

4th ANNUAL TIME

# VARIETY

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VOL. 137. NO. 4

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3, 1940

Take

another

Hollywood

## GREATEST AUDIENCE RADIO DRAMA HAS EVER KNOWN

LUX RADIO THEATRE starts its  
6th record-breaking year . . . and  
again says, "Thank you, Hollywood."

### LEADING CRITICS SAY . . .

"The pace Radio Theatre has set has been a hard one to keep. But each year, we radio editors have assured you that your pace has not slackened."

ALTON COOK, Radio Editor, New York World-Telegram

"Lux Radio Theatre is consistently tops in the radio drama field and is worth the price of anybody's radio set."

NORMAN SIEGEL  
Radio Editor, Cleveland Press

"Since its inception the Lux Radio Theatre has provided listeners with the best in radio drama."

DOROTHY DORAN, Radio Editor, Akron Beacon Journal

"The Lux Radio Theatre brings the cream of moviedom's crop into millions of homes."

ELIZABETH L. SULLIVAN, Radio Editor, Boston Globe

"Radio Theatre's splendid plays and casts have been courageous pioneers in radio drama of high standard."

ROBERT S. STEPHAN, Radio Editor, Cleveland Plain Dealer

"Judged on the basis of entertainment value, Lux Radio Theatre is radio's outstanding dramatic show."

DON FOSTER, Radio Editor, Chicago Times

## LUX RADIO THEATRE

HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD, HOLLYWOOD, CAL.

DIRECTED BY CECIL B. DEMILLE

LOUIS SILVERS, Musical Director

MONDAYS, 9 P.M. NEW YORK TIME, WABC  
AND COAST-TO-COAST COLUMBIA NETWORK

TAKE ANOTHER BOW, HOLLYWOOD! Throughout 1939, as in all the past five years, you have made it possible for the Lux Radio Theatre to score hit after hit. Awards for the best dramatic program, the best Hollywood program, add "official" recognition to the acclaim of radio listeners the country over. Yes, the Lux Radio Theatre has the greatest weekly audience radio drama has ever known, and to its listeners, its participants and to the critics, it says, "Thank you."

And a special "Thank you" to those who have actually appeared before the microphone of the Lux Radio Theatre—our heartfelt gratitude to them and to the many others who have helped, behind the scenes, to make the Lux Radio Theatre the outstanding dramatic success in radio's history.



*There's Only One*



Exclusive Management  
**TED COLLINS**  
1819 Broadway • New York



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Vol. 137. No. 4

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3, 1940

164 PAGES

## 1939 HOLLYWOOD TOPPERS

### 3 Months After War Sees British B.O. Chaos Veering to Confidence

By Samuel Eckman, Jr.

(Managing Director Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Ltd.)

London, Dec. 20.

From chaos to—what? After these first three months of war, I think I may say without unreasonable optimism—to confidence. Confidence in the future. And confidence that Great Britain in wartime is not too bad a place to be in, even for those of us who have the responsibility of doing our part in keeping the entertainment industry alive, both for the sake of the vast number of people to whom it means their livelihood, and because it is probably the most vital factor in keeping up the morale and cheerfulness of the ordinary citizen, whether in uniform or mufti.

The first week or so of the war was pretty grim.

Every cinema and theatre shut by Government order. Practically every film company transferred to somewhere in the country—also, in effect, by official command. For the authorities had made it very clear that they would not have films stored in London, and that they wanted as many firms as possible to move their employees to the 'reception', or safer areas.

If I may venture a mild criticism, the theatre-closing order was made no easier by the language in which it was couched.

On the fateful Sunday morning when war was declared, we all heard on the radio that every place of amusement was to be shut until further notice. In certain areas, the announcement continued, the matter might be reconsidered later on.

Of course, the authorities were expecting, or at least fearing, immediate mass air raids on London and other cities. Nevertheless, some assurance might perhaps have been given that the amusement houses would be reopened at the earliest possible moment—as in fact they were. It would have softened the blow, not only for the 500,000 or more people in Britain who depend on cinemas and theatres for their bread and butter, but also for the countless number who regard them as their principal source of mental nourishment, relaxation and amusement.

Although this is a purely personal opinion, I do not believe that, even if severe raids had come—even if they come now, as they may—England could carry on without entertainment. We all have learned a good deal of what happened during the last war.

Aircraft then were less powerful and speedy than they are today; but anti-aircraft defenses were infinitely less effective.

During War I there were scores of air raids on London; yet the theatres and cinemas remained open throughout its four years and more, giving comfort, recreation and a sane outlook on life to the people of London, and to British, Dominion and American soldiers and sailors here on leave, or on their way to the front. (Continued on page 66)

#### New Model

As the result of her recordings of 'Oh, Johnny, Oh' (Columbia) and 'Billy' (Vocalion), Bonnie Baker has become one of the most imitated singers in the business. Prior to Miss Baker's rise to attention the girl vocalists with dance units were given to borrowing the style of Mildred Bailey or Maxine Sullivan.

Now they're trying to capture Miss Baker's sub-ingenue nasal as part of their own vocal mannerism.

### TRAVELING BIG SPEC THROUGH SOUTHWEST

One of the largest traveling spec shows ever seen in this country will tour through New Mexico, Arizona and Texas from the end of May until the end of October in celebration of the 400th anniversary of the coming of the Spanish explorer, Coronado. Special steel scaffolding is being fabricated to make it possible to erect in 24 to 36 hours sets comparable in size to those used in California Cavalcade at the San Francisco Fair last season.

Productions will be presented in football stadiums at night with cast of about 1,000 players recruited in the neighborhood and a small nucleus of pros and stuntmen. With large Spanish populations in the touring territory, some of the productions will be presented in that tongue.

Cavalcade opens at Albuquerque May 29.

### THIS EXPLAINS SOME BAD LEGIT ROAD BIZ

Buffalo, Jan. 1.

There's growing resentment here about the final shows of visiting legit. They are consistently interrupted by loud backstage noises due to removal and loading of sets and props used in preceding acts.

On certain occasions, also, shouts and profanity of stagehands and truckers have been loud enough to drown out the stage dialog. And to make matters worse, these audience annoyances happen at last performances (especially Saturday nights), which usually see the largest attendance, with loss of good will multiplied accordingly.

### STEWART-ROONEY IN B. O. STANDOFF

Former's Film Gross Over \$10,000,000, But Rooney Heads 'Em All in New Product Released in 12 Months — Fleming, Capra and Curtiz Leading Money Directors

#### FEW NEW FACES

By Arthur Ungar

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

The cinematic man-of-the-year is James Stewart. In 1939, five of his pictures grossed more than \$10,000,000, a bit of a record for a male lead. The films were 'Made for Each Other,' 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington,' 'Destry Rides Again,' 'It's a Wonderful World' and 'You Can't Take It With You' which latter, while a late 1938 release, did most of its earnings in 1939.

Holding strictly within the limitation of films released during the 12-month period, however, Mickey Rooney tops the male star brigade at the boxoffice.

With the war threat and general (Continued on page 28)

### Miller, Chester Both Record for Victor With Ditto Styles; Squawks

Though many of the new bands and quite a few of the old ones have shown a tendency to use Glenn Miller's sweet style, obtained by using a lead clarinet, the first indication of any objection by Miller is his reported pressuring of Victor to request Bob Chester to change his style. Both bands are on the same Bluebird (RCA Victor) label. The request was made to Chester's managers, Arthur Michaud and Jim Peppe, who answered with a turn-down, accompanied by a request for Chester's release from his contract. That was in turn denied.

Chester's new band, which follows the current Glen Gray orchestra into the Paramount theatre, N. Y., was originally signed to Victor for a 10-side test stretch. It was subsequently signed for a year, on which 12 more sides have been turned out, on the assurance there would be no conflict with Miller. Situation remains as is for the time being.

#### Deadline Jan. 1

This edition went to press Jan. 1.

Early deadline, because of the holiday's mechanical problems and the size of this issue makes it necessary to omit certain standard departments this week.

### WLW Shows Hillbillies in Denims; Their Personal Wardrobe Too Flashy

#### Top Money Directors

Victor Fleming  
Frank Capra  
Michael Curtiz  
William S. Van Dyke  
George B. Seitz

Cincinnati, Jan. 1.

Most hillbilly entertainers who get into the bucks via radio adopt a yen for flashy street clothes, loud jewelry, classy autos and other big-time splurge. This, if known to their fans, causes a popularity letdown.

To build up, rather than tear down, fan illusions the WLW Boone County Jamboree folks hold a public reception after Saturday night stage-air shows in Emery auditorium. Patrons are invited to meet and mingle with the entertainers while the latter have on their stage gingham and denims. Several hundred attendees take advantage of the open-house offer after each performance. They get backstage glimpses and are permitted to obtain autographs. Too, they clear out before the entertainers wash up and change to fancy attire.

Hank Richards, who writes and supervises production on the troupe's stage-air shows, adopted the audience-mingling idea this season. He also has discouraged extemporaneous clowning and attempts at attention-hogging during performances.

At a meeting of the troupe last week, Richards said: 'The day when radio entertainers were a novelty in the theatre has passed. No longer do audiences look upon you as a member of the family and excuse bum showmanship and rotten stage presence.'

'When you play a theatre now, from 35% to 50% of the audience is there to see you perform. Bear in mind that from 50% to 65% of the audience is made up of regular patrons.'

'Too many radio acts have let down the people who paid cash to see them perform.'

### COAST AIRPORT LOSES BOUT WITH PIX COS.

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Pictures won a decision over aviation when the flying school at Tarzana, in San Fernando Valley, was ordered closed by the city council. Film companies with ranches in the neighborhood, chiefly RKO, complained that the droning of airplane motors interfered with picture making.

Training school, conducted by Major C. C. Moseley and backed by the War Department, put up a stiff fight but the film outfits won by a vote of 10 to 3.

### Leftist Mexico Bans Pix From the Soviet

Mexico City, Jan. 1.

Presumably because of the Finland affair, which leftist Mexico has officially disapproved, the federal government has forbidden exhibitions of Soviet pix at its Teatro Hidalgo here.

The government had made quite a show of Russian films.

### THEATRE BLDG. BOOM IN LATIN AMERICA

Expansion of the theatre construction programs in Central American countries and the West Indies forecast a material hike in sales by American equipment manufacturers in the immediate future. That is the word brought back to New York by H. B. Allinsmith, general manager for Western Electric Co. of Cuba, who has been on a month's tour of the company's Caribbean territory.

While the European conflict has delayed expansion plans in British dependencies, the increase in American garrisons has tended to improve business in Panama and Puerto Rico; also Latin American republics, especially in Central America, which are going forward with building on a scale unprecedented in recent years.

Largest theatre in Latin Americas is projected at Bogota while houses of 2,000 and 3,000 seats respectively are going up at Caracas and Baranquilla.

Allinsmith's recent trip included stops in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Trinidad, Colombia, Venezuela, Jamaica and Panama.

### LASKER GIVES CHICAGO U. \$3,500,000 ESTATE

Chicago, Jan. 1.

Albert D. Lasker, of Lord & Thomas, has given his \$3,500,000 country estate in Lake Forest here to the U. of Chicago. Property includes one of the most famous golf courses in the country.

Gift will be made official on Jan. 11, with the university to hold the property for at least two years. If in that time the university hasn't found an educational use for it, the school may then dispose of the property any way it chooses.

Lasker, who is a member of the university's board of trustees, had previously given the school \$1,000,000 to establish the Lasker Foundation for Medical Research. This gift was made in 1928 in conjunction with his first wife, the late Mrs. Flora Lasker.



# RETAKES OF 1939

By George E. Phair

Hollywood, Jan. 1.  
*There was a time when glamour was the rage,  
 When beauty ruled the motion picture screen.  
 The leading femme was like a fashion page,  
 All spick and span, no matter what the scene.*

*In silk and ermine, jewelry and pomp,  
 The damsel posed in a gilded hall,  
 But now they dunk her in a tropic swamp  
 Or wreck her makeup in a burroom brawl.*

De-Oomph, 1939 A. D.

In the history of the motion picture, old 1939 will be known as the Year of Deglamorization. Feminine pulchritude, cultivated, adorned and publicized at a tremendous cost, suddenly found itself behind a celluloid eight-ball.

Not so long ago a femme star could dawdle through a stampede, a hurricane, a sandstorm and a forest fire and wind up by swimming over Niagara Falls without disturbing one lock of her permanent wave or disarranging one flounce of her Paris gown. For a time Joe Public looked on in wonder. Then he snickered, and the snicker was loud enough to be heard by the Master Minds of Hollywood. Now the glamor gal finds herself pushed around, as if she were a heavy or a roughhouse comic.

Notable example is Marlene Dietrich, once the last word in beauteous hauteur. Marlene was a lady, like Du Barry, only more so. Today we find her in a western honky-tonk, warbling ribald songs and mingling in unladylike clinches with barflies.

Joan Crawford always looked as if she were stepping out of Ye Olde Smarte Shoppe. In her current picture she has the aspect of one emerging from a concrete mixer. Clark Gable clamps a headlock on Joan and drags her through jungles, swamps, fens, bogs, morasses, quagmires and anything else he can find on the lot. Joan is utterly and irrevocably de-oomphed.

For years Alice Faye was the fair-haired gal at 20th-Fox. Modistes, coutouriers, cosmeticians and hair-manglers were hired in vast numbers to enhance her natural beauty. Along came 'Hollywood Cavalcade' and Alice's features were festooned with custard pies, flung with unerring aim by that veteran pie pitcher, Buster Keaton. There is only one thing more deglamorizing than a custard pie. That is a huckleberry pie.

Even the Great Garbo, once as aloof as a Goddess of Norse Mythology, finally let down her hair and got a snootful.

P. S.—The beauty shops are still working overtime.  
 Life is a cycle. The back-laced corset is coming back. So is Dracula.

Once again the studios are threatening to knock off the high-salaried stars. The play's the thing and all that sort of stuff. It's a good idea if they can dig up another play. 'Boy Meets Girl' is getting a bit frayed around the cuffs.

Diplomats can't agree on what constitutes contraband, but everybody admits that Henry Armetta is a high explosive.

'Primrose Path' was once known as 'February Hill,' but the studio boys thought the title was too cold for so hot a story.

'The Patent Leather Kid' is coming back with the same title but a new story. Patent leather shoes and film stories crack with age.

They change the names of picture plays upon the slightest whim. They change the names of budding stars in spite of her or him. They even change the morning mist on yonder mountain's brow. The good old California mist becomes a Velo now.

Whether they call it a fog or a mist or a Velo, it still leaks.

'Should Husbands Work' will be followed by 'Should Wives Work?', but both questions are unnecessary if there is a moppet in the family.

Picture industry may be a trust in Washington, but not in Hollywood, where one producer will trust another about as far as he can throw Oliver Hardy.

Years ago the Supreme Court ruled that baseball was a peculiar business, requiring peculiar rules. And if baseball is peculiar, the film business is positively delirious.

*In Hollywood, life is a jumpy refrain,  
 With options.  
 Its rhythm interrupted again and again,  
 With options.  
 Not only in matters of cinema art  
 But even in gentle affairs of the heart,  
 They promise to wed 'until death do us part.'  
 With options.*

'South of Pago Pago' sounds like the work of Victor Victor. Or Gordon Gordon. Proper spot for the preem is Walla Walla.

O. Henry's life is about to be filmed but it won't be his first appearance on the screen. His yarns have been camera fodder ever since Hollywood was born.

Technically there is a difference between 'Hurricane' and 'Typhoon,' but old Joe Fan won't notice. He is interested in sarongs.

*In Picture Town the evening sky  
 Was pierced by flashes rising high.  
 Prodigious searchlights gleamed—  
 A hot dog stand was getting preemed.*

We have always wondered what would happen if some brash youth walked up to Charles Laughton and said 'Hi ya, Chuck.'

'The Drunkard' staggers into its seventh consecutive year, establishing a new record for marathon hangovers.

*Ladies who are built like hacks  
 Shouldn't walk around in slacks.*

Governmental shifting of Thanksgiving opened a new line of thought. Why not lump all the holidays into one grand festival? New Year's Eve always did sound like the Fourth of July and vice versa.

Even a cow must take a screen test nowadays. If she looks too much like a cow she is not the type.

It Just Keeps Rollin' Along

All up and down this whole creation there is no more versatile river than the Sacramento. It is not what you might call a big league stream but it has doubled for all manner of waterways, from a rippling rill to Old Man River himself. Cleopatra, on her gilded barge, has two-timed Caesar and Anthony on the muddy waters of the Sacramento. Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn have paddled on its tide, and many a Memphis gambler has dealt off the bottom while floating on the good ship Robert E. Lee



PETE SMITH

Greetings to Variety Mugs Everywhere

## Inside On Harry Edington's Orig Tie-In with RKO

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Naming of Harry Edington as head of RKO studio production followed negotiations that have been on and off for a number of years. He was first approached to become executive head of the studio at the time Hiram Brown was prexy, latter making special trip to the Coast to confer with Edington. Reportedly, Joseph P. Kennedy strongly recommended Edington at that time.

First overtures to Edington were made shortly before David O. Selznick moved into plant as executive producer, and were renewed soon after Selznick departed to join Metro. Edington, in the meantime, is said to have cultivated a close association with the bankers interested in RKO, and that his decision to accept the post was due to pressure from this end.

Universal has abolished post of scenario editor with the departure of Jerry Sackheim, who held the job for the past four years. Reginald Allen, formerly with the Edington unit, has been made secretary in charge of writer assignments under Dan Kelley, and producers and directors will clear writing wants through him in the future.

Joseph J. Nolan remains as assistant to president George J. Schaefer, in charge of studio operations. Lee Marcus continues in charge of the B's.

### TIME OUT TOUR

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Pending recovery of Claire Trevor, hospitalized with the flu, and the turning of cameras again on 'Dark Command' at Republic, Roy Rogers is personaling along the Coast.

He'll stay out until the command to return is given.

that never saw the Mississippi. Old Marse Sacramento has played the Volga, the Yukon, the Hudson and everything but the Erie Canal, which no respectable stream would think of playing. Now Old Sac is playing the Swanee, gurgling in southern accents as it meanders through California fields owned by Iowa farmers: 'For men may come and men may go, but my options go on forever.'

*In simple days of old, the humble cow  
 Would meet the milkman in the dawn, but now  
 She kicks aside the milking can  
 And goes to meet the makeup man  
 And get a smear of grease paint on her brow.*

Janet Gaynor has something the other Hollywood gals ain't got. A husband who can't criticize her new clothes.

While Uncle Sam's gumshoe boys are prowling around Hollywood, maybe they will discover an original story.

Prison pictures are so prevalent at Warners that the studio is known as the Big House.

Secret ambition: to see Spencer Tracy in a dual role, stealing scenes from himself.

Warning to young vocalists: Once upon a time Ned Sparks was a crooner, and look at him now.

'Too Busy to Work' is not the life story of a studio exec, although a lot of them are like that.

This talk about the extermination of B pictures is a lot of harmless buzzing. There will always be B's, no matter how colossal.

Giveaways are becoming so common that the film fan who wins an automobile demands a chauffeur with it.

*They had to write an epitaph  
 For little Aloysius.  
 He asked a star to autograph  
 A set of gimmick dishes.*

## THROUGH THE (34) YEARS

So another year has come and gone and show business makes its 1940 entrance on a world-stage that is peopled by strange and terrifying actors. On the backdrop is an erupting volcano effect, representing the resumption of European life and death struggle in age-old combat. Down front the scene is more tranquil, a vision of America in troubled peace.

In the swirl of events show business is not detached from the composite setting. So closely are the theatre, the screen and radio interwoven with the world panorama that every day and hour make new demands on the resources of professional showmen.

The obligation is clear and the assignment clean cut. In a world that is on the verge of political and military hysterics, show business is the dominating influence in the cause of universal sanity. It is the mirror in which humanity may glimpse itself, however vague and bleared the vision may be. Show business alone retains some sense of humor, an attribute that can save civilization.

Dust of 34 years has accumulated on the bound files of VARIETY since its first issue. Week after week the publication has maintained its unique place as an international newspaper of the show world. Its columns bear testimony to the fortitude of show people who, through the years, have adapted themselves to uncounted changes, innovations and developments both within and outside the theatre.

For the moment, the outstanding activity in professional entertainment is commercialized radio, the partnership of showmanship and merchandise. It's Joe Miller at his best—and worst—in front of a No. 1 drop, armed with a shaving stick, a bar of soap and a plate of soup. And Toscanini in the orchestra pit! Not in its wildest dreams could the generation of theatre-goers and music lovers, who made a ritual of a John Drew opening at the Empire Theatre or a Caruso appearance at the Metropolitan (high-lights of the era when VARIETY was young), imagine the show world that exists today.

Record of the recent past makes a prognosticator hesitate before predicting the future. But the future will be written, week by week in VARIETY.

To the people in show business, VARIETY extends heartiest good wishes for the New Year.

### Lull Over at U, 3 Go

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Universal started three pictures during holiday week after an all-time low with only one production in work. New films are the Deanna Durbin starrer, 'It Happened in Kaloha,' which started Thursday. 'Black Friday' and 'The House of Seven Gables' rolled next day.

'My Little Chickadee,' co-starring Mae West and W. C. Fields, wound up Thursday.

### SAILINGS

Jan. 12 (New York to Buenos Aires), John W. Hicks, Jr., Adolph Zukor (Santa Elena).

Jan. 2 (Baltimore to London), Robert Montgomery, Ben Goetz (Clipper).

Jan. 2 (Genoa to New York), Ferenc Molnar (Rex).

### Shirley Out of Costume

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

New production plan for Shirley Temple at 20th-Fox calls for 'The Young People' as her next starrer instead of 'Lady Jane,' the original entry.

Switch was made to avoid shooting the fourth consecutive costume picture with the young star.

### L. A. to N. Y.

Gene Busch  
 Jimmy Durante  
 Tom Evans  
 Sam Hellman  
 Walter Huston  
 Jesse L. Lasky  
 Bruno Lessing  
 William Reynolds  
 Lucile Watson

### N. Y. to L. A.

Robert Gray  
 Lou Irwin  
 Abe Meyer  
 Ellis St. Joseph

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# THE YEAR IN PICTURES

By Roy Chartier

As another year is left behind, the clouds of war hang menacingly over the entire world and the picture industry, a world enterprise of fabulous stature, prepares to steel itself, not only against the threats of disturbance originating abroad but also against the blows that are being struck it at home. Inasmuch as the picture business has weathered many a storm in the past, there is more than faint hope that again it will emerge intact, surmounting all the influences which are subversive to it, but while there is optimism on the one hand, there is more than a modicum of pessimism on the other, in view of the gravity of the problems of the day.

Armed conflict on the other side, which may or may not ultimately ensnare the United States, has had a dampening effect on the morale of the industry's men and women. It could amount to a crisis, greatly adumbrating the injury that has already been inflicted, but, in the minds of the righteously hopeful, a war could also have its compensating virtues, whether or not this country becomes embroiled.

While foreign markets have been decimated during the past few years and now lie in the paths of greater ravage because of war, it is possible that the losses to be sustained by the film companies may not be as great as imagined and that an appreciable portion of that deficit in income may be made up by stimulation of commerce on this side. The producer-distributors are seeking a larger return on home ground because of the situation already created abroad and it is not entirely beyond the realm of probability that sufficiently increased volume in business may not be attained to match the shrinkage overseas.

## Domestic Market Altogether

In some quarters it is believed that years to come may have the film industry relying almost totally on its domestic market and making as good a ratio of profit as it has by attempting to encircle the globe with its merchandise. To this end, the tendency appears to be to cut and tailor product much more with an eye to the American market and much less to the foreign. A representative number of pictures and personalities which never could be given away abroad anyway, thus were in the position of virtually depending on the domestic buyers for disposal. On the other hand, many pictures have up to now relied on the markets beyond the U.S. borders for their profits.

Though it is a paradox, a benediction of the present war with its utter destruction of life and property, might become the boom in industrial activity which so many in pictures are praying will come. It would no doubt be reflected in a vital increase in theatre receipts, as it was during World War I. Meantime, the effort toward betterment of the box-office grosses is being extended in every direction by both distributor and exhibitor. Each seeks more of the spending dollar than has been coming in but how much more may be wheedled from the public, if any, is a question aside from the value of film merchandise since so many other arms in the amusement arena are also reaching out for everything that can be had.

Other factors of a highly disconcerting character beset the industry at large. Living in a forest of uncertainties, the producer-distributors are bearing the heaviest burden of the moment, while out of some of the troubles which harass them the exhibitors hope to benefit.

## The U. S. Trust Suit, the No. 1 Woe

The United States anti-trust suit against the majors is No. 1 on the list of current nightmares. Filed in the summer of 1938, it has provided tasty legal pabulum for a year-and-a-half now and before it has reached a conclusion, the legal bill will be far up in the millions.

Lack of sleep and calm among producer-distributors has also been caused by the Neely bill to outlaw blockbooking, by the failure to negotiate the adoption of a trade practices code, by the problems created as a result of union power and expansion, by the crying need for economy measures, and by a multifarious collection of other annoyances. Civil suits, constant legislative sharpshooting, censorial difficulties, taxation of all kinds, Federal interference, busybody netting of all descriptions, Mayor LaGuardia's campaign to bring production east, church opposition, banker influence, stockholder complaints, etc., etc.—these all add to the parade of problems. The producer has his individual problems, the distributor has his, the exhibitor as well has his, and the three branches of the industry collectively also have theirs.

## THE PRODUCER

The man who turns the raw product into saleable merchandise for a market that reaches every corner of the world, the producer is at the outset the most important cog in the film industry wheel. Distribution and exhibition, as well as the public, are wholly dependent on what he and his studio does with the material at hand, a producer being placed in the position where good or bad judgment can make a vast difference. He takes the rap when he has been in error, or when a good picture has cost so much that it cannot show the desired profit.

Plodding along during the past year in more or less the same groove on picture styles, the producer has not made a remarkable contribution to the industry except that the level of quality maintained in the film product compares very favorably with other years. The question raised is whether or not the proportion of profitable pictures to the whole, considering that between 500 and 600 features are turned out yearly in Hollywood, shouldn't be higher. In this connection, the theory that the manufacture of fewer pictures per annum would not mean a better ratio of quality is attacked on the ground that greater efficiency over a given period is more likely to prevail if the job is small than if it is of wholesale proportions.

Although in some higher production circles it is believed there should be fewer pictures, in others there appears to be a tendency to favor the large programs which have been the habit of recent years. Meanwhile, the studios expiate on the demand for economy, evidenced in part when the war began by the firing of a lot of lesser help. Continuing a mass flow of product, they are exhorting the exhibitors to give product extended playing time. However, too many pictures are being delivered now to make it possible for the theatres to provide much extra time for the better ones, leaving it squarely up to the producers to do something about the matter.

Fewer pictures annually might also prove a part of the solution to the double-bill menace, a policy that is spreading more and more each year, with no apparent attempt made to discourage it. Were not so much film available, the theatres would not be able to continue with duals.

## If Neely Comes

If the Neely bill passes, output will probably be seriously shaved because of the danger in investing money in pictures which, when put on the auction block, might go begging for dates for free. The situation would be vastly different then, and not improbable that this legislation, if enacted, would

serve as the greatest eliminating factor of the double-bill policy that has developed.

The cost of the 1939-40 features, numbering over 500, will probably run somewhere around \$175,000,000, and includes 'Gone With the Wind,' a \$4,000,000 investment. It is the most expensive film made to date. When the '39-40 bills are in, around 40 features no doubt will have been in the \$1,000,000 class, while the average cost of the B's has run as high as for '38-39, if not higher, in spite of the campaign for economy.

Something new under the Hollywood sun—but they're still in the alphabetical department to the exhibitors—is the effort to remove classification of secondary product as B's. A rose being just as sweet by any other name, in the exhibition field the pictures that are not A's will still be B's or C's or D's. The quality will tell, no matter what letters are called.

Spectacles, biographical stories, romantic dramas and heavy drama on an elaborate scale have continued to figure prominently in the features styles of the past year, but there is somewhat of a tendency, in view of the war, to turn to lighter entertainment on the psychological ground that the public mind is ripe for that now. Everything of a war character, notably anti-Nazi or anti-neutrality material, is out, some stories on producer schedules having been tabled for that reason.

Musicals have dwindled further in number, and the screwball comedies of 1938 that were going sour are virtually extinct. Gangster, prison and G-men drama has not faltered, but the theme has gotten so tiresome that exhibitors are beginning to make a point of it. Comedies and family series continue to attract attention, and during the past year detective series have been given considerable play by the producers, a new one, based on Nick Carter, having just been launched by Metro. A lot of remakes, usually under new titles, has caused a vast amount of complaint. This may be soft-pedaled in future as a result.

Prodded more and more by the east, Hollywood is turning product out more rapidly where possible. Several of the studios, notably Paramount, 20th-Fox, Metro and Warner Bros., are way ahead of release schedules, and will be starting the 1940-41 pictures earlier than in history. In most cases producers are already discussing the production plans for that forthcoming season. Because of a narrowed market for them, due largely to double bills, shorts may be much fewer in number for '40-41.

## Cutting the Nut

Preparatory to a new season's manufacture and in line with the panic that dictates economy, studios have started weeding out whatever talent that could be spared, together with producers, directors, writers and other questionable assets. Not much, however, has been developed to replace ailing ranks, but there has been a concerted effort to nurture younger artists for future b.o. importance, with the studios pointing some of 'em rather high in hopes of a fast arrival.

The year 1939 has marked a tendency toward an increased number of deals with outside producers. This is notably true of RKO, Universal, United Artists, Metro and Columbia. While UA differs from the other companies in that it is made up of separate producers, for the '39-40 picture year it has the longest list of individual film-makers on its rolls in history, and promises the biggest program it has ever offered. Outstanding among the outside-producer deals, of course, was the making of 'Gone With the Wind' by David O. Selznick for Metro release.

Hollywood remains the solidly entrenched territory of the film producers, and doubted that the urging of Mayor LaGuardia to give New York some of this industrial activity will bear much fruit, if any. One recommendation reportedly made is a quota of two films annually in the east by all of the majors, but thus far there has been nothing concrete in this direction. Huge investments in Hollywood by the major companies make it unlikely that there may be any substantial split between east and west because of the way in which overhead is spread over a season's output. Two production organizations, one east and one west, would complicate the situation, it is pointed out.

Paramount is building a new studio on the Coast, and others are expanding, the threat of LaGuardia, California taxation, ham-an-egg plans and the like notwithstanding.

## THE DISTRIBUTOR

A salesman of salesmen, here is the man who must sell a pig in a poke, make his customers believe they've made a silk purse out of a sow's ear, get terms high enough to meet the high costs of what they're handing him, browbeat the exhibitor into taking his wares in preference to that of the company that has topped his on delivery during the past year, cajole accounts into added playing time, fight for better advertising appropriations, overcome clearance and other exhib objections, try to move those shorts, and, in general, lead a dog's life most of the time.

The distributor takes the rap more often and more manfully than the others, even when he's performed a miracle by getting hard-earned money for product that didn't warrant it. Many is the unsung hero in this branch who has taken a weak program of pictures and made them pay out to the utmost, who has put over questionable product for good gain and who, through his sales pressure, has covered up for producers having little on the ball.

Constantly after higher rentals and better time, the distributor during the past year has had no easy row to hoe. Exhibitor resistance has been greater than ever before, and the competition among the various companies reached the point where only the most aggressive selling resulted in the desired contract at the terms sought by the producer. Based on the deliveries made during the 1938-39 season, some majors were at an advantage in getting deals closed at satisfactory terms, while others which had fallen down during the '38-39 semester found themselves facing the problems of overcoming objections that had not existed the prior year.

The distributors began selling the current (1939-40) product earlier than ever before, with the exception of RKO, which waited until it had held its sales convention in midsummer before attempting to close any deals. This was partly due to the fact that the company did not know what it would have to offer for '39-40, with numerous producer deals hanging fire until the end of June. Result has been that RKO has been much later than others in closing negotiations with its accounts for the season, although some other distributors were still not getting circuit contracts of importance inked until December had arrived.

## No Early Buying

Early selling did not inspire early buying, the apathy of the exhibitors having reached a new high last summer. Much stress was laid on the fact that the producer-distributors were expecting the theatres to sign up for a year's pictures that would not start going on release until August or September, months later, and that meantime there was a con-

siderable distance yet to go with the old season's product. Should the final four or five months of the remaining prior season's product turn out bad, then that might serve as an important guide as to what to do for the new year. Conversely, if a distributor finished strong, that also would act as a probable deciding factor. The question of adjustments, reversions under the contract, etc., together with any concessions on unplayed product, or otherwise, in view of the writing of a new deal, were also borne in mind by many buyers who refused to be stampeded into contracts at too early a date.

Various exhibitors also wanted to see what the new ('39-40) pictures were going to look like and stalled their buying until some of these, pre-released as well as on general release, were already being played. While, in effect, the distributors tried to sell Christmas cards when the Fourth of July was being celebrated, the exhibs lay back and did nothing.

Meantime, throughout the spring and summer the distributors were burning midnight oil in an attempt to formulate a code of fair trade practices, the adoption of which in June or thereabouts would no doubt have acted as a sudden stimulant to sales. After months of toil and endless negotiation, in addition to countless meetings of the distributor group itself as well as of exhibitor organizations, the code was dealt a death blow by the Department of Justice, which ruled that it was not legal, and it palpably is now a dead issue though the need still urgently exists for self-regulation of relations between the selling and buying branches of the industry.

## The Code

The code received a severe setback at the hands of Allied States Assn. at its 10th annual convention in Minneapolis in June, when it was rejected, but it may have been placed into effect just the same had not official Washington ruled against it.

Late in August, with the code tabled, Warner Bros. announced a new merchandising policy which embodied some of the features of the code, notably an increased rejection privilege of 20% on features, the average rental of which was \$100 or under. The volume of sales doubled and other distributors followed suit, notably Metro, which publicly proclaimed a detailed list of trade practice points patterned after the code. These concessions were made retroactive on all deals for 1939-40, regardless of when signed, this also holding true for Paramount and 20th-Fox. Excepting for a lengthy voluntary arbitration clause which has been inserted in the RKO contract, the other distributors have not sought to incorporate leading features of the code into their sales policy, although it is believed that when it comes to selling the 1940-41 film, a 20% cancellation ceiling and other concessions will become industry-wide.

Because of the many difficulties which arise over clearance, machinery to govern these disputes and arbitration that will have teeth in it, are desired in many exhibitor circles, with moves independently in that direction having been taken. The distributors so far have taken no position in the matter, although their fostering of the code signified their support of arbitration to cover clearance and other controversies.

## Extended Playdates

Due to war and foreign sales uncertainty, the distributors early last fall began pressing the exhibitors for extended playing time in line with demands of the producers that the slack in markets abroad be met by getting more out of film in this country than has been the case in the past. This not being as easy as it sounds, with accounts having loaded up on film for the 1939-40 season which must be played or lost for, the distributor folk are more or less on the spot, from the big sales executive down to the exchange booker who assigns the dates. The Darryl F. Zanuck letter to Siobhan was interpreted as being as much of a warning to the distribution forces as it was a complaint against Fabian or other theatre operators who did not continue runs to their utmost.

Cluttering up the availability lists this past year have been a flock of reissues, including war stuff which did a black-out at the b.o. shortly after the war had got going. The public seemingly is shying away from anything concerning the cat-fight that is in progress abroad.

Numerous special premieres, some of them very costly, have been held during 1939, with trainloads of newspaper people and others carted from far-off places in a new kind of supposed publicity hypo. Such treatment has been accorded preems of 'Dodge City,' 'Union Pacific,' 'Young Mr. Lincoln' and other pictures, with the openings held in cities or towns to suit the subject matter of the films. As a practice, that is being discouraged now.

## Separate Deals for Special Pix

Among pictures being sold under separate contract this year are 'Gone With the Wind,' 'Gulliver's Travels' and 'Pinocchio.' A new high in percentage demands is being made on 'Wind,' with Metro seeking 70% of the gross from the first dollar. RKO has indicated it will want 50% deals on 'Pinocchio' but Paramount has made no trade announcement as to what it will want for its feature cartoon, 'Gulliver,' though it is understood the same terms prevail as for 'Pinocchio.'

Metro sets an important sales precedent under its policy to govern 'Wind.' Taking contracts for the picture through to 1941 only under an agreement that calls for advanced admission prices, the company is guaranteeing a 10% profit on any engagement played, provided that it (Metro) is satisfied with the playing time commitment and the expenses to govern the run. In other words, there being agreement on the scale and overhead to apply, together with the playing time that will be given, Metro still may come out with a net rental of 60%, should calculations fall on some engagements. The gamble it may lose by guaranteeing a 10% profit is relatively minor. In view of the potentialities of the picture at the b.o., the mean average on rental return is more likely to come very close to the 70% asked, even if the 10% guarantee becomes a part of the contract where exhibitors desire it. It remains to be seen exactly what opposition, if any, there will be to the high percentage demands on 'Wind' as well as the two cartoons.

Over 1939 there have been a few shifts in distribution personnel but no important shakeups such as occurred in the heyday of the mergers. Following the appointment of W. A. Scully to Universal as general sales manager, E. K. (Ted) O'Shea succeeded him in Metro as eastern district manager. Subsequently, Dave Levy resigned as New Jersey branch manager, moving over to Universal in charge of that company's New York exchange, while Sol Abrams, whom he succeeded, transferred to the h.o. in an executive capacity as assistant to Scully.

Paramount created a third division with supervision from

(Continued on page 32)



# America's War Advantage Anent English Films; Too Top-Sided?

By Michael Balcon

(Production Director, Associated Talking Pictures)

London, Dec. 20.

We embarked on a film at the Earling Studios some three or four days before Chamberlain announced over the air that we were at war with Germany. The film was "The Proud Valley," with Paul Robeson, set in the Welsh mining area. After two days shooting, when already the invasion of Poland had begun, and evacuation was put into operation, shooting ceased on the set, and the studio personnel, technical and administrative, were told they could have the weekend to make arrangements for getting their families into safe areas.

When we reassembled on Monday, the country was already at war, and we arrived to the music of the air-raid sirens, and had to take shelter. It was a false alarm, but it served to bring the reality home to us.

During those days, 40 men had left their jobs to take up Navy, Army and Air Force jobs for which they had been earmarked. Of these, 29 were key men, including the managing director of the associated companies, Major Reginald Baker; the secretary, Lieut. Gordon Rayner; my brother, Captain Shan Balson, and others.

The author and director of the Formby comedies (though restricted mainly to British and Dominions markets, they are one of the studio's most valuable assets) is now Lieut. Commander Kimmins of the Royal Navy. The associate producer in charge of the Formby comedies is Private Jack Kitchen, late of the Territorials and now of the Regular Army.

Production managers, camera and soundmen and all young artists left, in a comparatively small organization geared to make no more than two films at a time, a gap which then seemed impossible to fill. We decided to carry on with the production, nevertheless.

Paul Robeson, who could quite understandably have left for America with his wife and son, volunteered to stay and see the picture through. Welsh artists, who could have retired to the comparative safety of their western country, to a man asked to stay on.

It had its headaches, and it had its humors. One character written into the script became first two characters, as one actor was called up, and then split into three as the second actor was called, so the continuity of the story could be preserved.

A topical twist was inserted into the film. We carried our gas masks, we camouflaged and blacked out our studios. We cast anxious eyes at the sky until we became used to the idea that for the time being, anyhow, they would not be blackened by enemy planes.

Meanwhile the cameras turned. I expected every day to lose director Pen Tennyson, aged 27 and a Naval Reservist, and the deputy director spent days mugging up the script.

There were understandably sentimental moments when fellows said good-bye to their friends at the studio, and while the cameras were turning, our minds were occupied with two things that concerned us very much: how to keep the industry alive during the war, and how to harness it to the war machine so that it could play its part.

A feeling of excitement carried us through the first two or three weeks—and that most satisfactory feeling of, "At last—thank God," for the shadow of war had been hanging over us for more than a year. But when these feelings wore off, we got the real hangover. The picture in hand could obviously be completed without any major difficulties, and (touch wood) now that it is ready, it seems to have turned out as good as any we have made here in more peaceful days.

## Quota's Native Advantages

But what of the future? One difficulty after another became apparent. At least 80% of the production industry here is normally dependent on the shelter of the Quota Act. Imagine our consternation when we learned that the President of the Board of Trade had intentions of doing away with Quota. We could not help feeling either (on the strength of evidence) that American interests in this country knew the Board of Trade's intention before we did.

As opposing political factions in a

war unite when the safety of the country is threatened, so—miraculously enough!—the producers really got together and made a spirited attempt to avert this calamity.

Over two months passed with no decision either way, and this lack of decision had almost the effect of closing the studios altogether, for we had continually to bear in mind the possibility of the worst happening. So we had a layoff which we used to prepare a new and topical subject for George Formby.

I must pay tribute to those who remained in the studio. They came to me offering considerable voluntary cuts in their salaries. Several asked to work for nothing until something definite was known. Those cuts had to be accepted, and the Board of Directors was glad to have them at the time, particularly as the cinemas, at first closed down altogether for a week, were then being kept open only during restricted hours, and boxoffice returns fell to something like 20% of normal, so that films we had made under normal budgets now looked like becoming heavy losses. The layoff lasted six weeks, and then, happily, all salaries could be returned to pre-war rates.

Our studios, being one of the fortunate minority not directly dependent on the Quota (we have no tieup with any American outlet), we decided to go into production before the Board of Trade made the position clear about the Quota Act, since to go on waiting inactively, was threatening the wellbeing of the studios.

The Board of Trade, after over two months of fence-squatting, announced its tardy decision; to maintain the Quota Act, anyhow until the end of March, when the position comes up for further review.

