn't?

Well, they clicked from the start. Soon they were getting \$600 a week. Now it's \$2,250 from a local bakery account and \$1,850 from their morning network sponsor. And it was, of course, only a matter of time before representatives of the Cleveland RKO theatre, the Palace, came round with a contract. They were offered \$3,500 a week. No, they said again; they wanted to gamble on their talent. They asked for, and it was agreed, \$2,500 a week and fifty per cent of all revenue over the theatre's average business. Well, what a successful gamble that was! They went away at the end of the week with \$14,000 in their jeans, having broken the records set by Gilda Gray, Van & Schenck and (have you forgotten the convict pianist?) Harry Snodgrass.

Many funny situations arise in the giving and getting of radio salaries, and I like to recall particularly the story of Will Rogers' radio activities. Mr. Rogers' demands were high. Specifically, he wanted \$15,000 for a single fifteen minute period. And sponsors, being what they are, signed him for this sum on several occasions.

**W**ELL, finally he was signed about two years ago for his first series—thirteen weeks at \$5,000 a broadcast. When all were assembled to close the deal, an executive of the Columbia Broadcasting System said:

"You understand, of course, Mr. Rogers, that you will pay the usual ten per cent to the agent who booked you." "I don't understand any such thing," Mr. Rogers replied. "I intend to receive my entire salary myself."

The Columbia executive was somewhat flustered. This was decidedly unusual. The ten per cent fee for booking is regular.

"Well," he replied when it became apparent that silence wouldn't solve the problem, "we realize that it will be a distinction for the Columbia Broadcasting System to have you over our network. So, tell us what we'll do. We'll pay that ten per cent ourselves."

And for a full thirteen weeks Columbia paid \$500 a week to an agent on a series which, truth to tell, was not as successful as they hoped it would be.

(To be continued)

## Woman Behind the Sounds

(Continued from page 37)

The list is endless. And the contents of her locked cabinets of sound effects are infinite. Every sort of whistle. Every sort of bell. And a pile of phonograph records that is the foundation of every radio station's sound equipment. They are classified. Barnyard sounds, men laughing, baby crying, angry mobs, applause, train effects,

monks chanting, football crowds. . . . So you don't know, when you sit in your arm chair at home, just what you are listening to. But you think you know, and that is really the important thing.

Amusingly enough, for a long time it was thought that a kiss was one of the most difficult sounds to broadcast.

No one in the studios could get it. One experimenter used a cork rubbed against rosin-covered glass. But that wasn't it. Another tried a rusty hinge that creaked as he turned it. That wasn't it. Still another tried kissing the back of the hand. That still wasn't it. Mrs. Nichols suggested that two people kiss each other. That was it.



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# SETH PARKER HIMSELF

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Phillips Lord, in ether parlance Seth Parker, is pretty different in private life than what you'd expect. Gone is the grey beard and the grey hair and the slightly doddering manner. In its place is the handsome face of a young, virile chap that any girl might fall for hard. Yes, that's Phillips at the top of the page. At the right in make-up as Seth Parker with Effie Palmer as Ma Parker. There'll be a grand story on Seth Parker in our next issue—out October first and dated November. Don't forget.



## Woman-Hater?

(Continued from page 7)

she will be mine. We'll know it when we meet, and the search will be ended. Meanwhile, I'm going to keep on looking until I'm seventy years old. After that I might not continue to look any more, but I can't tell. I'm sure looking forward to my own marriage, my own home, and kids. Plenty of them."

Though Richman is best known to millions of fans as the high spot of the Chase and Sanborn hour, broadcast every Sunday night over a National Broadcasting Company network, he is in reality a pioneer radio performer.

**B**ACK in 1919, four years after his first appearance on Broadway, he and Nils T. Granlund, "N. T. G.," were first heard together over Station WHN. That was before Richman acquired his first night club, the Wigwam Cafe, the venture which gave him his later start on Broadway, and quite some time before he started the famous Club Richman, whose frolickings, with Richman as master of ceremonies, were broadcast up to a year or two ago.

In the earliest days of broadcasting, when "wireless sets" were regarded merely as toys, Richman foresaw the possibilities of radio, and broadcast whenever he could, so that his present series of appearances on the Chase and Sanborn hour is something in the nature of a return to an old love.

