

**Information-Entertainment Mixtures:** Representative of this approach is the Westinghouse stations' *Program P.M.*, introduced this summer. Two hours every night of the week are programmed with a single theme—"behind the scenes"—unifying many elements of service and entertainment. The idea is to present news of what is going on in the world of music, instead of just playing music; to cover the full background of a local news event, instead of just reporting what took place. Some of the segments are taped and used on each of the five Westinghouse outlets that have adopted the format. Most are locally originated. The show runs from 8:00 to 11:00 p.m.

**News as a Format Base:** One of the outstanding examples of this technique is KLZ, Denver. Its *Denver at Night* tries to be a "living chronicle" of life in the city, with extensive on-the-spot local news coverage. A major ingredient is the interview, including telephone calls to news-making personalities in other cities. Some music is also used. The program runs three times a night, 6:30-7:15, 9:30-10:00, 10:45-12:00. The most recent Pulse ratings (February, 1957) give the early portions about a 4 rating, going down into the 2 range towards midnight. Share of audience stays about 20%. Between airings of *Denver at Night*, the station's programming is a mixture of network and local shows.

**Local Controversy:** Among the proponents of this approach is WQAM, the Storz station in Miami. Its *Alan Hartney Program* is primarily a discussion program, devoted to hometown issues. Listeners can phone in and state their views. Its Pulse ratings before midnight are on or close to the 4 bracket, putting it in first place in the market for most of its segments.

**Country Music:** Long the strong point of many Southern and mid-Western stations, country music, recorded or live, is still a strong contender in evening hours. How successful it can be is illustrated by WSM in Nashville. One of its entries in this category, *Opry Star Time* on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 7:00-8:00 p.m., has Pulse ratings in the 7-9 range.

**Middle Music:** WPAT, reaching the New York area from Paterson, N. J., has become the much-discussed model of middle-music programming. Its *Gaslight Review* runs in uninterrupted half-hour segments from 7-11 p.m. Competing in a market covered by about 30 stations, it earns a 7%-11% share-of-audience, according to the New York Pulse for January-February, 1957.

**Live Variety:** WCCO in Minneapolis-St. Paul has added a new twist to this type of programming. *As You Like It*, from 7:05-8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, has a different local personality acting as host and programmer each night. One night, classical music is the subject; on another, parlor games and a player piano take over. The highest rated program in its period, its weekly cumulative audience in June was 341,500 homes, according to Nielsen Station Index.

On the local level, as well as on the network scene, the past year and the year ahead constitute a period of

experimentation and adjustment. Programmers have been searching for the weapons that will serve best in the battle for the nighttime audience. At the present time, the search is still on.

## THE COST OF NIGHTTIME RADIO

In an era in which traditional time-class definitions have lost all meaning and the simple rate card brochure has been replaced by a stack of complex package offerings, it is difficult to discuss rates without a yard of footnotes, exceptions and whereases. This discussion, then, will stick to the broad outlines of pricing policies, and by-pass the intricacies of discounts and special buys.

NBC is the only network that does not have substantially lower rates at night than during the day. In mid-September, the NBC affiliates met to discuss the network's first completely revised rate card in about five years. Essentially, the new card provides for a single rate on participations, regardless of day-part. For program time, night is slightly lower than day.

On CBS currently, nighttime runs about two-thirds the cost of daytime, except for segments included in the network's Impact plan. Impact portions are pegged at about half the price of day periods. On ABC, the ratio of night to day prices is about two-thirds.

On Mutual, newscast adjacencies after 8:30 p.m. are priced at two-thirds of the pre-8:30 level. Base rates for newscasts are \$750 in the morning, \$500 after 8:30 p.m. and \$1,000 when delivered by Gabriel Heatter, regardless of day-part.

On a spot basis, the Katz-represented stations as a group average a night rate that is 88% of their day price. This is less than half of what these stations charged for nighttime in 1946. A survey by the rep firm of Edward Petry found that in 38 of the top 50 markets, a 50% rate was in operation.

What nighttime rates should be is now a topic of considerable controversy, particularly among reps and stations. Petry has launched its "Crusade for Nighttime Radio" on the platform that many stations now have a night rate that is 50% of their daytime pricetag, and that all stations should have it if they want to attract business. Peters, Griffin & Woodward has spoken out with an opposite view. It feels that a 50% rate is underpricing, that nighttime's cost efficiency is already sufficiently attractive.

There are, of course, stations that still have nighttime classified as Class A, or else have a single rate.

Advertisers would naturally welcome lower prices. Rate realignments have usually attracted new business. Undoubtedly, some stations will find that their present rate cards, no matter what their day-night ratio, provide sufficiently good cost-per-thousand to attract advertisers.

The segment, the participation and the spot are the chief ways in which night radio is being bought and sold today, on the network as well as the spot level. News, weather and sportscasts, plus a handful of special-purpose programs, are about the only things that are being taken on a program sponsorship basis.

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Reprints of this study are available at 25c each. Bulk rates on request.