## Want U. S. Sympathy, But—

In my own view, the delay in announcing this was inexcusable. We knew, here, that American financial interests had to be taken into consideration, and we recognize clearly that, particularly in these times, the friendly neutrality of America—so valuable to this country—should be in every way encouraged and assisted by the maintenance of the best possible trade relationships. Yet for us, who for years have fought to regain for British film production the footing it tragically lost in the last war, the American influence on production activities here at times is a little top-sided. And I feel that the American interests themselves would have been better advised (taking a long view of it) to have adopted a more helpful and encouraging attitude.

That was one of our major difficulties. Another, which cannot be underrated, was that many available British artists and technicians are in America and look like staying there for duration, having been encouraged to stay there by their Consuls. Conversely, what will happen to the reputations and the popularity of British artists, writers and technicians in Hollywood, if their work in American films is sent here, when this country is enduring real hardships and dangers?

Under these circumstances, I do not think American producers have a safe investment in these names as far as this market (and it is a considerable market) is concerned.

What are the subjects which the British film producer should concentrate on at this time? My own view is the following categories:

(1). Comedy films—that's what the troops (and the civilian population want more than anything else at this time.

(2). Exciting, fictionalized dramatization of aspects of this war, which do not dwell at all on slaughter. For example, we have in hand a story—fictionalized—showing the heroic work done by the convoys of the vessels that bring food to us from overseas.

(3). Honest but exciting portrayals—realistic in the highest degree—of ordinary people living ordinary lives. Film glamor was on the wane before war broke out; the war killed it.

(4). Escapist subjects—those that make audiences forget the reality outside the cinema walls. Among these I would include highly imaginative thrillers—in-



CHARLES ALTHOFF

Season's Greetings

New 8th Month Lew Brown's Musical "YOKEL BOY," Majestic, New York "Returning to the comedy of the show, you'll split your sides laughing at Grandpa Hawkins' screamingly funny gyrations on the fiddle. Charles Althoff is the most hilarious and exhilarating fiddler that ever ran a bow across a set of violin strings" by Victor E. Bardet.

## SAM BISCHOFF DUE TO JOIN COLUMBIA

Sam Bischoff will leave the Warner fold shortly, though he has contract until September of this year. Indications are he will go to Columbia on a three-year deal as top producer on the lot at salary six times what he got when he left Col. some five years ago.

Likely, too, that with outside producer-directors also making product for Columbia, two producers, whose contracts expire within next six months, William Perlberg and Everett Riskin, will leave the lot. Freddie Kohlmar leaves this month on completion of his final picture.

## Metro Peeved at NBC Over Garbo Publicity

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

NBC is accused by Metro of putting the studio and Greta Garbo on the spot by publicizing an offer of a \$5,000 donation to the Finnish Red Cross if the Swedish actress would appear on the network's "Curtain Calls" program Sunday (31).

Proffer was scorned by the studio and Miss Garbo was not even apprized as she recently gave \$5,000 to Finnish Relief and has reportedly turned down radio offers running as high as \$20,000 for a half-hour program.

## Fla. Band Date Delays Vallee's Producer Bow

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Rudy Vallee's production career at Republic has been halted temporarily through an option clause in his contract for a band date at Miami.

Pact called for one week with extensions up to five. Vallee may not be able to report at the studio until Feb. 1.

Interesting screen biographies of great personalities of the past, etc.

That is the viewpoint of the commercial producer, whose primary consideration is to help keep the industry alive during war. I have not mentioned the obvious things, such as documentaries and instructional films, specially designed for instructing the services and the civilian population in their part in the war. I believe that the screen will emerge through this war as the textbook of our time.

## The Thought That Killed Lincoln

By Claude Binyon

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Joseph Lincoln died early in 1939. He died seated at breakfast with his wife, and there were eggs and crisp bacon before him, and the morning was sunny. Until one moment before he died Joseph Lincoln on that day was one of the few happy men on earth.

Joseph Lincoln had spent seven years in Hollywood. He had jumped from a publishing house office to a seat on the editorial board of a motion picture studio, and from there to an ornately carved producer's desk, and from there to his post as aide and advisor to the man whose name represented Hollywood. Faithfully his salary had ascended with him.

During the first of his seven years in Hollywood this Lincoln was a shy, gangling youngster with a belief expressed privately to his wife that motion pictures were dodging the issue. In his second year he became vague about whatever issue pictures were dodging. During his third year Lincoln started entertaining his friends in the Roman style. By the seventh year he owned race horses and spoke of the American people as stupid bums.

Then, suddenly, Lincoln became sick to his stomach. This happens to men. And it is hard to tell exactly why, although everybody knows.

Lincoln walked out on Hollywood. He walked out on a magnificent salary and a wonderful home and the California climate. He did this deliberately, laughing while he did it, and his wife was laughing, too. His wife was still pretty, but she was tired.

The Lincolns after seven years were leaving Hollywood, stuffy with food and praise, but penniless. It is hard to tell about being penniless after seven years in Hollywood, although everybody knows.

Lincoln went to the head of the publishing firm in New York and said he was ready to go back to work. The publisher stared. At \$100 a week? Certainly! Who is worth more?

And so Lincoln bounced about with the weight gone from his shoulders, and he helped his wife pick the little farmhouse outside New York. They added a breakfast room where the sun would hit it full, and here they would give thanks each morning for life and freedom and eggs and crisp bacon and \$100 a week.

In this breakfast room Joseph Lincoln died, early in 1939. The morning was so bright and Lincoln's wife no longer was tired, and before him was this plate of eggs and crisp bacon.

"God bless our home," said Lincoln. "God bless the sun and the bacon and eggs and my \$100 a week."

Lincoln's wife nodded happily. "And," she said, "God damn the \$104,000 you made last year."

Lincoln laughed. For a while he laughed, and then there was too much tightness in his throat and his eyes popped. He made a sighing sound and slumped forward with his face in his breakfast.

His wife sat stiffly. She knew Lincoln was dead and she knew what had killed him. What she said had brought to them a sudden, horrible realization. What she had said had brought the thought that killed Lincoln.

For Joseph Lincoln, lying dead now at his table, suddenly had remembered, as had his wife, that every penny of his salary for 1939 would not pay the income tax for his last year in Hollywood!

## Bioff Moves In On Studio Carpenters; Other H'wood Craftsmen Affected

### As Result of Bioff Scandal, Gov. Horner Sues Daily for Libel

Chicago, Jan. 3.

Another repercussion of the Willie Bioff scandal is the filing of a libel suit by Gov. Henry Horner of Illinois against the Chicago Daily News and its publisher, Frank Knox. Gov. Horner asks \$250,000 damages, charging he was libeled in an editorial printed on the front page of the News regarding the various postponements in the extradition hearings on the Bioff matter.

Editorial was headed, "Why Delay," and questioned the right of holding up the order to extradite Bioff from California in order to serve the remainder of a six-month prison sentence for pandering in 1922.

Gov. Horner's petition for damages covered three major points, the first of which claims that The News and Knox, in the editorial, implied improper motives to the governor in postponing the Bioff extradition hearings. Second, that there was a misrepresentation of the facts, and third that Knox was really trying to undermine the Democratic party, and recited that Knox was Republican vice-presidential candidate in 1936 and since then has been trying to increase his own influence in Republican party politics.

Governor, in his petition, described the various events in the hearings and stated that he postponed decision so as to allow both attorneys to present further briefs and arguments. Hearing is now scheduled for Jan. 10, the original move for the extradition of Bioff having been made on Nov. 23, 1939.

Reported that States Attorney Tom Courtney has declared that the delay in acting on the Bioff matter is unprecedented and that it is the first time any such situation has arisen in the seven years he has been prosecutor.

Hollywood, Jan. 2.

New demands, covering about 50% of work now done by studio carpenters, have been made upon film producers by Willie Bioff, another step in drive to assume control by the International Alliance of Theatrical State Employees over all industry labor. Jurisdiction claim filed with producers also would require plumbers, plasterers, moulders and sheet metal workers to carry IATSE cards when working on any special effect to go before the camera.

Claim is made by Bioff in list submitted to Pat Casey, producer labor contact, that grips are entitled to handle all cutouts, remakes, erection and wrecking of scaffolds, storing and caring for sets, and other details connected with this type of work. Under Bioff demands, propmakers would be allocated all work pertaining to erection of special effects, whether wood, plaster, iron or sheet metal. Plumbers and plasterers would be permitted to continue some of this work on special effects, but would be required to carry IA cards in addition to one from their own local.

Studio execs estimate that carpenters would lose about 50% of their present jurisdiction if the new Bioff demands are granted. Bioff contends this work was formerly done by grips and prop makers, but that carpenters gradually took it over. It has been disclosed, however, that the work originally belonged and was allocated to the carpenters, that the IA assumed jurisdiction, but that it was taken back by carpenters during the internal strife in the IA ranks.

Joseph Cambiano, International representative of studio carpenters, is due here first of week from his home in San Maeto, Cal., to go into a huddle on the newest IA demands. If IA insists on taking over carpenter work in the studios, production, it is hinted, may suffer by a jurisdictional fight between the two groups.



# Films' \$1,739,000 for Scripts in '39

By Herb Golden

With the limitation of foreign markets caused by the European war materially lessening the chances of producing companies to show a profit on every film, they are all anxiously seeking story material of 'guaranteed value' in an endeavor to insure a favorable return in the reduced markets left to them.

Best method of getting a story of proven b.o. quality, they feel, is in a book or play that has certified itself a success by the patronage of the public. There has been, as a result, a strong trend developing toward the purchase of Broadway legit hits and best-seller novels.

Exemplifying the trend is the fact that \$1,739,000 was spent by studios during 1939 for this type of story property. Purchased during the 12 months were 22 books at a total cost of \$728,000 and 18 plays at \$1,011,000. To the latter figure must be added royalties which, of course, are impossible to compute until a year or more after pictures, made from the legions, are in release.

Although the purchases were pretty well scattered over the entire year, being accelerated by the war threats in Europe long before the actual outbreak of hostilities, the demand has taken a big jump in the four months since the declaration was actually made. Purchases until the past few weeks when a brisk upturn set in, however, have scarcely kept up with the desire of studios to attain the properties, for, with the increased demand, have come increased prices.

This trailing of buys behind interest is especially evident at the current time in the legit field, where a whole flock of shows have Hollywood on edge in a desire to purchase them, but where prices are so high that producers hesitate to lay out the coin as long as there seems a chance that they can get along without these properties on their lists. Among the shows in this category are 'Life With Father,' 'Man Who Came to Dinner' and 'The Little Foxes,' while 'Skylark' was purchased only last week after being a Broadway click for almost three months.

## Par's \$260,000 Buys

Paramount stands out as an exemplification of the trend toward purchase of proven properties, having spent \$260,000 during the year on such works. They include three plays and four books. Company has never gone in in such a large way for this type material in the past. It was exceeded in expenditures in 1939, however, by RKO, which passed over \$550,000 for three plays and one book.

Metro spent a total of \$291,500 for five books and four legiters, which is consistent with previous policy, while Warners took three books and two plays at a total of \$195,000. Indie producers, distributing through United Artists, spent \$145,000 plus perhaps another \$35,000 in royalties for two Broadway productions and four books. Columbia's expenditures amounted to \$125,000 for one legit

and three books; 20th-Fox's, \$105,000 for two books, and Universal's, \$30,000 for one play.

In addition to the desire for properties of audience value, proved by past acceptance, several behind-the-scenes angles protrude into the reasoning back of the purchase of w.k. books and plays. The additional cost of such an established product over a studio-written original is often made up in saving all along the line, from the time the assignment for scripting is handed a lot scribbler, to the sale of the resultant picture to the exhibitor.

In the first place, it is easier for a story editor to sell the yarn to a producer; then it is easier for the producer to sell it to a good director; it is easier for producer and director to sell it to topnotch players; it is easier for the production department to sell it to the sales department; it is easier for the sales execs to sell it to the salesmen, and it is easier for the salesmen to sell it to the exhibitors.

Taking it step by step, it is said that it sometimes takes the story editor weeks to sell a property to a producer because the latter is frequently too busy to be interested in an unknown title by an unknown author, while he perks up his ears immediately when an established name writer or a hit is mentioned.

## Exploitation Values

Terms of contracts now allow many players a story say-so and they have to be coerced into doing something by a newcomer, unless it is exceptional. On the other hand, when they hear a producer has 'Grapes of Wrath' or 'The Man Who Came to Dinner,' they come running to him asking to do it.

Value to the sales department of a known vehicle is even more important. While the name of the biggest hit on Broadway is probably a meaningless jumble of words to the average citizen of Jersey City, it makes an attractive top-bracket listing on a company's prospectus during the selling season. Exhibs naturally have more faith in a proved success than an unheard of title—and, what is important, are willing to back up their faith with rentals. Which may bring in tenfold the extra coin spent for a best-seller or hit play.

The fact that numerous literary or legit successes have turned out to be film flops makes no difference, it is argued. When the salesmen go back to a exhib again, the well-known names on the coming season's list still attract him. Back of the ease of selling all along the line is the confidence gained by everyone from the fact that here is a story that must have something when playgoers were willing for a whole season to pay \$4.40 to see it, or 300,000 people were willing to pay \$2.50 to read it.

## RKO Tops With 500G Buys

Considering only legit pieces bought during the year, RKO heads the list of expenditures with \$500,-

000. Par is the runner-up, having laid out \$160,000, while Metro is in show position with \$148,500. Warner Bros. is fourth with \$75,000, followed by United Artists producers, \$40,000 plus royalties; Universal, \$30,000, and Columbia, \$20,000, while 20th-Fox bought no plays.

Leading—at least theoretically—the list of both plays and books for price paid during 1939 (in fact, since the advent of sound pictures) is 'The American Way,' bought last spring by Max Gordon and Harry M. Goetz for RKO release. It fetched \$250,000 with a royalty agreement that might easily push it up another \$100,000. However, it is reported that production has been indefinitely postponed, which will mean that the entire purchase price will never be paid. Aside from a substantial deposit, buying agreement is understood to call for payments of the \$250,000 when the film is released and at stated times thereafter.

Gordon and Goetz also paid the second highest figure for another RKO release, 'Abe Lincoln in Illinois,' which will preem this month (January). Price was \$225,000 plus royalties. Film stars Raymond Massey, who was also the principal in the stage version.

Third RKO property, but scarcely in the same price category, is 'The Primrose Path,' for which \$25,000 was paid. Play was produced by George Abbott. It was a dramatization by Robert Buckner and Walter Hart of Victoria Lincoln's novel, 'February Hill.' Ginger Rogers, Joel

## Spent for Plays and Books in 1939

	Plays.	Books.	Total.
RKO .....	\$500,000*	\$50,000	\$550,000*
Metro .....	148,500	143,000	291,500
Paramount .....	160,000	100,000	260,000
Warner Bros. ....	75,000	120,000	195,000
United Artists .....	40,000*	105,000	145,000*
Columbia .....	20,000	105,000	125,000
20-Fox .....	.....	105,000	105,000
Universal .....	30,000	.....	30,000
Independent .....	37,500	.....	37,500
	\$1,011,000	\$728,000	\$1,739,000

\* Plus royalties.

was made to keep the purchase quiet, as anti-Catholic bias attached itself to the play because of its treatment of the Virgin Mary. Although the story will be entirely rewritten for films, Par feared the Catholic feeling might carry over to the film if known that 'Family Portrait' was its basis. 'Portrait' was written by Lenore Coffee and William Joyce Cowen, produced by Cheryl Crawford in association with Day Tuttle and Richard Skinner. It ran about three months last season to slim pickings.

Par's most important acquisition was made only at the end of the year. It is 'Skylark,' by Samson Raphaelson, for which \$85,000 was paid. It is currently in its 12th week at the Morosco, N. Y. Play had been spoken of as a possible film vehicle for its star, Gertrude Lawrence, in an eastern-made picture by John

road after a full season on Broadway. Brock Pemberton produced.

## No Cut to the Bard

Universal made a single purchase, 'The Boys From Syracuse,' as the first production by Jules Levy, former RKO sales chief. Ritz Bros. will be in the picture. Broadway version, a musical, was produced by George Abbott. It was adapted by Abbott, Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart from an original by Bill Shakespeare (and even he is said to have copied it from somebody). Shakespeare won't be cut in, however, on the \$30,000 paid by Universal for the piece, 60% of which will be shared by the three adapters, with Abbott getting another 40% for the managerial end.

Sol Lesser bought 'Our Town,' which he will release through United Artists. He paid \$35,000 for the rights. It was written by Thornton Wilder and produced by Jed Harris in 1938, being quite successful. Another indie buy is 'And Now Goodbye,' produced by John Golden in 1937, an adaptation by Philip Howard of a James Hilton novel, which Lester Cowan, who usually works for Universal, will film. It's not certain whether this will be for U release, however. Cowan paid \$7,500 for the rights.

A freak purchase was the only one during the year by Columbia. It bought 'Both Your Houses,' by Maxwell Anderson, for \$20,000 after it had completed 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington' and found a great similarity between the stories. 'Houses' purchase was merely to protect itself against any future claim. 'Houses' was originally produced by the Theatre Guild in 1933.

## Steinbeck in Spades

John Steinbeck will shortly be represented by two pictures in general release. They are 'Of Mice and Men,' Hal Roach production for United Artists release, and 'Grapes of Wrath' (20th-Fox). 'Mice' was originally published as a book, then dramatized and produced by Sam Harris. Film rights to the dramatic version were purchased for \$5,000 and royalties. 'Wrath,' never became a legit, film rights bringing \$70,000, nearly a record (and tops for the year) for a book.

Next highest figure brought by a book during the year was \$60,000 paid by Metro for 'Escape.' Original deal called for \$35,000 with \$2,000 additional for each 10,000 (Continued on page 20)

## 'Ben Hur', 'Birth of Nation' Top All

Highest price ever paid for film rights to a book or play is said to be the approximately \$2,000,000 by Metro for 'Ben Hur.' Coin went to Klaw & Erlanger, legit producers, and Vincent Astor, who bought the property from General Lew Wallace, its author. Deal with Metro was on a straight 50-50 basis from the first dollar, but was later modified in light of the \$3,200,000 Metro spent to produce the epic. Picture remains one of the biggest grossers of all time, having taken in more than \$11,000,000, of which \$6,000,000 came from foreign markets.

Second biggest price, approximately \$1,250,000, was for 'Birth of a Nation,' adapted from 'The Clansman,' by Thomas Dixon. Dixon had an option of \$25,000 or 25% of profits, and took the latter. Pic. made by D. W. Griffith and Harry Aiken, and managed by J. J. McCarthy, cost only \$110,000 to produce, and netted \$4,000,000 as a roadshow and \$1,000,000 in general release.

McCrea and Marjorie Rambeau have been announced for the film.

Metro made four legit purchases at figures ranging from very fancy to rather low. Biggest is \$100,000 paid for 'The World We Make,' by Sidney Kingsley, currently in its sixth week at the Guild theatre, N. Y. Play was produced by the author and backed by Warner Bros., which gives an odd twist to the Metro purchase. Kingsley must split his 60% author's share—which is in addition to his managerial cut—with Millen Brand, from whose novel, 'The Outward Room,' he adapted the play.

'Susan and God' was the Metro purchase of second importance, \$36,000 being paid. Play was written by Rachel Crothers and produced by John Golden, opening in October, 1937. 'Let Freedom Ring,' another Metro purchase, is an oldie. It ran for three weeks early in 1935, being produced by Albert Bein and Jack Goldsmith. Bein did the dramatization from Grace Lumpkin's book, 'To Make My Bread.' Metro paid \$5,000 for film rights. Company's fourth purchase, 'Remember the Day,' cost \$7,500. It was written by Philo Higley and Philip Dunning and produced by the latter, running from September, 1935, until early January, 1936. 'Freedom' filmization was released last spring, proving a weak draw.

Warner Bros. bought two plays during the year, both at big prices. One of them, 'No Time for Comedy,' recently closed a 185-performance run of 5½ months on Broadway and is currently on the road. It was written by S. N. Behrman and produced by the Playwrights Co. WB paid \$45,000 for it. The other Warner buy, 'Elizabeth the Queen,' has already been released in celluloid as 'Elizabeth and Essex.' It was written by Maxwell Anderson and produced with the Lunts starring, by the Theatre Guild in 1930. Price was \$30,000.

## Camouflaged Buy

Paramount purchased three plays, one of which, it is said, will be unrecognizable on the screen. That is 'Family Portrait,' for which it paid \$25,000. It will be used as the basis for a Cecil B. DeMille biblical epic, tentatively titled 'Queen of Queens.' Contrary to usual practice, attempt

Golden, its legit producer. Idea has now been scrapped, however, and Par is understood planning Claudette Colbert for the lead.

Metro was also interested in the 'Skylark' rights and actually made an offer of \$90,000, but neglected to do so until too late, the bid being received the morning after the agreement with Par was set. Although nothing was in writing, Raphaelson refused to break his word, so the \$85,000 deal with Par stood. Metro was reported to be burning because it allegedly hadn't been given time to submit its bid, but Raphaelson declined to budge, while Golden and the Dramatists Guild refused to become involved.

Par's other buy is the Clare Boothe hit, 'Kiss the Boys Goodbye,' which sold at the neat figure of \$50,000. It is currently on the

## Broadway Plays Bought for Films in '39

RKO-RADIO	
'American Way' .....	\$250,000 and royalties
'Abe Lincoln in Illinois' .....	225,000 and royalties
'Primrose Path' .....	25,000
METRO	
'World We Make' .....	100,000
'Susan and God' .....	36,000
'Remember the Day' .....	7,500
'Let Freedom Ring' .....	5,000
WARNER BROS.	
'No Time for Comedy' .....	45,000
'Elizabeth the Queen' .....	30,000
UNITED ARTISTS	
'Of Mice and Men' (Roach) .....	5,000 and royalties
'Our Town' (Lesser) .....	35,000
UNIVERSAL	
'Boys from Syracuse' .....	30,000
PARAMOUNT	
'Skylark' .....	85,000
'Kiss the Boys Goodbye' .....	50,000
'Family Portrait' .....	25,000
COLUMBIA	
'Both Your Houses' .....	20,000
INDEPENDENT	
'Philadelphia Story' (Katharine Hepburn) .....	30,000 and royalties
'And Now Goodbye' (Lester Cowan) .....	7,500
Total .....	\$1,011,000

## Top Novels Bought for Films in 1939

WARNER BROS.	
'All This and Heaven, Too,' by Rachel Field .....	\$50,000
'Capt. Horatio Hornblower,' by C. S. Forester .....	35,000
'We Are Not Alone,' by James Hilton .....	35,000
PARAMOUNT	
'Disputed Passage,' by Lloyd Douglas .....	50,000
'Country Lawyer' (non-fiction), by Bellamy Partridge .....	25,000
'Miss Susie Slagle's,' by Augusta Tucker .....	20,000
'Honorable Uncle Lancey,' by Ethel Hueston .....	5,000
METRO	
'Escape,' by Ethel Vance .....	60,000
'The Yearling,' by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings .....	30,000
'Brother, Here's a Man,' by Kim Beattie .....	25,000
'Danger Signal,' by Phylliss Bottome .....	20,000
'Days Before Lent,' by Hamilton Basso .....	8,000
COLUMBIA	
'Tree of Liberty,' by Elizabeth Page .....	55,000
'Arizona,' by Clarence B. Kelland .....	35,000
(SEPost serial to be published in book form)	
'Rummelhearts of Rampler Ave.,' by Maude Smith Delavan .....	15,000
20TH CENTURY-FOX	
'Grapes of Wrath,' by John Steinbeck .....	70,000
'Children of God,' by Vardis Fisher .....	35,000
RKO-RADIO	
'Kitty Foyle,' by Christopher Morley .....	50,000
UNITED ARTISTS	
'Rebecca (Selznick), by Daphne DuMaurier .....	50,000
'My Son, My Son' (Small), by Howard Springer .....	25,000
'Dynasty of Death' (Wanger), by Taylor Caldwell .....	15,000
'Passport for a Girl' (Korda), by Mary Borden .....	15,000
	\$728,000

'Gone With the Wind,' by Margaret Mitchell, was purchased by Selznick-International for \$52,000 in 1937, although the book remained in the best-seller lists through most of 1939.



## Concerts' Big Boom, Via Radio And Films; 3 Name Exceptions

Much credit has been directed at radio buildup in present-day concertizing, yet three top draws in American music, exclusive of vocalists, have never been heard on the air to any great extent. Rachmaninoff, Fritz Kreisler and Josef Hofmann have always turned down term-contract radio offers despite fees that have doubled their recital prices. Hofmann has only done two shots on the air. The others, none.

Motion pictures are a much more important factor in concert building and count for Nelson Eddy's position as the No. 1 concert attraction for the fourth successive year, and also for the appearance this season of a new recital click in Jeanette MacDonald. Film soprano made her first concert tour last winter to important grosses and has been widely booked again this year. The Metro star is regarded more or less as a popular draw and whether she will establish herself as a serious concert artist is still to be determined. Allan Jones is another whose film rep has enhanced his platform draw. He goes out on a 12-week concert tour this month. Gladys Swarthout, while originally a concert figure, only gained top prominence in that field following her appearance in piz. Kenny Baker is another film and radio luminary who might go concert.

Concert business is having its best season in years with good boxoffice returns in larger centers particularly. Canadian business has held up and there have been less than a half dozen cancellations of major attractions in the Dominion.

With the rapid expansion of outdoor concert activities in America in recent years, a bumper summer business is anticipated. Success of municipal or quasi-municipal concerts in New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, Hollywood, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Washington, etc., will find many other cities in the summer schedules this year.

In former years, topflight artists headed for European festival dates in the spring but with most continental seasons off this year, musicians will remain in this country. Their presence here will probably be responsible for additional spring and summer bookings.

Lily Pons, little, but a good trouper, remains the ace woman boxoffice star, second only to Nelson Eddy, with a phenomenal outdoor tour last summer accompanied by her conductor-husband, Andre Kostelanetz, assuring her lead. An audience of 300,000 in Chicago gave the soprano a publicity momentum which is carrying her through her biggest season in this country.

Marian Anderson is third in the list of vocalists and certainly the best draw in some cities. Negro contralto has given three sold-out Carnegie Hall recitals this season, which is particularly heavy sugar for a single attraction.

A new colored personality of great importance is Dorothy Maynor, 26 year old soprano, who made an acclaimed debut in Town Hall (N. Y.) in November after singing for Serge Koussevitzky at the Berkshire Festival last summer. Miss Maynor is already heavily booked for next season.

### Tibbett and Grace Moore

Lawrence Tibbett maintains his place among the leaders with all the bookings he can take and Grace Moore, after several spectacular years as a cinematic soprano, holds her own in the field with her recent operatic successes, notably in 'Louise.'

Kirsten Flagstad, although she devotes more time to opera, is a big draw in certain centers, and Richard Crooks, John Charles Thomas and Lotte Lehmann, three of the most artistic of present day singers, complete the lineup of principal vocalists.

The passing years have made Sergei Rachmaninoff one of the most glamorous figures on the concert platform. His gaunt, brooding figure on a darkened stage is extremely effective and, added to his reputation as a composer, helps keep his price up. Both Rachmaninoff and Fritz Kreisler are two of a famous trio of artists marketed for years by C. J. Foley. The other was Geraldine Farrar. Foley still manages his two instrumentalists but books through NBC.

Josef Hofmann is one of the great draws of the concert business. The legend which makes him an old man only adds to his popularity. Actually

### How They Rate

#### Top Vocalists

Nelson Eddy.  
Lily Pons.  
Marian Anderson.  
Jeanette MacDonald.  
Lawrence Tibbett.  
Grace Moore.  
Kirsten Flagstad.  
Richard Crooks.  
John Charles Thomas.  
Lotte Lehmann.

#### Top Instrumentalists

Rachmaninoff.  
Kreisler.  
Hofmann.  
Menuhin.  
Heifetz.  
Vladimir Horowitz.  
Jose Iturbi.  
Walter Gieseking.  
Albert Spalding.  
Myra Hess.

Hofmann is in his early 60s and one of the most scrupulous artists and liveliest troupers.

#### The Prodigy Grows Older

Yehudi Menuhin, a phenomenon as a child prodigy, continues as a box-office winner and counts on settling into the respectable, moneymaking groove that accommodates Heifetz, his predecessor in the baby parade.

Returning this year after an absence of several seasons, Vladimir Horowitz faced a sold-out tour. Son-in-law of Toscanini, Horowitz has always had a big American public. Hard work and a flair for the spectacular have helped Jose Iturbi to keep his place in the upper brackets. Walter Gieseking hoped to overcome transportation difficulties to come here to make his annual, highly auspicious tour in January.

Lone American-born artist among the first 10 musicians is Albert Spalding, violinist. Shrewd handling in addition to his own, important talents have kept Spalding in front. Strangely enough Spalding has won his greatest acclaim outside his own country.

Myra Hess, the British pianist, is not coming to America this season. She has remained behind to organize free music programs for her government. But her place as the most successful woman instrumentalist since Maud Powell is assured. A woman pianist or violinist continues to be a drug on the American music market. Only Guiomar Novaes, Brazilian pianist, approaches Miss Hess.

However, Ignace Jan Paderewski undoubtedly would lead all concert performers as a draw were he able to appear more consistently. In his late 70s, he's no more than a freak personality, since his playing has seen its best days. He toured for a time last season in the U. S. but had to call it short due to illness.

#### Low Radio Ratings

Concert headliners have only had a fair year on the radio, the Ford Hour being the most important outlet. Richard Crooks has been the only star with a series (Firestone). Reason for decrease in use of top vocalists has been the low survey ratings compared to the asking price of talent. There are already signs that artists are coming to a realization of these facts and already several name vocalists have been quoted in the market for \$1,000 to \$2,000 less than the price of three years ago.

Several institutional hours are now in preparation which will use symphony orchestras and bigtime soloists, and there are reports that Eddy, Tibbett and Miss Moore will not be long idle.

A more knowing use of vocal personalities in motion pictures is also forecast from Hollywood with Miss Moore and Tibbett both mentioned for important productions. Metro is still interested in a film production of 'The Guardsman' to be tailored to suit their special talents and 20th-Fox is considering Irving Berlin's 'Say It With Music' for Miss Moore.

In addition to Dorothy Maynor, year's new b.o. personalities to date are Zion Francescatti, a French-Italian violinist, who made a successful debut with the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, and Helen Traubel, American dramatic soprano, who won tardy recognition in a Town Hall recital and two appearances with the New York Philharmonic. Mme. Traubel, a St. Louisan, was around the Metropolitan Opera for two years with little



#### GREETINGS

#### MOLLY PICON

Fourth consecutive season with Maxwell House Coffee — Sundays, 6:00-6:30 P.M., EST—WMCA.

## Goldwyn Strips Payroll During Studio Siesta

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Only a few execs will remain on Samuel Goldwyn's payroll when he shuts his plant for a siesta, beginning about Jan. 20, by which time his lone production, 'The Westerner,' will have ceased firing.

Seven contract players have been farmed out to other studios. Gary Cooper goes to Paramount for 'Triumph Over Pain.' Jon Hall, Walter Brennan, Andrea Leeds, Dana Andrews and Virginia Gilmore go to 20th-Fox where Zorina is already at work. The eighth contractee, David Niven, is on leave of absence in England.

Of the three Goldwyn directors, Sam Wood is assigned to Sol Lesser's 'Our Town,' William Wyler is handling 'The Westerner,' and Archie Mayo is on vacation in the east.

#### Schwartz's Warning

Fighting-mad warning that any other company which attempts to touch Sam Goldwyn's next picture, 'The Westerner,' will find itself in 'a peck of trouble,' was issued by Charles C. Schwartz, United Artists counsel, on Friday (29). Schwartz's belligerent statement followed reports that Goldwyn, who recently 'terminated' his distribution contract with UA, was in confabs with Paramount and RKO in attempts to get them to handle the forthcoming film.

'We have already said that we will fight Goldwyn on every legal ground in his attempt to wriggle out of his contract with us,' Schwartz declared, 'and that includes any company that is downright stupid enough to deal with him while he is under our contract. United Artists will distribute 'The Westerner' and any other picture made by Goldwyn until his contract expires on Sept. 2, 1945, unless we decide otherwise.'

'Westerner' is the last picture due by Goldwyn on the current season's commitment to United Artists. He recently delivered 'Raffles' as his 'final' picture for their release. It is known that he is having difficulty in obtaining a distribution agreement on 'Westerner' as every other company is fearful of becoming involved in a costly and dangerous lawsuit—such as Schwartz threatens—should any pact be made.

#### Tugend Shifts To U

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Harry Tugend checked out of 20th-Fox after four years of scripting and moves to Universal this week.

Writer came here from New York with Fred Allen and stayed.

or no opportunity. She now returns there in principal Wagnerian roles.

The Italian government caused both the Met and the San Francisco Opera many headaches by refusing to permit nine Italian opera singers to sail to this country for scheduled engagements. Among those unable to fill dates here were Mafalda Favero, Maria Caniglia and Eba Stignani, sopranos; Allesandro Ziliani, tenor and Giuseppe De Luca and Salvatore Baccaloni, baritones.

## THE 1939 B. O.

By Roy Chartier

The pulse of the picture business, the boxoffice, has many fingers on it, with the constancy of a doctor ministering to a doubtful patient, but all through 1939 no one has been able to clearly diagnose the condition or report on the prospects. Whether the outlook for the immediate future is bright, dubious or static remains as much a mystery as 1940 marks another year as it did 12 months ago.

Midway into another season of film programs, it would appear that while the b.o. is not seemingly facing a setback, it also is not showing signs of sudden rejuvenation. The war, and any boom resulting from that industrially in this country, might mean greatly renewed vitality in theatre receipts. It also may mean nothing and, so far, it hasn't, except in a very isolated way through stepped up grosses in certain communities where production has spurred, notably steel centers.

Repeal of the arms embargo was widely acclaimed in the picture industry, principally among exhibitors, in the belief that this would ultimately lead to a boom in this country which, in turn, would be reflected at the theatres the same as in the last war. 'If peace does not break out,' as one theatre operator recently stated, then this may come, but it may not arrive to any appreciable degree for sometime. Experience of the World War was that film boxoffices did not get any action until about six months after it had begun, but once the level of grosses soared, they stayed at a high plane until the armistice was signed, as well as for a time afterward. This was also true of the depression, the theatres getting hurt the last and recovering behind most other industries when a short-lived prosperity came. Thus, even though a business revival occurs as result of war and the theatres do not get their share of the spoils until prosperity has been spread around elsewhere, there may be some consolation in the fact that experience has seemingly taught that boxoffices are the last to have it taken away from them.

#### History May Not Repeat

Operators of the older school, however, point to the possibility that history may not repeat itself and that what happened during the war 20-25 years ago is not certain to recur. Since then public tastes have changed and a great deal of new competition has developed, not the least of these being radio which provides both entertainment and information (news) at a ridiculously low price even when compared with a 10c. picture show.

When the war was festering and when it first broke out on Germany's invasion of Poland, an incalculable number of persons stayed at home glued to the radios to keep in touch with world events who might otherwise have gone to the pictures. Were there no such thing as radio, a certain number might have gone for a walk, to play pinocle at someone's house or to the nearest barroom, but that a goodly percentage of the listeners would have been theatre potentials cannot be denied.

Moreover, not only has radio become a great oppositional factor to films but so have other fields of activity which have excited the public taste in a tremendous way during the past 20 years. In that time, golf has grown from an old man's game into a national pastime of great proportions. Then again, there's bridge, a game that commands the attention of old and young, far and wide, on a tremendous scale. You can't play bridge and go to matinees, if it's the women who spend afternoons that way, or visit the nearest theatre at night if a game is being indulged in the evening.

#### Other Pastimes, Sports, Autos, Etc.

Other sports or pastimes have similarly made inroads on leisure time which films in years past found it easier to hog. Baseball, one of the best-rooted of American sports, as well as fights, have increased their public, but they compare odiously to the killing for patronage made by some other fields such as football and horse racing. Professional football is now getting 'em in a big way on Sundays and holidays when the theatres look for the bulk of their business. A showman, citing the opposition that now exists, pointed to the fact that in bygone years the theatres could come out just on their Saturdays and Sundays alone, but that weekends have now provided too many other things for people to do. In the past, this showman added, it was a habit to go to theatres on weekends, but now too great a portion of the public has turned to other things and it isn't easy to wean them back.

The automobile, equipped with radio, has also made a difference in the last decade, with good highways everywhere adding to the appeal of the open road. This, of course, has redounded somewhat to the benefit of the film theatre since people come from greater distances to see a show. But parking problems in some centers has not acted as particular encouragement to the autoist.

Cars have worked to a disadvantage for some theatres, notably the small house or 'shooting gallery' in hamlets or lesser communities, with townsfolk hopping in their car to go to another town which gets film earlier or where the theatres are more comfortable. Because of this narrowing of distances through modern transportation, the smaller operator has also felt justification for another squawk. In many cases, just because cars make it simpler for people in his town to get to some neighboring city, he suffers on clearance. The protection is lengthened but the theatre having priority on run believes it is also justified in demanding this from the distributors.

Bearing these present-day conditions in mind, if a war boom should come it is reasonable to expect, however, that the theatre would get the same proportion of each dollar spent as now, with sports and other opposition enjoying the same probable ratio.

At all times, on the other hand, much depends on the product that is being spread on the film counters. Men of the theatre who seem to be unable to put their finger on what is exactly holding grosses from being larger than they are, believe that perhaps the public is getting tired of the same formulas in picture production. There is no way to be anything but speculative concerning this, however.

#### Film Quality Has Been Above '38

Since the present 1939-40 season began with releases last August, the quality of the product has been better than for the same period the year prior, yet business has not jumped in recognition of the improvement shown. On the other hand, the mediocre pictures of 1938 did better than the mediocre pictures have this season, leading to the assertion that if the theatres this late summer and fall had been getting the top pictures of 1938 they would probably be doing 20% less.

Superiority of the 1939 releases over those of the prior year has made it possible for grosses to hold their own or show a slight improvement in profits but that, on the other hand, is saying little since 1938 was a bad year. Grosses scraped bottom the first seven months of that year, with the result that since much higher ground was not reached during 1939, the comparison is odious, if anything. In 1938 the fall and early winter business enjoyed a good upturn, probably showing better results in view of the quality of the product than the pictures have this past fall and so far into this winter. The best year since depression was 1937 but at its tail-end and into '38, recession brought the levels away down. This past year's spring and summer was better than in '38, with a lot of rain aiding. This helped somewhat to keep grosses from being worse than 1938 but that again is not saying a whole lot. On the entire year just past, the grosses run from even with the 12 months of '38 to around 5%, with some sections better than a year ago and some poorer.

#### Geographical Comparisons

The south and southwest have been in good shape during the entire year. The midwest has also been steady and the Chicago territory has held up well but the east is off at least 20% and the northwest has been away down. In New England business started out good in '39 but suffered from a bad summer and is a bit unsteady now. The Detroit and Michigan territory compares favorably with a year back but in Pennsylvania it is claimed grosses are off slightly. The Rocky Mountain region and the far west is a little better than in 1938, and Canada, while off for most of '39, is beginning to come back strong.



# NEW FACES OF 1939

By Jack Jungmeyer

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Here they are again—another anniversary parade of the players who survived and thrived in the competitive jostle for high place on the screen: a census of the more important New Faces for 1939.

A few zoomed to outstanding prominence in one flashing performance, as a few do every season—the phenoms. The majority won their elevation to eminence less spectacularly and perhaps with more permanence. Again, as was the case last year, the new ranks are crowded with youngsters, some scarcely out of the cradle. For all those who registered marked advance, the climb probably was considerably faster than normal progress toward stardom during preceding years.

Swifter and swifter becomes this annual winnowing of the new film talent harvest; more intense the scrutiny and testing of potential celebs in the feverish competition for favored place in the list of contenders. Grooming for stardom has been accelerated. Producers and contract holders have been amazed and excited as never before at the astonishing success of youngsters who have elbowed into the important coin bracket after one performance or two, with scarcely any, and in some cases no previous experience. Brief rehearsals in some of these cases have provided the only theatrical grounding for the phenoms.

Wherefore, the nationwide search for player material has been greatly intensified, new avenues being explored in addition to the usual proving grounds of little theatre, school show groups, radio and the amateur play organizations in the film studios themselves. Pretty faces and alluring figures have been discovered and uncovered in the usual numbers by the talent scouts' dragnet, but these admirable assets of the femme candidates and the handsome prizes of young men who feel themselves destined for matinee idolatry are more than ever a drug in the Hollywood market. Talent is the password—personality and a natural entertainment flair.

## Given Better Breaks to Shine

The billing on pictures and widened marquee privilege has reflected the extension of public interest and favor for comparative newcomers during the past year and will continue during the next. The novices are getting much better breaks from the very beginning because producers and directors no longer are so easily influenced, for one thing, by the confirmed and once adamant stars who resented the encroachment of the upstart.

Deliberate showcasing roles for the film undergrads who indicate marked promise have become a matter of course. Parts are built up if this promise reveals itself in the early daily rushes. A tendency during the past year has been to experiment with young talent in groups of from two or three to a dozen in the same important picture, stimulating the competitive thespian passion. The new deal for the kids has achieved marked results.

Not one of the unusually swift on the way to stardom but as talented and professionally disciplined as any who has come to prominence during 1939 is Jane Bryan of the Warners fold. Twice she scored importantly during the season, as the daughter to Bette Davis in 'The Old Maid,' and as a topper in her outstanding role with Paul Muni in 'We Are Not Alone.' She is headed for big things if she keeps up her present pace, as she gives every indication of doing. She has worked hard and intelligently for what she's achieved and richly deserves her honors.

