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is in tune with the times, which is more appealing to the listener than the older content. Promotion merely serves to call attention to it. From this point of view, the numerous cases of swift rises to the top by music-and-news operations are sad commentaries on how badly out of date much American radio is today.

A sharp rejoinder to the critics comes from another young broadcaster who has built a three-station empire in his state through an aggressive operation that resembles that of Storz. Says outspoken Gordon McLendon:

"I'm sick to death of hearing the network stations complain of what is nothing more than their own inefficiency. They do not do a local public interest job, by and large. The people who are complaining the loudest are just plain lazy. Their trouble is that they've been pushing down the network lever so long, they've lost the spirit to do anything!"

McLendon tosses out this challenging statement: "The fact is, there is better radio in the hinterland than in New York, Chicago or Los Angeles."

To those who have been accustomed to looking down on Storz, it is like waking to find the world turned upside down to hear that his programming is among the best that radio has to offer today. His adherents maintain that the Storz "sound" represents an advance over even the great music-and-news model itself, WNEW. New York radio is acidly described as "tired radio," although still ahead of that of most of the country.

A Storz manager and v.p., Steve Labunski of WJGY, Minneapolis, says: "We have been a party to improving the quality of radio operation and increasing its value as an advertising medium."

Can all of these people be talking about the same thing? It would hardly seem so.

#### FUNDAMENTALS OF THE STORZ OPERATION

What really is the Storz "formula"? How much of its success depends on give-aways, high-pitched promotions? Is a Storz station nothing but a juke box, or is the programming the true key to its strength, as Storz claims? And, of particular importance to the advertiser, are the Storz-type rating successes produced primarily by promotions and therefore temporary? Or are they good for the long pull?

An outstanding characteristic of the Storz-type operator is youth (Todd Storz and Gordon McLendon are in their early thirties). He has had little or no TV experience. More important, unlike the veteran he competes with, he has no real roots in radio's past. To him, radio is not an also-ran medium to be sold defensively as a minor adjunct of TV. He tackles it as though it were a new medium, almost as though television did not exist.

A second important characteristic is objectivity. Storz is a foremost proponent of the "give the public what they want" school. He takes the position that his own tastes or those of his managers or talent are immaterial and not even to be considered when it comes to programming.

Management's chief task is to keep abreast of public taste: it must always be in a state of readiness to adapt to the listener's changing desires. The station itself should remain impersonal, detached.

Todd Storz puts it thus: "We follow the trend, we

do not try to lead it. If that is what is meant by 'cold blooded', then I suppose the charge is true. If we tried to educate the public to our taste, we might have no listeners."

This implies that the station must control the programming, and not leave it to the caprice or personal taste of individual programmers or personalities. For this reason, centralized program control is a marked feature of the music-and-news group operations. The degree of control, however, varies with the company.

It is important that whatever is done be done consistently. To Todd Storz, "a more consistent sound" is one of the reasons for his advantage over many other superficially similar stations.

The words that crop up most often when Storz or others attempt to describe that sound are "aliveness," "sharpness," "vitality," "pace," and "flow," and the sense that "something is happening" all the time.

In daily operation, what is involved is painstaking attention to details. Steve Labunski, describing how a Storz manager works, estimates that most of his time is spent on programming, rather than on sales. It is interesting that in the Storz setup the program director rather than the sales manager, is really the assistant manager.

To those who have not studied the music-and-news approach, it may seem strange that so much effort should be involved, since efficient operation of some turntables and a little sensible choice of records ought to do the trick. Those experienced in the ways of successful music-and-news operation, however, argue that the appearance of ease is deceptive.

Says the program director of a major broadcasting group: "There is a misconception about the music-and-news station. It is not a juke-box. The amateur imitator of WNEW thinks he hears something. The problem is that he doesn't really hear what he thinks he hears. He tries to duplicate it in his own market on a superficial basis, and fails."

Broken down into its component parts, here is the Storz music-and-news formula.

#### MUSIC

The foundation of Storz programming is the simple premise that what the public wants is popular music. The proof is what it has always been: it is the type of music for which people pay out the most money in records, sheet-music, juke boxes.

Todd Storz states: "The programming of music is out of our hands. It is controlled entirely by the choice of the public. If the public suddenly showed a preference for Chinese music, we would play it. We don't, for example, assume that some people like hillbilly music and therefore put on a program of that type."

The allegation that he is guilty of cultural betrayal leaves Storz unmoved. "I do not believe there is anything as better or inferior music. I do not think that the listener to either classical or to popular music derives greater satisfaction.

"The hit tune is the common meeting ground. Specific types of music, like hillbilly, may be popular with specific audience groups, but they may also be disliked b