Richman first came to Broadway in 1915. He had been touring the country before that, in musical shows and vaudeville. He was just about old enough to vote at that time, a husky youngster with a promising talent, and

he was a member of the Jewel City Trio, an act which played the Panama Exposition in San Francisco that year. Other members of the trio were Billy Gibson and William Farnsworth, the cowboy tenor, both of them old enough to be Richman's Daddy.

There was no doubt whatever, Richman says now with a smile, that the Jewel City Trio was wowing 'em, so they got a looking when the exposition closed which was destined to bring them to New York. Their agents received excellent notices of the act from all over the country, and the trio was in jubilant spirits when they unpacked at the Alhambra Theatre in New York. Broadway turned out to be a joy ride, however, and the Jewel City Trio played just two performances.

Stranded, Richman looked up some of his pals from the West Coast, and landed in a musical thing entitled "Have You Seen Stella?"

**T**HIS title had been borrowed from one of the most famous sideshow exhibits ever shown, a painting of a woman, exhibited in the exposition, so realistically done that it fooled many sightseers into believing that it was posed nightly by a living woman. Charging one dime admission to see the painting, the owners had rolled up three million dollars—in dimes! That record almost equals the stack of dimes which built the Woolworth building.

The show based on the girl in the painting flopped, however, because Richman says they never saw Stella,

and never saw their pay envelopes, either, after the show closed on the road.

Such was the inauspicious beginning on Broadway of the man who was to teach Mazda Lane how to "put on the Ritz."

The rest of his story is Broadway history: how Mae West engaged him to play the piano in her vaudeville act, how the Dolly Sisters lured him away with an offer of a higher salary after they heard him play; how Georgie White turned him down for the Scandals, cold, and then changed his mind after hearing Richman sing in his night club.

Following the Scandals, he worked for Zigfield, with an interlude for the making of a motion picture, "Puttin' on the Ritz." He had turned to song writing also, and such profitable hits as "There Ought to be a Moonlight Saving Time," "There's Danger in Your Eyes, Cherie," "One Little Raindrop," "Chez Vous," and others are recorded to his credit.

His greatest fame has come to him as master of ceremonies on the Sunday night radio hour, however. His fan mail comes in trucks, and Richman says he is happier working before the mike than anywhere else, as he regards radio as the best expressive medium for talents such as his. So do the fans, judging by his popularity.

And many of his fans are waiting for the day when Harry Richman will announce the end of his search for his ideal—for Mrs. Harry Richman! Let's hope, with him, that it will be soon.

## Katzenjammer Kids of the Air

(Continued from page 45)

Their entry into broader fields came unexpectedly. A friend who worked in a music store told them that a man from the Victor company was coming to town—and he might listen to them sing. Sure enough, the gentleman came and expressed a willingness to hear the Boswells . . . just Martha and Connie, then. Not only that, he wished to hear something that could be made immediately into a record. The girls were unprepared; they had planned to sing only a chorus of this and a chorus of that. But Connie who can think as fast as she can sing has never yet let an opportunity slide through her fingers.

"We have a song, one Martha wrote," she told the Victor visitor, "but we haven't polished up the lyrics yet. Give us a minute and we'll sing it."

**T**HE gentleman said he would wait five minutes, so Martha and Connie retired to a corner and wrote a song.

It was named "I'm Gonna Cry," possibly because they both felt that way about it. In five minutes, Connie sang it and Martha played it—and the man from out of town said it was just the sort of thing he wanted.

Later, when Vet found her voice and turned the duo into a trio, they appeared at theatres all over the south. One of their first jobs was in the Palace in New Orleans—and they were given the star dressing room.

"We spent most of our time," Connie admits, "polishing the star on our door."

When they left home, Mr. Boswell gave them \$500 and told them he would send tickets to bring them back to New Orleans as soon as they went broke. Of course, there were times when they wanted to write home for money, but they didn't. They tramped through Oklahoma in one night stands, sang over obscure stations, learned a lot about the business of entertaining people. In Chicago, they missed more

than one meal—because they were stubborn about writing home. In California, they skirted the bitter edge of want.