Linda Darnell rates in the phenomenal category. She skyrocketed in her first role at 20th-Fox, an important assignment in Elsa Maxwell's 'Hotel for Women.' The demonstration was so convincing that Darryl F. Zanuck immediately started grooming her for stardom, and she was set opposite Tyrone Power in 'Daytime Wife,' justifying her initial promise in the co-starring role. Miss Darnell is a Texas girl from Dallas. She was considered too young when she made her first bid for films and was advised to return home for a year or two more of preparation in little theatre parts. Studio sent for her again early this year and signed her immediately on strength of the new tests. She has talent, looks, charm and grace.

## A Couple of English Gals

Greer Garson made the grade for American audiences with her memorable performance opposite Robert Donat in 'Goodbye Mr. Chips' and followed convincingly in the lighter 'Remember' at Metro.

Vivien Leigh's 'Scarlett' in David O. Selznick's 'Gone With the Wind' holds her up to public appraisal only now, but her stellar work and professional verdict presage her as one of the important names established during 1939. Although no novice, to majority of picture patrons in this country she rates as a 'new face.'

Slashing his way to film prominence in a first enactment was William Holden, the fiddling fighter in Columbia's 'Golden Boy.' He was conditioned in the Pasadena little theatre and is under contract to Paramount. The 'Golden Boy' assignment was on loanout. He stepped next into Warners' 'Invisible Stripes' and went back to his home studio for 'At Good Old Siwash' and 'Golden Gloves.'

Sensational in their swift achievement of importance and promising future is the group of young singing personalities brought out by various studios—Universal's Gloria Jean, 11 years old, clicking in 'The Under-Pup'; Linda Ware, 14, protegee of Charles R. Rogers, making her debut in 'The Star Maker' with Bing Crosby; Leni Lynn, 13, first seen in Metro's 'Babes in Arms'; Susanna Foster, 14, who scored outstandingly with her thespian as well as warbling in Paramount's 'The Great Victor Herbert.' They are all in the talented prodigy class, and all are being carefully provided with appropriate roles to capitalize their initial starts during the coming year.

Universal's sub-moppet, Sandra Henville, known on the Screen as Sandy, was literally lifted out of the cradle, to toss her infectious smile into the camera, from the arms of Bing Crosby in 'East Side of Heaven.' She has made successive hits in two other pictures, 'Unexpected Father' and 'Little Accident,' before reaching the ripe old age of two. The child is uncanny in her response to direction, and her infant sense of wanting to please rates her a natural baby star.

Robert Preston loomed up in Cecil B. DeMille's 'Union Pacific,' after handling a number of increasingly important parts during the preceding year, and is in one of the principal assignments on Paramount's 'Northwest Mounted Police' (DeMille). Resourceful, intelligent, Preston is regarded by Paramount as a valuable asset and seems well established.

Brenda Joyce impressed in 20th-Fox's important picture, 'The Rains Came,' as the lovelorn ingenue. Prepped in school theatricals, she has a fresh, engaging personality and looks. Second role was in 'Here I Am a Stranger.'

Doris Bowdon, from Memphis, was spotted by 20th scouts at a college play in Louisiana State University, was coached through a few minor roles, and graduated through one of the 'Jones Family' films to an excellent showing with Henry Fonda in 'Young Mr. Lincoln.'

Janice Logan, Chicago socialite wholly without experience, justified Paramount scouts' selection with neat exhibit in 'Federal Offense,' made a hit as the school teacher in 'What a Life,' and was given the sole femme part in the fantastic 'Dr. Cyclops.'

## Glamour Girls

Lana Turner, carefully groomed as one of the prime dazzlers in the Metro establishment, made important gains this year through advantageous roles in 'These Glamour Girls' and 'Dancing Co-Ed.' She is considered the heir of the glamour roles which once were the privilege of Jean Harlow.

Susan Hayward, walking unheralded and untutored into Paramount's talent department, came out with the leading feminine role opposite Gary Cooper and Ray Milland in 'Beau Geste,' was signed to term contract on strength of the first few days rushes, and then appeared with Bob Burns in 'Our Leading Citizen.'

Betty Field, femme topper in 'What a Life,' won the coveted part of Lannie in Lewis Milestone's production of 'Of Mice and Men' at Hal Roach, one of the amazing quick steps to prominence for the season's large feminine contingent.

Barbara O'Neil won distinction in Universal's John M. Stahl production, 'When Tomorrow Comes,' competing on even terms with Irene Dunne and Charles Boyer, in the appraisal of critics, and played Queen Elizabeth in U's chiller, 'The Tower of London.'

Robert Stack, 20, Los Angeles little theatre player, and Lewis Howard, from New York legit, also 20, had leading juve roles with Deanna Durbin in 'First Love.' Geraldine Fitzgerald at Warners is regarded by her studio as an exceptional find. Initialer was with Bette Davis in 'Dark Victory,' from which she went to Samuel Goldwyn for 'Wuthering Heights' and then back to Warners for 'A Child Is Born.'

Eddie Albert, who came to Warners from the stage to do 'Brother Rat,' his first film, is being brought along with important assignments, through 'On Your Toes,' and an advantageous showing in 'Four Wives.'

William Lundigan, brought over by Warners from Universal, did a standout job in 'Dodge City' and scored in 'The Old Maid.'

David O. Selznick introduced Ingrid Bergman, Swedish actress, to American audiences in 'Intermezzo,' which she wrapped up very much for her own.

John Hubbard, previously a bit player at Metro, was picked up by Hal Roach and placed opposite Joan Bennett in 'The Housekeeper's Daughter' where he clicked for a term contract.

Brenda Marshall ably managed a co-starring role with Joel McCrea in 'Espionage Agent' as her initialer at Warners, having come from the Federal Theatre Project in New York, and is being pointed for important chores.

Considerable number of the young newcomers have profited during the past twelve-months through the increased practice of loanouts. Has given them wider and more varied opportunity, counteracted to some extent the tendency to type players, and has eliminated to considerable extent the former long time waits between appropriate roles where a player was held jealously to the home studio.

## BLUMBERG'S COAST TRIP TO SET U.S. PIX BUDGETS

Number of pix and budgets for the coming year will be taken up by Nate Blumberg, Universal prez, during a two-week trip to the Coast on which he leaves Friday (5). He'll be accompanied by Bill Scully, sales-manager, and J. H. Seideman, who is in charge of the company's foreign sales. Blumberg indicated important announcements would be forthcoming following the Coast confabs.

Among subjects on the agenda during the visit will be addition of new producers to the U fold. Blumberg said last week that the pact with Jules Levy, which has been in progress of negotiation for more

than a month, has been completed and will be inked this week. It's for only one pic, Blumberg said, 'The Boys from Syracuse,' although others are likely to follow.

Another producer with whom Blumberg has talked and, it is understood, will continue negotiations is Frank Lloyd. He denied, however, that he has been in contact with Jesse Lasky, who, it has been said, will return to film production via Universal.

Blumberg refused comment on the departure of Harry Edington from the lot to become RKO production chief. He said, however, that U was taking into its employ two execs on Edington's staff—Reginald Allen, who was handling production detail, and A. H. McCausland, business manager.

## Lloyd, Skirball Assured Bankrolling For 5 Pix

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Frank Lloyd and Jack Skirball are drawing up incorporation papers for their new indie production company, with commitments for a minimum of five pictures, to be bankrolled by the Guaranty Trust Co. of New York.

First to roll will be 'Tree of Liberty,' slated for Columbia release. Outlets for the other four may be divided between Columbia and Universal. Second feature, under present plans, is 'The Flying Yorkshireman,' with Will Fyfe in the title role.

## Goldwyn's Legal Maneuvering Cues Premonition of Setback In UA Suit

Premonition by Max D. Steuer, Samuel Goldwyn's counsel, of the dismissal last week in Delaware federal court of Goldwyn's contract-breaking suit against United Artists is now seen in New York as the reason back of Goldwyn's sudden announcement several weeks ago of the 'termination' of his UA pact. Opinion of Judge John P. Nields in Wilmington makes it virtually impossible, according to attorneys, for Goldwyn to push his suit against UA on the original tack.

Announcement of 'termination' of his contract with UA is seen, therefore, as making the distributing company take the offensive so that the suit can be fought to the same conclusion, but from a different angle.

Court held that Goldwyn must name as defendants, in addition to UA, Alexander Korda and the Elton Corp., the late Douglas Fairbanks' holding company, inasmuch as Goldwyn's action is based on alleged breaches of the contracts of these two producer-owners with UA.

To make them defendants, however, they must be served within the jurisdiction of the court—and Korda

is in England. That's why it is impossible for Steuer merely to start his suit over again with the additional two defendants. With UA on the offensive, however, to force Goldwyn to distribute through it, Steuer will be able to argue the case (as the defendant) on similar grounds without naming the other parties.

Delaware decision has no bearing on the suit brought in N. Y. supreme court Dec. 8 by Goldwyn to obtain about \$700 interest from UA on the \$54,559.26 bonus he claims was due him on Aug. 25 and not paid. This action was transferred on Thursday (29) to the U. S. district court in New York on order of Justice Aron Steuer. UA's reply to this is awaited to show on what grounds it alleges Goldwyn failed to fulfill his contract and thus why the coin was not owed him. When Goldwyn began to raise a fuss about the bonus, UA finally sent him a check for the money in hopes of avoiding further trouble, but he returned the check with the demand for interest thereon.

In the Delaware action there are (Continued on page 20)

## Night Life of the Cods

By Groucho Marx

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

When one considers the setup, it seems to me that this local bull pit called Hollywood has considerably less scandal than it is entitled to. Here is a town teeming with beautiful ingenues, marble-chiseled juveniles, low-priced vintage wines and half-priced bedroom suites; it has a desert moon, a neighboring ocean and dozens of lovely, lonely mountain tops; yet, despite all this, its Sodom and Gomorrah Crossley is lower than any hinterland cowtown.

What is the reason for all this? Is sex going the way of the horse and buggy? Is a well-turned ankle less important than a well-turned phrase? Not that it matters—but where is the next generation coming from? Be calm, my friend, love is still alive and kicking, but Hollywood is too wrapped up in its groups and sets, its cliques and intrigues to bother about that little thing called love.

To begin with, there is the young whippersnapper group. This is the 16-21 crowd. The studios pair them up like horses at a State Fair and they are instructed weekly with whom they are to go and when to announce their engagements. They are usually snapped with their current fiances, holding hands at a night club, sharing a nutburger at a Drive-In, or gingerly holding a tennis racket at El Mirador. The fact that they have never played tennis has nothing to do with it. It gives them a chance to pose in shorts, and besides, there's a sort of unwritten publicity law that all young starlets (as they are revoltingly called) must be photographed at some time in their young careers brandishing a tennis racket. If the lenser is particularly ingenious, he poses them peering coyly through the gut. This is tops in photography, as it combines both sex appeal and sport! This crowd also goes in for mass bowling, serenading each other on roller skates and officially greeting visiting Washington Congressmen who look as though they might vote for the Neeley bill.

Then there is the gambling group! They bet on anything—a card game, a roulette wheel, whether their next kid will be a boy or a girl, local and national prize fights, the horses, African golf, the market, baseball, and most of all, football! The football chatter usually starts around July in the studio commissaries and ends up the following January at the Rose Bowl. They bet on punch boards, lotteries, high and low scores and have even been known to make book on how many collective pounds a team will shed in one afternoon. These boys go in for plenty of check-kiting and financial legerdemain and their mornings are usually spent in a tank, trying to square things with a brace of vice-presidents.

## The Cultural Bunch

Then there is the cultural or white-tie-and-tail crowd. They spend half of their lives running to the Philharmonic to hear lectures, concerts, symphonies, to see dancers from Bali and Monte Carlo, and, in fact, anything that promises a high-hat opening. They take French and Spanish courses at the local universities; they specialize in first editions and Old English plate; they rush over to Pasadena for Maxwell Anderson and Shaw and will entertain any visiting lecturer who can be induced to stop over for dinner or cocktails. They won't attend a preview unless there is a canopied awning in front of the theatre, a red-carpeted sidewalk of at least 400 feet from their limousines to the main entrance and a grandstand of not less than 3,000 admiring yokels. In addition to this, the theatre manager has to guarantee in writing that when the show is over the carriage starter will follow their names in an English accent for not less than five minutes.

The busiest and most voluble group, however, are the social-conscious kids. They go to a meeting every night—any kind of a meeting will do. If it's a cause that they agree with, so much the better; but their theory is, any cause is better than none! At the drop of a hat, they'll boycott anything. It's a night lost when they don't issue an official white paper, denouncing something. They have you slappingly signing papers, petitions and protests. It's all very confusing and frequently you find yourself sending money to both sides of a great cause. Unless you are exceptionally strong-minded, you eventually belong to more organizations than an insurance agent soliciting the Sons and Daughters of I Will Arise.

## The Old Guard

And now we come to the final crowd—the old guard! Somebody once said: 'The old guard dies, but never surrenders!' Well, this crowd has done both. They are known as the low-blood-pressure group. They all have minus thyroid, leaping arthritis and droopy eyelids. Their idea of a ducky evening is to sit around and discuss their symptoms. Insomnia is their favorite topic and, at the slightest provocation, they will reel off hours of evidence to prove they haven't slept a wink in weeks. They subsist largely on a diet of aspirin, vitamins and shots in the arm. They swallow tablets all night to put them to sleep and chew benzedrine all day to keep them awake! They are easily recognized on the street—they all walk with a little jerk and a slight toss of the head like Lionel Barrymore in his last five pictures. They see their dentist twice a year and their doctor twice a day; they take daily massages and scalp treatments and spend more money on X-rays than they do on jewelry.

So you see, love staggers along out here under many handicaps. It's doubtful if even Tommy Manville would thrive under these conditions, and that, gentlemen, is the acid test! So if you think the scandal from the Western Front is a bit on the dull side, don't blame it all on Vine Street.



# Film Showmanship

By John C. Flinn

It is only when viewed from the perspective of a year's end that events shape themselves clearly to disclose the radical changes and trends which are taking place in film showmanship. Also the increasing importance of capable and experienced handling of picture properties. Past 12 months have seen some revolutionary methods of exploitation tried out with varying degrees of success.

Dominant has been the out-of-town premier buildup, which in a few months since Charles Einfeld first put Dodge City, Kas., back on the map, reached a high state of ballyhoo when Howard Dietz and the Metro brass band, arclight batteries and Hollywood screen stars, took over Atlanta, for three days and made the natives forget on which side General Sherman had fought. The prairie debut was in behalf of Warner Bros. technicolor western, 'Dodge City,' and resultant publicity from the premiere celebration reached millions of newspaper readers. The Atlanta blowout, still alive in memory, ushered the initial showing of David O. Selznick's 'Gone With the Wind.' Eye-witnesses report the festivities in Atlanta consisted chiefly of the thrill which the feminine population experienced in beholding Clark Gable, the wicked Rhett Butler of the film, in person.

While these two had the distinction of being the first and the last of the out-of-town preems of the year, there were other films that also benefited by first showings away from New York and Hollywood. Cecil B. DeMille's 'Union Pacific' nearly wrecked the city of Omaha during a week given over to revival of frontier customs and costumes. Several blocks of buildings in the downtown section were transformed to represent the frame structures of 75 years ago when the first transcontinental railroad was built. Bob Gillham and the Paramount publicity forces entertained scores of newspaper writers from many cities for a week's outing, asking in return only headline mention of the name of the film and several thousand words of vivid description of its reception.

## 20TH-FOX'S TIEUPS

Taking advantage of the gratis cooperation from chambers of commerce, politically ambitious city and state officials and the willingness of newspapers to cover the premieres, other companies tried out successfully the out-of-town openings until they became monthly affairs. Charles E. McCarthy, of 20th-Fox, invited half a hundred members of the press to the opening of 'Young Abe Lincoln' at Springfield, Ill., the onetime home of the martyred president. He tied in with a national radio network and the air show almost smothered the film angles when Marian Anderson sang some spirituals so beautifully that listeners, entranced by her artistry, demanded more from her and less from the bevy of film stars who spoke their pieces. McCarthy has taken the lead among the publicity directors in using radio tieups for exploitation of Zanuck film productions. He bought the broadcasting rights for the Kentucky Derby and the air account of the turf classic was an amusing mixture of horse-flesh. 'My Old Kentucky Home,' Al Jolson jokes and a minute description of 'Rose of Washington Square.' He has tied in also with Kate Smith commercials.

Other inland premieres were arranged by Barrett McCormick for RKO's 'Allegheny Uprising,' which was launched in Pittsburgh with pomp and pageantry; Columbia's release of Frank Capra's 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington,' which was shown before officials at the national capital; Universal's 'The Under-Pup,' which provided a gala week's outing for film writers of the dailies who were introduced to Wilkes-Barre, Pa., the home of little Gloria Jean, star of the picture; and another Zanuck repeat when 'Drums Along the Mohawk' was premed in Albany, Schenectady, Troy and other upstate cities before it was shown in the key spots. Paramount's special showing of 'Gulliver's

Travels' in Miami lost lustre as an important national event because first run bookings followed within a few days in New York and Chicago. Film has proved a natural for holiday screen fare.

## DON'T NEED THAT B'WAY STAMP

Breakdown of the long established precedent of a Broadway premiere, as the accepted official first showing, was an inevitable development of showmanship due to the crowded condition of bookings in New York. Smash boxoffice records which 'Gone With the Wind' is ringing up in Atlanta, Boston, Cincinnati, Reading and Harrisburg furnish ample proof that the Broadway stamp of approval is unnecessary on a piece of entertainment given the potent advance buildup which has made the 'Wind' campaign the year's best and most effective bally.

Attractions like 'Gone With the Wind' come infrequently, however. It is the exception, rather than the rule. But the way has been opened and the principle clearly re-established that the most effective method of film advertising and exploitation is to beat the drums of showmanship far in advance of first bookings. If there has been one outstanding omission by major company advertising departments during the past year it has been the neglect in starting advertising campaigns a period of time sufficiently far in advance of first showings to acquaint both the trade and the public with the merit of important pictures.

## NO COHESION WITH NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS

Recognizing the necessity of reaching as large an audience as possible, some of the major companies have appropriated large sums for national magazine advertising, timed to appear on newsstands concurrent with the general release date of the films. It is an expensive and far from satisfactory method, a one-time shot usually, creating a ripple of interest for a day or two and then ineffective as a follow-through aid for thousands of theatres which do not play a film until weeks and months after the first runs.

The chorus of comment from exhibitors on present day exploitation is that many films are released which possess real boxoffice values, but the theatre men learn of their strength too late to plant their advertising effectively for local showings. Extended national campaigns in the slick magazines are too expensive for most distributors to handle, whereas consecutive, consistent and advance informative buildup for pictures through the trade press would quicken exhibitors into action, spur their efforts locally and at the same time meet the requirements of limited budgets.

Every distributor currently is straining to lift domestic film rentals to fill the gap which has been opened by a disordered foreign market. More and more pictures are allocated to the higher percentage brackets in existing license agreements. True solution of the problems of upping film rental grosses will not come from highpressuring exhibitors; a more logical approach would be more intensive cooperation with theatres to increase public attendance at the box-office. And in that highly commendable undertaking the exhibitor, when properly and adequately informed of what he has to sell to his patrons always has proved the most effective agent in getting the customers through the wickets.

The true showman—and the business has thousands of them—is a creator of ideas. If there is existing incongruity in the film situation it is the lack of recognition on the part of distributors of the latent abilities of showman—exhibitors who know their business backwards. This goes for operators of affiliated major circuit houses as well as independents.

The first national distributor and sales manager who devotes himself to winning enthusiastic exhibitor support to his films by talking exhibitor language through the trade press will have gone far towards a solution of his troubles.

## 'SWANEE RIVER' PLUGS COME EASY IN PITT

Pittsburgh, Jan. 1.

'Swanee River,' current at Alvin, is a cinch for local exploitation possibilities and George Tyson, head of Harris publicity department, squeezed them dry. Radio tieups were easy, inasmuch as Stephen C. Foster was a native Pittsburgher and some of scenes of picture are laid in this city. Best publicity break, however, was a private screening of picture for Mrs. Alexander Dallas Rose and Mrs. Ralph L. Mellady, granddaughter and great-granddaughter, respectively, of the composer, who still live here. Pix and stories of this broke in all the papers and relatives also went on the air over KDKA with a plug for the film.

Another swell break locally was Darryl F. Zanuck's invitation to Fletcher Hodges, director of Foster Memorial here, to fly to the Coast for a private filming of 'Swanee River.' Hodges went out and gave the picture his blessings, with story breaking nationally and, naturally, played up particularly big here.

## Beery, Carrillo Teamed

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Wallace Beery and Leo Carrillo team up again in '20-Mule Team,' a J. Walter Ruben production at Metro.

Pair last worked together in 'Viva Villa.'

## Just a Tie-Up Kid

Philadelphia, Jan. 1.

To Jack Lexey, manager of the Stanley-Warner Broadway theatre, goes the prize for tieups.

When he played 'Heart of the North' last year he had a heavy snowfall. When 'They All Come Out' was showing, convicts at the nearby Moyamensing gaol staged a prison break.

Last week he featured 'The Rains Came.' The weatherman came through with an all-day downpour.

## Exhibitor Leaders

### Laud NSS-Par Deal

National Screen Service under terms of a new five-year contract with Paramount will handle distribution of all Par trailers immediately, and on Feb. 1 will become the active sales agency for all Par advertising accessories. For the latter function a new subsidiary company has been formed called Advertising Accessory Corp.

Charles Casenave is general manager of the accessory distribution unit.

## BAINTER IN 'MARYLAND'

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Fay Bainter was assigned by 20th-Fox to a topline in the high-budget picture, 'Maryland.' Shooting starts Feb. 15.

## WB Shorts Go West In Feb.

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Concentration of all Warners shorts at the Burbank studio is effective in February, when Norman Moray, WB briefcase sales head, comes west.

Meanwhile, Gordon Hollingshead continues to turn out the remainder of this year's shorts under Bryan Foy's supervision.

## F. P.-Canadian Finds That Campus Trade Pays OK

Vancouver, B. C., Jan. 1.

Surveying the past year, Famous Players officials consider their appeal to university and high school trade as one of their better promotion bits of '39.

'Passport' system, whereby kids are identified by pix in pocketbooks and admitted any time for a quarter, has proven highly successful, according to district superintendent Larry Bearg.

## 'Sea Hawk' Winged

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Start of 'The Sea Hawk,' high-budget picture at Warners, has been set back two weeks from Jan. 3, to permit Michael Curtiz and Errol Flynn to finish their jobs in 'Virginia City.'

Western film has been delayed by bad weather and illness.

## Wasted Publicity; Paper Defunct

San Diego, Jan. 1.

Example of studio wastefulness in shoveling out publicity is being demonstrated by all flackeries in refusing to remove defunct San Diego Sun from mailing lists despite 'return to sender' kickback.

Shortly before the paper folded, one studio circulated a quiz on the use of publicity. It was informed that the sheet tossed all releases into the trash basket, while staffers collected the pretty photographs. Studio, however, continued to shoot the works anyhow.

When paper folded, mail was sent back marked 'Return to Sender. Paper Out of Business.' But anyway the studio sends airmail flashes of special pix, etc., on 'Gulliver.' Reply went back by return mail pointing out the paper had been dark almost a month, and suggesting publicity be stopped.

S'no use. The flood continues, direct from that one studio to the city dump. Latest batch was received day this was written, one month and two days after the paper expired.

## FILM STYLES FOR 1940-41

By Bob Moak

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Music once more fills the Hollywood atmosphere, which means another cycle of tune-films—fourth since the dawn of cinematic sound—is just around the corner. Along with biographies, actionful dramas and super-sagebrushers, musical pictures will make up the major portion of Film-town's 1940-41 output.

There'll be the usual sprinkling of straight comedies, too, but screwballers, as well as crime pictures, are as passe as yesterday's map of Europe.

While scenario department staffs are oiling their typewriters preparatory to the start on next season's vehicles, studio production bosses are scanning lists of composers and lyricists with an eye to putting the cleffers back in the foldin' money division. It's been a tough year for the sharps-and-flats crowd, but they're already turning up their noses at the 'coffee and' counters, having been assured that they may now unlock the rainy day hoard because of fat weekly paychecks that are again in the offing.

Reharnessing of music for talker purposes, however, doesn't mean that there'll be a return to the old order of things. What the lot biggies currently have in mind is drama with song rather than the clambake type of musical they previously sought to popularize, with disappointing results. The gingerbread revue will be permitted to rest in its grave alongside slapstick and cops-and-robbers yarns.

### The Lineup

Emblematic of the current trend to tune-films are Metro's recent 'Babes in Arms,' its just-released 'Balalaika' and its forthcoming 'Broadway Melody of 1940' and 'Good News'; 20th-Fox's soon-to-be-filmed 'Say It With Music,' by Irving Berlin, and not unlike his other b.o. winner, 'Alexander's Ragtime Band,' in pattern; Paramount's presently-circulating 'The Great Victor Herbert,' its new 'Buck Benny Rides Again' and 'Road to Singapore,' and its coming-up 'Miami'; Samuel Goldwyn's proposed 'Natchez,' with Alice Faye and Zorina, and Universal's Deanna Durbin starrer, 'It's a Date.'

Some will carry big choral ensembles and hoofing lines, while others will merely intersperse drama and song, but all of them will be woven around tales as gummy as it is possible to drag from writing mills. Hollywood is convinced that the theatre-going public is music-minded, but it's not overlooking the established fact that the story's the thing that really counts.

### Biogs Again

Biographies, having proven their worth as turnstile spinners, will get even a heavier play from the celluloid czars in 1940-41 than they have in the past. Any studio would be willing to swap a top star for another 'Jesse James' or 'Stanley and Livingstone.' Lincoln has now been done to a crisp, what with 20th-Fox's 'Young Mr. Lincoln' and RKO's 'Abe Lincoln in Illinois.' Metro, unable to cram the whole of Thomas Edison's life into one feature, is splitting it into two, 'Young Tom Edison' and 'Edison the Man.' Warners is reaching all the way to Germany for 'The Life of Dr. Ehrlich.' Darryl Zanuck is playing the field, moving from Broadway's 'Lillian Russell' to Utah's 'Brigham Young,' while Cecil B. DeMille will construct Paramount's 'Queen of Queens' around the Virgin Mary.

Nor are persons who figured in the too-dim ago to garner all of the glorification. There's a tendency on the part of the talker chiefs to dramatize the biographies of their own celebrities, an idea tried out by David O. Selznick when he made 'A Star Is Born' for the 1937-38 slate. It is generally conceded that the characters portrayed in that feature by Frederic March and Janet Gaynor were composites of folks who once rode the crest of the village's wave. 20th-Fox's 'Second Fiddle' undoubtedly was drawn from the career of its skating star, Sonja Henie. 'Hollywood Cavalcade' touched numerous Hollywood lives. Metro's 'Babes in Arms' more than hinted at truth in fiction as pertaining to Mickey Rooney and his father, Joe Yule. Zanuck's 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star' will parallel the biog of its star, Linda Darnell, while his 'End of the Trail,' cavalcade of west-erns, will parade the private and public lives of the screen's two-gun gents.

Par has designated 'Royal Northwest Mounted Police,' with DeMille at the helm, as its bid for a ride on the action feature gravy train. Metro has its 'Northwest Passage,' RKO its 'Hunchback of Notre Dame' and 20th-Fox its 'Little Old New York.'

### Civil War All Over Again

Selznick-Metro's 'Gone With the Wind' having shown the production lads there is both romance and action in the Civil War period, there's a race on at the moment to dig other yarns out of those years during and immediately following the strife between North and South. Metro is winding up one tagged 'Arouse and Beware,' with Wallace Beery starred, while Republic has before the cameras 'Dark Command,' co-starring John Wayne, Claire Trevor and Walter Pidgeon. 20th-Fox, Par and Warners are mulling ideas touching on the same era.

Universal's 'Destry Rides Again' is serving to intensify interest in the more elaborate type of westerns. Teaming a pair of names never before associated with sagebrushers, as U did with Marlene Dietrich and James Stewart in 'Destry,' has minds of producers following new lines of thought, and any day now you can expect to find the Gables and Lombards, and the Munis and Shearers, donning caps and boots for lariat practice with the Hatfields and the Coys.

Greater care than ever before will be used by company heads in lining up programs for new season, execs of each outfit having come to realization that they've got to make features that lend themselves to the heaviest possible exploitation. Paramount's success in swelling domestic revenues by throwing unusual bally campaigns behind its A product this year has shown rival home office and studio groups a way to partially overcome decreased takes in foreign fields.

Better than 85% of the 1940-41 crop of features will be turned out with a view to salesmanship angles. Producers today are unanimous in their stand that pictures lacking in marquee names are more or less a waste of time and money.

Traveling exploiteers, roving bands of players, radio time and increased newspaper and mag space will be utilized by all distributors to drain every possible dollar out of each film. But fellows who control the bankrolls are aware that exploitation of any kind is worthless unless they have something worth-while to exploit.



# New Year Tees Off With a Bang In Chi; 'Herbert'-Jones-Martin Great, Ditto 'McCarthy'-Ted Lewis

Chicago, Jan. 1.

New Year's Eve was terrific, in fact, the entire weekend was dynamite, with holdouts the rule at houses as early as Friday afternoon, which was opening day for most of the theatres. Everything was sock-eroo and the shows were obviously just what the people were looking for. Theatre are getting their first real money break in a long time.

Everything did business, with the question being primarily that of capacity. For that reason the Chicago will go through to the mightiest figure with 'Victor Herbert' plus Allan Jones and Mary Martin in person on the stage.

All houses went to \$1.10 New Year's Eve and had no trouble getting it. State-Lake and Oriental are both climbing to new high figures. Oriental has Ted Lewis on stage. The State-Lake is getting business because of the A. B. Marcus unit.

Roosevelt is doing great with 'Gulliver', which is capacity during the day and falling off only at the last show at night. 'Hunchback' is in second week and smashing 'em. The last two pictures opened on Christmas Day and included New Year's Eve in their first week's gross figures.

**Current Pix; Last Week's Estimates**

**Apollo (B&K)** (1,200; 35-55-65-75)—'Intermezzo' (UA). With added strength of New Year's Eve show, the flicker, which opened Saturday (30), figures to clip off good coin in initial week. Last week, 'Mr. Smith' (Col.) wound up smashing seven-week gallop to fine \$4,000.

**Chicago (B&K)** (900; 35-55-75)—'Victor Herbert' (Par) and stage show. Allan Jones and Mary Martin on stage. Capacity weekend and a great money week in the offing. Last week, 'Four Wives' (WB), turned in fine take at \$34,500.

**Garlick (B&K)** (900; 35-55-65)—'Four Wives' (WB). Moved here from the Chicago and coming through in general upswing to high profits. Last week, 'Barricade' (20th), meaningless at \$2,900.

**Oriental (Jones)** (3,200; 35-40-55)—'Charlie McCarthy' (U) and Ted Lewis on stage. Upped prices for the session and will zoom into biggest week since Jones, Linick & Schaefer took over. Last week, '20,000 Men' (20th) and vaude, big winner at 40c top with \$17,200.

**Palace (RKO)** (2,500; 35-55-65-75)—'Hunchback' (RKO) (2d wk). Followup week opened today (Monday). Rode high to better than \$25,000 in initial week.

**Roosevelt (B&K)** (1,500; 35-55-65-75)—'Gulliver' (Par) (2d wk). Likewise started second week today (Monday). Last week, matinees were strong and the last shows at night weak, which totalled to excellent \$22,000.

**State-Lake (B&K)** (2,700; 25-40)—'Dress Parade' (WB) and A. B. Marcus' 'Revels of 1940' unit on stage. Marcus show is dynamite any time any place in this town and zooming take. Last week, 'Thunder Afloat' (M-G) and vaude, managed good \$14,300.

**United Artists (B&K-M-G)** (1,700; 35-55-65-75)—'Another Thin Man' (M-G) (2d wk). With New Year's Eve coin, whodunit should gather strong biz currently after taking close to \$15,000 in initial session, last week.

## Seattle Holiday Big Boosts 'Balalaika', Hunchback

Seattle, Jan. 1.

All first-run houses downtown played midnite shows last night (Sunday) which will sweeten the grosses and give 1940 a good start. After some dull weeks, indications this week are for nice takings. One reason, of course, is the gala New Year feeling, but more important is the fact that real attractions are offered.

**Current Pix; Last Week's Estimates**  
**Blue Mouse (Hamrick-Evergreen)** (850; 27-42)—'Gulliver' (Par). Move-over after nine good days at Paramount. Looks for good business. Last week, 'Destiny' (U) and 'Dr. Christian' (RKO), third week, nine days, slow \$2,300.

**Coliseum (Hamrick - Evergreen)** (1,900; 21-32)—'Eternally Yours' (UA) and 'Disputed Passage' (Par), dual, split with 'Real Glory' (UA) and 'At Circus' (M-G-M) (2d run). Hitting nice pace. Last week, 'Babes Arms' (M-G) and 'Chan Island' (20th) (2d run), slow \$2,500.

**Fifth Avenue (Hamrick-Evergreen)** (2,349; 27-42)—'Hunchback' (RKO). Got big campaign and fast start. Anticipates big week. Last week, 'Hardy Son' (M-G) and 'Witness Vanishes' (U), \$6,800, good considering season.

**Liberty (J-vH)** (1,650; 21-27-42)—'Amazing Williams' (Col) and 'Blondie Baby' (Col) (2d wk). Still

looks good. Last week, same films, okay \$4,500.

**Music Box (Hamrick-Evergreen)** (850; 27-42)—'Hardy Son' (M-G) and 'Witness Vanishes' (U). Moveover from Fifth should do well here. Last week, 'Remember' (M-G) and 'What Life' (Par) (2d wk), eight days, \$1,700, terrible.

**Orpheum (Hamrick - Evergreen)** (2,600; 27-42)—'Everything Happens Night' (20th) and 'Call Messenger' (U). Midnight show a big help; satisfactory week indicated. Last week, 'Tower London' (U) and 'Honey-moon's Over' (20th), \$4,600, good.

**Palomar (Sterling)** (1,350; 21-27-37-42)—'Everything's Ice' (RKO) and 'Invisible Stripes' (WB), plus vaude. Nice pace. Last week, 'Four Wives' (WB) plus local talent revue, \$6,000, great.

**Paramount (Hamrick - Evergreen)** (3,039; 27-42)—'Balalaika' (M-G) and 'Nick Carter' (M-G). Heavy newspaper blasts helping solid b.o. harvest. Last week, 'Gulliver' (Par) and 'Neighbors, the Carters' (Par), got nine days for great \$10,000.

**Roosevelt (Sterling)** (800; 27-42)—'Four Wives' (WB). Big biz expected. Last week (21-32), 'Jamaica Inn' (Par) and 'Under-Pup' (U) (2d run), \$1,800, mild.

**Winter Garden (Sterling)** (800; 16-32)—'Women' (M-G) and 'Blackmail' (M-G) (2d run). Good combo getting nice coin. Last week, 'Rains Came' (20th) and 'Bright Boys' (U) (2d run), got nice matinee biz and good \$2,400.

## 'CISCO'-JOE COOK LOOK FORTE IN INDPLS.

Indianapolis, Jan. 1.

Biz this week in the downtown sector isn't casting too bright a picture on the New Year screen, but grosses are generally fair and upped slightly by midnight shows. Indiana is taking top coin dualling 'Swanee River' and 'Two Thoroughbreds'. Loew's holds second place with 'Balalaika' and 'Blondie Baby'. Circle riding to nice week with holdover of 'Gulliver's Travels'. Though first week's biz didn't warrant repeat, house believes cartoon pic may take a fresh hold on life.

Lyric, with only vaude in town, and two midnight shows, looks good with 'Cisco Kid' and Joe Cook unit on stage.

A snowstorm on Christmas Day sent managerial hopes for nice biz to the basement last week.

**Current Pix; Last Week's Estimates**  
**Apollo (Katz-Dolle)** (1,100; 25-30-40)—'Four Wives' (WB) and 'Honey-moon's Over' (20th). 'Amazing Williams' (Col), brutal \$1,200 last week.

**Circle (Katz-Dolle)** (2,600; 25-30-40)—'Gulliver's' (Par) (2d wk). First week felt the competition and weather to only fair \$6,500.

**Indiana (Katz-Dolle)** (3,100; 25-30-40)—'Swanee' (20th) and 'Thoroughbreds' (RKO). Last week, 'Four Wives' (20th) and 'Honey-moon's Over' (20th), disappointing \$6,000.

**Loew's (Loew's)** (2,400; 25-30-40)—'Balalaika' (M-G) and 'Blondie Baby' (Col). Last week, 'Judge Hardy Son' (M-G) and 'Fast Furious' (M-G), healthy \$11,000.

**Lyric (Lyric)** (1,900; 25-30-40)—'Cisco Kid' (20th), and Joe Cook unit. Last week, 'Barricade' (20th) and 'Moulin Rouge' unit on stage, profitable \$11,000.

## STRONG HOLIDAY FARE BOLSTERS PROVIDENCE

Providence, Jan. 1.

Outstanding attractions combined with the usually heavy midnight show and holiday trade hereabouts, helping stands all around. Still packing them, though in their second weeks are 'Hunchback of Notre Dame' at RKO Albee, and 'Gulliver's Travels' at Strand.

**Current Pix; This Week's Estimates**  
**Albee (RKO)** (2,300; 25-35-50)—'Hunchback' (RKO) (2d wk). Holding up strong. Screen to be shattered Wed. (3) for one performance of 'What A Life' with Jackie Coogan. Last week 'Hunchback' (RKO) cleared zowie \$15,000.

**Carlton (Fay-Lowe)** (1,400; 25-35-50)—'Hardy Son' (M-G) and 'Fugitive Large' (Col) (2d run). An old

faithful and always good for a second week. Last week 'Dress Parade' (WB) and 'Missing Evidence' (U), so-so \$2,000.

**Fay's (Indie)** (2,000; 25-35-40)—'Destry' (U) (2d run) and vaude. Pic, carried over from Majestic, should hold nicely with vaude headed by Frank Gaby. Last week 'High School' (20th) and vaude, good \$6,500.

**Majestic (Fay)** (2,200; 25-35-50)—'Swanee River' (20th) and '1 Hour' (U). Holiday trade should help this one nicely. Last week 'Destry' (U) and 'Laugh Off' (U), nice \$7,000.

**State (Loew)** (3,200; 25-35-50)—'Balalaika' (M-G) and 'Nick Carter' (M-G). Little b.o. trouble. Last week 'Hardy Son' (M-G) and 'Fugitive Large' (Col), swell \$13,000.

**Strand (Indie)** (2,000; 25-35-50)—'Gulliver's Travels' (Par) and 'Main Street Lawyer' (Par) (2d wk) and still going strong. Last week lifted house into upper brackets with zowie \$12,000.

## 'HARDY'-CROSBY ORCH COMBO PITT CLICK

Pittsburgh, Jan. 1.

Flock of ace attractions makes New Year's week look unusually promising. Although the Xmas session was generally disappointing, except in case of Stanley, that was believed due in part to counter competition by sock 'Ice Follies' at Duquesne Garden and smash 'Hot Mikado' at Nixon. So much biz in town, even on holiday stanzas, and with three spots hogging the trade, most everything else suffered. That's not true at present, however.

Stanley's confident of a new record this week, with 'Judge Hardy and Son' and Bob Crosby's band and a New Year's eve capacity show at \$1 top. Expectations are based on fact that 'Hardy' pix usually do around \$20,000 on their own at Penn without a stage show. Only reason Stanley got the picture was because Loew-WB pool is clearing decks of as much product as possible in order to prepare for coming of 'Gone With the Wind'.

Senator's in first full week of vaudefilm policy with 'Cisco Kid and Lady' and Rimaacs band, and h.o.'s include 'Daytime Wife' and Fulton and 'Gulliver's Travels' at Warner, a move-over from Penn. Alvin is looking for a run with 'Swanee River' and Penn has high hopes for 'Four Wives'.

**Current Pix; Last Week's Estimates**  
**Alvin (Harris)** (1,850; 25-35-50)—'Swanee River' (20th). Big radio breaks, together with lot of marquee strength, expected to result in a run for this one here. Last week 'Charlie McCarthy' (U) a big disappointment, and didn't get even its share of kid trade. Around \$5,000, poor, and yanked day short of full week.

**Fulton (Shea-Hyde)** (1,700; 25-40)—'Daytime Wife' (20th), 'Secret Dr. Kildare' (M-G). Replaced, although latter was scheduled to run through. Last week 'Wife' only fairish at \$5,500.

**Penn (Loew's-UA)** (3,300; 25-35-50)—'Four Wives' (WB). House got behind this one with a brisk campaign, and expects to do enough to send picture to Warner for h.o. Last week 'Gulliver's Travels' (Par) n.s.h. for this kind of picture at this time of year at \$14,000, but it went to Warner anyway.

**Senator (Harris)** (1,750; 25-40)—'Cisco Kid Lady' (20th) and vaude with Rimaacs band. First full week for house's new policy and no chance to get line on prospects for survival. Last week 'Blondie Baby' (Col) and vaude, opened Xmas Day and in four days not very impressive at \$2,000.

**Stanley (WB)** (3,600; 25-40-60)—'Hardy Son' (M-G) and Bob Crosby's band. This is the combo management expects to crack house record now held by Kay Kyser's band. Last week 'That's Wrong' (RKO) and Martha Raye unit, great \$28,000, only a bad weather break at the finish stopping gross from hitting couple of grand above that.

**Warner (WB)** (2,000; 25-35-50)—'Gulliver' (Par). Moved here after just a fair week at Penn, but figured to pick up enough additional holiday trade to keep it profitable. Last week 'Call on President' (M-G) and 'Dr. X' (WB), never in the running and finished at around \$5,000, pretty ordinary for holiday stanza.

## Winnipeg Cheery

Winnipeg, Jan. 1.

Unusual weather, with Winnipeg celebrating its second snowless Christmas in history, along with Christmas leave of soldiers, making a healthy combination to shoot grosses to a new high.

