

"About the time you can't stand it, mama's beginning to learn the words"

she'd pick 'The Music Goes Round and Round.' Why this should be, I don't know. But I saw waitresses do this time after time."

Some of the older music-and-news practitioners criticize Storz for poor program balance, holding that not enough attention is given to such matters as musical pace within the individual program, sequencing of vocals and instrumentals for maximum effect, and so forth. Storz's answer is that so long as the numbers are what the listener wants to hear, their sequence is immaterial!

"It may be that 'program balance' is a myth," says Storz. "It may be that there is really no such thing. We don't worry at all whether a vocal follows a vocal. Nor do we program to fit the 'mood' of a day part."

It is left to the disk jockey to arrange the sequencing of records. If he wishes to observe principles of "balance," it is fine with Todd Storz, so long as he does not impose his own selections on the audience.

The disk jockey, in Storz's view, is not representative of the public. Because he is usually above the audience mentally and financially, and lives with popular music, his own preferences are a dangerous guide. Bud Armstrong, manager of the Storz Kansas City station, WHB, issues the following warning to his disk jockeys:

"About the time you don't like a record, mama's just beginning to learn to hum it. About the time you can't stand it, mama's beginning to learn the words. About the time you're ready to shoot yourself if you hear it one more time, it's hitting the top ten."

The acceptance of this over-all philosophy by so many broadcasters today, and the apparent success which many are finding it possible to achieve with it, suggests that while there may be regional differences in cultural taste, they are not as important as in the past—although they must, of course, be considered in any local program structure.

For almost two decades, the country has been undergoing dramatic changes. Population shifts have been stimulated by two wars. Moving pictures, network radio and then television have provided the same program content in Salt Lake City as in New York. As a consequence, it is no longer the case—if it ever was—that all sophistication resides in one or two great cities connected by a great untutored hinterland.

Until his experience in New Orleans, the question troubled Storz. "I had grave doubts about New Orleans," he says. "That city is at least 50% Negro, and there are large French and hillbilly populations. Yet the pattern is working there on our WTIX. We are operating successfully in the most diverse markets."

It is the growing universality of musical taste that appears to make possible group application of a single programming standard to many individual markets. Those who take this position argue that the only important differences that do exist are those of time-lags, that it takes longer for a song to reach popularity in one market than in another. Therefore, a major part of the job is to know the individual market thoroughly.

Some critics hold that the Storz Top 40 thinking is in tune primarily with the teenager, an audience minority. Storz argues that for the biggest part of the day the teenager is not available as a listener, that therefore

the music-news formula must meet the needs of the housewife, the most important part of the audience.

PERSONALITIES

If the logic of the Storz station is its Top 40 tune, its heart is the disk jockey, or personality. He provides the station's warmth, its sparkle and much of its human appeal. Storz looks for the best he can afford, is always listening to tapes of disk jockeys in other areas. The company boast that his disk jockeys earn more than other disk men on other stations in the market.

"We occasionally lose men to the bigger markets," says Steve Labunski. Recently, a Storz disk jockey was hired by a Chicago station; there is one in New York.

Storz on disk jockeys: "We want our men to talk enough to become personalities, to achieve individual identities. Otherwise, the station's sound is apt to become only 'background', and we want the listener to listen actively. We encourage the disk jockey to use his own talent. If he sings, let him sing. He is left completely free to talk as he feels best."

But aimless chatter is discouraged. "If you don't have anything to say, don't say it," is a Storz station rule. Another: "It doesn't hurt just to introduce a record."

Close listening reveals that, for all the air of excitement the air-men seek to create, there really is little talk between records—perhaps a short comment or gag. The focus is on the music. In the early morning period there seems to be a more relaxed manner, and more talk. The disk men will, however, spend considerable time in the station's various promotions and in calling attention to other disk jockey programs to come.

COMMERCIALS

The Storz stations are described by *Time* as "well-larded with commercials." Storz maintains that:

1. Strict limits must be observed on the number of commercials aired—eight in any half-hour period, seven in any 25-minute period.
2. No commercial can be over a minute long.
3. The client list is kept clean, the disreputable advertiser is not allowed in.

As a result of carefully observing the rules, say Storz adherents, the listener is never conscious of over-commercialization, as he is on some stations.

The commercial is actually considered a program item in itself, that people enjoy listening to when well done; in Storz's hands it becomes another means of achieving the brightness and pace he is always after.

NEWS

The charge is frequently heard that a Storz newscast consists of little more than excited beep sounds plus a few items of a sex scandal or a Hollywood divorce. "Sensationalism" is the term that is said to best describe the approach.

An examination of the transcripts of five newscasts carried by KOWH, Omaha, the morning of April 11, 1957 shows a uniform emphasis on local and regional events. Here is an enumeration of the items, in the order aired, contained in the 8:55 a.m. broadcast:

Winner of Mrs. Nebraska contest, mid-western fug