**N**OW, all that is behind. As co-stars on the Chesterfield programs, they have succeeded far beyond the dreams of the father who is still waiting to send those tickets that will bring them home.

Now, they are ensconced in a sky-high Manhattan apartment. Of all this world's gifts, I think they love above all else the gift of laughter. Their songs show it. As yet, they are as closely knit as they were in the days when they battled their chum's tormenters. No man, they say, will ever separate them.

Vet is still in her teens, Connie is about eighteen months older. And Martha is just that much older than Connie. On the air and off, they're a grand trio, these Boswell sisters.

RADIO STARS IS A MONTHLY MAGAZINE—WATCH FOR THE NEXT ISSUE

## Big Chief of the Jesters

(Continued from page 35)

son of a prosperous millinery manufacturer. His father put his foot down and said, "The honored name of Wynn shall never go on the stage." Israel Edwin took his second name, put it in, and marched out to conquer the world.

That was in 1902. Those early years were filled with the exuberant experiences of cowboyville tours all over America. As a gag, he bought a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles and wore them in his act. Harold Lloyd saw him and borrowed the idea.

He knows what it means to be hated. In 1919, the actors' union was contemplating a strike against theatre man-

agers. Ed Wynn led the actors out, walking out of the "Gaieties of 1919." Immediately all the managers boycotted him and swore that he would never be permitted to work again.

They forced him to produce his own show and to hire a hall where the public could see it. Presently, those managers were begging him to come back.

Today, his productions are almost always successful. "It's a good thing," he says. "I need the money." He has three homes: an apartment in New York, a house on Long Island, and a house in Florida.

He is immensely proud of his son, Keenan, who is planning to enter Har-

vard. And his wife, Hilda Keenan, who listens to his broadcasts and tells him frankly whether he is good or bad.

The vast air audience is still a mystery to him. That is why he insists on performing before people who can see him and whose laughter he can hear. Every week during the summer an audience of three hundred invited guests has sat in the little auditorium of the Times Square studio. Those guests alone got all of Ed Wynn's humor, from over-size shoes to under-size hats. The rest of us heard only a voice and a story. But that is all right with us just as long as we can have his lip and an occasional "So-o-o-o."

## The Story of Julia and Frank

(Continued from page 12)

prevails, with everybody calling everybody else by his first name. And when Julia sings at that nasal mock-mountain voice which has proved so popular over the air, every last musician grins affectionately as he follows his score.

Watching them rehearse their Blackstone Plantation program, I kept remembering how a world-famous psychologist once said to me:

*"It's not our birthdays that age us. It's our point of view. As long as we keep our minds open and receptive we stay young. The minute we close our minds we start growing old. People who think young are young. And don't doubt for one minute that our mental processes influence our appearance. For they do!"*

Frank Crumit and Julia Sanderson have left behind them those years usually relegated to youth. Nevertheless, there is something so decidedly enthusiastic and fit and eager about them that their additional years have in no way marked them. They are, for one thing, quick to laugh. And there is mirth in their laughter. It isn't a polite thing they turn on and off. You feel, watching them, that they did it pretty grand once alive, depression or no depression. And since their brand of gaiety is a contagious thing I, for one, believe

it is their very happiness seeping out over the air that proves so beguiling and brings them the tremendous popularity they so thoroughly enjoy.

Just to give you some idea of how they look, since Television isn't with us yet, Frank, six feet tall, weighs two hundred and nine. He'd be impressive even if he didn't wear his eye-glasses on a black ribbon. But Julia insists when his feelings are hurt he acts as crushed as any little boy.

Julia weighs only one hundred and twenty-six. She dresses attractively, but in a dainty, pretty way rather than in the smart, severe mode of the moment. And it suits her.

When Frank went to the microphone to rehearse I asked if, during her retirement, she had done anything about her singing or if, coming to the radio a few years ago, she had had to work to get her voice into shape again.

"I've never paid any attention to my voice," she told me. "It's just a mouse-like thing. I had lessons once in my life and not for very long. Looking back, I don't see how I ever had the nerve to play the part I did. Really! 'Sihl' for instance, when I had the role of an opera star previously had played in Europe."