Week before Christmas, which usually has the boys crying in their beer, had 'em going the reverse with money flowing freely around town.

# 1940 Into High Gear as Broadway B.O. Booms; 'Hunchback,' 'Swanee' Pacing OK; Colman, 'Gulliver,' 'Wind' Strong

Licking their chops over the killing made over the holidays, the Broadway theatres enter a new decade with more than the customary optimism. Most managers view the early 1940 releases as better in quality than last year at this time and in most instances there is no fear concerning a shortage, including among the theatres that have to buy in the open market.

Over Christmas the throngs that mobbed the downtown area were enough to bring cheerful tears to the eyes of the managers, even if the pressure on the Police Department was enough to make it wish films had never been invented. During the day, between Xmas and New Year's, the press of the public was so great that pedestrian traffic was seriously impeded along Broadway and cops, together with house attaches, had difficulty in controlling the crowds. Kids being out of school over the two holidays, they jammed the theatres, notably where the attractions were the type they wanted such as 'Gulliver's Travels'.

The kids also laid siege to the Capitol, where 'Gone With the Wind' is doing a hurricane business. All along, since Christmas arrived, police reserves have been on duty, with lines forming as early as 9 a.m. and the Cap finally decided to throw the doors open an hour earlier than it did at first so as to get people off the streets. Very often people have been standing in the lines for two hours and getting within reaching distance of the Cap b.o. only to have it closed on them. The only thing they could do then was to seek other houses. Business began to ease a little Thursday night (28) and Saturday, with people preparing for New Year's, was also a little slower.

'Wind' went to nearly \$70,000 on its first week and over the New Year's will top that considerably, but the Cap remains at the same scale whereas other houses dug up fancy figures for the New Year's eve mobs, most of the de luxe houses getting \$1.50. The Music Hall sticks to its same scale, the policy there being not to disturb the scale for a midnight show on New Year's. Some houses juggled prices according to the crowds.

Paramount, Roxy, Strand and State all scheduled extra shows following the arrival of '40 and most laid plans to grind to as late as 6 a.m. The management of the Par, current with 'Gulliver' and the Glen Gray orchestra, decided to put on a complete show after midnight, with continuous running of the film thereafter until dawn. Others similarly held out bait for the stayers. The Strand decided to go on with a complete show as late as 2 a.m. A total of six stage shows was the order of the day at the year's tail-end with all the houses having in-person entertainment but other theatres, in straight films, such as the Rivoli, also tucked away the key for most of the night.

In addition to 'Wind', the attractions that command the greatest attention are 'Hunchback of Notre Dame' at the Music Hall; 'Gulliver' and Gray at the Paramount; 'Four Wives' and Abe Lyman at the Strand; 'Light That Failed' at the Rivoli; 'Swanee River', Roxy's new picture, and the State with 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington' and a vaude bill headed by Cross and Dunn.

Filling daily, on every show, at the Capitol, 'Wind' is also a sellout at the Astor where seats are not obtainable now until February unless from specs. Initial week of the picture at the reserved-seat \$2 top Astor was \$23,000, which means occupancy of every single seat there.

'Hunchback' teed off potently Saturday (30) at the Music Hall, first time that a film has opened on that day at this house. This was caused by the holdover of 'Balalaika' for two extra days on a third week. Understood the Hall was anxious to retain 'Balalaika' a full third session, but that RKO insisted 'Hunchback' be opened for New Year's.

'Swanee' into the Roxy Friday (29), also started auspiciously, with the names of Don Ameche and Al Jolson amounting to good b.o. bait. No other new pictures ventured in for the New Year killing excepting lesser first runs such as 'Night of Nights' (Criterion) and 'Big Guy' (Globe). Retaining 'Charlie McCarthy' for New Year's, the Rialto decided to move in a French-made, 'That They May Live' on Tuesday (2).

'Gulliver' goes a third week at the Paramount, starting Wednesday (3). Off to a mildish start prior to Christmas that ran into shopping, the theatre went into high gear with the arrival of Xmas, getting a particularly heavy matinee play. The first week was \$48,000. House on Wednesday (27) played to over 15,000 people up to 3 p.m., an all-time attendance record for any day up to that hour. 'Four Wives' and the Lyman band

packed the Strand on its first week over Xmas for a total of \$46,000, while 'Light That Failed' got the Rivoli \$47,500 on its first seven days, terrific. State brought in its New Year show Thursday and left the barrier in very strong fashion, with 'Mr. Smith' providing heavy draught.

On its second week 'Balalaika' took the Music Hall to \$105,000, as against the first seven days, prior to Xmas, of \$86,000. The picture remained very firm to the end, on its final two days of a third session grossing \$32,000 and but for the 'Hunchback' pressure would have gone a full total of 21 days.

**Current Pix; Last Week's Estimates**

**Astor** (1,012; 75-85-\$1.10-\$1.65-\$2.20)—'Wind' (M-G) (3d wk). Capable of doing \$23,000 on the week, all seats sold, and doing just this, the roadshow engagement of Metro's hurricane entered its third stanza Tuesday night (2). Terrific demand for seats way into February.

**Capitol** (4,520; 75-\$1.10-\$1.65)—'Wind' (M-G) (3d wk). Hitting high speed with the arrival of Xmas, there is no letup here and undoubtedly the run will be long. Theatre remains at three shows, though over the holidays four could have been done with people forming lines at the house at 9 a.m. to get into the first showing at 11:45. In order to clear lines, house began opening doors an hour earlier. First week for 'Wind' was close to \$70,000, including several days during the Xmas shopping period.

**Criterion** (1,662; 25-40-55)—'Night of Nights' (Par). Opened here Wednesday (27) and doing okay. Last week, 'Reno' (RKO), \$5,000, weak.

**Globe** (1,700; 25-35-55)—'Big Guy' (U). Opened Saturday (30) for the New Year's sesh. Started out satisfactorily, presaging a good week. In ahead, 'Cisco Kid' (20th), \$7,000, o.k. though not as much as expected over Xmas.

**Palace** (1,700; 25-35-55)—'We Are Not Alone' (WB) and 'Barricade' (20th), both 2d run, dualed. The Paul Muni name strongly aiding this pair and making up for the weakness of the No. 2 feature. Should have a pretty satisfactory week. 'Daytime Wife' (20th) (2d run) and 'Laugh It Off' (WB) (1st run) last week got \$8,000, much of which was credited to the Dempsey-Willard fight films. On the RKO circuit, the fistic pix of 20 years ago drew best in localities where men represent the majority of customers.

**Paramount** (3,664; 25-35-55-88-99)—'Gulliver' (Par) and Glen Gray orch, Jimmy Savo, Merry Macs (2d week). Winding up the second stanza Tuesday night (2), this show remains a third into 1940, but doubtful of a fourth. The initial seven days was \$48,000, not as fancy as has been grossed here, but four days of this was during the Xmas shopping period, which hurts anything. Second stanza over New Year's will up this figure considerably.

**Radio City Music Hall** (5,980; 40-60-84-99-\$1.65)—'Hunchback' (RKO) and stage show. The Laughton spec moved in Saturday (30), first time that any film has opened here on that day, and off to a powerful slaying at the b.o. 'Balalaika' (M-G) went two days beyond two weeks, getting \$105,000 the second and for the extra brace of days \$32,000.

**Rialto** (750; 25-40-55)—'Charlie McCarthy' (U) (2d week). Socked through at this little-seater for over \$9,000 the first seven days and remains for a second over New Year's, with 'That They May Live' (Mayer-Burstyn) getting Tuesday (2) as its debut.

**Rivoli** (2,092; 25-55-75-85-99)—'Light That Failed' (Par). But it isn't failing here, far from it; steady all-day trade over Christmas brought Ronald Colman starrer a splendid \$47,500, sending it into 1940 with colors flying. 'Grapes of Wrath' (20th) has been bought for the house, but unlikely that it will open at the end of January, as scheduled, unless insisted upon by 20th.

**Roxy** (5,836; 25-40-55-75)—'Swanee River' (20th) and stage show. Al Jolson-Don Ameche names figure as important b.o. for this New Year's release from the 20th-Fox factory. Teed off Friday (29) in sturdy fashion, auguring a fine first week. Last week, second for 'Everything Happens at Night' (20th), under \$30,000, very disappointing.

**State** (3,450; 35-55-75)—'Mr. Smith' (Col) (2d run) and vaude show headed by Cross and Dunn. With considerable of a wait since it played the Hall first run, 'Mr. Smith' is piling up nice coin here, aided by a stage show. Last week 'Cat and Canary' (Par) and the Louella Parsons unit provided excellent Xmas draught for a week of \$30,000, away over average.

**Strand** (2,767; 25-50-55-75-85-99)—'Four Wives' (WB) and Abe Lyman (2d week). Inaugurated its second week Friday (29) in high gear, following a first seven days' take of \$46,000, with this including a couple pre-Xmas shopping days.



## Frisco Wickets Active; 'Swanee,' 'Hunchback'-Vaude Potent at B.O.

San Francisco, Jan. 1. The combination of Charles Laughton's drawing power and the tale of the 'Hunchback of Notre Dame,' plus plenty of advance ballyhoo and the post-Xmas go-to-the-show spirit, plus a good vaude bill, giving the Golden Gate the top gross this week. Opening day (27) business has been exceeded only once, and then by 'Snow White.'

Good business, exceeding expectations, is pouring through doors of United Artists, where 'Raffles,' plus popular March of Time, opened to best pre-Xmas business house has done in five years. Orpheum, too, with 'Destry Rides Again' and 'Amazing Mr. Williams,' will get hefty slice of big year-opening melon. Fox, with 'Swanee River,' and Warfield, with 'Balalaika,' should also be in high brackets.

**Current Pix; Last Week's Estimates**  
**Fox (F-WC)** (5,000; 30-40) — 'Swanee River' (20th) and 'Honey-moon's Over' (20th). Should get a fat slice of the holiday business. Last week, 'Hardy Son' (M-G) and 'City Darkness' (20th), not so hot \$10,000.  
**Golden Gate (RKO)** (2,850; 35-55) — 'Hunchback' (RKO) plus New Year vaude bill. Looks to be by far the town's best bet. Last week, 'Flying Deuces' (RKO) plus stage show, none too forte at \$13,000.

**Orpheum (F&M)** (2,440; 30-40) — 'Destry' (U) and 'Amazing Williams' (Col). Gathering blue chips right and left and forecasts rip-roarin' take. Last week, 'First Love' (U) and 'Beware Spooks' (Col), in final frame of three-week run, only fairish \$6,500.

**Paramount (F-WC)** (2,740; 30-40) — 'Gulliver' (Par) and 'Neighbors the Carters' (Par) (2d wk). Business should approach that opening week, which was strong \$15,000.

**St. Francis (F-WC)** (1,740; 30-40) — 'Tower of London' (U) and 'Laugh Off' (U) (2d wk). Originally was moveover from Warfield. Last week's take was so-so \$5,500.

**United Artists (Cohen)** (1,200; 35-55-75) — 'Raffles' (UA) plus March of Time (2d wk). Looks to have heavy second week, after exceptional \$12,000 in first.

**Warfield (F-WC)** (2,680; 30-40) — 'Balalaika' (M-G) and 'Nick Carter' (M-G). Will get fine share of year-out, year-in business. Last week, 'Everything Happens Night' (20th) and 'Cisco Kid Lady' (20th), pretty good \$12,000.

## HOLIDAY HYPOS 'CAT'-BOLES IN OMAHA

Omaha, Jan. 1. Theatres here profited nicely from New Year's Eve falling on Sunday night, which meant no hard likker sold at nite clubs and hotels. Latter held celebration parties Saturday (30) mostly, but full effect was not there.

'Hunchback of Notre Dame,' at Brandeis, looks like town's best. Manager Will Singer is singling the pic and expects to run 11 days. 'Hardy and Son,' at Paramount, also has high expectations.

**Current Pix; Last Week's Estimates**  
**Avenue - Dundee - Military** (Goldberg) (800-600-900; 10-25) — 'Women' (M-G) and 'Thunder Afloat' (M-G), dual, split with 'Blondie Baby' (Col), 'Holmes' (20th) and 'Millions' (20th), tripler. Expecting good take. Last week 'Mr. Smith' (Col) and 'Xmas Carol' (M-G), dual, split with 'Black-mail' (M-G) and 'Speedway' (WB), dual, \$1,600, good.

**Brandeis (Singer-RKO)** (1,250; 10-25-35-40) — 'Hunchback' (RKO). Same bill New Year's Eve at 55c. Last week 'Four Wives' (WB) and 'Money Ring' (WB), \$7,000, great for nine days.

**Omaha (Blank)** (2,000; 10-25-40) — 'Gulliver' (Par) and 'What Life' (Par), dual. Moveover from Paramount. 'Swanee River' (20th) previewed at New Year's Eve show at 55c. Last week 'Ninotchka' (M-G) and 'City Darkness' (20th), moveover from Paramount, \$5,000, fairish.

**Orpheum (Blank)** (3,000; 15-35-55) — 'Cat Canary' (Par) with John Boles and Lawrence Welk on stage. 'Charlie McCarthy Detective' (U) and stage show for New Year's Eve at \$1 per. Stage show should help to very nice week. Last week 'Everything Happens Night' (20th) and 'Women Secrets' (Par), dual, \$6,000, n.g.

**Paramount (Blank)** (3,000; 10-25-40) — 'Judge Hardy Son' (M-G) and 'Honeymoon's Over' (20th), dual. 'Destry Again' (U) and WOW radio show on stage New Year's Eve at 55c. Mick Rooney will give theatre profitable week. Last week 'Gulli-

ver' (Par) and 'What Life' (Par), dual, \$7,000, nice.

**State (Goldberg)** (900; 10-20-25-35) — 'Women' (M-G) and 'Blondie Baby' (Col), dual, split with 'Thunder Afloat' (M-G) and 'Coed' (M-G), dual. Should get fairish take. Last week 'Mr. Smith' (Col) and 'Black-mail' (M-G), dual, \$900, so-so.

**Town (Goldberg)** (1,250; 10-20-25) — 'Days Jesse James' (Rep), 'Panama Lady' (RKO) and 'Wong Chinatown' (Mon), first-run tripler, split with 'Chip Flying U' (U), 'Five Peppers' (Col), first-run, and 'Coast Guard' (Col), tripler. Expecting average biz. Last week, 'Mesa City' (RKO), 'Smuggled Cargo' (Rep) and 'Sky Patrol' (Mon), first-run tripler, split with 'Trigger Fingers' (Cap), first-run, 'Speedway' (WB) and 'Prison Gates' (Col), tripler, \$1,100, nice.

## VAUDE REVIVAL PACES CINCY'S ROSY BIZ

Cincinnati, Jan. 1. 'Gone With the Wind's' phenomenal pull and New Year's week are mainstays for this burg's fastest b.o. in a decade. Resumption of stage shows at the Shubert also is helpful in current upswing.

Not since 'Sunny Side Up' have the natives gone so ga-ga over a film as they are now about 'Wind.' Screen adaptation of Margaret Mitchell's novel has patrons in two-block-long ticket lines for each of the thrice-daily shows. This, despite freezing temperature and heavy snowfalls. With changed reserve-seat setup, made after pic's initial test week, gross capacity has been increased close to 50%, which allows for second week's hefty climb over the first.

'Hunchback of Notre Dame' is tugging big biz at the Albee and 'Swanee River' is above par at the Palace. Combo Shubert, with 'Barricade' and the 'Hellzapre' unit, starring Bert Wheeler, likewise is turning in a comfy figure.

**Current Pix; Last Week's Estimates**  
**Albee (RKO)** (3,300; 35-42) — 'Hunchback of Notre Dame' (RKO). Last week, 'Judge Hardy Son' (M-G), good \$13,000.

**Capitol (RKO)** (2,000; 75-\$1-\$1.50) — 'Wind' (M-G) (2d wk). Three-day screenings. Turnaways at every show since pic's second day. Revised reserved-seat plan, put into effect Thursday (28) for start of second week, ups night revenue. Capacity \$32,000 seems certainty. Last week, first, socko \$23,000.

**Family (RKO)** (1,000; 15-25) — 'Phantom Strikes' (Mono) and 'Pasco Basin' (U), split with 'Man Montreal' (U) and 'Buried Alive' (Ind). Last week, 'Laugh Off' (U) and 'Call Messenger' (U), split with 'Blue Grass' (WB) and 'Black Limelight' (Ind), normal \$2,200.

**Keith's (Libson)** (1,500; 35-42) — 'Judge Hardy Son' (M-G). Transferred from Albee for second week. Last week, 'Dr. X' (WB), poor \$3,500.

**Lyric (RKO)** (1,400; 35-42) — 'Destry' (U). Moveover from Palace for second week. Last week, 'South Border' (Rep) and 'Beware Spooks' (Col), dual, fair \$4,000.

**Palace (RKO)** (2,600; 35-42) — 'Swanee River' (20th). Last week, 'Destry' (U), eased off in last half to mild \$9,000.

**Shubert (RKO)** (2,150; 42-60) — 'Barricade' (20th) and 'Hellzapre' unit with Bert Wheeler. Revival of vaudefilms after four weeks of pix. Advance sellout for New Year's Eve midnight performance at advanced scale. Last week, 'Not Alone' (WB) (2d wk), very poor \$3,000.

## 'Balalaika,' Dietrich Riding For High Biz in Portland

Portland, Ore., Jan. 1. Every major spot went over the top in a big way last week, most houses getting 50 to 100% better than the average take.

'Balalaika' is strong at the Broadway. 'Hunchback' is a heavy winner for the Paramount, ditto 'Destry Rides Again' at Parker's U.A. 'Gulliver's Travels' rated a second week at the Liberty.

**Current Pix; Last Week's Estimates**  
**Broadway (Parker)** (2,000; 30-35-40) — 'Balalaika' (M-G) and 'Nick Carter' (U). Getting magnificent biz, possibly 50% above normal takings. Last week, 'Four Wives' (WB) and 'Blue Grass' (WB), strong \$6,000.

**Liberty (Hamrick - Evergreen)** (2,000; 30-35-40) — 'Gulliver' (Par) and 'Neighbors, the Carters' (Par) (2d wk.). Holding up to good results after first week put House way over par with \$5,300.

**Mayfair (Parker-Evergreen)** (1,500; 30-35-40). House went legit over weekend with Katharine Cornell's road unit. Last week, 'Another Thin Man' (M-G) (4th wk.) and 'Bad Angel' (M-G), closed with nice \$2,700.

**Orpheum (Orpheum Co.)** (1,800; 20-30-40) — 'Tropic Fury' (U) with Major Bowes' unit. Bang-up trade, chiefly on the vaude angle. Last week, 'Mickey Kid' (Rep), 'Swing Professor' (Reliance) and vaude, hit a little better than average \$5,200.

**Paramount (Hamrick - Evergreen)** (3,000; 30-35-40) — 'Hunchback' (RKO). Single-billed and over the top for a 50% increase in the b.o. Last week, 'Everything Happens Night' (20th) and 'Dr. Christian' (RKO), scored heavily at around \$6,500.

**United Artists (Parker)** (1,000; 30-35-40) — 'Destry' (U) and 'Call on President' (M-G). Putting this house in the winning bracket. Last week, 'Hardy Son' (M-G) and 'Private Detective' (WB), strong \$6,000.

## 'Swanee,' 'Gulliver' H.O. Both Good in Denver

Denver, Jan. 1. A severe cold snap at the start of the week cut grosses somewhat, but the biz on New Year's weekend is expected to make it up. The New Year's eve shows were practically all sold out.

'Gulliver's Travels' packed them in at the Denham last week and turning a tremendous second week. May be held for a third.

**Current Pix; Last Week's Estimates**  
**Aladdin (Fox)** (1,400; 25-40) — 'Everything Happens Night' (20th), after week at Denver. Will have normal week. Last week, 'House-keeper's Daughter' (UA), after week at Denver, below normal with \$2,500.

**Broadway (Fox)** (1,040; 25-35-40) — 'Hardy and Son' (M-G) and 'Mexican Spitfire' (RKO), following week at Orpheum. Business about average. Last week, 'Another Thin Man' (M-G) and 'Secret Kildare' (M-G), slightly off with \$2,000.

**Denham (Cockrill)** (1,400; 25-35-40) — 'Gulliver' (Par) (2d wk). Tremendous biz and probably will hold for third. Last week, best business of town with \$12,500.

**Denver (Fox)** (2,525; 25-35-40) — 'Swanee River' (20th). Excellent week. Last week, 'Everything Happens Night' (20th), below average \$7,000.

**Orpheum (RKO)** (2,600; 25-35-40) — 'Hunchback' (RKO). Big gross. Last week, 'Hardy Son' (M-G) and 'Mexican Spitfire' (RKO), excellent \$12,000.

**Paramount (Fox)** (2,200; 25-40) — 'Cisco Kid Lady' (20th) and 'Call Messenger' (U). Business above normal. Last week, 'Mutiny Big House' (Mono) and 'Blondie Baby' (Col), below average \$2,500.

**Rialto (Fox)** (878; 25-40) — 'House-keeper's Daughter' (UA), after a week each at Denver and Aladdin, and 'Man Montreal' (U). Expected to gross above normal. Last week, 'Elizabeth Essex' (WB), after a week each at Denver and Aladdin, and 'Smashing Money Ring' (WB), only \$1,400, n. g.

## Harris Bows Out of Michigan; Other Theatre-Exchange Moves

Pittsburgh, Jan. 1. Harris Amusement Co. here is withdrawing from its theatre interests in Michigan and dissolving owning company which operates Family in Detroit. House was started in 1908 by John P. Harris, founder of circuit and father of John H. Harris, its present head. New Family Theatre Co. is being formed by Edgar E. Kirchner, who has managed house for 30 years, and Kantner estate, owners of the building. Kirchner has been an important stockholder for years, so no drastic managerial changes are expected.

Joe Lefko, who recently resigned from RKO sales force here, has acquired European horror twin-bill, 'Return of the Frog' and 'Demon Barber of Fleet Street,' which was recently first-run at the Fulton, for distribution in tri-state area. Jack Cohen out at Monogram, where he's been a salesman.

Two new houses being planned in district for Meadville and Aspinwall. First will be a 500-seater for Dr. H. C. Winslow, who already operates Penn there, and other will be built by Mervis Brothers. It'll be a 600-seater.

They'll go for the Trans-Lux policy downtown but not in the nabes. Harris outfit sadly learned here last week. Encouraged by success of newsreel programs at Palace in heart of Golden Triangle, Harris also converted their Family, East Liberty, fortnight ago, but it was no dice. Flopped out there in quick order, and house few days ago returned again to old double-feature policy.

Strand on South Side, which was destroyed by fire several months ago, has been completely rebuilt, rechristened the Rex and reopened last week. John J. Howley, formerly manager of Harris-Beechview for five years, has been named to manage site. Triangle, East Liberty, sold recently by England Bros. to Abe and Irving Josephs, reopened Xmas day after brief shutdown pending ownership transfer, with William D. Davis staying on as manager.

Committees in charge of testimonial dinner Jan. 29 to C. C. Kallenberg, honoring him on his 20th anniversary with Fox company, will be headed by Al Weiss, David Victor and C. J. Iatta. Harry Kalmine is general chairman, and William Sussman honorary chairman of the affair, which is expected to attract around 800 guests. Guest of honor has been in show biz 30 years, starting as a theatre usher in 1910.

Sam M. Reichblum, owner of chain bearing his name in this district, has appointed Albert Green manager of Columbia, East Liverpool, O. Green piloted that house for seven years until he left in 1937 for a post with another outfit.

Annual Xmas Milk Fund Drive of Variety Club KDKA and Pittsburgh Press was called off this year because of uncertainty regarding state's new Milk Control law, which makes it tough for producers and dairymen to furnish milk below retail price. Campaign may be staged at Easter if ruling is cleared up satisfactorily.

**Wallace Opens Auditorium**  
 Philadelphia, Jan. 1. The Auditorium, Newmannstown, opened under direction of C. W. Wallace.

The Strand, Atlantic City, and the Margate, Margate, N. J., shuttered for the season.

Melvin Koff, Carl Munzer and Helen Konchas have formed Congress Amus. Co. to operate their theatres in Delaware county.

The Rockland, in Logan section, skedded for complete renovation. James A. Flynn, president of the Film Exchange Employees Union, elected business agent, succeeded by William Z. Porter, Monogram.

The Walnut St. which almost unshuttered two weeks ago as a legit with 'Mulatto,' until the cops stepped in, will open Friday (22) with Yiddish pictures.

Warner's has acquired the following theatres from Northeastern Theatres, Inc.: The Lindy, for \$204,219; Northeastern, \$112,636; Earle (South Philly), \$70,939. The Plaza was acquired from the Stanley Co. of America for \$25,882.

Albert Garfield, former manager of the WB Keith's, appointed manager of William Goldman's News, replacing William Matteson, Jr., resigned last week to go into other business.

Rebuilding the Astor (Stanley-Warner Co.), John Ebersson, New York, the architect. Plans call for demolition of present building.

Harry and Oscar Stiefel building in Lewisburg, Pa., to seat 800.

The Palace, formerly the Gem, Cressona, Pa., reopened Xmas Day, under the direction of Charlie Poorman, Pottsville.

The Walnut St. theatre, former legit, unshuttered for Yiddish films under the management of Joseph E. Becker.

Elias Coury, who has taken over the Capitol, Summit Hill, Pa., from

George Alexander, completely remodeling the house.

Harry Thorp and Murray Sternberg are building a new theatre at Woodstown, N. J., replacing the Opera House, recently destroyed by fire. Thorp formerly operated the Lyric, Landisville, N. J. Sternberg is a Vineland, N. J., merchant.

Al Garfield, former manager of Keith's, appointed to take charge of William Goldman's News, replacing William Matteson, Jr., resigned.

Melvin Koff has cancelled plans for a new theatre in Darby, Pa., and will continue operation of the Darby there. Koff's new house, the Spielmont, Marcus Hook, opens this week.

**Toledo Co. Wins Suit**  
 Toledo, Jan. 1.

Rivoli and Palace theatres will continue as tenants of the buildings in St. Clair street in downtown Toledo, owned by the Toledo Theatres & Realty Co., as a result of a federal court decision, made by Judge Frank L. Klobb. Hearing was on an application filed by a group headed by Jack O'Connell, known as the Community Theatres, Inc., which sought to lease the building from the Toledo Theatres & Realty Co., operated under a trusteeship pending action on a reorganization application.

Though the applicants had offered a higher guaranteed rental than the present occupant, the Willard Theatres, Inc., is paying, Judge Klobb ruled that the present rental of \$750 a week, plus percentage of receipts, produced virtually the same amount for the trustees as the proposed guarantee of \$50,000 a year, plus a smaller percentage rate.

Six-story downtown building at Superior and Jefferson streets in Toledo is being razed to make way for a \$75,000 theatre, which will be completed May 1, according to the George B. Crosby Realty Co., owners.

Three operators are negotiating for the house, which will seat 950.

**Theatre Op Fined \$400**  
 Bowling Green, O., Jan. 1.

Clark Young, theatre owner here, has been fined \$400 and costs, after pleading guilty to a charge of selling advertising and promoting a game of chance following a drawing for an automobile at the theatre recently. Mayor Alva W. Bachman, who assessed the fine, also instructed Young to halt his bank night and told to close the theatre if the procedure was attempted in the future.

Clubs and churches also came in for censure from the reform element for permitting gaming of any type, and Wood County has the lid clamped down.

**Ted Gamble Honored**  
 Portland, Ore., Jan. 1.

Ted Gamble, general manager of Parker Theatres in Portland, Astoria and Pendleton, was named Portland's 'Junior First Citizen for 1939.' Honor is handed out by Junior Chamber of Commerce to outstanding young business executive contributing most in public spirit civic causes during the year. Junior distinction belongs to the younger group of business men. Gamble is 33 and has operated Parker Theatres for several years.

**New Aero House**  
 Los Angeles, Jan. 1.

Aero Theatre Corp., subsidiary of Douglas Aircraft Corp., opened the new Aero theatre, 750-seater, in Santa Monica.

Fox-West Coast reopened the Valley in North Hollywood, after overhauling, and the Maywood at Maywood, after reconditioning.

**Seitz Adds in Sandusky**  
 Sandusky, O., Jan. 1.

Seitz Amus. Co. has taken over the 690-seat Plaza here, with the expiration of Warners' lease. WB will continue operation of the 700-seat Ohio. Woodrow Meyer, assistant manager of the Plaza, transferred to Canton, as assistant to manager Bill Harwell, of the Ohio, Warner house there.

**Up UA's H.O. Press Aides**

Three members of United Artists publicity and advertising department upped yesterday (Tuesday) by chief Lynn Farnol. Tom McCabe, assistant in the exploitation department, and Bob Gildersleeve, of the still division, named assistant press book editors. Ned Norwroth, publicity clipping clerk, promoted to feature story writer.

**N. Y. Merit Exchange's New Ops**

Etta Segal, booker, and Jerry Wilson, sales supervisor, for the Merit Exchange, N. Y., have taken over its operation, effective yesterday (Tuesday).

Exchange has been operated for the past year by Harry Thomas, who withdrew several weeks ago to handle New York, Philly and Washington exchange districts for Monogram.

## Inside Stuff—Pictures

New electrical gadget, which enables an exhibitor to register automatically every patron passing the turnstiles, will be marketed shortly by Conrac, Inc., comprising many officers with the present Altec Service Corp. Count is made by persons crossing a beam of light. Device registers only those entering the theatre, not leaving it.

Screen tests in New York, once a popular device of the eastern talent reps of major producers, are currently being held down to a minimum. At one time almost a daily affair, with flocks of potentials facing the lenses, the tests now are almost a rarity. They cost about \$200 each.

Publicity and advertising on 'Magic Bullets,' dealing with the career of Dr. Paul Ehrlich, has been halted by Warners, pending careful scrutiny of all angles. Picture deals with the discovery of a specific against syphilis, a touchy subject.

Reported costing \$75,000, 'Tevya,' produced by Maurice Schwartz, actor-manager, is the most expensive Yiddish film made.



## Philly Blue Law Pushing 'Swanee', 'Destry,' 'Hunchback' to Big Biz

Philadelphia, Jan. 1. With the Sunday blue law ban against liquor pushing Philly New Year's Eve celebrants to film mid-night shows, downtown theatres are set for one of the biggest weeks in years. Good product at virtually every house is also helping to hypo the b.o. to pre-depression era proportions.

Stanley-Warner houses did not up admish prices as in former years, giving their customers a cheap New Year's night out at the 68-cent top.

**Current Pix; Last Week's Estimates**  
**Aldine** (WB) (1,303; 32-42-57-68)—'Raffles' (UA). Opened Wed. (27) and playing to full houses. Last week 'Tower London' (U), got neat \$9,500 in second week after good \$11,600 first sesh.

**Arcadia** (Sablowsky) (600; 32-42-57)—'Another Thin Man' (M-G) (2d run) (2d wk). Held over after neat \$3,500 for opening turn at this indie.

**Boyd** (WB) (2,350; 32-42-57-68)—'Four Wives' (WB). Opened Fri. (29). Last week 'Hardy Son' (M-G) grossed nice \$16,000.

**Earle** (WB) (2,758; 32-42-57-68)—'Destry' (U). Opened Sat. (30). Last week 'Invisible Stripes' (WB), got forte \$14,000 for the first week of the Earle's straight pic policy.

**Fox** (WB) (2,423; 32-42-57-68)—'Swanee River' (20th). Opened Thurs. (8). Last week 'Everything Happens Night' (20th), weak \$13,000.

**Karlton** (WB) (1,066; 32-42-57-68)—'Ninotchka' (M-G) (2d run) (2d wk). Doing its fifth week downtown and still going strong. First week at this house showed neat \$5,800.

**Keith** (WB) (1,870; 32-42-57-68)—'Hardy Son' (M-G) (2d run). Opened Friday (29). Last week 'Remember' (M-G), a weak \$4,000 after equally sour first-run at Aldine.

**Stanley** (WB) (2,916; 32-42-57-68)—'Hunchback' (RKO). Opened Sunday (31). Last week 'Gulliver' (Par), profitable \$18,500 for 10-day run.

**Stanton** (WB) (1,457; 32-42-57)—'Invisible Stripes' (WB) (2d run). Opened Sat. (30) after moveover from Earle. Last week 'Rulers Sea' (Par), fair \$6,500 for nine days.

**Studio** (Goldberg) (398; 32-42-57)—'Harvest' (French). Opened Thursday (28). Last week horror dual of 'Return Frog' (Sel) and 'Demon Barber' (Sel), nice \$2,000 for third round.

## ALL FILMS LOOK STRONG IN B'KLYN

Brooklyn, Jan. 1. Strong New Year's Eve biz in downtown sector, with all houses and restaurants booming. Fabian Paramount and RKO Albee came in with new films Friday (29), while other deluxers held on to previous attractions.

Albee is stressing 'Everything Happens at Night' and 'Flying Deuces'. Paramount has 'Great Victor Herbert' and 'Blondie Brings Up Baby'.

**Current Pix; Last Week's Estimates**  
**Albee** (3,274; 25-35-50)—'Everything Happens Night' (20th) and 'Flying Deuces' (RKO). Came in Friday. Last week, 'That's Wrong' (RKO) and 'Barricade' (20th), okay \$17,000.

**Met** (3,618; 25-35-50)—'Ninotchka' (M-G) and 'Nick Carter Detective' (M-G) (2d wk). Last week, good \$20,000.

**Paramount** (4,126; 25-35-50)—'Great Victor Herbert' (Par) and 'Blondie Baby' (Col). Opened Friday. Last week, 'Elizabeth Essex' (WB) and 'Covered Trailer' (Rep) (2d wk), good \$18,000.

**Fox** (4,089; 25-35-50)—'Not Alone' (WB) and 'Mutiny Big House' (Mono) (2d wk). Last week, good \$19,000.

**Strand** (2,870; 25-35-40)—'Miracle Main St.' (Col) and 'South of the Border' (Rep). Last week, 'Beast Berlin' (PDC) and 'Jeepers Creepers' (Rep), swell \$7,500.

## Montreal Picking Up; 'Hunchback' Looks Best

Montreal, Jan. 1. Grosses are perking up a little from Christmas week. There were shows last night (New Year's Eve) which sold at \$1 at all houses except Loew's \$1.50.

**Current Pix; Last Week's Estimates**  
**Palace** (CT) (2,700; 25-45-55)—'Hunchback' (RKO). Should be five-figure take and easily top town. Last week, 'Not Alone' (WB), fair \$6,000.

**Capitol** (CT) (2,700; 25-45-55)—'Great Victor Herbert' (Par). Last week, 'Dr. Kildare' (M-G) and 'Henry Arizona' (M-G), feeble \$4,500.

**Loew's** (CT) (2,800; 30-40-60)—'First Love' (U) (2d wk). Last week, excellent \$9,000.

**Princess** (CT) (2,300; 25-34-50)—'Everything Happens Night' (20th). Last week, 'Dress Parade' (WB) and

'Covered Trailer' (WB), fair \$3,500.  
**Orpheum** (CT) (1,100; 25-40-50)—'Mice and Men' (UA) (2d wk). Good \$4,000 last week.

**Cinema de Paris** (France-Film) (600; 25-50)—'Les Trois Valses'. Last week, fourth of 'L'Entente Cordiale', weak \$900.

**St. Denis** (France-Film) (2,300; 25-34)—'Orange' and 'Baby'. Last week, 'Mon Pere et mon Papa' and 'L'Et-range Nuit de Noel', poor \$4,000.

## Snow Sloughing L'ville; 'Balalaika,' 'Gulliver' Both OK

Louisville, Jan. 1. Snowfall that descended on this town Saturday (23), and again on Tuesday (27), dealt a terrific sock to grosses all around. It was heaviest snowfall since 1917 and hopes for after-Xmas biz were dashed.

All houses scheduled extra shows for last night, New Year's Eve, and the Rialto brought in a special showing of 'Swanee River'.

There's some stage show activity at Memorial aude, with Raymond Massey in 'Abe Lincoln in Illinois' (1-2), at \$3.30 top. Renfro Valley Barn Dance played National yesterday (Sunday).

Harry Rogers 'Mikado in Swing' played three-day engagement at Columbia (26-27-28) to brutal biz. Show expected some hefty returns from colored trade, but terrible weather and traffic conditions made any kind of b.o. showing out of the question.

**Current Pix; Last Week's Estimates**  
**Brown** (Loew's-Fourth Avenue) (1,000; 15-30-40)—'That's Wrong' (RKO) and 'Dr. Christian' (RKO). This pair had nice stanza at Rialto about three weeks ago, but with present inclement weather outlook is decidedly poor. Last week 'Intermezzo' (UA) and 'Remember' (M-G), weak \$1,400.

**Kentucky** (Switow) (900; 15-25)—'Mr. Smith' (Col) and 'Am Stranger' (20th). Probably light takings. Last week 'Hollywood Cavalcade' (20th) and 'Honeymoon Bali' (Par), felt general Xmas slump, tabbing mild \$1,300.

**Loew's State** (Loew's) (3,100; 15-30-40)—'Balalaika' (M-G) and 'Nick Carter' (M-G). Crackerjack bill and, with extra New Year's shows, should return pleasing gross. Last week 'Raffles' (UA) and 'Call on President' (Col), average \$6,500.

**Mary Anderson** (Libson) (1,000; 15-30-40)—'Four Wives' (WB) (2d wk). While first week's biz held up well, h.o. will be on the light side. Last week, pleasing \$4,000.

**Rialto** (Fourth Avenue) (3,000; 15-30-40)—'Gulliver' (Par) and 'Thoroughbreds' (RKO). A natural for hefty gross. With early morning showings (9 o'clock) on Friday-Saturday, and with special showing of 'Swanee River' (20th) on New Year's Eve, this house should really go to town. Last week 'Everything Happens Night' (Par) and 'Women Have Secrets' (Par), under expectations at \$6,000.

**Strand** (Fourth Avenue) (1,400; 15-30-40)—'Charlie McCarthy' (U) and 'Big Guy' (U) (2d wk). Pulling some nice biz, particularly at matinees. On initial stanza pic surprised everybody with swell \$3,700.

## 'Gulliver' and 'Wives' Lincoln's Fave Dishes

Lincoln, Jan. 1. 'Gulliver' is trodding the local scene in seven league b.o. boots, and will dish up the tastiest gross on the row this week. Pic was opened early to sweep clean of the early biz, to leave room for the weekend pack, which was a smart move.

'Four Wives' is in the money, too, but 'Flying Deuces' is mostly grounded in early returns, and will get the bulk of the take over the holiday.

**Current Pix; Last Week's Estimates**  
**Colonial** (NTI - Noble - Monroe) (750; 10-15)—'Death Rides Range' (Cap) and 'Lady and Mob' (Col). Split with 'Yukon Flight' (Mono) and 'Heroes in Blue' (Mono). Looks fairly good. Last week 'Phantom Stage' (U) and 'Peck's Bad Boy Circus' (RKO) split with 'Rovin' Tumbleweeds' (Rep) and 'State Police' (U), fair, \$705.

**Liberty** (NTI-Noble-Federer) (1,000; 10-25-35)—'Four Wives' (WB). Taking a pretty fair chunk of money. Last week 'Amazing Williams' (Col), rang up all right \$2,500.

**Nebraska** (LTC-Cooper) (1,236; 10-25-40)—'Gulliver' (Par). This is the house stuffer, very fancy. Last week 'Ninotchka' (MG) couldn't

make nights match good mats, so was light at \$3,000.

**Stuart** (LTC-Cooper) (1,900; 10-25-35)—'Flying Deuces' (RKO). So-so. Last week 'Everything at Night' (20th), fair, considering, \$3,300.

**Varsity** (NTI-Noble-Federer) (1,100; 10-20-25)—'Dr. X' (WB) and 'Money to Burn' (Rep). Light prospect. Last week 'Beware Spooks' (Col) and 'She Married a Cop' (Rep), very nice, \$2,600.

## 'SWANEE' LOOKS BEST IN DETROIT

Detroit, Jan. 1. Surprised by the biz boom after the shopping lull, most theatres here are standing pat on their last week's bills. This meant some fancy shuffling around to cash in on New Year's Eve with something beside the holdovers to offer.

Michigan, which did a big week with 'Gulliver's Travels' and 'Secrets of Dr. Kildare', is holding this pair for a second week, but to give an added flash to its midnight show (31) provided a special of 'Victor Herbert' and 'Four Wives', which won't start their regular runs until later.

United Artists came up to same problem with h.o. of 'Judge Hardy and Son', so it tricked up its special show with 'Balalaika', due to follow 'Hardy', and added another 'surprise feature'. Fox was changing bill to bring in 'Swanee River' and 'The Honeymoon's Over', so, to match rival houses midnight shows, it swung in Kay Kyser's 'That's Right, You're Wrong', with 'Swanee' and an hour of dancing on stage for its midnight flash.

With most of the theatres looking to good followups on the first week, Fox probably will get bulk of the business with 'Swanee' and 'Honeymoon's Over'. Michigan should also be well up there again with 'Gulliver'.

**Current Pix; Last Week's Estimates**  
**Adams** (Balaban) (1,700; 30-40)—'Charlie McCarthy' (U) and 'One Hour Live' (U). Should do all right. Last week, nice \$6,500 with 'Tower London' (U) (2d run) and 'Amazing Williams' (Col) (2d run).

**Fox** (Fox-Michigan) (5,000; 30-40-55)—'Swanee River' (20th) and 'Honeymoon's Over' (20th). New bill should lead town. Last week, 'Everything Happens Night' (20th) and 'Charlie McCarthy' (U), after slow start got neat \$14,500.

**Michigan** (United Detroit) (4,000; 30-40-55)—'Gulliver' (Par) and 'Secret Kildare' (M-G) (2d wk). Both held after coping neat \$18,000 during first week.

