



↑ **FRANK DEVOL** used to sit in the orchestra pit with his musician father at the Grand Opera House in Canton, Ohio. When he was five years old he adored red-nosed, baggy-pants comedians and wanted, himself, to make the customers roll in the aisles.



↑ **BEHIND THAT INSCRUTABLY GENTLE SMILE** on Frank's face is a keen wit which has just occasioned Ginny Simms to break out laughing.

## *Doubling in Laughs*

*Frank DeVol Has Combined Conducting-Arranging and Comedy for Fans' Pleasure*

**By Lillian Kramer**

*Friday, 6 p. m.  
CBS-KNX-KSDD*

**N**OWADAYS people who tune in on Ginny Simms' show are surprised to hear another one of their favorite bandleaders give out with the comedy. For a long time they were used to hearing Frank DeVol's unusual arrangements add a fillip to the programs, but to discover that he had a flair for comedy that fitted the show's format like a glove, too—that was a bit of a revelation.

"Frank DeVol, a dead-pan!" they are likely to exclaim in wonder.

"And all the time we thought he was a longhair!"

Just goes to show how wrong you can be. He's actually been practicing the gentle art of ribtickling for a long time—since he was old enough to walk, in fact.

"My father was an orchestra leader in the pit of the Grand Opera House in Canton, Ohio, back when they had four days of silent pictures and three days of Columbia burlesque a week," Frank explains.

"I sat in the orchestra pit with Dad and it was no time at all before my secret ambition was to be a burlesque comedian."

At five, he was an habitue of the red-nose and baggy-pants emporium, watching the old-time great comedians like Clark and McCullough, Billy Gilbert, and Bert Lahr parade before the boards.

But his father and mother gave him violin and piano lessons and

when it came time to go to college they had him take up law.

### **Yearned for Laughs**

Frank turned up eventually as a musician playing the saxophone in various dance orchestras and gradually worked up to reading a few lines in vaudeville. His yearning to make 'em roll in the aisles with baggy-pants comedy lay dormant, however, until this year on Ginny's show, when he was given an opportunity to achieve his ambition and was made second comedian.

Don't get the impression that Frank is forsaking the baton for grease paint. He's learned to love music in the very successful years he's been at it. Right now he's wondering if he should learn to wave a baton with either hand so he can direct two orchestras at once and maybe catch up on his work.

Frank was twelve years old when he started composing music, and when he was sixteen he was doing arrangements with professional skill. Pretty soon he was helping his father cue musical scores for films and showed an aptitude for selecting the right type of music to fit the dramatic sequences.

He added stage acting to his repertoire in 1935 when he became a member of the George Olsen-Ethel Shutta troupe, doing novelty singing and comedy routines. Later on he joined the Horace Heidt organization as instrumentalist and singer and it wasn't long before he invaded radio as musical director at Mutual's KHJ.

Now besides conducting the music on Ginny's program he's beating time for Capitol transcriptions and recordings. In addition to instrumental selections for his own orchestra, Frank accompanies Hal Derwin, the King Sisters and Peggy Lee. He's also plugging his new tune, "Can't Get Out of Texas in My Dreams". He's the composer of many novelty tunes, including, "Friendly Tavern Polka", "Little Bo Peep Has Lost Her Jeep", "Mary", and others.

There's no extra money coming because comedy has been incorporated into his Friday night chores, but Frank believes that doubling in laughs enhances his stature as a musician.

"The competition among orchestra leaders in the radio and dance fields

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