It was very pleasant meeting people like the Crumits, people who show each

other the courtesy and consideration so many couples reserve exclusively for outsiders.

However, it was just as I was leaving when what I think is the very touchstone of their happiness manifested itself . . .

"Frank says it will be all right," Julia told a musician who questioned her about something, "so I'm not worrying any more."

She showed so very clearly that in spite of the great success she has known, that in spite of the fact that she is a celebrity and an individual in her own right she is, first of all, Mrs. Frank Crumit.

"Frank says it will be all right, so I'm not worrying any more!"

This attitude in a woman like Julia Sanderson, a woman who has paddled her own canoe upstream with sensational success, means one thing very definitely: that there is between her and Frank Crumit a bond as primeval and fundamental as life and love itself.

When a man and wife lack such a bond everything matters more than it should. When they have such a bond nothing else matters much . . . and their marriage has an excellent chance of being what marriage should be, the perfect partnership . . . like that partnership of Julie and Frank, Inc.

## A Woman's Right to Help Her Husband

(Continued from page 33)

Later, she turned these histrionic gifts to account in high school dramatic societies. For the first time, people were allowed to notice her. Marie Wainwright, an actress, wanted to introduce her to David Belasco and wrote to her father for permission. Senor Hernandez' fiery refusal brought that to an abrupt end. Again the family was horrified.

At sixteen, she really began to study

singing. Sophie Breslan was also a pupil with the same teacher. Immediately, they liked each other and their friendship gave Olga a new glimpse into the world of art and opera. How tantalizing it must have been, for she knew that a career outside her own home, in her father's mind, was utterly unthinkable. At the end of a year, she topped studying and turned for relief to the giddy parties of a gay debutante.

That was the wildest twelve-months of her life. She describes it as a "mad whirl of events." She was aglow with the excitement of "growing up." And of falling in and out of love. Four engagements were made and broken in almost as many months.

Suddenly, her father made plans to move to Mexico City. Business called him there. Olga was desolate at the thought of leaving New York. One

night, when she met a handsome young Count Alhani of Milan, Italy, she told him about it.

"I think maybe you won't have to go," he said.

Within a month, he proposed. Within a year, they were married. And Olga Hernandez became the Countess Olga Medolago Alhani, with a whole net set of royal restrictions and taboos that ought to have kept her in the groove of married respectability for the rest of her life.

But two things happened. A son was born—Gnardo Angelo Medolago Alhani who is both a count and a marquis. And her husband's business failed.

In short, they presently found themselves almost penniless. Believe me, the middle classes have had no monopoly of sudden poverty these last few years. Here was a titled family wondering how it would pay the grocer and the landlord. And here was life challenging a woman who knew nothing of the dusty business of earning money.

**M**ANY a woman has felt that challenge these last few blistering years. Some have met it with heart-breaking nobility. Some have sulked and let it lick them.

The Countess Olga Alhani went out and looked for a job.

Can you imagine the parental roar that arose? Can you imagine the hor-

ried gasps from her family? No Hernandez—no Alhani woman had ever worked!

But Olga Alhani worked. Sophie Bresslan introduced her to Sigmund Romberg who was casting a company for his operetta, "New Moon." He listened to her sing and asked if she had ever acted.

"Yes—but always on the Continent," she answered.

That white lie got her a job. And that job she held through back-breaking rehearsals and endless performances until she got a weekly pay check. She really began to live on that day, I think, for only then did she realize that her girlhood dreams could be realized.

Presently, she went to the National Broadcasting Company and asked for an audition. When it was granted, she sang miserably through her nose on account of a head cold. She went home weeping. A week later, a phone call summoned her back. NBC officials had liked her so well that she was scheduled for an immediate program.

After that, she became the Kodak girl and sang on a dozen big commercial programs. This past summer, we have heard her regularly on the City Service Hour.

**I** DON'T want to give you the wrong picture of this young countess who has been called "the most beautiful

woman in radio." She wears neither the thick veneer of continental sophistication nor the blatant glitter of a go-getter. Even the famous Spanish temperament is so subdued that her rare rages are the white, quiet sort. Her friendliness is a byword wherever she works.