**Palms - State** (United Detroit) (3,000; 30-40-55)—'Housekeeper's Daughter' (UA) and 'Kid Nightingale' (WB). Given much bally and should have healthy week. Last week, 'Cat Canary' (Par) (2d wk) and 'Dress Parade' (WB), good \$7,000.

**United Artists** (United Detroit) (2,000; 30-40-55)—'Hardy Son' (M-G) (2d wk). Repeating after choice \$9,500 last week.

## 'HUNCHBACK' MAY HIT NEW RECORD IN BALTO

Baltimore, Jan. 1. After a puzzling lull immediately following Xmas, biz took a decided lift here and promises to make up for the slack in rosy fashion. Opening 'Hunchback of Notre Dame' Friday (29), combo Hipp broke all previous records for the day and seems headed for a week's figure that should reach if not top previous high set by first week of 'Snow White'. Also strong opening on same day was 'Balalaika', at Loew's Century, and 'Swanee River', at the New. All houses gave midnight shows New Year's Eve.

**Current Pix; Last Week's Estimates**  
**Century** (Loew's-UA) (3,000; 15-25-40)—'Balalaika' (M-G). Good daytime pacing, but not quite up to scratch on night-time doings. Should turn in pleasing figure for week, which includes extra midnight show. Last week 'Hardy Son' (M-G) attracted pleasant biz at \$12,400, a bit off with rest of town.

**Hippodrome** (Rappaport) (2,205; 15-25-35-40-55-66)—'Hunchback' (RKO) plus vaude. Record opening day and heading to possible all-time high at present scale for house. Last week 'Amazing Mr. Williams' (Col) getting lots of help from Dead End Kids and Schlep-erman p.a., held consistent trade to strong \$13,900.

**Keith's** (Schanberger) (2,460; 15-25-35-40)—'Gulliver' (Par) (2d wk). Strong after highly satisfactory opening round, \$11,000.

**New** (Mechanic) (1,558; 15-25-35-55)—'Swanee River' (20th). Opened well, pointing to bullish week. Last week, second of 'Happens at Night' (20th) added mild \$3,700 to fairish opener at \$4,800.

**Stanley** (WB) (3,250; 15-25-35-40-55)—'Four Wives' (WB) (2d wk). Starting second round Sun. (31) after somewhat disappointing response thus far. Expecting better doings in line with figures reached for previous pix of series.

## 'Wind' Sweeping to Sock Grosses In 2 L.A. Spots After \$6,700 Preem; 'Swanee,' 'Stripes' On Holiday High

### 'WIVES,' KYSER BOTH HOT IN OK MEMPHIS

Memphis, Jan. 1. The Christmas rush is still on. Good holiday business started with the day itself and is continuing into the New Year season.

Current week's attractions all got away to nice starts. Loew's has 'Balalaika', which opened strong on Friday (29) against 'Call a Messenger' at the Strand and an Orpheum combo of Jack Fine's 'Park Avenue Scandals' on stage and 'Charlie Chan in City of Darkness'. Saturday the Warner launched 'Four Wives', while Kay Kyser's 'That's Right, You're Wrong' entered the New Year competition at Malco Palace.

Grosses for the previous week were all up on the strength of holiday patronage.

**Current Pix; Last Week's Estimates**  
**Loew's** (Loew's) (2,600; 10-30-40)—'Balalaika' (M-G). Nelson Eddy drawing well. Last week, 'Judge Hardy' (M-G), \$8,000, sockeroo.

**Warner** (Warner) (2,300; 10-30-40)—'Four Wives' (WB). Arrived Saturday (30). Last week, 'Invisible Stripes' (WB), \$4,700, better than expected.

**Malco Palace** (Lightman) (2,200; 10-30-40)—'That's Wrong' (RKO). Should do all right on Kyser popularity. Last week, 'Gulliver's' (Par), \$7,100, okay.

**Orpheum** (Cullins-Evans) (2,800; 15-40-55)—'Chan Darkness' (20th), with 'Park Avenue Scandals' on stage. Started well for four-day run. Last week, 'King Turf' (UA) and Dave Apollon unit, \$9,200, swell.

**Strand** (Lightman) (1,000; 10-20-30)—'Jeepers Creepers' (Rep), 'Three Sons' (RKO) and 'Legion of Lawless' (RKO), split. Last week, 'Flying Deuces' (RKO), 'Little Accident' (U), 'Call Messenger' (U), split, \$2,300, very good.

## BOSTON HAPPY; 'FOLIES' UNIT BIG B.O.

Boston, Jan. 1. 'Folies Parisienne', the Clifford C. Fischer stage show, is lifting the Keith-Boston to the top rung on the gross ladder this week, with hold-over of 'Gone With the Wind', at Orpheum and State, also running at fast pace. 'Hunchback', in second week at Memorial, is strong, as is 'Victor Herbert' at the Met.

**Current Pix; Last Week's Estimates**  
**Boston** (RKO) (3,200; 40-65)—'Mexican Spitfire' (RKO) and 'Folies Parisienne' on stage. Raking in big coin. New Year's Eve midnight show at \$1.65 scale will help in the final tally. Last week 'Heroes Blue' (Mono) and 'Crashing Through' (Mono), with vaude, four days; and 'Fugitive Large' (Col) and 'Beware Spooks' (Col), with vaude, three days, okay \$10,200.

**Fenway** (M&P) (1,332; 25-35-40-55)—'Gulliver' (Par) and 'Neighbors Carters' (Par) (both continued run from the Met). Taking medium money. Midnight show of 'Remember the Night' (Par) and 'Night of Nights' (WB) at \$1.10 scale. Last week 'Remember' (M-G) and 'Nick Carter' (M-G), double, \$5,000.

**Keith Memorial** (RKO) (2,907; 25-35-40-55)—'Hunchback' (RKO) (2d wk). Going into second week after three days last week, and showing no letdown. Will hit high figure. Also running continuous through midnight New Year's Eve at 75c. Last week 'Destry' (U) and 'Laugh Off' (U) (2d wk-4 days) and 'Hunchback' (RKO) (3 days), dandy \$19,600.

**Metropolitan** (M&P) (4,367; 25-35-40-55)—'Victor Herbert' (Par) and 'Women Have Secrets' (Par). Aiming at average biz, but not exciting. Midnight show at \$1.10 was 'Night of Nights' (WB) and 'Remember Night' (Par). Last week 'Gulliver' (Par) and 'Carters Neighbors' (Par), dual, fair \$15,500.

**Orpheum** (Loew) (2,900; 75-\$1.10-\$1.50)—'Wind' (M-G) (2d wk). Shows no slackening of pace. Looks good for third frame anyway. Initial week boomed to \$37,000, with evening biz solid, matinee trade lighter, but big, and morning takes relatively light.

**Paramount** (M&P) (1,797; 25-35-40-55)—'Gulliver' (Par) and 'Carters Neighbors' (Par) (both continued run). Promising fair tally. 'Night of Nights' (WB) and 'Remember

Los Angeles, Jan. 1.

Fortified by better than average film fare, bulk of the local first-runs are piling up terrific grosses currently, the weekend holiday adding materially to the take. Customary New Year's Eve midnight shows were given in most of the theatres, with some of them pulling a double celebration by holding late shows Saturday, as well as Sunday.

Long-heralded 'Gone With the Wind' premiere at the Carthy Circle (28) drew capacity house at \$5.50, with two-a-day policy going into effect following day. At the United Artists, the Selznick opus started a grind policy (29), and early returns indicate terrific grosses at both houses on the inaugural week.

'Wind' is heading for spectacular grosses, judging from opening business in two houses. The downtown United Artists, with three shows a day, got \$4,480 the first day. The record for the house is \$9,000. The two-day total at the twice-daily Carthy Circle hit \$9,919, topping all previous marks. Thursday's (28) premiere netted \$6,700.

'Gulliver's Travels' is holding over at the Paramount, while 'Hunchback of Notre Dame' is in second stanza at the Pantages and RKO theatres. New Year's week attraction at the State and Chinese is 'Swanee River', while Four Star has 'Of Mice and Men' in second stanza.

**Current Pix; Last Week's Estimates**  
**Carthy Circle** (Fox) (1,518; 75-\$1.50). 'Gone With Wind' (M-G). Garnered better than \$6,000 at opening (28) and complete sellouts were registered in advance for Friday through Monday. Advance topped \$10,000, four times bigger than for any previous film at this house.

**Chinese** (Grauman-F-WC) (2,024; 30-40-55-75)—'Swanee River' (20th) and 'City Chance' (20th), dual. Opened mildly, but the triple holiday indicates substantial take for the stanza. Last week, 'Everything Happens Night' (20th) and '20,000 Men' (20th), just fair \$7,600.

**Downtown** (WB) (1,800; 30-40-55-65)—'Invisible Stripes' (WB) and 'Little Accident' (U). Should hold its own with the downtown attractions. Last week, 'Four Wives' (WB) and 'Smashing Money Ring' (WB) (2d week), neat \$6,800.

**Four Star** (F-WC-UA) (900; 40-55)—'Mice and Men' (UA) (2d wk). Hit excellent \$6,300 on first stanza and should do as good, if not better, on current seven days.

**Hollywood** (WB) (2,756; 30-40-55-65)—'Invisible Stripes' (WB) and 'Little Accident' (U), dual. Holiday trade will help for substantial take. Last week, second, 'Four Wives' (WB) and 'Smashing Money Ring' (WB) (2d week), okay \$5,400.

**Orpheum** (Bdwy.) (2,280; 30-40-55)—'Flight Midnight' (Rep) and vaudeville. Aided by Blackstone (magician) on stage, house hung up best gross in weeks, thanks to New Year's biz. Last week, second runs.

**Pantages** (Pan) (2,812; 30-40-55)—'Hunchback' (RKO) (2d wk). Moved into second week on New Year's Day after big \$21,000 on opener.

**Paramount** (Par) (3,595; 30-40-55)—'Gulliver' (Par) (2d wk) and stage show. Holdover continues to be profitable through heavy juve attendance. First week, nifty \$21,000.

**RKO** (2,872; 30-40-55)—'Hunchback' (RKO) (2d wk). Should add another \$20,000 after first week's big \$22,000.

**State** (Loew-Fox) (2,414; 30-40-55-75)—'Swanee River' (20th) and 'City Chance' (20th), dual. Heavy week-end biz, with advanced prices on New Year's Eve, heading this one to satisfactory returns. Last week, 'Everything Happens Night' (20th) and '20,000 Men' (20th), \$10,500.

**United Artists** (F-WC) (2,100; 75-\$1.50)—'Gone With Wind' (M-G). Started (29), with four shows being scheduled for each day. Last week, 'Hardy and Son' (M-G) and 'Intermezzo' (UA), on moveover, okay \$4,300 on nine-day run.

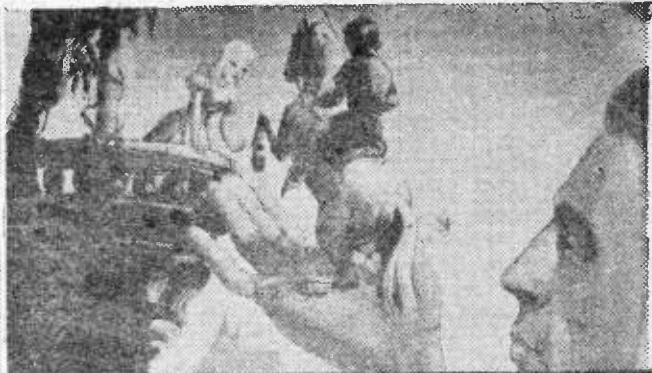
**Wilshire** (F-WC) (2,296; 30-40-55-65)—'Everything Happens Night' (20th) and '20,000 Men' (20th). Doing okay on moveover. Last week, 'Hardy and Son' (M-G) and 'Intermezzo' (UA) \$4,900, good for move-over.

**Night** (Par) for midnight show at \$1.10. Last week 'Remember' (M-G) and 'Nick Carter' (M-G), dual, adequate \$7,300.

**Scollay** (M&P) (2,538; 25-35-40-50)—'Dr. X' (WB) and 'Elizabeth Essex' (WB) (both 2d runs). Looks like hearty combo. Same pix for mid-night show at 55c. Last week 'Rulers Sea' (Par) and 'Dress Parade' (WB) (both 2d run), dual, \$5,500.

**State** (Loew) (3,600; 75-\$1.10-\$1.50)—'Wind' (M-G) (2d wk). Continues strong, but film is too long for a mid-night show. Rang up smash \$30,000 opening week.



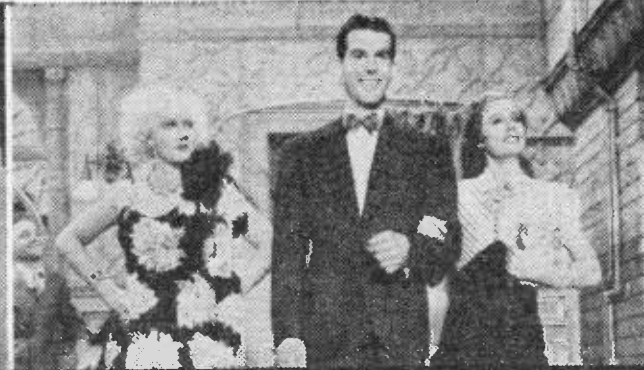
**"THE CAT AND THE CANARY"****"THE GREAT VICTOR HERBERT"****"GULLIVER'S TRAVELS"****"RULERS OF THE SEA"****"DISPUTED PASSAGE"****"JAMAICA INN"****"MAN ABOUT TOWN"**

# CONSISTENT DELIV PRODUCT—PARAMOU

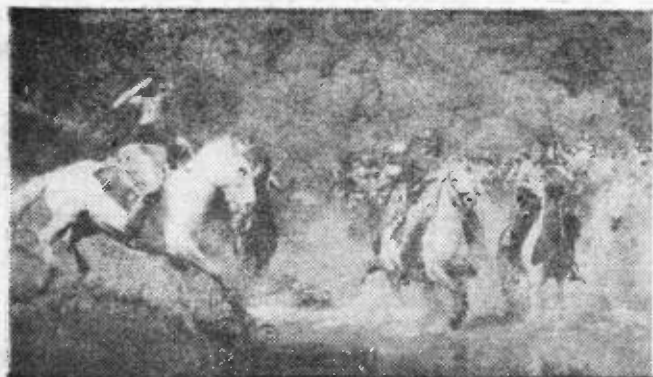
This week, the motion picture industry swings, not only into a new year, but into a new decade. The "Threadbare Thirties" give way, we hope, to what historians will sometime call the "Fortunate Forties." Looking back over the troubled years, which began in the last months of 1929, we can be proud of our industry, justly proud.

To Columbia, Metro, United Artists, Universal, Warner Brothers, 20th Century-Fox and other leading companies, we offer our honest congratulations for the stout-hearted, hard-working way in which they have not only fought tough times with ever stronger, ever finer product, but have made this industry a model to other great American industries in its ability to forge ahead no matter how tough the going. The past ten years are indeed a great testimony to the energy, the will, the genius of the motion picture industry.

And the past ten years, culminating in the gloriously successful year of 1939, are a glorious testimony to the strength of our own company, Paramount. As we face the new year, the new decade, we know that our record is a fine and proud one. For not only has our policy been consistent. We have succeeded in living up to our policy. Week in, week out, month

**"PARIS HONEYMOON"****"WHAT A LIFE"****"INVITATION TO HAPPINESS"**



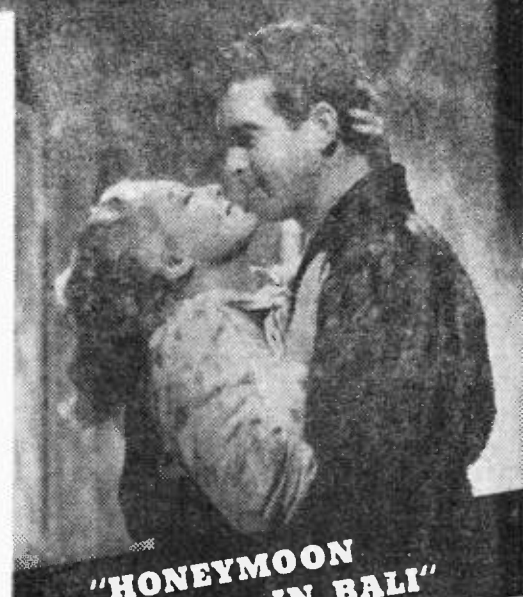
**"GERONIMO!"****"THE LIGHT THAT FAILED"****"REMEMBER THE NIGHT"**

# ERY OF BOX OFFICE NT'S RECORD IN 1939

in, month out, Paramount has continued to deliver a full, rounded quota of superior motion pictures. Believing that our duty is to keep the exhibitors of the nation supplied with the kind of pictures they want, when they want them, we have never shirked that duty.

In 1939 no company in the industry has supplied the exhibitor with more good, sound box office product than Paramount. Of course, we are proud of such great hits as "Union Pacific," "Beau Geste," "Midnight," "The Great Victor Herbert" and the other top successes we have used to illustrate these pages. But prouder still are we of the fact that Paramount has delivered at least two big pictures every month of the year, that no week has gone by in which an exhibitor did not see at least one worthwhile Paramount Picture on his Paramount release schedule.

CONSISTENT DELIVERY OF BOX OFFICE PRODUCT IN 1939, AS FOR YEARS, TOGETHER WITH AN HONEST, REASONABLE SELLING POLICY, WITH AGGRESSIVE NATIONAL PROMOTION, HAS MADE PARAMOUNT PRODUCT THE BACKBONE OF YOUR BUSINESS. IN 1940, FIRST YEAR OF THE NEW DECADE, YOU CAN BE ASSURED OUR POLICY WILL REMAIN THE SAME.

**"HONEYMOON IN BALI"****"BEAU GESTE"****"MIDNIGHT"****"THE STAR MAKER"****"THE BEACHCOMBER"****"UNION PACIFIC"**



"EMERGENCY SQUAD"

"GERONIMO!"

"SANTA FE MARSHAL"

"REMEMBER THE NIGHT"

"PAROLE FIXER"

"THE LIGHT"

"THE FARMER'S DAUGHTER"

"DR. CYCLOPS"  
in Technicolor

"OPENED BY MISTAKE"

"FRENCH WITHOUT TEARS"

"THE BISCUIT EATER"

"WAY OF ALL FLESH"

"THE SHOWDOWN"

"TYPHOON"  
in Technicolor

# IT'S ANOTHER PA



Inaugurating another decade  
with a consistent delivery

"LIGHT OF THE WESTERN STARS"

"BUCK BENNY RIDES AGAIN"

"HIDDEN GOLD"

"SAFARI"

"AT GOOD OLD SIWASH"

"WOMAN FROM"



**"THAT FAILED"**

**"THE SIDEWALKS OF LONDON"**  
A Pommer-Laughton "Mayflower" Production

**"KNIGHTS OF THE RANGE"**

**"SEVENTEEN"**

**"ADVENTURE IN DIAMONDS"**

**"WOMEN WITHOUT NAMES"**

# RAMOUNT YEAR!



**"ROAD TO SINGAPORE"**

**"A NIGHT AT EARL CARROLL'S"**

Cecil B. De Mille's  
**"NORTHWEST MOUNTED POLICE"**  
in Technicolor

**"DOWN WENT MCGINTY"**

**"GOLDEN GLOVES"**

**"NIGHT OF JANUARY 16th"**

de of Paramount progress  
of box office product...

**"HELL"**

**"UNTAMED"** in Technicolor

**"HOLD YOUR HORSES"**

**"COMING 'ROUND THE MOUNTAIN"**



YOUR SEAL OF SUCCESS



# Portrait of a Story Editor

By William James Fadiman

(Eastern Story Editor, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer)

Ask almost any author what a Story Editor is and he'll look at you with that I-studied-under-Professor Baker-at-Yale glance and tell you in no uncertain syllables that he's a guy who knows nothing about stories, could never learn anything about stories, and how did he get the job in the first place? The book publisher files all Story Editors under a mysterious heading in his contracts which reads Subsidiary Rights, hardly a term of profound affection. The film executive says nothing, but if you can read the chained lightning playing about his head, it may be translated as: 'Well, what do you think we're paying you for? Why don't you find some good stories?'

You'll admit this is a pretty confusing picture of a guy who spends the better part of his life digesting the creative efforts of a lot of other guys who spend the better part of their lives writing stories so that the Story Editor can spend the better part of his life . . . and so ad infinitum. Most story editors were born with a phone in either hand, a pair of bi-focal hornrimmed glasses, a vocabulary that would astonish their Sunday School teachers, an ability to play the typewriter with two mangled fingers, and a tired manuscript-beaten face. They usually live in booklined offices decorated with autographed pictures from the authors of 'Black Beauty' or 'Lavender and Old Lace.'

As one of the fraternity, I'd like to tell you what a Story Editor really is. If you can conceive of somebody whose working day may call upon him to be part critic, part espionage agent, part salesman, part linguist, part diplomat, part reader, part writer, part stenographer and still part sane—then you have some idea of a Story Editor. You won't believe it; but then, they said the same thing to the Wright Brothers!

## An Elastic Career

Some of the things that come under the generous heading of Story Editing could form the basis for a new comic strip:

The cousin-in-law of the executive's uncle who has spent 22 years in the African veldt and 'just knows' there's a picture in it somewhere, somehow.

The foreigner who recites his whole play to you in Danish before you can tell him you don't understand the language.

The lady-author who interviews you as if she were on a witness stand and the jury were all men unhappily married.

The Bright Young Thing who writes just like Katharine Brush because her sorority sisters told her so.

The 1,100-page manuscript (sixth carbon copy) that must be read overnight, and the night is only 10 hours long.

The wire from the Coast asking you to trace a book on the plumage of extinct birds in the Pleistocene era.

The out-of-town play opening which looks like a preview of a Chicago abattoir to you, and which is a Broadway smash after you've said it would never come in.

The item in *VARIETY* which says a famous author has written a great novel and which you find is non-existent after wearing out two phones, a used larynx and a dwindling command of the English language.

The dilettante whose book is not for the masses but is willing to give them a break this once.

The pseudonymous author whose identity you try to trace with cables, wires, phone calls, letters and telepathy only to find that you knew him in High School and that he lives at the Astor.

The one manuscript out of 12,000 that you didn't return to its out-of-town sender via registered mail and the author sues you and your company for 88 million dollars.

## Agents

The agent who says: 'I'm telling you this in utter confidence, mind you, just because I like you. Another company which I cannot name is going to buy this tomorrow morning.'

The agent who eats an expensive lunch at your expense and then writes an acknowledgement note to your rival across the street, who makes sure to phone and tell you about it.

The I-majored-in-English-at-Harvard boys who want to bring culture to the films and feel the industry is tottering on the brink of 77B without them.

The boy and girl who suddenly go

into an adagio act before you inform them they are in the wrong office.

The story you've rejected as being unfit for human consumption—which wins the Academy Award that year.

The lady from the censor board who wrote her autobiography at the age of eight and saved it all these years just for you.

The magnificent story which ends abruptly in the middle of page 288 and you learn that the author forgot to tell you it wasn't finished.

## Barfly Scenarists

The man you said 'please pass the canapes' to at the Ritz Bar who calls you by your first name and has a true story of his life as a bootlegger that is stranger than fiction.

The book you've recommended only to discover six months later that you read it five years ago and thought it was terrible.

The authors who submit the same ms. under 12 different titles and think it's funny.

The secretary who writes 'morbid' for 'morsel' and can't see what difference it makes anyway.

The playwright who intones majestically: 'After all, my dear man, what can you do for me that Broadway can't? We'll discuss it further after my play is produced.'

The galley-proofs that are three feet long and fly out the window while you are reading.

The playscript bound in pink tulle with a hand-painted picture of the author on the cover.

The agent who submits a story that was purchased and filmed by your rivals six months ago.

The executive who wants to know immediately the names of the five best sellers in 1903.

The man who knew you in P. S. 63 and wants to meet Joan Crawford.

The 4,654 imitations of 'Gone With the Wind' or 'Rebecca', which wouldn't cost as much to buy and are just as good.

The 'original' stories taken from the Saturday Evening Post which you are supposed to recognize immediately.

The author with the private, unlisted telephone who wants to know where you got his number.

The agent who buys you a lunch and then can't eat for thinking of the expense.

The producer who wants a rags-to-riches story that is absolutely brand new in every respect.

The pins in manuscripts that give you blood poisoning as you turn the pages.

The short-story writer who mails you 79 one-sentence 'ideas.'

## The Severe Critic

The novelist who doesn't like your company's pictures and tells you just why for three and a half hours.

The foreign novel whose rights



**AL GOODMAN**

A Happy New Year  
to All My Friends

you've tracked down half way across the earth to discover that it's in the public domain and could have been used for nothing in the first place.

The publisher who tells you in confidence that his book will win the Pulitzer Prize—and it really does!

The visiting celebrity who discusses every subject under the sun save the outline of his new serial which you can see jutting out of his pocket.

The 'inside story' of Charlie Ross.

The newspaperman who will 'knock off' a story for you in 15 minutes if you only say the word.

The agent who boasts that he never reads the material he submits and proves it every day.

The clown in the elevator who grins and asks you whether you have read any good books lately.

The Vassar daisy-chain graduate who wants to join your staff because you 'meet so many interesting people.'

The important writer who never makes carbon copies and consequently shortens your life by 20 years.

The income tax expert who wants to know what 'entertaining authors' means.

The explorer-author who wants \$600,000 to give you exclusive rights to his unwritten story of Genghis Khan's third wife.

The literary tea where they serve tea.

The guy who wants 10 tickets for 'Information Please' for tomorrow night.

And the exciting, thrilling electric feeling you get as you turn the first page of every manuscript that reaches your desk in the never-dying hope that it will turn out to be a great picture possibility, and that you never lose no matter how many years you're behind the door marked 'Story Editor.'

P. S. Don't get me wrong. I love my work.



**WILLIAM A. SEITER**

Refusing to divulge his number of years as a director, he does admit there were no concrete streets on the Universal lot and the only protection against the elements were the 'diffusers' used on the open platforms called stages.

He returns to his old home lot directing 'It Happened in Kaloha' starring Deanna Durbin in her most pretentious musical to date.

# PASSING OF POVERTY ROW

By Bill Bloecher

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Poverty Row, testing field for motion pictures' future stars, producers and directors, is on its last legs. And will soon find even those makeshift props breaking unless the Guilds and unions compromise on a more equitable scale for this class of production, small indie producers claim. A drop from approximately \$2,500,000 spent yearly on states-right production to less than \$250,000 each 12 months is the sum total of the more than five years campaign by various employe groups to increase member earnings by raising wages. A case of cutting off its own nose, independents assert, through putting the indie class of worker on the same pay basis as major producing companies.

Particularly active during year in drive to prevent wage cuts and maintain its minimum scale was the Society of Motion Picture Film Editors. Drive drew two asserted offenders into the net and resulted in charges and counter-charges during hearing before the State Labor Commission. Climax of the fight between indies and film cutters was recent superior court filing of a suit by a suspended member, containing sensational charges of conspiracy between editors and the major producing companies to force states-righters out of business. Matter failed to come to trial when the society reinstated the member and dismissal of action was signed Dec. 8 by his attorney.

Feeling among Poverty Rowers is that indies have a good case against studios but just when, and how, an anti-trust suit could be entered is problematical. Indies look on clause in agreement between actors and majors, which specifies no producer will be given a deal calling for less than scale paid by big lots as open to question of restraint of trade.

During the year independents have been making moves to reduce wage scales paid various union members, using argument that the Guilds have been their members' worst enemy, in spite of considerable upping in rate. There is no profit in a pay increase when that increase results in far less work in proportion to upping of stipend, indies contend. Many of the producers along the row who turned out from six to 12 pictures yearly at a cost from \$8,000 to \$20,000, figuring on a profit of around 20% from states-right exchanges, are letting someone else take the risk of getting any money back. They figure there's not much money to be made when returns on that \$20,000 feature are still the same, or less, and the same picture now costs from 25 to 35% more to turn out. Point is, indies declare, that under present conditions a worker in this particular field can now be called an idler, in spite of big wage increase if he works, whereas under the old regime a comfortable living was assured by almost steady employment throughout the year at smaller pay rate. These workers rarely if ever find employment on major lots (excepting of course those who advance with experience) and indies hold conditions imposed by Guilds and union hit hardest at their members in this class.

Overtures have been made by indies both to the SMPFE and the Screen Actors Guild for a scale adjustment but any compromise is still very much in the future. Editors are reported to have said they would consider confabs for possible reduction if actors would also look into matter. Guilds' stand makes no bones about their feeling towards independent production, declaring bluntly that indies should increase picture budgets, strive for a bigger market and pay a living scale to workers. Biggest handicap to any compromise is the fact that the majors would have a perfect wedge to start a drive for talking reduction for their workers. Indies come back to Guilds' contention that they should reach for bigger markets with claim that the majors' block-booking methods stymie any effort in that direction, so that they are forced to concentrate on the small nabes and lesser Main street houses for placing of product.

## Negro Pix Best Bet

About the only activity left among the small-budget producer is now in the Negro picture field. Two companies locally, Million Dollar Productions, and producing company making a series for release by Bert Goldberg's distributing setup, have

managed to keep working, turning out features budgeted from around \$13,500. Along the row though, Million Dollar is reported to have run into difficulties on its last effort, story and other troubles sending costs up into the 30G, with things still not whipped. By staying within a definite budget on this Negro product, producers are assured of an easily estimated profit, plus any gravy resulting from special percentage deals in larger spots.

Comeback in independent production being watched closely by Poverty Rowers is second start of Ben N. Judell in the field. Couple years ago, Judell landed on the Coast and formed Progressive Pictures with ambitious plans. Boys in the know along Row called the turn correctly when they pointed out Judell was setting his budgets too high for a thing but a loss on returns. Judell's new company, Producers Pictures, has gotten off to a more auspicious start with one successful release, 'Hitler—Beast of Berlin,' reported to be doing all right around the country. Producer has lined up big slate of features plus three different series of westerns to be filmed at the Prairie street studio erected at Prescott, Ariz. Local production on features is being done at Grand National studio.

Periodic hopes of lining up a nationwide distribution setup for release of independent product, going on for several years, are still only in the big talk stage and present indications are that there they will remain, states-right market being what it is.

## Henkel's Beef

Suit charging conspiracy by majors to throttle indies was filed by David Welts, attorney for Charles V. Henkel, suspended member of the Society of Motion Picture Film Editors. Action named Society and its officers as defendants, asserting Henkel was deprived of his membership without benefit of proper hearing all because cutter refused to join in asserted plot to frame an independent producer on charge of 'wage chiseling.' Henkel's suit stated he was promised steady employment at a major lot if he would go through with alleged plot and threatened with dire action if he refused. Damages of \$126,900 were asked, divided into \$1,900 for loss of work, \$25,000 general and \$100,000 punitive damages. Formal dismissal has been filed following SMPFE proposal to reinstate Henkel and notify producers he was again a member in good standing if action were withdrawn before coming to trial. Henkel asserted in suit that alleged plot against indie was all part of a move to force independents out of production.

Just how indies rallying for better working terms for themselves will end is still vague, but it is a cinch that Poverty-Rowers can't take much more of a beating from what they term 'unreasonable demands' by the Guilds and the country's market for their type of production.

Unless radical changes take place soon, Hollywood stands to lose its best proving ground for new recruits.

Indies still hope for concessions from the Guilds that will allow them to operate at a reasonable margin of profit, a step towards that goal being reached when minor concessions in production of westerns and serials were gained.

# Dismiss Suit Against Walter Reade, Others

N. Y. Supreme Court Justice Philip McCook has dismissed the suit of Henry H. Frieder and Henry and William Grossman against Walter Reade, Reade Hudson Amusements, Inc., Birch Holding Corp. of Hudson, N. Y., R. J. Service Corp. and several individuals for failure to state a cause of action. The plaintiffs were given 20 days to file an amended complaint.

The three plaintiffs claim to have sold 50% in five Hudson, N. Y., theatres to Reade in 1937. The theatres were the Playhouse, Rialto, Star, Park and Community. They allege that they were forced from the management of the theatres, that Reade filed improper income taxes, breached their contracts, etc.

Removal of Reade, appointment of a receiver for the theatres and a general accounting was sought.



## NORTH OF THE BORDER

By Mori Krushen

Montreal, Jan. 1.

Show business across Canada today is another name for N. L. Nathanson (Famous Players-Canadian Corp.). With suave, able J. J. Fitzgibbons, negotiator and trouble-shooter extraordinary, as second in command, Nathanson operates a chain of some 350 picture houses with which are tied in about 150 other theatres under pooling or partnership agreements, and several film exchanges also controlled by N. L.

This is the upper crust of the picture business in the Dominion—the deluxers, the important first runs and the key neighborhood chains—and without pictures there would be no entertainment, except via radio, for the 11,000,000 inhabitants to whom vaudeville has become something of a vague memory. Here, as elsewhere, the legitimate theatre has faded away to a legend, with only the occasional touring company as a reminder that living actors still exist. Once or twice, annually, an English company has a tryout here before going on to the United States. And stock companies last enjoyed a measure of prosperity some 10 years ago.

In addition to his chain of theatres and film exchanges, Nathanson has franchise hookups with Metro, Paramount, 20th Century-Fox, RKO, Warner Bros. and United Artists, which have been selling away from F. P.-Can., may also sell its product to Nathanson in the near future.

Apart from the Nathanson chain there are some 700 independents scattered throughout the country, mostly unorganized, and doing business as best they can. In recent times there has been some sort of a movement on foot in Ontario to organize independent exhibitors and several individual complaints were made at Ottawa anent chain operation. Since those who complained were not backed up by any national organization, they were regarded as nothing more than squealers. No determined effort has been made by independents to establish an organization strong enough to carry weight with distributors.

### Stagnant Showmanship

Totalitarian statesmen might even learn a thing or two from some showmen here. Result is that first runs do not chalk up the grosses they might get if each house had to battle for the maximum of business available.

In Montreal, largest city in the Dominion, exploitation is limited to buying space in the dailies and sending out routine advance notices. Heavy display copy devoted to almost every film, regardless of individual merit or specialized exploitation required, has killed off a great deal of reader interest in that type of advertising.

Montreal is a special problem in film exhibition. Population of more than 1,000,000, is but little over 300,000 for pictures. The 700,000 French-speaking potential audience, though mostly bi-lingual, may listen in to Charlie McCarthy and other radio programs, but only films of a certain type will bring them to the theatres. Musicals and thrillers are surefire for the French audiences. Hence, the popularity of Cagney pictures. 'Gunga Din' was one of the biggest grossers of the year, because of its draw among the French.

Some French-language business has been lost by converting Loew's into a straight picture house. Because Loew's is still a vaudeville house, and the film that draws big at Loew's will do as well and better at the Palace, nothing has been gained in the change of policy. Since all the first runs are under F. P.-Consolidated operation. Vaudeville has been tried at Loew's with varying results. Cheap \$1,500-a-week bills have chased customers away and \$6,000-a-week bills haven't brought quite enough of them in, especially since the tariff was raised at the same time.

Grosses throughout Canada during 1939 were up over the previous year, but so is the seating capacity, with result that if new houses are counted out, net receipts for the others are lower.

War clouds have neither eased the problems nor shaded the favorable aspects of the picture business for 1940. But prospects for the coming year appear to be favorable rather than otherwise.

### Farm Income Up a Lot

Farm income in Canada for 1939, according to statistics given by Norman Vail of Ronalds Advertising Agency, is \$1,065,700,000, or \$45,000-

000 ahead of last year. The prairie wheat crop is one of the biggest in years.

Computing farm value from production and prices of five principal grains the average farmer's purchasing power is \$1.103 or 33% higher than it was in 1938.

This is the highest purchasing power the Canadian farmer has had since 1929 and 50% above the average of the past nine years.

All of which must soon translate itself into action at the boxoffice. And incidentally, it's something for buyers of radio time and newspaper space to shoot at. A lot of this money is already in circulation, showing in improved sales in cities also, since the farmers have received large cash advances on their marketings.

The sudden increase in purchasing power throughout Canada since the outbreak of war is perhaps best exemplified in a composite lineup of 12 lines of business taking in food, clothing and household requirements. These showed a gain of 24% in September over August, and an increase of 12% over September last year.

Dollar volume of nine lines of consumer goods averaged 33% higher this fall than for the same period of 1938. For the farming community it's been the most prosperous season since 1929.

Picture business in general has not been plagued by problems such as price-cutting, gagging, stunting, giveaways and banknote to any great extent during the past year. One of the major problems, especially in the Province of Quebec, has been the rather severe censorship. But some of the recent gangster films

have been okayed and less difficulty is expected on the whole with a new Liberal administration in the Province.

In some parts of Canada where training camps and military bases of any kind have been set up business at picture houses has trebled.

The road company is a success in Canada if it bears the stamp of approval of Broadway critics and New York audiences. Otherwise the hinterland is apathetic. Occasionally an English company does well also. But the Broadway stage click usually draws best in Canada, with the odds in favor of the dramatic rather than the musical production.

French-language legit, for the first time, is trying to establish itself here with a nucleus of local radio performers and a few French importations who are not required for military duty overseas. But it's a thorny path in a town where the natives have never acquired the theatre-going habit common to most metropolitan sectors.

Aside from the picture houses and radio there is less show business in the Canadian metropolis, with a population of more than 1,000,000, than in Hoboken. There's a little more initiative in Toronto.

Radio continues a vigorous factor throughout Canada, despite the fanatical regimentation and vice-like control by the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. Broadcasters remain the only source of talent development here, most Canadian performers having drifted into the U. S. in other years due to lack of encouragement on this side of the border.

### Douglas Draws L-H

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Gordon Douglas gets the director assignment on the next Laurel-Hardy picture on the Hal Roach lot. Shooting starts Jan. 10.

## Exit—2d Letter in the Film Alphabet; B's Become Near-A's

By Bob Moak

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

B-budget pictures, bane of the exhibitor's life in recent years, are due for a real axing before the 1940-41 selling season rolls around. With all major studios readying to reduce their feature output for next season, cheaper product will bear the brunt of the pruning.

Jolted into action by the series of economic upsets that have been dogging their tracks in recent months, the talker makers have been making serious surveys of their celluloid kingdoms. Out of these have come two discoveries that actually startled them. They are:

1. That the majority of their Beehive productions have brought little or no profit, and in some cases have actually run up losses.

2. That the average B picture is a detriment to the industry as a whole because it leaves the ticket-buyers with the feeling they have been gypped.

For years the Hollywood onlooker has been listening to the production lads spout about doing away with dual bill fillers, and has taken their prattle with a grain of salt. But this time they see in it something more than empty conversation.

### Extended Runs Started It

With major production-distribution toppers already united in a campaign to force longer runs on the more expensive features during 1940-41, there is no place left in the set-up for the large number of quickies they've been turning out in the past. Standing guard to make certain the lot chieftains don't renege from their

and Columbia right now are re-vamping their personnel and story-buying methods for the new deal that awaits around the corner. Many an associate producer, director and writer, who has been okay for the small-cost product, but who can't quite make the leap into more important company, will be looking for new employment come February, by which time first of next year's crop of vehicles will be hitting the camera line.

Paramount, whose B division under Harold Hurley, is grinding out 17 pictures this year, will bring total down to between seven and 10 for the next stanza, according to present indications. Departmental heads on the Par lot have been instructed to draft their budget estimates on that basis. Funds saved on the lopped B's will be added to allotments for those retained.

Similar situations exist at 20th and Warners. At Westwood's plant Sol M. Wurtzel is contributing 27 B's and one special for 1939-40, but will do only approximately 13 for 1940-41, the entire crop to carry greater expenditures. Bryan Foy, handling around 20 for Warners in 1939-40, will do half that number next season. Both RKO and Columbia are pruning on B's for this year, with further cuts to be effected before the new slate gets the go signal.

Minimum B budgets for Par, 20th and Warners since July have been around \$130,000. What's spared of program-type product next season will run from \$250,000 to \$350,000. Additional funds will go for better writing and more important players.

### But Dualers Not Doomed

Curtailment of B's by majors, however, does not mean the doom of dualers, because, for every cheapie dropped by the majors there will be an added one from indie producers. Latter today are more enthusiastic over outlook for quickies than they have been in a decade, for, having listened to chatter anent extended runs, they tell themselves, 'It can't be done.' At least it gives them an added talking point in their efforts to round up financial backing, and many a shoestring operator who has been living on 'coffee and' already has turned to steaks on strength of new influx of coin from the gullible.

Officials of both Monogram and Republic see for their companies added outlets immediately the majors check the flow of B's.

beviies of them. They blamed the war-scare, completely ignoring the fact that this product had been planned and announced long before there was serious thought of war—almost a year, in fact, before hostilities reached a critical stage.

Gripes, however, were relatively few. Directors found that they could get desirable effects with 200-people crowds when they had asked for 400—found that the saving in numbers was but part of economies effected. He could, he found, handle 200 with but a fraction of the trouble encountered with twice that number.

Parts were consolidated, simplifying scripts, saving costume costs and salaries. Walls frequently sufficed where once entire rooms were thought necessary—or at least demanded. B-product made increasing use of footage and backgrounds cast off by their A brethren.

Stocks players only recently bemoaning their lack of opportunity suddenly found themselves on call. Freelance bit and part players felt the pinch of their replacement by contract talent already on studio pay-rolls. Loanouts of stellar talent became an every-day occurrence. Players between pictures were induced to make personal appearance tours. Stars became suddenly much more amenable to the demands of their self-styled hard-working lot, immensely more cooperative, more considerate of their employers and the health of the industry which supports them so richly.

For the first time, an industry which had ridden through the 1929 depression on a wave of new-found wealth in talking pictures was jarred out of its complacent feeling that it was royalty. Paradoxically, too, it was achieved by a calamity seemingly remote—the war.

It is doubtful if it will admit it, but the film industry unquestionably has made a nearer approach to what might be termed normalcy than had been widely deemed possible.

## Keeping 'Em Up to Standard—Despite War

By Bill Bloecher

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

A few months ago, with only a whisper of warning, the refrain of 'chop, chop, chop' was wafted through the ('til then) pearly gates of Hollywood.

War had busted into the open in Europe, and the pulsations of its bombarding had set up panic-exciting temblors in faraway Hollywood. Cables hummed, and word was flashed down from the 'home office' to the most obscure straw-boss that drastic action was needed. Foreign revenues had been wiped out in an overnight blackout. Only rigid economies could keep the motion picture business from bogging down in the wake of Europe's pyrotechnical extravaganza.

To the chant of 'lop, lop, lop,' Hollywood leaped to its hastily appointed task. There was not a little glee mixed up in the antics of the most heavily furrowed brows in responding to the call. Many a self-be knighted hireling with a bit of authority pushed himself into a front pew without preamble. 'Cut my staff?—why, certainly!' And, anxious to cut himself a generous slice of favor with his boss, he grabbed the pruning knife and fitted action to his promise.

It was a ruthless business—as ruthless, in a sense, because of its questionable sanity and need, as the red rape of Poland.

Withal, however, it had its markings of merit in the general scheme of cinematic things. For here was a monumental industry tossing millions of dollars about with growing carelessness. It had acquired a habit of talking big; spending big. It had grown to view its success in terms of returns. A hit picture was measured in terms of grosses. Its cost was lost in a maze of boxoffice figures.

Now, for the first time in years, Hollywood went into a closeup of itself and its business. Costs became a factor of vital interest.

### New Defense Line

And so, along with the heedless, panic-incited lopping, came a regimented defense against extravagance. Hollywood, in fact, dug in to establish a new defense line.

The spirit was willing—to reduce—and, according to reliable sources, many important economies were effected. Word went down the line from the front office that a strict accounting would be required for every move. People, important people, were put on their mettle.

A producer no longer felt justified in moving onto a sound stage with a company until he had checked and rechecked his materials. He couldn't afford to take the same chance he

but recently took in stride. His screenplay now had to be completed, for it was argued that a critical budget factor is involved before, not after, a script was given the starting whistle. Further, it was cut to the bone.

Writers were instructed to restrain their impulses to send troupes of actors on world tours. They were given to understand—as were the producers and directors—that they could no longer prop themselves against ultra-expensive sets purely for the edification of eye.

Directors were ordered to shoot the script, not change it, and not to penalize technical patience from prop men to laboratory, by shooting 12 takes where three or four could be made to hit a scene on the nose. Art directors were pressed to employ every possible artifice in providing backgrounds in keeping with the plausible intentions of the drama highlighted against them. Camera-men, sound crews, electricians—all

the way down the line went instructions to hew the 'on-your-toes' order of the day.

### Good Pix Still Being Made

While all this was going on, pictures were being made. Good pictures. Pictures which will doubtless make their marks as good, bad, indifferent and terrific. It is questionable that the public will notice any difference—even if it pauses to remind itself that this or that picture was a 'depression' product.

Pictures announced were blacked out of schedules. But it is doubtful avowed course are the bankers who supply the cash.

Paramount, 20th, Warners, RKO that economy accounted for excesses, if any. Other picture-years had seen plans and product shelved. More pictures were moved back on announced schedules. Again, they were pegged back in after a momentary flurry of indecision. Some product, even, drew increased budgets.

Meanwhile, calamity howlers called attention to 'remakes'—alleged



**GENE AUTRY**

The Singing Western Star for the third straight year has been voted the boxoffice champion, among Cowboy Stars, by the Nation's Exhibitors. Autry will be heard on the Wrigley Doublemint Program every Sunday at 3:30 P. M. (P.S.T.), Starting Jan. 7, over the Columbia Network from Hollywood. He recently completed 'Shooting High' for 20th Century-Fox.



## \$1,739,000 for Scripts

Continued from page 7

copies sold within 18 months, maximum to be \$70,000. This figure would undoubtedly have been reached, but there was a disagreement between the author's agent, Allen Collins, of Curtis Brown, Ltd., and J. Robert Rubin, of Metro, as to exactly what copies were to be counted. Result was the compromise on \$60,000 after Collins threatened to put the book back on the market. Author is Ethel Vance, pseudonym for a w.k. writer who wishes to keep identity secret because of fear of reprisals on relatives in Germany, as the story is anti-Nazi in character. It's the only anti-Nazi property, in fact, that was purchased during the year.

Metro made three other best-seller buys, and purchased another as yet unpublished book, for a total of five, one more than Par. Metro's total outlay was \$143,000, the highest. WB was second with three buys totaling \$120,000. United Artists producers, with four buys; Columbia with three, and 20th-Fox with two, were tied for third on prices paid at \$105,000. Par with its four paid \$100,000.

M-G obtained 'The Yearling,' by Marjorie Kinman Rawlings, at \$30,000; 'Danger Signal,' by Phyllis Botome, at \$20,000, and 'Days Before Lent,' by Hamilton Basso, at \$8,000, in addition to 'Escape.' It also acquired, for \$25,000, 'Brother, Here's a Man,' by Kim Beattie, Canadian army officer. Book will be published by Macmillan in February.

### \$50,000 for 'Passage'

Paramount's top figure was \$50,000 for 'Disputed Passage,' by Lloyd Douglas. It also recently purchased 'Miss Susie Slagle's,' by Augusta Tucker, for \$20,000, and early in the year gave \$5,000 for 'The Honorable Uncle Lancelot,' by Ethel Hueston. It was also the only studio to delve into the non-fiction best-seller list, buying 'Country Lawyer,' by Bellamy Partridge, for \$25,000. Latter is a compilation of true cases handled by a small-town attorney. It has consistently been No. 1 non-fiction best-seller almost since publication in August.

Columbia paid the third largest figure of the year, \$55,000, for 'Tree of Liberty,' by Elizabeth Page. Another whopper was \$35,000 for a Saturday Evening Post serial, 'Arizona,' which hasn't yet been published as a book. It's by Clarence Buddington Kelland. Col. started on 'Arizona' (Wesley Ruggles production) but abandoned it for the time being. 'Rummelhearts of Rampler Avenue,' by Maude Smith Delevan, cost \$15,000.

Warners paid \$35,000 each for 'Capt. Horatio Hornblower,' by C. S. Forester, and 'We Are Not Alone,' by James Hilton. Latter film is currently in release with Paul Muni starring. Best-seller earlier in the year, 'All This and Heaven Too,' by Rachel Field, brought \$50,000.

Fox's two acquisitions were 'Children of God,' by Vardis Fisher, \$35,000, and 'Grapes of Wrath,' Book buys by indie producers were all for United Artists release. They are 'Rebecca,' by Daphne du Maurier, purchased by David O. Selznick for \$50,000; 'My Son, My Son,' by Howard Springer, now almost completely filmed by Edward Small and bought for \$25,000; 'Dynasty of Death,' by Taylor Caldwell, owned by Walter Wanger, \$15,000; and 'Passport for a Girl,' by Mary Borden, purchased by Alexander Korda, \$15,000.

RKO made a single purchase at the year's end, 'Kitty Foyle,' by Christopher Morley, and paid the very neat price of \$50,000 for it. There was considerable interest in this by both Par and Metro, but RKO topped their bids.

'Gone With the Wind,' by Margaret Mitchell, which was just released as a film, was purchased by Selznick for \$52,000 back in 1937, from the galley proofs, but continued on the best-selling list through almost all of the past year. Picture has spurred the book sales again.

### Demand 'Dinner'

Of the unusual legiters, 'The Man Who Came to Dinner,' is perhaps in the greatest demand. Holding up its sale is the fact that George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart, the authors, are in no way anxious. In the first place, it has no particular timeliness, hence they feel it will be as good next year as now. In addition, the lengthy run it is assured on Broadway must add to the price they can get. They figure also on big returns from the

two road companies. The road income would either be pinched off by a film release or the picture would have to be shelved by the producer until the legit version had petered out.

One of the things, in fact, holding up all purchases of legiters is the unwillingness of authors and producers to have a film version come out before the complete potentialities of the legit have been exhausted. Hit plays are offered Hollywood generally on the condition that releases are deferred. Studios are naturally unwilling to tie up coin for that length of time.

With the drive of Mayor LaGuardia, of New York, to bring picture production east, everyone is giving thought to turning out pix in Manhattan, which is another thing said to be adding to the Kaufman-Hart reticence to unload their property. Pair has a year to produce it themselves in a New York studio. Hollywood is not taking that too seriously, however.

### 'Foxes' \$100,000 Price Tag

'The Little Foxes' is not only being held from filmization by the approximately \$100,000 price tag being mentioned in connection with it, but, by a general understanding in the industry that producer Sam Goldwyn has the inside track. Miss Hellman was long with Goldwyn, adapted her 'Children's Hour' for him and has a loose sort of contract with him to do any scripting she wants.

'Life with Father' is another which is being delayed by price difficulties. However, not so much so, in view of its present Broadway b.o. status, that a sale can't be expected shortly. Hal Roach has been eying it, it is known, as a vehicle for Roland Young.

In a category all its own is 'The Philadelphia Story,' the film rights to which are owned by its star, Katharine Hepburn. She paid author Philip Barry \$30,000, plus a royalty arrangement, for the rights, and is said to be asking various figures between \$150,000 and \$250,000. Price, however, includes Miss Hepburn's appearance in the film, it being understood that she has no desire to sell unless she is guaranteed the lead. Metro has at various times been reported as having the rights, but vehemently denies it. This is another one, too, on which the owner of the filmization privilege has talked of producing in New York on her own.

Although producers are anxious to get these accepted properties, they think twice or thrice before laying down any \$100,000 sums, even if they can obtain rights to film the picture at once. In these times of restricted markets, studios must be certain the b.o. success of the completed film will be commensurate with the hurdle toward profit put in its way before production even starts.

Despite the prices, however, sale of at least several more of the top Broadway plays may be expected

within the next few months. Every film company is anxious to have 'prestige' pieces on its schedule for the ensuing season when it gathers its personnel together each spring for the annual sales meeting. Programs are announced with attendant fanfare, and no film company wants to lose the opportunity for glory—with the resultant will to sell instilled in the salesmen—of an announcement of a big legit hit. The same thing may be said of best-selling novels.

### Even Spicy Stuff

Of the other hits on Broadway, 'DuBarry Was a Lady' is not only much too risqué in manner of treatment, but basically on a theme that makes it too vulnerable for a Haysian nix. Nevertheless, a buy isn't inconceivable, as even 'Tobacco Road' is on the verge of being purchased, it is said. Six years of Broadway and road success is figured as just too much to resist, although a high price is being asked, and complete rewriting to escape any Hays ban must be undertaken.

Of the three Warner-backed plays currently on Broadway, two are still for sale. Under the film company's agreement with George Abbott, who produced two of them, and Sidney Kingsley, who produced the third, they must all be offered on the open market with WB bidding against other studios. That's how Metro got 'World We Make.' Still for sale are 'Too Many Girls,' musical grosser, second in take only to 'DuBarry,' and 'See My Lawyer,' in which Milton Berle is top-billed. Two other Warner-backed ventures, incidentally, were quick flops, while a third looks doubtful. Failures were 'Ring Two,' turned out by Abbott, and 'The Woman Brown,' of which Margaret Hewes was nominal producer. 'The Unconquered,' which Abbott opened and closed in Baltimore last week, has a questionable—if any—future.

## ROXY WOULD PUNISH N. Y. TAX COMMISSION

Application to punish the N. Y. Tax Commission for contempt has been made to the N. Y. supreme court by the Roxy Theatre Corp. The theatre is seeking a reduction in 1939-40 taxes from \$4,100,000 to \$3,125,000.

On October 13 Justice Julius Miller ordered the commission to defend its assessment. A hearing was set for Nov. 6, but the commission failed to answer the writ of certiorari.

### Lazfox's Encore Suit

Lazfox, Inc., has applied to the N. Y. supreme court for leave to file an amended bill of complaint against Skouras Theatres Corp., Fox Metropolitan Playhouses, Inc., and Fox Theatres Corp. The original action sought \$100,000 for the alleged breach of a candy concession agreement in Fox Metropolitan's theatres.

The plaintiff had been found guilty of contempt of court almost a year ago. This decree was vacated by Justice William T. Collins, and the attempt is now being made to continue the action.

## Goldwyn

Continued from page 9

three separate contracts with each producer involved. First are the distribution pacts by which each producer commits himself to make films for UA, and UA in turn promises proper release of them. Second are the 'guarantee contracts,' by which each producer promises that he won't 'directly or indirectly, through subsidiaries or by any other means, produce or be interested in production or distribution of pictures other than those delivered to United Artists.' Third pacts are 'inducement contracts,' by which each producer is assured of terms as favorable as those of any other producer and by which UA agrees not to amend or waive any parts of any producer's contract without written consent of the other partners.

Goldwyn in his complaint, filed in N. Y. federal court last March and moved to Delaware the following month, as UA is a Delaware corporation, declared that by a resolution of the five owner-members last January Korda was authorized and permitted to form another company whose pictures might be accepted for UA release just as though they had been made by the Korda company with whom the original UA contract had been signed. London Film Productions, Ltd. Goldwyn claims that this was followed by discontinuance by London Films of production and delivery of pictures for UA's release, and UA acquiesced in this.

Goldwyn further complained that Korda, in December, 1938, distributed pictures in Spain which were made by London Films and should have been distributed by UA. In addition, Goldwyn's brief stated, in January, 1938, Korda organized with other people an English corporation known as Omnia Films, Ltd., which was engaged in distribution of films. He also alleged that in August, 1938, Korda was associated with Harefield Productions, Ltd., the English subsidiary of Columbia, in production of pix not for UA distribution.

### Goldwyn's Theory

As for Fairbanks, Goldwyn claimed that a resolution similar to that pertaining to Korda was passed by the stockholders in January.

These acts, Goldwyn said, breached or modified the distribution and guarantee contracts of Korda and Fairbanks, which, in turn, violated terms of Goldwyn's inducement contract. Therefore he asked for a declaratory judgment by the court that in view of these breaches his distribution and guarantee contracts were also terminated. He also asked for an accounting.

Judge Nields, for convenience in his opinion, considered only the case of Korda, forgetting Fairbanks. He said that he couldn't decide whether UA had breached its inducement contract with Goldwyn without first deciding whether the Korda contract was 'amended as charged and breach in respect charged.' This, he said, affects the interest of Korda even though the decree of the court should not run against him.

In making a decision, the judge stated, he would be affecting the rights of an absent party without according him his day in court and would be prejudicial to the interests of Korda in any subsequent litigation which might ensue.

Opinion is based on a U. S. Supreme Court decision holding 'that where it is necessary to construe a contract to enable a court to grant the relief sought, the court cannot construe such a contract in the absence of a party thereto.'

Judge Nields concludes that a decision in this case would precipitate more controversy instead of making an end to it. The opinion was on a motion entered last June by O'Brien, Driscoll & Raftery, UA attorneys, to dismiss the complaint because of failure of Goldwyn to name Korda, London Films, Fairbanks and the Elton Corp. as defendants, inasmuch as they are 'indispensable parties.'

## A James Boy Returns

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Jesse James' body lies-a-mouldering at 20th-Fox but his soul goes marching on in 'The Return of Frank James,' which Sam Hellman is writing for Darryl Zanuck.

Henry Fonda gets the title role.

### COOL TO CAPONE YARN

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

All studios are being offered a yarn about Al Capone. It is labeled 'Mr. Big Comes Home' and deals with the gangster's life after release from prison.

There have been no nibbles.

## ITOA'S MASS MEET IN N.Y. TO BATTLE NEELY

The Independent Theatre Owners Asso. is holding a mass meeting at the Hotel Astor, N. Y., today (Wednesday) as an open forum to discuss the Neely bill in all its various phases. Harry Brandt, president of the organization, has sent out invitations asking recipients to come and also bring others from their organizations as well as 'vendors.'

The meeting will not involve any solicitation of funds, the session simply going into a frank discussion on the Neely legislation. Bill, going through the Senate last year, is scheduled to come up before the House early this year if emerging from committee.

Brandt is personally opposed to the Neely bill and is attempting to rally support against it. He assails it as 'ruinous' and, on a recent tour throughout the country, attacked the proposed legislation.

## A Literati Puzzler

By P. W. TELL

Wide divergence between prices paid for film rights to stage plays and that for published stories is something that has always been beyond the ken of prose writers and publishers. They can't reconcile a price of \$225,000 for the stage play, 'Room Service,' and a reputed \$52,000 for the novel, 'Gone With the Wind.' Nor does Hollywood itself furnish an answer satisfactory to those who trade in prose.

The film value of a hit show is considerably enhanced because the stage work garners much more publicity than a best-selling book is the general explanation by the pix people for the big price difference. This is scoffed at by the prose gentry, who say Hollywood has one eye fixed rigidly on its own community and the other on New York, and so fails to see what's in between.

They admit that a hit show makes a wide contact in the cultural and entertainment activity of New York. It's much written about and much talked about in the metropolis, and attracts audiences in impressive number.

But a hit show, they claim, doesn't begin to take on the proportions of a pronouncedly best-selling book. A differing point—and one of vast importance—is that a best-seller reaches a nationwide audience. It penetrates the veriest hamlet, and is as fully absorbed and discussed in a backwoods community as it is in the big city.

### Widespread Audience

Best-sellers, it is added, are read by literally millions of persons. A book's sales figure is only partly an indication of its reading public. So-called duplicate reading is enormous. Innumerable circulating libraries loan out a single copy of a book again and again, and private owners of books also loan out their copies repeatedly.

Book publishers have mentioned a reading public of up to 10,000,000 persons for a single sensational best-seller. The actual number of readers of a pronounced best-seller can never be fully known, but even seemingly fantastic figures are within the realm of possibility.

If new stage pieces get localized reviews, new books get reviews in hundreds of papers from coast to coast. Still other space is given to news of books, and authors—particularly those of best-sellers—are sufficiently in demand as lecturers to troupe the country month after month if they are so minded. Many are so minded, and their book successes form no small part of their talks, which are generally before audiences of respectful numbers.

Literary discussion groups, of which there are a great number, invariably take for their subjects the leading contemporary books, and ministers in thousands of pulpits often find in books ready subjects for sermons.

The bush-beaters for prose wistfully express the hope that the pix people look about the country at large to determine just what possible film material gets the most publicity. After all, they add, pictures themselves go to the country at large.

## Autry's New Director

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Frank MacDonald signed a deal to direct future Gene Autry westerns at Republic under the producer supervision of William Berke.

First picture under the new contract is 'Rancho Grande,' due to roll about Feb. 1.

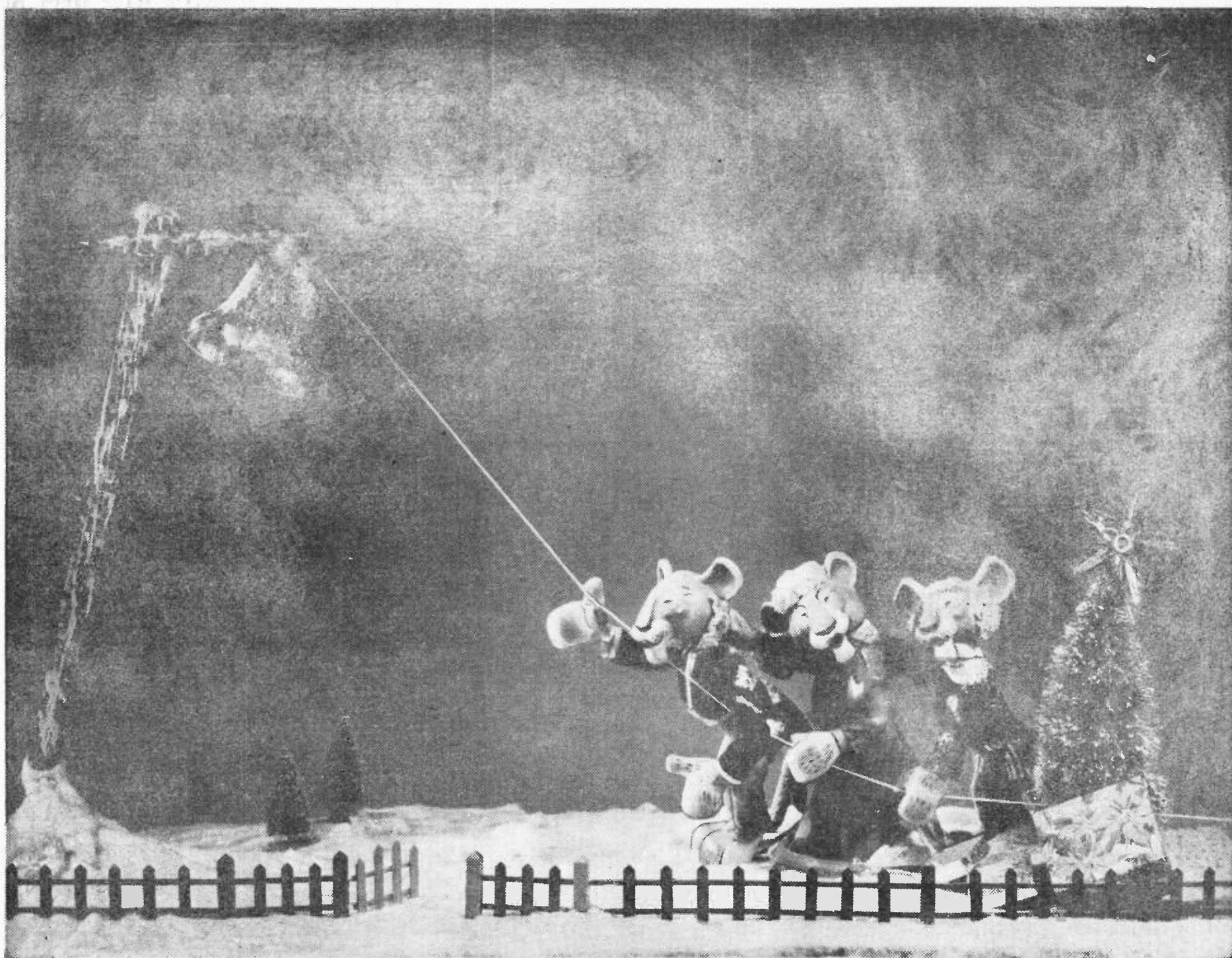


MICHAEL BARTLETT

Season's Greetings

Radio, Pictures, Musical Comedy, Concert, Opera





*"From our family to yours, happy holiday, good cheer all year!"*

# FRIENDLY 1940!

All the folks of Loew's, Inc., Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures and Radio Station WHN take this opportunity to send heartfelt seasonal greetings to friends the world over.



To "The Women"  
To "Thunder Afloat"  
To "Babes in Arms"  
To "Another Thin Man"  
To "Ninotchka"  
To "Judge Hardy & Son"  
To "Balalaika"



# HATS OFF!

It's really a great achievement and we're proud of it. Above are just a few out of the remarkable parade of hits delivered by M-G-M in the first few months of the 1939-40 season. The pace is terrific! Can M-G-M keep it up? Look!





# BEAT THE DRUM

## See what's coming!

BALALAIKA starring Nelson Eddy with Ilona Massey. THE EARL OF CHICAGO starring Robert Montgomery with Edward Arnold. CONGO MAISIE with Ann Sothorn and John Carroll. THE SHOP AROUND THE CORNER starring Margaret Sullavan and James Stewart with Frank Morgan. BROADWAY MELODY OF 1940 starring Fred Astaire and Eleanor Powell with George Murphy and Frank Morgan. NORTHWEST PASSAGE (in Technicolor) starring Spencer Tracy with Robert Young, Walter Brennan. STRANGE CARGO starring Clark Gable and Joan Crawford. I TAKE THIS WOMAN starring Spencer Tracy and Hedy Lamarr. NEW MOON starring Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy. YOUNG TOM EDISON starring Mickey Rooney with Fay Bainter, Virginia Weidler and George Bancroft. 40 LITTLE MOTHERS starring Eddie Cantor. SUSAN AND GOD starring Greer Garson and Fredric March. EDISON THE MAN starring Spencer Tracy. GO WEST with the Marx Bros. I LOVE YOU AGAIN starring William Powell. WATERLOO BRIDGE starring Vivien Leigh. THE YEARLING starring Spencer Tracy. START THE MUSIC starring Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland with June Preisser, Douglas McPhail. RUINED CITY... BITTERSWEET... I HAD A COMRADE starring Robert Montgomery. CHOPIN starring Robert Donat. TWENTY MULE TEAM starring Wallace Beery. NEW TARZAN with Johnny Weissmuller, Maureen O'Sullivan. BOOM TOWN starring Clark Gable and Spencer Tracy. A NEW THIN MAN starring William Powell and Myrna Loy. TONIGHT AT 8:30 starring Norma Shearer. SMILIN' THROUGH starring Jeanette MacDonald. HELL CATS starring Robert Taylor. ESCAPE... I MARRIED AN ANGEL starring Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy.

**THE FRIENDLY COMPANY!**



# Greater Distribution Co-op With Hollywood Production

By Jack Edwards

Hollywood, Jan. 1. Distribution end of pictures has benefited materially during past year or two by production recognition of need for greater cooperation with this all-important phase of the industry. For first time in many years, distribution may be said to have more open leeway in negotiating exhibitor deals than has ever been accorded it.

Production, realizing need for improvement in its relations with distribution, paved the way by bringing in during recent years several high-powered theatre operators, who by virtue of their experience, are considered better qualified to work in harmony with distribution than would be the ordinary run of studio personnel.

At least several of the major companies can attribute much of their current strongly fortified position to introduction of new blood prominently familiar with the problems of distribution and exhibition. Paramount has made rapid strides in this direction since its elevation to studio chieftain of Y. Frank Freeman, for years in charge of the farflung Paramount theatre circuit, and well versed in the problems annually besetting both distributor and producer.

Universal, under the guidance of two recognized top theatre showmen—Nate Blumberg as president and Cliff Work as general production head—has forged rapidly to the front ranks of production and distribution, especially during 1939. Blumberg and Work are both veterans of the exhibition field, and as such have been always more or less familiar with the ills of distribution.

Gradwell Sears, at the head of Warner Bros. distribution, has been granted more power in recent months than has been the lot of the ordinary sales manager, with the result that this company has worked out number of revolutionary practices, all or most of which are expected to prove a greater incentive in amicable relations between the distribution and exhibition phases of the industry.

In the selection of Herman Wobber as head of its world-wide distribution, 20th-Fox, it is generally conceded, took a far-reaching step forward. Wobber has long been identified with distribution, having for many years been with Paramount prior to his going over to the 20th-Fox organization. Free rein given him by his superiors in handling the intricate details of distribution may well be said to be largely responsible for enviable position that company today holds in the field.

No radical departures in producer-distributor cooperation have been effected at Metro, but here, also, importance of unhampered circulation of output has long been realized. In consequence, sales chiefs have been given added authority until today few problems come up that are not completely handled by Al Lichtman and his co-workers, headed by William F. Rodgers, head of Metro sales.

## Exhibits Dig Say on Films

More and more are the various production organizations taking leading exhibitors into their confidence, conferring with them from time to time on production matters and more and more leaning to the showmanship angle in completed output. More exhibitors, from various parts of the country, visited the Hollywood studios during the 1939 period than in any previous year, and as result of these visits production heads have been enabled to get a pretty good idea and cross-section of public wants and opinion. Studios are making little secret that these exhibitor opinions are deeply valued, and in consequence problems of the distribution forces are virtually overcome in the finished product.

Distribution during the past 12 months came in for its share of Government attention. Numerous new anti-trust suits have been filed in various localities, most of which are still pending in the courts. As a result of exhibitor agitation some reforms already have been worked out and others are in the offing. Greater cancellation privileges, allowed by several of the majors, regardless of the outcome of the ill-fated industry reform code, have gone a long way towards increasing distributor-exhibitor relations, and production has

done its share in helping bring about these harmonious ends.

That considerable remains to be done before totally harmonious dealings will be possible between distribution and exhibition is generally admitted. But 1939 will go down as the year when vast achievements were accomplished and the year will long be referred to as marking a decisive turning point in exhibitor-distributor relations.

What the new year will bring forth in distribution channels is problematical. Much of the current season (1939-40) has gone by and ambitious plans are already under way by virtually all companies for the new season of 1940-41. Whether it will witness further improvements in producer-distributor relations, and likewise improved distributor-exhibitor dealings, is pure conjecture. Most everybody within the industry holds hope for better and far-reaching developments, and the Hollywood studio personnel may be expected to do its share in bringing about such a condition.

## PINBALL CRIMELET

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

First pictorial echo of the recent vote against pinball games in Los Angeles is heard in Culver City, where Metro is filming 'Jackpot,' an expose of the racket as a Crime Does Not Pay feature.

Roy Rowland is directing.

# Peace Over Pic Percenters

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

A more settled 1940 is expected by Hollywood agents after a rather bombastic 1939. Featuring the past year was final signaturing of the Screen Actors Guild franchising agreement, formally accepted by the Artists Managers Guild and associate members at a meeting Oct. 30. Acceptance brought to an end the drive by actors to bring reforms in the representation business, lasting close to two years. Of equal importance to percenters was an average dropoff in business of approximately 20%, resulting in heavy slashing of personnel and other retrenchment moves to balance the budget.

Now that dickering back and forth with the SAG is over, agents are more likely to settle down in 1940 and give closer attention to making ends meet with a profit. Latter is a word that will be well-hidden around the corner if studio production schedules are any indication. Studios themselves are faced with the problem of meeting lessening grosses and the most likely reflection will be still further close-watching of costs to meet budgets.

Fine hand of the State Labor Commission played a big part in final terms of the SAG-AMG franchise deal, but without stepping from behind the scenes. Final analysis shows SLC lost little of its supervision over percenters, except in case of arbitrating disputes between agents and clients. On this particular point, State body still retains the privilege of sitting in on sessions to keep an eye on its own interests, as well as parties involved. Arbitration has long been a headache to Labor Bureau, handicapped as it is by a small staff and numerous employment problems to adjust, and reverting of such power to SAG through State legislation takes a big burden off hands of Leo L. Schauer, attorney-deputy for Commission, who previously heard the disputes.

Schaumer figured in on terms of agreement by suggesting numerous changes which will work to the advantage of both actors and agents. One important change was that an agent will continue to be responsible for any liabilities to a client incurred prior to surrendering his franchise license. Under clause as drawn by SAG, a percenter could wipe out any liability to a client by the mere giving up of his license. Another matter was the assigning of managerial pacts from one agent to another, clause as first drawn allowing this to take place at any time in the future by stipulation inserted in pact at time actor signed with agent. Clarification by Schaumer now calls for client's okay at actual time of assignment.

Another clarification also gives an actor the right to claim all exemp-

# THEATRE MAN BEEFS TO FCC ON TUMS

Detroit, Jan. 1.

With Tuesday night biz nipped by customers staying home to listen to giveaway programs, theatre managers are biting back.

Formal complaint was lodged here by Thomas McGuire, public relations director for the Co-Operative Theatres of Michigan. He filed charge with Federal Communications Commission that Horace Heidt's 'Pot of Gold' (Tums) radio program, a new headache for pic houses, was violating the lottery laws. He asked that action be taken under Section 316 of the Communications Acts.

He also asked that an injunction be issued to keep program off the air while the hearing is pending on his petition.

That customers are staying home on chance of collecting big cash award is reflected in from 10-40% estimates on falling off on biz in smaller theatres here.

Kind of proposals have been made including one that co-ops build together and find out what it would cost for insurance on payoff in case a customer in one of their houses gets the call for the big money. Other suggestion is that the boys kick in with a bigger kitty, plug it and boast that they will double the payoff if one of their patrons gets the call from Heidt.

# THE UNIONS

A strike maneuver, in which it was sought to put the distributors in the middle by getting them to shut off film service to theatres that were not in the American Federation of Labor column and further moves with a view to solidifying the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees in the whole amusement field, highlighted developments during 1939 so far as labor unions in distribution and theatres were concerned. [The Hollywood phase was something else again, and is covered in detail in a separate story from the Coast.]

Although proving somewhat abortive, except that an armistice brought with it increases to boothmen in home office and exchange screening rooms in New York, the operators' offensive against the distributors had the industry in the danger zone for several weeks. Unable to oust the independent operators union, Empire, from around 75 theatres in the New York area after years of struggle, the AFL local, No. 306, notified the distributors that they could no longer continue to serve these 'non-union' houses.

The distributors, having their contracts to live up to, refused to do this and Local 306 threw picket lines around the exchanges, with result the Exchange Workers Union, No. 52-B, walked out. Branches were badly crippled for weeks in the handling of film while the so-called 'back-room help' was out and momentarily the threat existed that the ops would also go out of the theatres.

## Dept. of Justice Steps In

Before the Department of Justice stepped in, it was feared the IATSE would not only call out the operators in New York but throughout the country and also get the exchange employees to walk in all the key centers out of which distributors serve their accounts. For a time anxiety was also felt concerning any effort the IA might make to also walk its members in every field in which producer-distributors figured, including studios, on the ground that union-made pictures were going first into so-called 'non-union' houses. This might have come only for the intervention of the D. of J. which ruled the New York strike was along illegal, dangerous lines.

On one occasion a few years ago, the IATSE had suddenly pulled operators out of theatres in Chicago and other midwestern keys as a means of forcing a wedge in connection with studio negotiations under the so-called five-year basic agreement. The result was conclusive and quick in that case. No doubt this coup and its effectiveness served as a pattern for the operator offensive against distributors.

Empire continues to exist, having theatres that are mostly located in Brooklyn, and while there have been fresh overtures toward a merger or absorption by Local 306, the situation appears to remain the same. However, recently the State Labor Relations Board dismissed a complaint brought by two Empire operators who had been discharged by a New York theatre and the booth turned over to 306 men. This might serve as a precedent where the operator of the Empire-manned house wants to turn to 306.

## CIO's Minor Attempts

The CIO has made only cursory moves to try to creep into the picture, but a few months ago an organization claiming CIO affiliation and promising to provide not only operators but stagehands appeared on the horizon. Known as United Theatrical and Motion Picture Service Employees Union, its ambitions are nationwide but doubted that it can go up against the IATSE the way this union now is entrenched.

Minor CIO attempts to chisel into IA territory has concerned candy butchers in theatres, still photographers, home office clerical help, etc. No headway has been made.

Although it has been working for several years now on the organization of managers, theatre publicity representatives, cashiers, ushers, doormen, etc., the IA has made only sketchy progress in this direction. Action may be expected, however, before another year rolls by, with the IA having quietly lined up a lot of members in the various theatre crafts under organization, so that when the time comes to pitch its battle, a strike could be of more than ordinary effect.

The IA and the Theatrical Mana-

gers. Agents & Treasurers are not together, so far as jurisdiction of help is concerned, in the film houses but it's expected that this will not deter final moves in organization of managers, press agents, treasurers,

## Building Service Help

Meantime, the ushers, doormen, ticket takers, et al., are girding for an early offensive, with locals having been chartered in New York and Brooklyn to cover this help. At the same time the porters, washwomen, matrons, cleaners, etc., are being grouped in a union offshoot of the Building Service Employees Union, with which the IA is cooperating and with which, it is said, there is an understanding. The Elder Service Employees, a powerful union through its contracts with apartment, office, hotel buildings covering doormen, elevator ops, etc., has already sought negotiations with the New York theatres. Nothing has developed but since the scale demands are low for cleaners, porters, etc., it is believed there will be a get-together ultimately.

The ushers and doorman unions in the Greater N.Y. area are preparing to single out one of the larger circuits first as a test of strength before expanding. This will probably be the strategy with other unions in theatre crafts now not organized, not only in the east but other parts of the country, notably New England and the midwest, where heavy membership drives have been instituted.

There have been no extreme difficulties with the operators and stagehands throughout the country during the past year, excepting the 306 matter with the distributors. Slight increases have been obtained in most cases where contracts came up for renewal, no serious walkouts having occurred.

In the Greater New York zone, Local 306's demands for increases were sent to arbitration in the case of both the major circuit houses (RKO, Loew's, etc.) and the Independent Theatre Owners Assn. After lengthy negotiation and eventual arbitration, the ITOA houses granted a 10% increase and two weeks' vacation with pay instead of one, as formerly existed. Local 306 asked a 25% increase from RKO, Loew's, Warner Bros., Music Hall, Roxy, Par, etc., with result those negotiations also went to arbitration for a decision. There has been no action as this issue goes to press.

## Exchange Employee Demands

Winding up on a two-year contract with the distributors, its first since organization by the IA, the Exchange Employees Union presented the distributists with demands for an increase on a renewal effective Dec. 1. A new two-year deal, calling for various adjustments but reportedly at substantially the same scales, was agreed upon the middle of December.

Toward the end of the year, with local production dwindling, the various eastern studio crafts gained new encouragement when Mayor LaGuardia of N. Y. started a campaign to stimulate filming on the Atlantic coast, backed by a solid labor front. Objective is to get the transfer of at least 10% of the production which California now enjoys. This would provide approximately \$350,000 weekly for the various union crafts that would benefit, including cameramen, studio mechanics, stagehands, laboratory workers, scenic artists, operators, etc., not to mention artists who are members of the Screen Actors Guild, directors and other creative talent.

Behind the mayor to a man, New York State labor has agreed that an agreement will be made for a period of five years under which there will be no trouble with producers utilizing the east. The mayor's campaign is expected to produce results in the final analysis so far as stimulation of indie production in the sector is concerned, if not by the majors who are wholly concentrated in Hollywood and environs.

## Par's Solo Starter

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Paramount reopened its gates today (Tues.) after a three-day holiday with one picture, 'The Woman from Hell,' before the camera.

Production of 'Down Went McGinty' is still suspended because of the illness of director Preston Sturges. Next to roll will be 'Destiny,' slated for Jan. 16.



# Show Business' Hectic Labor Year

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

By Ralph Roddy

Anno Domini 1939 was a hectic year indeed for motion picture producers, at least from a labor standpoint. Hardly a week passed without the industry being threatened with a general strike. One demand for a wage increase followed another. When not otherwise involved, company executives found themselves caught in the middle of an inter-union or jurisdictional fight.

Many of their labor difficulties can be attributed to amateurish negotiations. Deals were split up between executives, lawyers, labor contacts, and what have you. One group seldom knew what the other was doing. Deals were made over the telephone, in hotel lobbies, at the homes of labor leaders, etc.

The attorneys ran interference most of the time, but when the going got tough the big boys usually called in Pat Casey to carry the ball. But half of the time Casey didn't know whether his teammates were going to tackle him, run interference, or whether they had made a deal 10 days before the negotiations started. Other times he was left sitting on the bench when his knowledge of the labor situation might have saved the day, and thousands of dollars for the producers. Several times when he was called in it was too late and he could not pull the chestnuts out of the fire for the legal boys who had bungled negotiations.

## Costs \$5,000,000 More

When a final check-up is made it probably will be found that approximately \$5,000,000 has been tacked on the cost of production. And several wage deals still are in the making. These include demands of the Screen Actors Guild for a 15% pay hike for extras.

The Screen Writers Guild spent a week telling the National Labor Relations Board that the producers had done wrong by them. The fireworks started after negotiations with the screenwriters reached an impasse. Alexander Wilson, Jr., a hard-hitting young attorney from Atlanta, was sent in to represent the Government. L. B. Mayer, Darryl Zanuck, David O. Selznick, Grover Jones, Charles Brackett, Sheridan Gibney, Harry M. Warner and other bigwigs were summoned away from their work to testify.

More than 50 writers signed affidavits charging the producers had tried to break up their Guild. They claimed the executives had called the Guild leaders bad names, threatened to blacklist them, and otherwise tried to intimidate the writers. The producers entered a general denial. They admitted campaigning against affiliation of the Screen Writers Guild with the Authors League of America, but insisted this was as much to protect the writers as to protect the producers. They claimed it would have given eastern authors control of the writing situation and would have enabled them to order the screen writers to strike whether the latter wanted to or not. This clause, objectionable to producers, has since been amended to give the SWG complete autonomy. The Guild's charge of unfair labor practice is now under submission by the NLRB.

## Writers'-Producers' Tiff

In the case of writers, the producers again reversed a situation which had been in vogue for 10 years. Instead of leaving negotiations to the producers' labor department, which had maintained peace for 10 years, the executives first grabbed the ball themselves, and after the writers had walked out on them tossed a pass to the lawyers. The latter spent several weeks getting nowhere, followed by the labor board hearing.

The break in negotiations came when the producers insisted on a 10-year agreement. They finally dropped this to seven years, but refused to come around to the SWG's insistence on a contract of not more than 3½ years. The Guild also demanded an immediate 80% Guild shop and the right of writers to any material produced during their layoff periods. The producers offered a 70% Guild shop, graduating up to 80% after three years, but wanted to reserve the motion picture rights to stories produced during layoff stints.

The situation was somewhat like that of the Screen Directors Guild. The producers nixed the directors' demands, spent more than a month and thousands of dollars defending their position before the NLRB, and then made a deal with the directors before the NLRB handed down its decision. Negotiations were renewed with the writers several times, but the boys never quite got around to a deal. The SWG stated it was not asking any drastic demands, and claimed a deal would have been possible had the company executives met them half way. Experienced negotiators undoubtedly could have negotiated a pact that would have been satisfactory to both the producers and writers.

## IA, George Browne, Et Al.

A fight between the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees and Technicians, Local 37, furnished the labor fireworks for several months. The boys in Local 37 demanded autonomy and the right to negotiate their own deals with the major companies. When they became too insistent, prexy George E. Browne stepped in and declared an emergency. John F. Gatelee and Frank Stickling, IATSE international representatives, were sent in to take charge of the union. Aided by detectives and a strong-arm squad, they took over the local office about 2 o'clock one morning.