And, despite her career, she is a genuine home-maker for her husband and son. For the boy who looks so much like her, I think she would do anything, even sacrifice her work, were it to endanger his happiness or health.

If a fairy god-mother could give her everything she wanted, she would wish first of all, to be breath-takingly beautiful. Her nose, she maintains, is put. Her next wish would make her just a successful as anyone possibly could be. And the third would give to her a cuddly baby daughter.

Of all her rich memories, one stands alone—her first pay check from the "New Moon" company. She says it was the most beautiful thing she has ever seen. It made her feel as if she had graduated from something. But it was greater than any diploma for it was her ticket into a new world where she stood four square with her husband in their struggle for existence.

where she helped instead of leaned. That check was the precious symbol of a woman's freedom and emancipation. And her right to help her husband

## Let's Gossip About Your Favorites

*Continued from page 27*

Some of the writers willed theirs to the nearest good-humored stenographer. And some gulped and groaned and stayed home and fed the doggone things.

**N**OT many months ago, we were hearing songs repeated on the air in a way that hurt the song and hurt us—particularly us. According to a breezy messenger from the network nabobs, those days are gone forever. One big station, for instance, played 531 different selections during a typical week. Of these, 240 were played just once during the entire seven days. The others averaged from two to five times for the same period. Which isn't so bad, is it? The rule responsible for this pleasant change is one which prohibits any song being repeated within two hours.

So, you Sherlocks, if you hear programs that don't permit the required passage of time between tunes, just let us know. There's a law ag'in it.

If you like that song, "Abdul Abulbul Amir," you ought to write Frank Crumit a letter. Only 14,000 other persons crave the same tune and have expressed their desire in writing. Some of these days, Frank will sing it, too, we betcha.

**T**HEY say Kate Smith is going to retire.

She has been on the air for three years. She has earned more money than is good for most people—and she has saved it. Most of her life is ahead of her and she has all the cash she'll ever need. And they say she is planning to leave the air. Katie, it is said, would prefer the simple life.

Well, if you ask her, she'll say yes and no. She'll say yes because the idea of quitting at the peak of one's popularity appeals to her, and she'll say no because she knows it is bad business to announce a retirement prematurely.

It's our guess that she'll go right on singing for quite a spell. So we won't worry about it.

Jane Frohman, the Chicago indigo warbler, got in a hurry the other fortnight and grabbed the wrong gown as she dressed to go to the studio. She chose a frock with a lot of beads on it. During the rehearsal just prior to the regular broadcast, the program engineer heard an unusual clatter in his loudspeaker. It sounded like tinkling sleigh bells or a speaky scene with ice in glasses. He investigated, and discovered the beads.

So pretty little Jane broadcast that evening in a hastily borrowed dress.

**T**HE other day, Amos 'n' Andy found a yellow slip in their mail box at the NBC studio in Chicago. They knew that meant for them to see Jack Price. Price gets the mail and the express and the parcel post, and he holds up the items that are too big to go in the boxes.

This time the package was a set of automobile tires, complete. Somebody got worried about that Fresh Air Tax, evidently, and shipped in the rubber shoes.

**R**AY PERKINS is a jolly yachtsman these summer days. He has bought himself a yacht and, between broadcast casts, sails it all around Long Island. Being outdoors so much naturally turns his mind to athletic subjects. One conclusion he comes to regarding the Olympic games was that several very important contests were entirely missing. Accordingly, he believes—and we're with him, tooth and nail—that the next Olympiad should include such testive items as the Standing Broad Hum, Hurling the Epithet, Ear Boxing, Wrestling with Temptation, juggling Figures, Street Crossing (with no lights), Street Crossing (against no lights) and the Half-shot Pin.

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Merely the ability to sing is not sufficient. It must be coupled with the art of

knowing how to get the most out of your voice for broadcasting purposes. Merely the knack of knowing how to write will not bring success as a radio dramatist. You must be familiar with the limitations of the microphone, and know how to adapt your stories for effective radio presentation. It is not enough to have a good voice, to be able to describe things, to know how to sell. Broadcasting presents very definite problems, and any talent, no matter how great, must be adapted to fit the special requirements for successful broadcasting.

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