The seizure was appealed to the State Superior Court. After a long fight, in which each side hurled perjury charges at the other, the court ruled in substance that the IATSE was a one-man union and that prexy Browne could do with it pretty much as he saw fit. The court ordered return of the Local 37 charter, but the union was abolished within a few weeks after the IA had gone through with the routine motion of returning the charter.

Leaders in Local 37 then organized the United Studio Technicians Guild and started enrolling IATSE members. The drive made considerable headway, and appeared to be headed for success, when William Bioff stepped back into the picture. Willie had resigned two years previously when it was revealed he had received \$100,000 from Joseph M. Schenck. Bioff told a Sacramento County Grand Jury the 100G was a 'loan' and had been repaid, but apparently felt it advisable to fade into the background for awhile.

## Enter Willie Bioff

But when it looked like the USTG might scuttle the IATSE, Willie came back into the open. He demanded a 20% wage increase for the workers, opened negotiations with producers, and announced the USTG was keeping the men from getting more money. The USTG, which had secured an NLRB order for an election of workers, protested the negotiations were unfair. The deal finally was postponed, but the harm had been done, as the producers had been forced to sign a tentative closed shop pact. Some of the IATSE members withdrew from the USTG in fear of losing their jobs, but nearly 2,000 of them remained to vote against the IATSE and in favor of being represented by the Guild.

The IATSE won by about 2½ to 1, but neutral observers

felt the result would have been closer but for the wage negotiations. Then, too, the fact that the USTG received financial support from Harry Bridges, of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, did not help the situation. True, the CIO had extended financial aid to the Studio Painters and other American Federation of Labor crafts, but Bioff and his assistants claimed it was a move to put the CIO over in the studios. The producers fell for this gag, and lent their aid. The fact is there were no strings tied to the CIO money, and the chances are that the USTG would have elected to remain independent or go back into the AFL fold after Bioff had been eliminated.

## Actors Vs. Stagehands

Perhaps the most serious threat to the industry was the jurisdictional tiff between the actors and stagehands. Start of the fight was predicated upon action of the Associated Actors and Artistes of America in revoking the charter of the American Federation of Actors. It was the only way in which the actors could get rid of Ralph Whitehead, AFA executive secretary, who was charged with incompetence, among other things.

Whitehead huddled with George E. Browne and the announcement was soon made that the IATSE was issuing a charter to the AFA covering all actors in the show business. Sophie Tucker, then prexy of AFA, and Harry Richman supported Whitehead. Miss Tucker, soon to open in a Broadway play, was promptly suspended by Actors Equity, American Federation of Radio Artists and the Screen Actors Guild. The IATSE announced that if Soph could not go on, the stagehands would walk out. The Screen Actors Guild retaliated with a general strike threat for the entire film industry. Threats and charges were hurled back and forth for several weeks. The actors appealed to the AFL. A plane-load of stars was flown to Atlantic City to appear personally before William Green and other AFL executives. A compromise agreement which would have permitted Whitehead to remain in the picture was suggested by an AFL committee, headed by Matthew Woll. The SAG nixed the proposal, and continued its attack on the IA and its president, George E. Browne.

## Willie Again

About this time, Bioff let it be known that he was the gentleman to see if the actors desired to negotiate a peace pact. Bioff was being investigated by a Federal Grand Jury and was anxious to show his importance in the labor situation. Following an all-night conference at Bioff's ranch with Ralph Morgan, SAG prexy, and Kenneth Thomson, executive secretary, a truce was signed. It was announced the IATSE recognized the jurisdiction of the Four A's in the acting field. In the meantime, the Four A's had organized the American Guild of Variety Artists to take over activities of the AFA. It was announced that the Four A's would be reorganized along the lines of other international unions and a close working alliance would be welded between the American Federation of Musicians, the IATSE, and the Screen Actors Guild. Little or nothing has ever been done to carry out such an alliance.

Bioff then started several minor moves to carry out his 1937 threat to take over the entire industry. He corralled several of the small AFL unions into a group known as the AFL Studio Conference. After the usual threats of a studio strike, etc., producers announced a 10% wage increase for these locals totalling about 2,300 men. Those affected include the laborers, plasterers, molders, machinists, welders and building service employees. Bioff had previously set the stage for this maneuver by instructing the producers to negotiate with the crafts but not to sign anything. When the little fellows became convinced they were getting nowhere, Bioff was 'drafted' to negotiate for them.

## Willie Takes An Encore

Bioff followed similar methods in negotiating a 10% pay hike for the IATSE locals. The crafts were first sent in to negotiate for themselves, with the usual instructions to producers, and later Bioff was 'drafted' to handle the negotiations. He did agree, however, to arbitrate the question of kicking back the increase after Feb. 15 if the producers try, but are unable to convince the locals that the industry is not in a position to continue the scale.

Bioff tried several times to maneuver the actors, directors and writers into a wage-cutting parley. He turned down requests to kick back the IA's 10% increase unless there was a 'close scrutiny' of the salaries paid executives, top actors, writers and directors. All three groups declined. The writers were more emphatic than the others. The actors finally told Bioff they could see no purpose to such a conference, and indicated it was not becoming for a labor leader to carry the torch for the producers, that the latter were perfectly capable of taking care of themselves.

Bioff's office promised the Screen Publicists Guild a contract within 24 hours, but the flacks turned thumbs down and decided to retain their independence. The same thing occurred with the Society of Motion Picture Film Editors. The IATSE received less than 50 favorable votes for affiliation out of a membership of nearly 1,000.

Bioff and the IATSE made a bid for the white-collar workers, but the office employees voted in favor of an industry-wide independent organization. The workers indicated they were in favor of both the American Federation of Labor and the IATSE, but that since either at this time meant Bioff they wanted no part of them.

Bioff about this time was engaged in fighting extradition to Chicago to complete a six months sentence for pandering. He claimed the old charge had been dug up to embarrass him but never explained how he managed to get away after serving only six days of the six-month rap. Chicago writers later revealed he had been released on a motion of appeal from his conviction to the upreme Court, but that no such appeal ever had been filed.

## Other Labor Cool

The Publicists finally reached an agreement calling for a minimum of \$100 a week for senior flacks. Contract is now being drafted, but has already become effective at several major studios. Working agreements also are being drafted with the Screen Readers Guild and Script Clerks Guild. The Society of Motion Picture Film Editors are asking for a new deal, calling for an up in wages of 10%. Studio Painters are due for a 15% hike, producers having agreed that if the Teamsters, Carpenters and IBEW electricians received an increase at Atlantic City the Painters would be given their request.

Fred Pelton, former Metro studio manager, was given the post of labor contact, and Victor H. Clarke, assistant to Pat Casey, given the gate. It was announced that Casey would handle all negotiations with crafts in the Studio Basic Agree-

ment, spending most of his time at his New York headquarters. Pelton, it was stated, would negotiate with the local crafts.

While wage increases were being handed out to the various labor unions, wages in the Producers' Association were being cut. Several members of the personnel were dropped entirely, while those getting \$50 a week and more were handed a cut.

## —And on the Talent End

By HOBE MORRISON

In the talent end of the business the unions had an unusually eventful year. In the case of the Associated Actors & Artistes of America it was a year of crisis, with the parent organization of all performers fighting and winning a battle for existence. Affairs in the subordinate performer unions in the year brought confusion and many changes, but the outlook for the future seems fairly clear.

The Associated Actors & Artistes of America (Four A's) is a comprehensive and rather complex union covering all performers in the entertainment industry. It takes in Actors Equity Assn., the Screen Actors Guild, the American Federation of Radio Artists, the American Guild of Musical Artists, American Guild of Variety Artists, Chorus Equity, Hebrew Actors Union, Brother Artists Assn. (burlesque) and a number of minor organizations. During the year the American Federation of Actors (vaudeville, nitery and circus) charter was revoked by the Four A's and the union is now attempting to continue independently. AGVA is a new union set up by the Four A's to replace AFA.

It was the AFA situation that led to all the complications and crisis for the Four A's. There had been rumblings for some months on the Coast and in New York and finally, at the demand of Ralph Whitehead, AFA executive-secretary, the Four A's voted an investigation of the vaude-nitery union's affairs.

## 'One Big Union'

A major premise in Four A's affairs for the last couple of years has been the advisability of revising the organization into 'one big union.' The reasons for this have been repeatedly stated, and in general they are based on a theoretical economy of administration overhead with a consequent saving to the membership, increased efficiency and greater unified strength. At the time the settlement with the IATSE was announced, the Four A's leaders pledged themselves to work out the 'one big union' setup without delay, but so far little in that direction has been done and there is little indication of any substantial progress in the near future.

Although nearly all Four A's executives favor the 'one big union' idea, it's not as simple a problem as it might appear on the surface. There are geographical factors involved, with SAG dominating performer affairs on the Coast and a complex combination of Equity, AFRA, SAG and AGVA in control in the east. Certainly SAG leaders would oppose any move that would tend to place the power to deal with the film industry in the hands of the New York faction. And the officials in the east are perennially wary of SAG 'domination' of the whole setup.

Equity, in particular, has more or less openly tossed chilled water on the 'one big union' proposition, for a variety of reasons. And, as one prominent Coast official has stated it, if the Four A's member unions will cooperate fully there won't be need of unification, whereas if they won't cooperate there's no possibility of unification. Also it must be remembered that if a closely knit 'one big union' is established, it will almost certainly result in the elimination or curtailment of a number of executives. Naturally, the executives involved would not be too favorable for that. And just as obviously, in the maze of jealousies and counter-jealousies involved in the Four A's picture, the memberships at large have no part. Those jealousies are confined to the union heads, whose personal interests are involved.

## Television

The question of television jurisdiction, which has been suggested repeatedly as a likely cause of friction within the Four A's ranks, as Equity, SAG and AFRA are actively concerned and all other groups are more or less interested, is not likely to bring about a real split. On the contrary, it may tend to bring the different unions closer together. That is because the various groups have named a joint committee to study the problem, and, presumably, will cooperate in regulating the field. It seems unlikely that any one union will be given jurisdiction over the medium.

Aside from Whitehead's elimination from the Four A's setup, there have been only two major changes in personnel. Dorothy Bryant, formerly head of Chorus Equity, was finally persuaded to become executive-secretary of AGVA (with Jean Muir as assistant), and Ernest Charles, formerly the Coast rep of AGMA, was recently made temporary executive-secretary of AGMA, replacing Leo Fischer.

AFRA, which entered 1939 as a young and comparatively small union, has grown tremendously in size, strength and wealth, and, with AGVA, appears likely to have an increasing say in Four A's affairs. AGVA, still only a few months old, faces a tougher battle to organize its field, but it is also potentially a large and powerful union. Equity and AGMA maintained pretty much a constant relative position during the year, but SAG, which has been steadily cutting down its membership list, has receded in relative strength in the organization.

## The Writing End

In the writing end of the talent field there have been a few significant developments during 1939. The Authors League of America, comprising the Authors Guild, Dramatists Guild, Screen Writers Guild and Radio Writers Guild, is the dominant organization in the field. Most of the developments of SWG, which centers on the Coast and is less closely tied with the parent outfit, have been handled from Hollywood. SWG has made little progress toward winning a contract from the studios—and that has been its main objective.

RWG has been moving carefully to extend its membership in the scripting ranks and to better contractual conditions by individual negotiations. It has made considerable progress on both counts, but is still not ready to approach the agencies and networks for a contract. The Dramatists, after huddling with the film interests for nearly two years regarding a possible amendment to the minimum basic agreement to cover film backing of legit, finally passed the draft of a plan. But the League of New York Theatres, which asked permission to call a meeting of its members to vote on accepting the amendment, failed to get a quorum at the meeting, so the matter is now at a standstill. There seems little chance that anything more will be done before the minimum basic pact expires a year hence. Certainly the prospect of further concessions by the Guild is exceedingly remote.



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## The Most Vital News Story—and Why!

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NEW YORK"

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(3rd year in the First Ten)



Now in "EVERYTHING  
HAPPENS AT NIGHT"



# 1939 Hollywood Toppers

Continued from page 3

chaotic conditions that prevailed during the year, which included general retrenchment, only two really outstanding productions came through in the calendar year that were more discussed than any others and will prove exceptional boxoffice factors. 'Mr. Smith' and 'Gone With the Wind' were the industry topmounters, the latter coming late in December to the deluxe operations so that its true commercial value will have to come under the 1940 recording.

## The Directors

Victor Fleming and Frank Capra lead the list of directors in top grossing films of the year. Work of each spans beyond the 12-month period, technically. Fleming rates first place for 'The Wizard of Oz' and 'Gone With the Wind,' Capra qualifies with 'You Can't Take It With You' and 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington.' Crowding these leaders are Michael Curtiz, with 'Dodge City,' 'Angels With Dirty Faces,' 'Daughters Courageous' and 'Four Wives'; William S. Van Dyke with 'Sweethearts,' 'Another Thin Man,' 'Andy Hardy Gets Spring Fever,' 'Stand Up and Fight' and 'It's a Wonderful World.' George B. Seitz scores with 'Thunder Afloat,' 'Judge Hardy and Son,' 'Hardys Ride High' and '6,000 Enemies.'

In the general production group of releases there was an abundance of high-budgeted pictures, with returns on all, whether early in the year releases or the new 1939-40 season output, somewhat retarded in the foreign market income.

And with this general scope of production during the year, results find little if anything had been done to bring forth any overnight or sensational screen finds. Closest to anything like that is Vivien Leigh in 'GWTW,' and she again cannot be classified as a 1939 boxoffice factor. Studios during the year, with the type of massive production that they concentrated on, seemed to rely totally on 'boxoffice insurance' and consequently used the potent established marquee factors as casting assets for top-bracket roles in the heavy costing output of the year.

It showed, as a result, with the public, for Mickey Rooney again led the star parade in boxoffice value. The Rooney popularity, though he was cast in only half the pictures that he was used in during 1939, was far stronger than any of the top bracket names in the entire film biz.

## Bette Davis Heads Femmes

Heading the femme contingent of stars was Bette Davis. Exhibits and theatre coin-spenders sort of banked on her previous Academy award, and consequently the four pictures that Warner turned out, with her starred or co-starred, had the heaviest draught of product in which a femme played the major role.

Many of the major companies brought to the fore talent that they had been and are keeping under wraps to lead the boxoffice parade in the next year or two. Metro has several femmes who give indication of potent drawing strength, and also cashed in strongly on James Stewart. The latter, however, did it off his own lot, as Clark Gable did, and became a strong b.o. fave in Columbia's 'Mr. Smith' and Universal's 'Destry,' where he divided star ranking with Marlene Dietrich, making her film comeback. Dietrich value, of course, is strong on this down-to-earth type of picture and Universal, should they have a fitting vehicle for her in the New Year, will have one of the topnotch money-making stars of 1940 competing in value with any of the top-ranking group of the bigger major outfits.

Gable, always a top asset for Metro, was without a picture in the entire year from his home company. However, with 'Wind' under his belt, Metro will capitalize on his value and probably turn out three or four during 1940 that will give him the top ranking spot of the year as a boxoffice magnet. Spencer Tracy and Myrna Loy, Metro contract players, each scored heavily in films produced away from their home lot. Their most popular films were made by 20th-Fox—Tracy in 'Stanley and Livingstone' and Miss Loy in 'Rains Came.'

None of the Metro established stars shone any too strongly in the femme division during the year, but studio hit a lucky number in Greta Garbo, whose change-about in characterization by Ernst Lubitsch for 'Ninotchka' has given her great domestic draw value. This should prove a solution of her domestic stand with fans and probably make her a gravity-

getter in the future from the home market, instead of depending on the foreign territory to show the black on her pictures.

## Back to Zanuck Formula

20th Century-Fox, which was bearish on its massive productions for the foreign market with its outdoor, cavalcades and biographical pictures, will no doubt go back to the Zanuck formula of 'human equation' and headline product for the '40 season. Zanuck is pretty much sold on the idea that, with the foreign market a hazardous prospect on the coming year, heaviness must be taken out of product; that the comedy angle to stories should be stressed; and the more intimate, lighter type of entertainment made the most dependable for profitable investment.

The Zanuck thought will probably be the general production trend of Hollywood for the New Year as studios will be compelled to take into consideration added operation costs and a limited foreign distribution market. They realize that little if any progress can be made in the Latin-American market toward offsetting whatever loss they may sustain as result of the limitation of European revenue. Where product was aimed for both the domestic and European market in the past, a happy formula at this time seems inconceivable to apply to the South American field and that of the English speaking market. The South American lingual nut is too hard to crack, and the film companies are aware of it through past experiences in product turned out for the combined Latin and domestic market.

Most lucrative return from that field for American-made product is in the western or outdoor type of pictures of which a considerable number have been turned out during the past year here. This market, which was a soft touch for the Douglas Fairbanks and Tom Mix type of pictures, is going very strong in support of the Republic group of Gene Autry pictures. Autry, singing cowboy star, has melody in his pictures that is aimed at the Latin market and gives indication of becoming an outstanding element in westerns as was Tom Mix at the top of his career.

Though the U. S. Dept. of Commerce and the Hays office are making a concentrated move toward improving American goodwill in the Latin-American market now, heavy concentrated effort has been made by Hollywood toward grinding out film entertainment appropriate for that market in heavy budgeted pictures that would also be acceptable as top-notch entertainment in the domestic market. Fantasy spectacles and costume pics from Hollywood have better appeal in that market than do the pure American type of drama, comedy and serial brands of pictures.

## Can't Catch the 'Hardys'

Hollywood in 1939 stuck pretty much to its formula of the preceding year. It went fairly strong on certain series, such as the 'Hardy,' 'Jones Family,' etc. The 'Hardy' group proved the most responsive in return, having been soundly established with Mickey Rooney-Lewis Stone boxoffice ingredients. The 'Dr. Kildare' series, which Metro calculated on being a runner-up to the 'Hardy' series, however, did not seem to stir above second-bracket rating. Same goes for the various other type of series features the studios have been making.

Technicolor played a potent role in 1939 production. Naturally all of the pictures in which it was used were in the \$1,000,000 budget or over and among those that found it to advantage at the boxoffice were the producers of 'Jesse James,' 'Dodge City,' 'Wizard of Oz,' 'Four Feathers,' 'Kentucky,' 'Elizabeth and Essex,' 'Hollywood Cavalcade' and 'Drums Along the Mohawk.' It also was used for 'Gone With the Wind,' 'Gulliver's Travels,' 'Swanee River,' 'Blue Bird' and 'Untamed,' which will be 1940 boxoffice contenders in the first brackets.

Metro had the greatest number of top-money pictures during 1939. Leader in their group was 'Boys Town,' a winter release of 1938, with 'Sweethearts,' released at end of year, next in take. Studio also had as heavy money getters 'Too Hot to Handle,' 'Out West With the Hardys,' 'Marie Antoinette,' 'Hardys Ride High,' 'Wizard of Oz,' 'Huckleberry Finn,' 'Andy Hardy Gets Spring Fever,' 'Goodbye Mr. Chips,' 'The Women,' 'Idiot's Delight,' 'Three Loves Has Nancy,' 'Pygmalion,' 'Babes in Arms,' 'Another Thin Man' and 'Ninotchka.'

Warner's top money getters of the

year were 'Angels With Dirty Faces,' a late 1938 release, 'Dodge City,' 'The Old Maid,' 'Dark Victory,' 'Dawn Patrol,' 'Each Dawn I Die,' 'Four Daughters,' 'Brother Rat' and 'Yes, My Darling Daughter.'

'Jesse James' was the leader of the 20th Century-Fox b.o. magnets, with 'The Rains Came,' a much later release, giving indications of equalling if not topping that gross. Other big takers on the year were 'Stanley and Livingstone,' 'Kentucky,' 'Suez,' and 'Rose of Washington Square.'

Paramount's four top-bracketers on the year were 'Union Pacific,' 'Men With Wings,' 'The Starmaker' and 'Beau Geste.'

## 'Gunga Din' RKO's Topper

RKO did exceptionally well, its quota of top coin getters being led by 'Gunga Din,' outdistancing all the others; 'Carefree,' a late 1938 release, 'Love Affair,' 'The Castles,' 'Bachelor Mother,' 'Fifth Ave. Girl,' 'In Name Only' and 'Hunchback of Notre Dame,' this a late 1939 release.

In the United Artists group there was nothing sensational so far as big boxoffice was concerned, two of the top money pictures, 'Drums,' in late 1938, and 'Four Feathers,' being produced in England by Alexander Korda. The other three were 'Topper Takes a Trip' (Roach), 'Trade Winds' (Wanger), and 'Man in the Iron Mask' (Small), the above normal coin getters. 'Cowboy and the Lady,' 'Algiers,' 'Made For Each Other,' 'Young In Heart' and 'Stage Coach' were somewhat below normal while 'Wuthering Heights' trailed.

Universal had for its 1939 quota two late '38 releases. 'That Certain Age,' 'When Tomorrow Comes,' 'You Can't Cheat an Honest Man,' 'East Side of Heaven,' 'Three Smart Girls Grow Up' and 'Destry Rides Again' landed in the top coin brackets.

Columbia had two Frank Capra pics, 'You Can't Take It With You,' a late 1938 release, and 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington,' and 'Only Angels Have Wings' as its pace setters with 'Golden Boy' coming in under the normal average at the ticket window.

The number of producer-directors at all of the major studios increased during the year. Those in these positions are all top meggers who are generally cutting in on a percentage of the profits of their pictures. Metro took Ernst Lubitsch over for such a spot, also having Mervyn LeRoy do same chore. Paramount had Frank Lloyd and Wesley Ruggles on such deals. Frank Capra and Leo McCarey did one under these conditions at Columbia, where also Howard Hawks and Wesley Ruggles have similar deals.

RKO has Leo McCarey and David Butler ticketed, with addition of Gene Towne and Graham Baker and Stephens-Lang.

Universal has John M. Stahl, Rowland V. Lee and David Butler as producer-directors and also Harry Edington (now production head at RKO) for one picture. It adds for 1940 Jules Levy, ex-RKO sales exec.

Warners and 20th-Fox, though giving some directors producer control on their product, did not list them as such.

## Heavy 'Prestige' Spending

In all, plenty of coin was spent by all of the major plants on 'prestige' pictures as well as big productions. However, with the general market unrest in most instances these top-notch productions, especially those budgeted after the last half of '39, were pruned somewhat. The \$1,000,000 and above pics were hit hardest. Metro went heaviest on production costs, having, besides 'Wind,' which cost \$3,800,000, of which Metro put in \$1,250,000, such films as 'Wizard of Oz,' 'Babes in Arms,' 'The Women,' 'Idiot's Delight' and 'Sweethearts' in the top-bracket cost group.

Warners had quite a number that hit around \$1,000,000 on its list, which included 'Dodge City,' 'Dark Victory' and 'Each Dawn I Die.'

20th Century-Fox had 'Jesse James,' 'Stanley and Livingstone,' 'Kentucky,' 'Drums Along the Mohawk' in the top costing bracket.

RKO had 'Gunga Din,' 'Hunchback of Notre Dame' and 'The Castles' as their most expensive.

Paramount's top layout was on 'Union Pacific,' 'Men With Wings,' 'Spawn of the North,' 'Ruler of the Seas' and 'If I Were King.'

Columbia had as its heavy budgeted 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington,' 'Only Angels Have Wings' and 'Golden Boy.'

Sam Goldwyn had some fancy-casting entries in 'Cowboy and the Lady,' 'They Shall Have Music' and 'Wuthering Heights,' all over the \$1,250,000 mark. Hal Roach had a heavy budget on 'Topper Takes a Trip.' Other UA product from here hit below the seven figure mark in cost. Universal, though having coin getters in its lineup, did not hit over

the \$1,000,000 figure on its product of the year, closest being 'When Tomorrow Comes,' made by John M. Stahl.

## Fleming Year's Epic Director

Victor Fleming is easily the tops among directors who made the bigger b.o. pics of the year. He did 'Wizard of Oz' for Metro, which looks like a \$5,000,000 grosser, and 'Gone With the Wind,' which is figured to do anything above \$10,000,000. That makes him the top coin-getting director of all times.

Frank Capra runs next with his two Columbia productions, 'You Can't Take It With You' and 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington.' They look like an easy \$5,000,000 return via the b.o. for the company.

Michael Curtiz is the outstanding b.o. director in the Warner fold. He had four that scored in the 1939 period. They are 'Angels With Dirty Faces,' 'Dodge City,' 'Four Daughters' and 'Daughters Courageous.'

George B. Seitz still proves pretty important in the money division with the 'Hardy Family' series at Metro. Edmund Goulding also rates in the top brackets with two for Warners, 'Dark Victory' and 'Dawn Patrol.'

Directors as a whole proved very important during the past year. Many of the boys who formerly were term contract meggers went out on individual basis, getting their weekly or per picture stipend boosted considerably, got story choice and cast, and managed to acquit themselves much better on this basis of operation than when they took what was allotted. Gross for most of the output these boys brought through for 1939 was most always above the initial seven figure mark.

Metro, Warners and 20th had most of the contract directors, Metro's list an especially large one.

## Musicals

Musicals again on the year were less than in 1938, Metro having its MacDonalds-Eddys, 'Broadway Melody,' 'Babes in Arms,' RKO's Astaire and Rogers, and Paramount's 'The Great Victor Herbert.' Indications point toward lighter story themes and comedy angles, and that musicals for the latter part of 1940 will again be dominant.

## Cutting Down Stock Cos.

With general pruning going on during the year, most of the major studios almost depleted their stock companies. The small bit stock men and women were virtually eradicated from majority of the studio payrolls, as were top three and four-figure character and feature players. This made the freelance market more necessary than in the past, with some of those who were stricken from the weekly payrolls finding a chance to get into circulation more, though not having the 40-week check. These people, in general, however, earned as much if not more doing one-half to two-thirds the steady labor for their coin.

It was figured that no such move would be made by such studios as Metro, Warners and 20th-Fox. But they did a rather sharp pruning act. Just what the intent for the current year with respect to building stock companies is not obvious as yet. But the studios are beginning to realize that some of the stellar marquee names they have been using are getting a little shopworn and will have to groom new talent for replacement.

## Gone from the Majors

Among some of those who have been dropped by various major lots are Freddie Bartholomew and Helen Hayes, at her own request, by Metro, with Luise Rainer on the inactive list. Only new addition not to have made a 1939 picture on the lot is Eddie Cantor, who just started. On the 20th-Fox erasure list were Ritz Bros., Simone Simon, Annabella and Fred Allen. Paramount no longer lists Burns and Allen, Mae West, George Raft, Harold Lloyd, W. C. Fields, Frederic March, Gladys Swarthout, Anna Mae Wong, Carol Lombard, Irene Dunne, Barbara Stanwyck and Buck Jones. Missing from the Warner fold are Dick Powell, Kay Francis and Anita Louise.

The RKO star group was minus Jack Oakie, Marx Bros., Katharine Hepburn, Richard Dix, John Boles and Burgess Meredith. Sam Goldwyn had no chores for Sigrid Gurie and Zorina. Walter Wanger did without Charles Boyer, Henry Fonda, Frederic March and Madeleine Carroll. Selznick-International did not use either Janet Gaynor or Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., who were its only star players of 1938. Hal Roach made pics without March and Virginia Bruce, stars for the company in 1938.

Of the 1938 star contingent missing last year were Danielle Darrieux, Victor McLaglen, Sally Eilers, Randolph Scott, Warren Williams, Con-

stance Bennett, Gail Patrick and Hope Hampton.

Of course, the fact they went off the star list of the different studios did not drive many of them from the screen. They free-lanced on a per picture basis, some of them doing more chores than in previous years.

With most of the major plants planning fewer number of pictures on the year, it is likely that plenty of separation of chaff from the wheat will be done during the new year. Many of the studios will abandon the so-called B's and B-minus product, and those who are not geared to mount into the better grade of product may find themselves quite unnecessary for production.

This process will not be alone among actors, but will apply also to writers and directors. It will in no way mean that salaries will fall with a crash or that people will not get proper remuneration for their work as during the last half of 1939 when outstanding actors, directors and writers found little trouble in getting salary adjustments commensurate with their ability. Plenty of people had their earnings boosted 50% to 200%. Mickey Rooney was the outstanding example of youthful screen progress, getting the tilt from around \$1,000 to \$5,000 a week.

However, at the same time development of new star faces was almost nil in Hollywood.

## Stewart Moved Fastest

James Stewart made the most marked progress among the male star contingent. This, however, he did away from the Metro lot where he is under contract. He had one pic, 'Made for Each Other,' opposite Carole Lombard for Selznick-International; 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington,' and 'You Can't Take It With You' at Columbia, and 'Destry Rides Again' at Universal. Cary Grant continued to be much in demand, as did Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., and Randolph Scott. Also making important progress in the male section was David Niven, who chored for Goldwyn, RKO and Selznick-International.

In the femme division the only name to spring up with a bang over night is Vivien Leigh in 'Wind.' Just what her fate may be as result of this job in the future is most problematical. She will need most careful and timely casting and care must be taken that parts she plays are not contrasted to the 'Wind' role. Greer Garson, whom Metro brought from England after 'Mr. Chips,' also proved a find, whose value, however, will have to be determined by 1940 efforts.

Coming from secondary roles to leads in the year was Jane Bryan at Warners, who looks like potent film value in the future. Priscilla Lane at Warners also came forward in three or four pictures.

On the 20th-Fox lot to the fore came Linda Darnell, a Jesse Lasky radio discovery; Mary Healy, Doris Bowdon and Brenda Joyce. Betty Field is the only comer from the Paramount minor group, having done outstanding work in two pictures, with 'Mice and Men' the last.

Universal brought forth a couple of kiddies, Baby Sandy and Gloria Jean. Also a fine prospect on that lot is Barbara O'Neill, who got her first break in 'When Tomorrow Comes' and also did fine work in 'Tower of London.'

Lana Turner showed quite a sexy flash at Metro and is being groomed for the Jean Harlow type of roles. Also being developed toward a stardom goal on that lot is Ann Rutherford.

## Bad Year for the Comics

It was a bad year for comics as none of their screen endeavors seemed to be of boxoffice consequence. Marx Bros. and Ritz Bros. pictures did not bring any glee to exhibitors' hearts. There is little in preparation for star comics on the 1940 period, which will bring in the late '39-40 and early '40-41 product, excepting Paramount's Jack Benny-Fred Allen film, another of those radio 'feud' aftermaths, a la Winchell-Bernie. Also the hillbilly formula is a thing of the past with the major companies, leaving that type of production entirely in the hands of the indies.

## Fantasies on the Way

Industry may go strong on the fantasy type of production which got its initial start with 'Snow White' last year and which brought forth 'Wizard of Oz' from Metro, 'Gulliver' from Fleischer-Paramount, and 'Pinocchio' due shortly from Walt Disney (RKO). Also coming early this year will be '1,000,000 B. C.' from Roach; 'Dr. Cyclops' from Paramount and a prehistoric yarn patterned along the lines of 'The Lost World' by Cooper-Schoedsack from Metro.

In the strictly western market. productions done without super-



embellishment, with the 'Hopalong Cassidy,' Gene Autry, Tex Ritters, Roy Rogers and 'Three Mesquites,' George O'Brien, Charles Starrett and Tim McCoy series proved quite profitable, with Autry being the top coin getter in this division of entertainment.

Universal and Republic did remarkably well with their serials, as did Larry Darmour releasing through Columbia. These studios will probably increase that type of output on this year's list.

Radio's contribution to the screen was nothing extraordinary in 1939. No new star material came from the ether waves and studios seem convinced that this field currently is not a good hatchery to fish in. Ezra Stone and Kay Kyser are the only ones outside of Orson Welles to light here.

Also little progress was made by the talent scouts in both the star and little theatre areas. Broadway did not come through either with any stellar talent with exception of Mary Martin (Par) from musical comedy, Hollywood feels Welles did all of his high calibre acting and characterizing in the cafes and resorts of the state where his black chin spinach was more evident than around the RKO studio. What prestige he will add to screen achievements in 1940 is as calculable as Mussolini joining Stalin.

### Miss Garbo's Surprise

#### Comeback At M-G Studio

Mickey Rooney was by far the best of the Metro coin stimulants on the year. That, of course, was rather surprising for a studio which has the largest aggregation of star talent. Clark Gable, their 'Rhett Butler,' made no pix during the year on his home lot.

Garbo, with her surprise come-

back in 'Ninotchka,' was easily the foremost of the femme contingent at the studio. Robert Donat was quite potent as result of his 'Good Bye Mr. Chips.' Judy Garland proved a big surprise and her strength has mounted tremendously with her performance in 'Babes In Arms' and 'Wizard of Oz.' Jeanette MacDonald, though with only one Nelson Eddy combination picture, more than held her own among the important Metro stars. Norma Shearer had only 'The Women' to sustain her popularity. Spencer Tracy did not work on his home lot, but with the Academy award and his performance in 'Stanley and Livingstone,' still ranked high in the Metro fold as did James Stewart, who made one film on the home lot and three for other studios. Robert Taylor did not continue the fast pace of the preceding year and, unless given proper material, does not appear to be the big bet the studio had acclaimed him. Wallace Beery improved his audience value as did Robert Montgomery.

Fred Astaire and Eddie Cantor will not appear on the studio star slate until early '40.

Lewis Stone, longest stock player in service on the lot, leads the featured contingent, with Lew Ayres and Ann Southern running close seconds. Among the other topnotchers in this division who seem to hold prestige support value in films are Melvyn Douglas, Frank Morgan, Fay Holden, Robert Young and Walter Pidgeon.

Compared with last year the Metro feature list has been greatly curtailed, but those who remain on it are calculated to have unusual future value with Miliza Korjus, Ilona Massey, Rita Johnson, Betty Jayne, George McPhail and Lana Turner in this category.

Studio still has number of players who have been there for past four or five years and are just cast conveniently but outside of current usage are not figured to climb to greater heights than they occupy at present. Many of these people are on term contracts that call for little or no increases in compensation and therefore are classified as belonging in Metro pictures.

Studio had considerable number of stellar freelance players in its important pictures during the year but, due to single chores, are not classified with the Metro group as to ticket buyer value.

## METRO

### Stars

**MICKEY ROONEY**  
\*CLARK GABLE  
GRETA GARBO  
ROBERT DONAT  
JUDY GARLAND  
JEANETTE MACDONALD  
NORMA SHEARER  
\*SPENCER TRACY  
JAMES STEWART  
ROBERT TAYLOR  
LIONEL BARRYMORE  
WALLACE BEERY  
JOAN CRAWFORD  
NELSON EDDY  
WILLIAM POWELL  
MYRNA LOY  
ROBERT MONTGOMERY  
MARGARET SULLIVAN  
MARX BROS.  
ELEANOR POWELL  
ROSALIND RUSSELL  
GREER GARSON  
HEDY LAMARR

\* Made no pic on lot during year.

### Featured

Lewis Stone  
Lew Ayres  
Ann Southern  
Melvyn Douglas  
Frank Morgan  
Fay Holden  
Maureen O'Sullivan  
Virginia Bruce  
Lana Turner  
Billie Burke  
Robert Young  
Walter Pidgeon  
Cecilia Parker  
Reginald Owen  
Nat Pendleton  
Miliza Korjus  
Johnny Weissmuller  
Ilona Massey  
Dennis O'Keefe  
Florence Rice  
Ann Rutherford  
Virginia Weidler  
Bonita Granville  
Rita Johnson  
Guy Kibbee  
Ian Hunter  
George Murphy  
Lorraine Day  
Sara Haden  
Douglas MacPhail  
Betty Jaynes  
June Preisser  
Lee Bowman  
Virginia Gray  
John Carroll  
Tom Neal-Mary Howard  
Terry Kilburn  
Ruth Hussey  
Don Castle  
Leni Lynn  
Joe Yule  
Ann Morris  
Eugene Reynolds  
Lynne Carver  
Diana Lewis  
John Price Shelton  
Alan Curtis

## 20th-FOX

### Stars

**TYRONE POWER**  
SHIRLEY TEMPLE  
ALICE FAYE  
JANE WITHERS  
SONJA HENIE  
AL JOLSON  
DON AMECHE  
LORETTA YOUNG  
RICHARD GREENE  
HENRY FONDA  
CLAUDETTE COLBERT  
WARNER BAXTER  
NANCY KELLY  
RITZ BROS.  
CESAR ROMERO  
SIDNEY TOLER  
GRACIE FIELDS

### Featured

Binnie Barnes  
Linda Darnell  
Joseph Schildkraut  
Lynn Bari  
Doris Bowden  
Brenda Joyce  
Tony Martin  
Jed Prouty  
Slim Summerville  
Arthur Treacher  
Lionel Atwill  
George Sanders  
Jack Haley  
June Carlson  
Marjorie Weaver  
John Carradine  
Chick Chandler  
George Barbier  
George Ernest  
Spring Byington  
Gregory Ratoff  
Peter Lorre  
Eddie Collins  
Mary Healy  
Mary Beth Hughes  
Douglas Fowley  
Ken Howell  
Robert Lowry  
Jean Rogers  
Joan Davis  
Amanda Duff  
Kay Griffith  
Chris-Pin Martin  
Kane Richmond  
Robert Shaw  
Arleen Whelan  
Sen Yung  
Charles Tannen

## Tyrone Power Passes

### Shirley at 20th-Fox

Tyrone Power steadily forged his way to the front on the 20th-Fox lot and with production he was in during the year gained the lead from Shirley Temple, who continues to lead in value among the femme contingent. Alice Faye, who is being groomed here for top money value, holds same spot as last year, with Jane Withers and Sonja Henie right alongside. Richard Greene showed little progress in the star zone, but a newcomer to the ranks, Nancy Kelly, is considered a good bet by the studio. Warner Baxter still holds strongly as potent factor, with Sidney Toler, the new Charlie Chan, and Cesar Romero, the new 'Cisco Kid,' also included in the star group. Loretta Young, though off the lot, had two pictures on the year, with Ritz Bros. also doing a duo before departing. Gracie Fields contributed nothing this year.

20th is very strong on women feature players. It has lot of developing talent in these ranks, with Binnie Barnes the topmouter, strongly crowded by Linda Darnell.

Many of the newcomers in the femme group have already registered strongly with the ticket buyers, and likely will find themselves close to top billing honors before the 1940-41 sked is made up. Jed Prouty and the 'Jones Family' series group confine themselves practically to these pictures, while the male contingent here is what is known as both audience-proof and audience-satisfiers in the featured supporting roles they are allotted. Studio has large stock list of girls and a few youths. These, due to fact of lack of billing and appearance, are not recorded among the players who get into general production work at the studio.

### Crosby, Benny, Colman, Paramount's Male Tops

Paramount star list is considerably curtailed from that of 1938 and continues to have Claudette Colbert as its main contractual b.o. magnet. Bing Crosby, Ronald Colman and Jack Benny lead the male group on the lot, with Madeleine Carroll and Dorothy Lamour only two other contractual stars the company had through the year. Only addition

## PARAMOUNT

### Stars

**CLAUDETTE COLBERT**  
BING CROSBY  
RONALD COLMAN  
GARY COOPER  
JACK BENNY  
MADELEINE CARROLL  
JOEL MCCREA  
FRED MACMURRAY  
JACKIE COOPER  
BOB HOPE  
DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS, JR.  
DOROTHY LAMOUR  
WILLIAM BOYD  
RAY MILLAND  
BOB BURNS  
ALLEN JONES

### Featured

John Howard  
Robert Preston  
Eddie Anderson (Rochester)  
Akim Tamiroff  
Paulette Goddard  
Ida Lupino  
Lynne Overman  
Victor Moore  
Brian Donlevy  
Patricia Morrison  
Charles Ruggles  
Martha Raye  
Louise Campbell  
William Frawley  
Tito Guizar  
William Holden  
Ellen Drew  
Isa Miranda  
Susan Hayward  
Betty Grable  
Joseph Allen, Jr.  
Lloyd Nolan  
J. Carroll Naish  
Mary Martin  
Olympie Bradna  
Anthony Quinn  
Judith Barrett  
Mary Boland  
William Henry  
Russell Hayden  
Frances Farmer  
Leif Erikson  
Susanna Foster  
Betty Field  
Ezra Stone  
Linda Ware  
Janice Logan  
Joyce Matthews  
Muriel Angelus  
Albert Dekker  
Betty Moran  
Peter Hayes  
Virginia Dale

made to the group on the year was Allen Jones, who moved over from Metro. Bob Hope, who was questionable star quantity last year, progressed with his last opus, 'Cat and Canary,' and properly tailored with material can become a standard box-office figure for the company. Gary Cooper also was on the lot for 'Beau Geste.'

In the featured group was John Howard, who will be in the star aggregation during 1940, with Robert Preston next in line, followed by Eddie Anderson ('Rochester').

The femme contingent of feature players are not a pretentious lot so far as b.o. clamor can be relied on.

Studio has plenty of gals who are considered good in supporting roles, but check-over from exhib angle shows no outstanding draw value among them.

## Bette Davis, Cagney

### Are Warners' Honeys

Bette Davis and James Cagney appear the main contenders for top honors in the Warner-First National lineup. Miss Davis proves able to aid in carrying a lot of product with her pictures. Cagney, though only having limited number of pictures under his belt, is ahead of Errol Flynn and Paul Muni in exhib estimation. Flynn did not come through

## WARNER BROS.-F.N.

### Stars

**BETTE DAVIS**  
JAMES CAGNEY  
ERROL FLYNN  
PAUL MUNI  
JOHN GARFIELD  
EDWARD G. ROBINSON  
GEORGE RAFT  
GEORGE BRENT  
'DEAD END KIDS'  
PRISCILLA LANE  
HUMPHREY BOGART  
MIRIAM HOPKINS  
DICK FORAN  
PAT O'BRIEN  
ROSEMARY LANE  
ANN SHERIDAN  
WAYNE MORRIS  
OLIVIA DE HAVILLAND  
JOHN PAYNE  
GERALDINE FITZGERALD

### Featured

Jeffrey Lynn  
Jane Bryan  
Eddie Albert  
Gale Page  
Claude Rains  
May Robson  
Alan Hale  
Jane Wyman  
Maxie Rosenbloom  
Frank McHugh  
Ronald Reagan  
Donald Crisp  
Brenda Marshall  
Fay Bainter  
Henry O'Neill  
John Littel  
Barton MacLane  
Glenda Farrell  
Allen Jenkins  
Bonita Granville  
Lya Lys  
Johanna Davis  
Jerry Colonna  
John Ridgely  
Morton Lowry  
James Stephenson  
Maris Wrixon  
William Hopper  
Tom Kennedy  
Gloria Dickson  
Janet Chapman  
Dennis Morgan  
Margot Stevenson  
Jane Gilbert

as Warners figured as result of 'Dodge City,' while Muni is another of the studio prestige stars.

John Garfield is coming along in good shape, with Edward G. Robinson consistent in this company's lineup. Much is expected of George Raft, newcomer to star ranks here, also of Priscilla Lane. George Brent, who gave some splendid performances in last couple of pics, did not advance in selling value up to the expectations of the Warner crowd.

Studio has added Geraldine Fitzgerald to star group with one pic released late in the year.

In the featured class two newcomers to the ranks of players here, Jeffrey Lynn and Jane Bryan, appear to be strongest sales factors, with others in this division showing a chance of advancing their value to the company with increased work and experience. This studio always puts promising talent through tense working pace and develops more quantity of it than any other studio over the period of a year. Many changes were made in the featured and stock list during the year with quite a few who had attained important rating dropped from the roster.

## Ginger Rogers No. 1

### On RKO's '39 Roster

Ginger Rogers is in a class by herself as RKO's No. 1 star. She did one picture with Fred Astaire and then soloed in a few, meaning she was the essence of the RKO meal ticket. Cary Grant, who got a couple under his belt, came next, with Astaire, now on Metro lot, third on the year.

Other potent stars, who were mostly on lot with single picture commitments such as Irene Dunne, Carole Lombard, Barbara Stanwyck, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Victor McLaglen and Charles Laughton, helped polish the 'A' bracket values the company distributed.

Joe Penner held his own. George O'Brien did smartly with his western group while the Bobby Breen returns were fairly good. Laurel and Hardy were over for one, 'Flying Deuces,' released late in the year. Studio had a new star in Kay Kyser for one, also Jean Hersholt on start of 'Dr. Christian' series. Charles Laughton, in at tail of year with 'Hunchback,' under a new deal with the company, should lead its star contingent in 1940. Douglas Corrigan, the wrong-way flier, was also listed with a pic that went the wrong way with the fans.

Studio, for its potent feature strength, depended mostly on the freelance players which is shown by standing of such as Adolphe Menjou, David Niven, Gail Patrick, Sally Eilers, Chester Morris, Leo Carrillo and Allan Mowbray.

Plant has not much star or feature strength, either arrived or de-

## RKO-RADIO

### Stars

**GINGER ROGERS**  
CARY GRANT  
FRED ASTAIRE  
IRENE DUNNE  
CAROLE LOMBARD  
BARBARA STANWYCK  
DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS, JR.  
VICTOR McLAGLEN  
CHARLES LAUGHTON  
ANNE SHIRLEY  
JOE PENNER  
GEORGE O'BRIEN  
and those for other studios. Robert LAUREL and HARDY  
LUCILLE BALL  
KAY KYSER  
\*JOHN WAYNE-CLAIRE  
TREVOR  
RICHARD DIX  
BOBBY BREEN  
JEAN HERSHOLT  
LEE TRACY  
DOUGLAS CORRIGAN

\* Borrowed from Republic.

### Featured

Adolphe Menjou  
David Niven  
James Ellison  
Gail Patrick  
Sally Eilers  
Walter Connolly  
George Sanders  
Chester Morris  
Betty Grable  
Leo Carrillo  
Tim Holt  
William Gargan  
Wendy Barrie  
Roscoe Karns  
Bradley Page  
Allen Mowbray  
Joan Fontaine  
Lee Bowman  
Peter Holden  
Edward Ellis  
Edna Best  
Maureen O'Hara  
Linda Hayes  
Steffi Duna  
Noah Beery, Jr.  
Donald Woods  
Virginia Weidler  
Robert Barrat  
Paul Guilfoyle  
Virginia Vale  
Robert Armstrong  
Eleanor Hansen  
John Archer  
Barbara Reid

veloping, and with the producer-director system pretty well installed, there will hardly be developed any quantity of RKO's own b.o. magnets. It must depend generally for its picture strength on the freelance field in all the acting branches.

## Deanna Durbin, U's No. 1

### Star; Others Also Big

Deanna Durbin again was the Universal top coin getter this year, the studio showing marked progress through having product that proved most acceptable in the 'A' brackets. Bing Crosby, Irene Dunne and Charles Boyer and the W. C. Fields-Edgar Bergen combos all counted (Continued on page 46)



# FIRST OF THE 1940 FROM

*Cha*  
**LAUG**

IN VICTOR HUGO'S

**HUNG  
NOTRE**

WITH

**SIR CEDRIC HARDWICKE • THOMA  
EDMOND O'BRIEN • ALAN MARSHAL  
ALEXANDER • PRODUCED BY PANDRO S.**

SCREEN PLAY BY SONYA LEVIE

**IT'S A HAPPY NE  
HOLDOVER EVERY**





# BIG ONES FOR RKO RADIO!

*rules*  
**HTON**  
**HE**  
**HBACK**  
**F**  
**DAME**



**S MITCHELL • MAUREEN O'HARA**  
**• WALTER HAMPDEN • KATHARINE**  
**BERMAN • DIRECTED BY WILLIAM DIETERLE**  
**• ADAPTATION BY BRUNO FRANK**

**W YEAR**  
**WHERE!**

*and*  
*Soon*

**SWISS FAMILY**  
**ROBINSON**

★  
**ABE LINCOLN**  
**IN ILLINOIS**

★  
**VIGIL IN**  
**THE NIGHT**

*and* more and  
more and more!



## Cartoon Field Looks Lush To Metro, Will Turn Out Full Length Fantasy

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Metro is going into the super-cartoon field to cash in on the current popularity of animated inkings, as evinced by the heavy returns on the Paramount-Fleischer film, 'Gulliver's Travels.' Culver City plant's facilities for shooting cartoons is on par with the best, and its staff, including the Hugh Harmon and Rudolf Ising, is capable of handling cartoons of any size without much revision of the production setup.

Studio execs have been mulling the cartoon idea ever since the expensive 'Wizard of Oz' fell short of Walt Disney's 'Snow White.' Consensus is that 'Oz' would have been more successful, both artistically and financially, if it had been made as a cartoon.

Current short cartoon production under Fred Quimby is well ahead of schedule, and a feature could be added without seriously disrupting the schedule. Studio is studying several fantasy subjects for the first big cartoon.

## WAR'S IF-MONEY ON ROACH'S STORY BUY

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Hal Roach has taken another three-month option on the Kenneth Roberts novel, 'Captain Caution,' making a total of \$10,000 advance payments against a total price of \$30,000. He had already paid \$5,000 for a first option, which expired last week.

Angle of the deal is that if Roach takes up the contract he will not acquire complete rights to the story, but will get only a 10-year lease. Extension of the option for another three months doesn't extend the lease period, however. At the conclusion of the 10-year term, not only the rights, but also the actual prints of the Roach film, will revert to the author. Believed it is the first deal of the kind ever negotiated.

Roach's idea in obtaining a renewal of the option is to make some minor story changes in view of the war. Roberts consented to the renewal on condition he has the okay on all changes. Deal was handled by H. N. Swanson.

## Hays Meeting Today Resumes Many Problems

Numerous problems that require immediate attention are supposed to come before the adjourned session of the Motion Picture Producers & Distributors Asso. directors today (Wednesday). Revised budget for 1940 is understood to be ready for submission and okay by the directorate, it now being reported about \$200,000 less than in 1939 or any of the three previous years.

Legislative outlook also is to be given a thorough going-over by the directorate, with special attention given the Neely bill and means for preventing its passage. Next important matter to be considered, now reported, will be the foreign situation and steps being taken to replace losses in the territory outside the domestic market.

Various ways of stimulating business in this country and in foreign territories which may enjoy a trade boom as a result of the European war also may come before the session. More problems than ever are expected to come up for handling by the Hays organization during the coming year, extending from production code matters to the biggest legislative problems.

## U. S. Orders Goulding Out; Re-Entry Exam

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Alf Goulding, film director for 27 years, was given 90 days to leave the United States and take an examination for re-entry under a British or Australian quota.

Goulding came to America in 1912 and lived here continuously except for a three-year period in England, 1935-38. He came back on a three-month visitor's permit and declared he did not know it was a temporary document.

## DARRO'S PERSONALS

Frankie Darro, Monogram player, begins a vaudeville tour in Detroit at the Colonial Jan. 7.

Tour will take him through several key cities of the middlewest.

## Flying Year

Past year probably will be remembered as the first year that the film business used airplane service to get executives to and from Europe, as well as to speed shipment of negative to foreign accounts.

Only the newsreels employed the oceanic clipper ships, extensively, although Paramount rushed a print of 'Gulliver's Travels' to England so that it could open in London last week.

## Paramount Theatres Seen Exceeding Par Pictures' Earnings

Paramount Theatre Corp and subsidiaries will show earnings nearly as good as 1929 and 1934, according to latest year-end forecast in Wall Street. Some believe the net take of the theatres will top the business shown by the parent film company, Paramount Pictures.

Southern theatre partnerships or chains, Balaban & Katz and A. H. Blank, look like leaders in the upped income expected for 1939. Now believed that the only weak spot in the theatre setup will be Detroit where automobile labor troubles have hurt business.

Pickup of theatre business in the final quarter has been particularly noticeable, and it seems sure of topping the showing made by the picture distribution company which is expected to suffer a decline in the last three-month period. This would result from the losses sustained in the foreign market.

## Selznick Omits Holiday To Prep New UA Lineup

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

David O. Selznick is taking a motorist's holiday on his three-month vacation, originally planned as a period of travel but now relegated to Hollywood, where he will prep his 1940-41 program for United Artists, beginning May 1.

First picture on the new slate is a starrer for Ingrid Bergman, currently in Sweden but due in Hollywood late this month. Selznick is working on two other pictures for Vivien Leigh and Joan Fontaine.

## TERRY TURNER'S BIG CLAIMS ON RIPLEY

Terry Turner filed suit Friday (29) in N. Y. supreme court against Robert Ripley, Robert J. Hyland, John E. Gregory, Believe It or Not Odditorium, Inc., and International Oddities, Inc., seeking \$102,735 from the first four defendants, and \$100,000 from the last. Turner claims breach of contract whereby he was to share in the profits of the venture.

It is claimed that the defendants breached a contract made in May, 1938, whereby Turner secured a spot on Broadway and 51st street in N. Y. for the location of the Odditorium, when in March, 1939, they took the place at 1600 Broadway, where the show is now going on. Turner asserts that he was promised 50% of everything the defendants received in the way of profits.

Plaintiff is a p.a. and exploitation man, now with RKO Radio Pictures.

## FINAL QUARTER '39 EARNINGS WERE OFF

Earlier estimates of final quarter 1939 earnings, made a month or two ago, have been revised downwards for picture companies by Wall Street experts in view of uncertain revenue in the foreign market. Fact that most film companies do not start receiving the bulk of their foreign rentals until six months after a production is released makes it necessary for distributors to rearrange writeoffs to account for probable dip in foreign income.

Thus a strong showing in the domestic market by a picture corporation may be wiped out by declines abroad in the final three months of last year.

One factor which may help major corporations having strong theatre affiliates is that theatre grosses have held up well during the last three or four months.

## Pidgeon Goes Hula

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

'It Happened in Kaloha,' Deanna Durbin starrer, rolled at Universal with Walter Pidgeon as a last-minute starter in the male lead, on loanout from Metro.

Pidgeon became available when Republic suspended production of 'Dark Command' because of Claire Trevor's illness.

## WB Cuts to 36 For 1940-41; See This as Gen'l Cue

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Warners plan 36 features for 1940-41 and under this alignment, when Bryan Foy returns to the studio Jan. 15 as an associate executive producer to Hal Wallis, he will handle the making of 16. Wallis will do 20.

This means producers who are assigned to pictures will work under them.

In elimination of 'B' product at Warners studio will make three grades of 'A,' first 12 skedded for 35% rental; next 12, 30%, and last 12, 25%. Reason for taking this burden from Wallis is that he handles virtually everything executive in making of all 'A' pictures, down to the cutting.

Now he will just assign story, producer and director to Foy, who takes up from there in his group, and Wallis continues his general labor on the 20 he will boss.

With Warners cutting feature product 25% for new season it is believed other companies will make same. Proportionate cut in the number of features for the coming selling season, with low bracketed features dropped by most of them and replacements of 'A' pictures that will be, at least, double the budget of the former minimum costing product.

## JOHN LODGE BACK TO COMPLETE FRENCH PIC

John Lodge sailed for France to finish work on a French film interrupted in September by the war.

Pic, based on life of Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand, was being shot in south of France. Shooting of scenes of assassination of Archduke, immediate cause of First World War, was broken up by beginning of second.

Max Ophuls, former Viennese director, was directing the film until war started. Then he joined Foreign Legion. He is being given a furlough to finish the picture, Lodge said.

# THE YEAR IN PICTURES

(Continued from page 5)

the home office when it brought Oscar Morgan up from Atlanta to handle all sales for the south. Over in RKO, Jules Levy resigned and A. W. Smith, Jr., took over the eastern division, with E. L. McEvoy going out to Cleveland to head a district in that territory under a realignment of the RKO field setup. Republic broke down its h.o. lineup to some extent and Jack Bellman shifted to Buffalo, whereas over in Monogram, Harry Thomas was added to the sales organization a couple months ago in supervision of the New York, Philadelphia and Washington territories.

In the last twelve months no man in distribution has come forward with greater strides than William F. Rodgers, general sales manager of Metro, who succeeded the late Felix F. Feist a few years ago. Rodgers first attracted attention when the distributors, at a hearing on the subsequently repealed North Dakota divorce bill, were massing in defense of that measure. Since then he stepped importantly to the fore as a distributor and an industry leader through the work that he did on the trade practice code, as well as in his method of dealing with exhibitors, large and small, far and wide.

Distribution-reared men who have gone from film peddling to top exec posts at present include S. R. Kent, James R. Grainger, George J. Schaefer and Murray Silverstone. Another, Al Lichtman, probably one of the hardest hitting sales managers the business has known, is assistant to Nicholas M. Schenck of Metro. Theatre men at the top of their companies are Barney Balaban, Paramount, and Nate J. Blumberg, Universal.

## THE EXHIBITOR

Retailer of what the producer makes and the distributor sells him, the exhibitor occupies an interesting niche in the industry. He deals with the public and he takes the rap there. If he has a landlord, he may also take it on the chin in that direction when the pictures he has bought are bad or he suffers the setbacks of local business stagnation, strikes, etc.

From the man in the soft leather chair, in offices in the larger cities, guiding the destinies of theatres that are far from him, to the little exhibitor who can't even find a chair to sit on, the problems are to a considerable extent not so variable. Each may operate in a different fashion but each operates with a view to buying film on which profit may be shown in line with the manner in which the merchandise is retailed to the public.

Exhibitors are eternally wrestling with the distributors and at the same time fighting each other, whereas a policy of closer cooperation for mutual benefit might, in the long run, tend to better relations and harmony as well as lengthen the profits. One of the most prominent chain operators in the industry not so long ago expressed the view that he wished he could establish more friendliness and contact

with the little exhibitor in competition with him. Exhibitor organizations have sought that, too, but though the problems are many which should provide common ground for all theatre operators, the tendency is rather to pull apart than to hang together. A dog-eat-dog formula prevails too much of the time instead.

Then there is the exhibitor who engages in exhib politics, trading on his activities in that connection in a selfish determination to get the edge on his brethren in dealings with the distributors. Very often the mere fact that he enjoys the privilege of an avenue of expression against the distributors, the producers or the entire industry, brings concessions to his door.

On the Neely bill, exhibitor opinion is divided, the same as it is on the trade practice code; or continues to be concerning arbitration; the question of radio competition; and other matters affecting the theatre one way or another. The one point on which all film accounts appear to be in accord concerns the high rentals distributors demand from them, since they all want to make more money by buying their product cheaper. They may feel just as justified in resisting the present-day prices of film as the distributors feel that are warranted in getting a better return on the investments they have made. This fight will never be settled.

Percentage contracts and designation of preferred playing time are the bane of many an exhibitor, and when checkers come around to see what kind of business is being done—just in case—there is open resentment not infrequently. To illustrate the attitude, one of the leading sales managers tells the story of the account that bought his company's product on percentage and, after the first picture under the contract had been played, he came running to the exchange to raise a howl. He fumed that when he bought the pictures he was led to understand he wouldn't be checked—and was he mad!

It hardly pays to check some of the pictures, on the other hand, and that's where the exhib gets stuck, whether his deal is on percentage or flat. Quite a number of contracts have been closed during the past summer and fall on a flat basis all the way including important circuits.

## Suits Against Indie Chains

Powerful buying power, meantime, is under attack, with the Government having filed anti-trust suits against the Schine Bros. Griffith and the Crescent chain in the south. Others are threatened, action of the Government indicating that, just as chains of the producers enjoy great advantages in buying power and other ways, in its opinion so have independently-controlled circuits dominated their territories and their opposition.

Duals are spreading, giveaways continue apace and price-warring here and there attests to the struggle that is being made by theatres in competition with each other. The matter of taxation continues to affect all, and there is a move-

ment afoot to lift the 40c minimum under the Federal tax statutes, so that admission scales may be increased where practical. But the industry is not very sanguine of results in that direction.

Meantime, grosses are not showing the strength they should in view of the high quality of product being delivered, and account is being seriously taken of the inroads made by the opposition, including radio, sports, the open country, etc. In exhibitor opinion, it may be that the picture business is geared too high and that the returns expected of pictures, regardless of how fine they are, have gone entirely out of proportion to the potentialities of the market as it stands today. The best apple pie in the world, if costing a dollar, cannot become profitable product because it has to bring back more than the buck it cost. And that can't be done.

The theatre operators of the country are not adverse to giving the maximum of playing time to the picture that is entitled to it, since they make money at the same time the distributor does, but the average does not like to gamble too close to the quick, with the result some films are pulled whereas they could extend further on a run. And once gone off a run, they can't come back to work the mine a little longer.

Exhibitors who have bought their product in advance for an entire year also point to the fact that if they are going to give additional dates to certain pictures, that additional time must be taken away from others. They also complain that while they would be willing to grant extra time to the more deserving pictures, the distribs will make no concessions to them on the 'pups' that are waiting to be picked up and must be played. Some of the majors were even tough as nails in making concessions or adjustments on the '38-39 pictures, it is claimed.

## Bad Spacing

Bad spacing of pictures is another blame that is laid at the door of the producer-distributors, with men of the theatre believing that the grosses aren't higher than they are because stars and other film personalities are being seen too often—as well as heard on the air.

Loans of stars has partly caused the release too close together of pictures in which they play, result being that very often a star is on first-run in a new film while a prior vehicle is still in release, playing the subsequents.

There has been considerable construction in the theatre field during the past year, together with face-lifting, air-cooling installation, etc., but activity has been light in connection with change of control covering important circuits. The U. S. suit against the majors has greatly restricted expansion among the producer-distributors but a few theatres have been dropped here and there by these chains.

Despite his troubles, his complaints and his woes, the exhibitor plunges into 1940 the same as he did in 1939. It's just another year to him.



# Dressing Up the Pix For Crix

By Bob Moak

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Press previews took on a vastly broadened import in the eyes of the film moguls during the year just closed. Not only did the majors vie with one another in a drive to fluff up the pre-release screenings, but they went even farther, installing in the more desirable chairs the critics, who for years had been forced to take what was left in way of seating after an army of execs' relatives and friends and talent agents had been serviced.

Topper for the 1939 stanza was staged by Warners, when it loaded the newspaper, radio and mag lads and ladies abroad a special train and conveyed them to Dodge City, Kansas, for the unveiling of the feature named after that town. While the junket is reputed to have cost the Burbank outfit some \$80,000, it is estimated it returned four times that amount in the matter of free printed and ether-shouted space for the offering, to say nothing of what it piled up in the matter of good will for future harnessing.

Warners' railroad party followed immediately on the heels of a similar, though briefer stunt, by 20th-Fox, which streamlined the crowd to San Francisco, where it hosted them at the fair and wine and dined 'em before unfurling 'Alexander Graham Bell' in the Federal theatre on the expo grounds.

When it came to ermine and high hats, however, laying of red carpet by 20th-Fox for preview of its 'Young Mr. Lincoln' at Fox-Wilshire in Beverly Hills still stands unsurpassed. Brand imported Marian Anderson, colored canary, then riding crest of a publicity wave launched when Washington's DAR snubbed her, as an extra added attraction. After scribbles and chatters had been taken care of, balance of house was sold at \$11 per, with southern California's '400' rubbing shoulders with the screen's creme de la creme in mad dash for last bit of standing room. Result was satisfaction all around, press being appreciative of the treat, ticketbuyers admitting they got their money's worth, and 20th-Fox garnering enough at b.o. to pay off entire expense, including warbler's \$6,000 for wages and traveling expenses.

## Buffeting the Boys

Running Harry Brand a close second was Paramount's Terry de Lapp, who took over the Carthay Circle for debuting of 'Great Victor Herbert,' following affair with buffet supper at the Bevhills Victor Hugo. Highballs, a dash of potato salad and a few cuts of cold meats have long since become more or less meaningless to the press contingent, but what did give them a kick was to have Barney Balaban, Stanton Griffiths, Neil Agnew, Russell Holman, Y. Frank Freeman, William LeBaron and their wives join in the post-show festivities. Balaban danced with the frau of the Podunk Corners Bugle correspondent, Mrs. Griffiths (Whitney Bourne) rhumbaed with a columnist or two, Mrs. Freeman discussed the care of children with a couple of young mothers, a good time was had by all and Par reaped healthy benefits.

Par also dragged out the arcs and posies at the Carthay for 'The Star Maker,' 'Ruler of the Seas,' 'Beau Geste,' 'Union Pacific,' others, dropping around \$1,800 each time in buying out the house and decorating it. After seeing to it that scribes are given proper attention, remaining ducats are dispensed free to important players on their own and rival lots, idea being to bring out the personalities who will cause newspaper and photo syndicate bulbers to do nip-ups, thus collecting all possible space in the nation's dailies and mags for Par's newest celluloid infant.

## Ditto Metro and Warners

Metro and Warners have also come forward with their share of gala previews, former more than doing justice to 'The Women,' 'Idiot's Delight,' 'Huckleberry Finn,' 'Ice Follies of 1939,' 'Wizard of Oz,' and 'Babes In Arms,' while Burbank plant put holiday wrappings on 'Yes, My Darling Daughter,' 'Dark Victory,' 'Juarez,' 'Elizabeth and Essex' and 'The Old Maid.' RKO entered the chase with 'Gunga Din,' 'Story of Irene and Vernon Castle,' 'Nurse Edith Cavell' and 'The Hunchback of Notre Dame.' Universal's entries in the swank preview derby included 'Three Smart Girls Grow Up,' 'You Can't Cheat An Honest Man,' 'The Under-Pup,' and 'First Love.' United Artists was there, too, with Edward Small's 'The Man In The Iron Mask,'

Samuel Goldwyn's 'Wuthering Heights,' David Selznick's 'Made For Each Other' and Walter Wanger's 'Stagecoach.' Columbia's most impressive affair was that woven about Capra's 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington,' with 'Golden Boy' as its next best bet.

## They Came With The Wind

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Metro's press preview of 'Gone With the Wind' was just that. Few blurbers ever have given such close scrutiny to an invitation list as Howard Strickling devoted to that drawn up for the villagers' initial glimpse of David Selznick's epic. Four Star theatre, with its 900 seats, was taken over for afternoon, with 800 chairs going to 400 newspaper and ether folks at rate of two each, and remaining 100 to hand-picked group of Metro and Selznick biggies. Only player in crowd was Rosalind Russell, who came as guest of a scribe.

Squawks from critics and general press force against being pushed around at press previews have been increasing in volume over extended period, until front offices finally were aroused to fact that in many cases excellent pictures were drawing bad notices simply because of shabby treatment being passed out to those whose job it is to review them. Investigations as to cause revealed that in most cases lot of biggies were jamming allotted theatre space with kin and pals, with at least 25% of free chairs being filled with agents.

Fast to act following this discovery were Paramount, 20th-Fox, Metro and RKO, which now include Hays office list of 350 accredited correspondents and reviewers on Annie Oakley roster for showings of their more important pictures. Outfits producing for United Artists release follow suit. Universal and Warners are gradually breaking down.

Average press preview is held either at Westwood Village, Warners Hollywood, Grauman's Chinese, RKO-Hillstreet or the Alexander in Glendale. Forum and Uptown draw heavily from B makers. Customary deal is granting of block of 400 seats by exhibit in return for the added attraction. Allotted number of tickets, however, does not suffice except on cheaper product, with studios usually buying another 400.

## VIEWPOINT FROM THE HINTERLAND

Lincoln, Jan. 1.

About 100 years ago a couple of guys named Lewis & Clark pushed west from the banks of the Mississippi and tried to prove Napoleon was a poorer salesman than Uncle Samuel was a buyer—that the great American desert might have some value.

In 1939, the year of the great film pilgrimages by stars and newspapermen, Hollywood is ready to accept it for a fact.

In the past year, the hinterland Siberia, which had yielded up a background for an occasional quickie western, but otherwise unapproached by the glamor capital, has become a mecca for Hollywood visitors—in fact, and in screen fiction.

Warners, Metro, Paramount, 20th-Fox and RKO have all had a part in the re-discovery of midland America. It's a two-fold heel turn in the opposite direction, and just in time. Scenarists found in it film settings which were better than the old, time-worn Broadway-Hollywood parade of big chances, first nights, careers, screen tests and press agents. Also, that the midwest audience is a swell combo of sincerity, good behavior, and appreciation where it counts—in b.o. dollars.

Junkets won for Hollywood the applause from business-conscious chambers of commerce; newspapermen for providing legitimate front page stories; fans for a look at stellar personalities in closeup; and exhibitors for giving the biz a shot in the arm. On the other side, the junkets didn't lean back as far as they should have in conduct of players and junketeers, although sessions with bottled happiness and party-uproar were pretty well closeted.

## 'Boys Town' Tee-off

The junket itself, with newspapermen and stars, was not new, but the midwest goals for them date from September, 1938. That was when, growing out of the location two-weeker at Father Flanagan's Boys Town, Neb., Metro decided to

premiere the flick in Omaha. The surprising success of 'Boys Town' was yet to assert itself, because L. B. Mayer and the other boys who twist the lion's tail in Culver City had no idea of its immense b.o. 'Boys Town' was only a minor junket, Mickey Rooney and Spencer Tracy, the pic's stars, lent femme dressing by Maureen O'Sullivan, making the trip. Newspapermen would climb aboard the train 50 to 100 miles west of their town, grab an interview, and then get off at home station to go to press.

Then with a 107-Mutual radio hookup, a fair-sized newspaper battery, and three stars, ennuied press men from the studios saw Omaha streets ganged with more people than a command appearance of all the Hollywood stars would gather at a premiere in the film city, with front page art and headlines of the size saved for Hitler crises.

Came the spring, and Omaha was again set for a premiere, this time as the eastern terminus of the Union Pacific railroad, which was the subject of the latest Cecil B. DeMille epic. There would be a modest half dozen stars, according to the first promise. But, suddenly two films were tossed in the laps of Harry Brand (20th-Fox) and Bob Taplinger (Warners). Brand chose to shoot his wad in connection with the opening of the Golden Gate expo in Frisco, while Taplinger chose to invade the backyard of Par's theatre of operations and steal a march.

His assignment was a western,

'Dodge City,' a collection of semi-fiction and Errol Flynn, which had two slim claims to hoss-opera superiority outside of its budget—a collection of stars led by Flynn and Technicolor. With sweet timing, a tub-thumping campaign starting with petitions from Dodge City citizens and a Kansas delegation asking for the kickoff in the Kansas town, it was built up with a flock of space-gathering shenanigans. The climax was the arrangement of two special trains from east and west carrying more headline cinchers and stars than had ever been assembled outside of a presidential train in campaign year, with Dodge City as the destination. In that relatively small prairie town on the morning of April 1, 1939, Hollywood learned the meaning of the word 'Colossal.'

Less than a month later, in a publicity created monster, 'Union Pacific' was presented to a jam of 500,000 celebrants in Omaha, driven to enlarged Hollywood presentation because of the big wham created in newspapers countrywide by the little Dodge City, fully 22 times smaller than Omaha. Then the parade was on—Young Mr. Lincoln' (20th), Memorial Day, in Springfield, Ill.; 'Man About Town' (Par), with Jack Benny's radio family, in Waukegan, Ill., late in June; 'Career' (RKO), with Hollywood delegation and the Gateway to Hollywood radio show, in Des Moines, Ia., July 1-2; and 'Under-Pup' (U), in Scranton, Pa., in August.

Critics on newspapers were reported by office co-workers to be

hither and yon around the country until their creditors and friends grew dizzy trying to keep track of them. Many of them came to work with toothbrush and copy pencil side-by-side in vest pockets, just in case. When 'Rains Came' (20th) was up on the release chart, most of the lads and lassies were so punchy they started writing Harry Brand to find out how many stops they'd make between Frisco and Bombay.

VARIETY's poll of exhibitors and newspapermen in affected areas finds little else except applause for legit effort to sell the film biz to the people on a homey basis. They're divided on whether b.o. stature was gained, but generally agreed nobody lost anything by being on the trips.

Jay Wooten, manager of the Fox theatres in Dodge City, Kan., says his town's convinced. If there was ever a chance of another such event there, he says the merchants would double the appropriated money and risks to put it over. The town showed a hefty profit and nobody was assessed to pay the freight, many believing at the same time it is the biggest thing the town will ever see of its kind.

Tourist traffic through Dodge City has picked up tremendously, and Santa Fe Chief pullman porters say many people leave 4:30 a.m. calls so they can step to the observation platform and gander the one-time frontier hell-gate.

## Some Players Helped

Two answered the poll from Omaha—Everet Cummings, Tri-State district manager, who staged both 'Boys Town' and 'Union Pacific' shows, and Keith Wilson, the World-Herald's typewriting toughie. Wilson opines Barbara Stanwyck and George Raft were winners, but none of the rest—featured players or glamour girls—were aided. Cummings believes Raft, Stanwyck, Brian Donlevy, Robert Preston, and Lynn Overman were helped. Wilson favors the Hollywood junkets, because it provides a legit news approach, providing a story with local meat in it—not only for town, but territory as well, and he believes the studio is paid whether the critic likes the pic or not. Both think the junkets should be confined to outstanding pictures, although Cummings said Jean Hersholt's stint as principal speaker at the Des Moines 'Career' luncheon did the industry in that area much good.

Both Wilson and Cummings believe Hollywood should cooperate with local committees, not attempt to run the show, which might result in a great deal of resentment.

Springfield, Ill., according to W. F. Dagon, of the Illinois State Journal, drew from 50 miles around for the 'Young Mr. Lincoln' premiere, and it did the players good locally. Publicity breaks were not large, however, as compared to others which had preceded it. E. J. Macklin, of the Waukegan, Ill., News-Sun, picked Andy Devine and Rochester (Eddie Anderson) as having made the biggest gains of the Benny crew in the 'Man About Town' flurry. He saw no increase of b.o. draft for Benny or Dorothy Lamour. Junkets, Macklin believes, tend to help the community more than they help Hollywood. Waukegan still prefers bridge or radio, if the pic hasn't got the stuff, he concludes, believing Waukegan as a city got 95% of the glory and Hollywood the remainder.

Net findings seem to be that this approach is far superior to the quiz type stunts; that only outstanding pictures, or films with a definite chance, should be so handled; that closer watch should be held over players coming to and on the way back to Hollywood, and that, with few exceptions, the guy who planks money down at the ticket window still wants to see a good show and no amount of garnishing will change him.

## Marching Through Ga.

With Atlanta declaring a holiday and the whole town, plus surrounding territory, turning out, the premiere put on there for 'Wind,' by Metro and Selznick-International, was one of the greatest attention-getters of all time. Newspapers played up the festivities and the opening at the Grand, on page one, and reams of invaluable space was grabbed for the picture. The N. Y. Times sent its Meyer Berger to Atlanta specially to cover the affair.

In addition to the opening itself, a grand ball was put on with stars from Hollywood among those present. Parades were also staged with a flock of bands taking part, cocktail parties were given, etc. The preem was Dec. 15. Day the picture opened at the Grand the advance sale had already gone over \$50,000.

## COLOR'S ADVANCE

By Jack Jungmeyer

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Numerically, Technicolor doubles its output during the 1939-40 season over the preceding year, the score being 19 to nine. Marked advancement in the technical requirements was largely responsible for the impetus. New speed emulsions, economies in lighting, improved processing and the growing familiarity of camera and laboratory personnel in handling the medium encouraged color production. Artistically, also, the tints were comparably much better than ever before, and the inclination to swell the Technicolor volume for the coming year is evident in tentative schedules.

Process effects and camera tricks, heretofore limited, now give the color medium practically the same leeway as the black-and-white. Cost of color production actually has not been much reduced, but, with the improved technical facility and the proved customer appeal of the prismatic films, the previous reluctance to take on added budget allowances has been pretty well counter-balanced.

Metro's Mervyn LeRoy production of 'The Wizard of Oz' led the year's Technicolor output for elaborate magnificence at a cost of around \$3,000,000. Into this production went a great deal of costly experimentation, necessitating cautious procedure, but both the Technicolor officials and the studio felt that the results amply justified the expensive venture. 'Wizard' was peculiarly adapted to color treatment for its resplendent phantasies.

20th-Fox set the pace for number of Technicolor productions put out during the season, setting high standard of excellence and variety of subjects dramatized in its 'Drums Along the Mohawk,' 'Jesse James,' 'Kentucky,' 'The Little Princess,' 'Hollywood Cavalcade,' 'The Blue Bird' and 'Swanee River.'

'Drums Along the Mohawk' benefited in its color phases by full application of the technical advances made during the year. It also demonstrated what effect atmospheric clarity has on the prismatic medium, having been filmed at an altitude of around 8,000 feet in Utah uplands, for the balance of outdoor scenes. Result was exceptional splendor in the pure color brilliance and gradations heretofore not achieved.

In 'Hollywood Cavalcade' the sharp contrast between color and black-and-white was demonstrated through the neutral insert between Technicolor sequences of the old Mack Sennett comedy episodes.

Sharing with 'Drums' the first complete application of the 1939 technical advancement of color was Warners' 'The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex,' also a stunning exhibit of tinted elegance in its pageantry and regal dramatic scenes.

Warners, one of the first companies to splurge successfully with color, also has 'Dodge City' as one of its fine entries for the season. As the year came to close, 'Virginia City' was being completed as another Technicolor picture of imposing dimension. Company also had numerous color shorts to its credit.

Metro's other two color entries for the year, on the grand scale, are 'Sweethearts' and 'Northwest Passage,' the latter not yet released and also one of the films incorporating the advanced technical benefits.

David O. Selznick's 'Gone With the Wind,' long and cautious in the making, and first publicly shown a couple of weeks ago, represents pioneering with numerous effects, experimentation in faster film and lighting, as well as over-correction of the low colors through filters. During the early stages of camera work several weeks were consumed in testing and altering these factors in the year's most pretentious picture to get the desired uniformity and quality.

## From Britain

From Britain came several outstanding Technicolor examples, notably Alexander Korda's 'Four Feathers' for United Artists, an excellent entry in superlative craftsmanship on both the outdoor stuff and the interiors. Herbert Wilcox, a pioneer with color, brought over '60 Years a Queen.'

Paramount was completing its 'Dr. Cyclops,' a bizarre fantasy especially adapted to the medium, as the year closed, and still has to release on its current program the Cecil B. DeMille spec, 'Northwest Mounted Police.'

Universal released the color version of Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta, 'The Mikado,' an elegant treatment of artistic and stylized interiors and backdrops.

Forty per cent less lighting is required on the new speed panchromatic film than formerly. Back lighting, once very uncertain, is now easily controlled and greatly enhances the closer figure shots. With these perfected advantages, 'Gone With the Wind,' for example, is said to have saved several hundred thousand dollars in lighting bills alone.

Major improvements have been made in the laboratory labors to secure and insure the full advantages of more brilliancy, more depth and better control of the hitherto uncertain factors. Print processing has settled down to assured color uniformity.

Film-going public has come to accept color in the more pretentious offerings as a matter of course, but is definitely conscious of added delights from the tints, according to producers and exhibitors. Altogether, the impetus for greater extension of color during the coming year is very definite.



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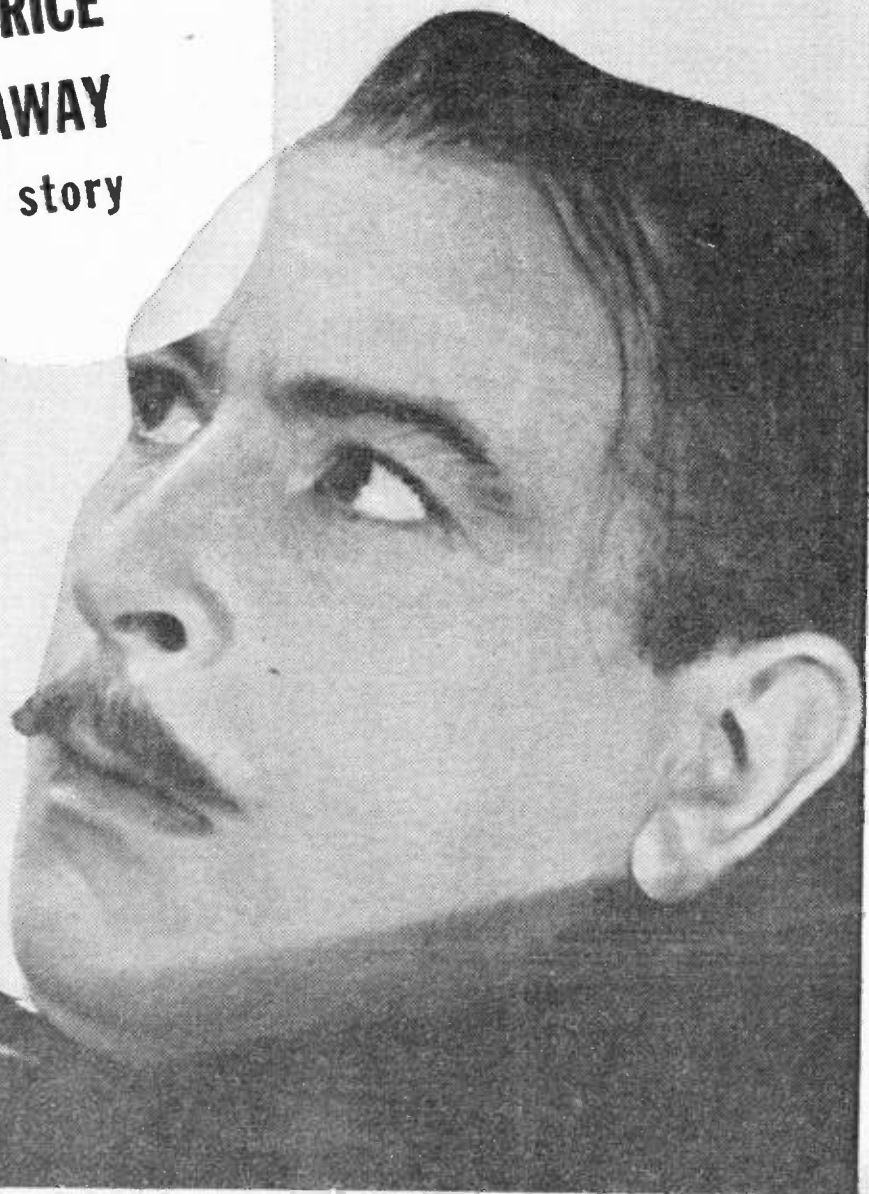
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# INFORMATION PLEASE

By Helene Samuel

'Hello, hello, information department? This is Hotchkiss, haberdashers. Can you tell us the theatre in Schenectady that 'The Blue Wall' opens tomorrow? We made some special shirts for the juve lead, Drew Pastell, which we gotta deliver before curtain time, but we don't know where ...'

'Miss, we have a bet, the boys and I in the office. Who would you say has the most sex appeal on the screen, Hedy Lamarr, or that new girl, Oomph Sheridan? ...'

'Era Magazine' calling. We want comparative statistics, quoting actual figures, showing the increase or decrease of gross intake at the American Academy since its opening in 1930 ...'

'Lady, I hate to bother you, but my girl, I haven't heard from her in a long time. She's a dancer, a very good dancer. And I'm sure she's got a big part in some Broadway show. Maybe you know where she is? ...'

'Darling, be a sweet child and tell me where I can get a complete list of Grade-A theatrical press agents. You know, the kind that wouldn't pass up a swell bet like yours truly ...'

'Please give me some data on Glamour-Glamour, Inc., talent agency. I've been recommended to them and I want to know if they're reputable and responsible. For a down payment can they get me on top as they claim? ...'

'My child is far far more talented and much much cleverer than Shirley Temple. Sweetheart, hum a little song for the lady ...'

'Hinton & Hinton on the wire. Perhaps you can give us the whereabouts of our client, Adeline Squigg, stage actress? Her case comes up at court in two days, after having been on the calendar for more than a year, but she's no longer located at the address we have for her ...'

'We understand that movies are also to be made in New York now. I am an expert bookkeeper and stenographer; also a competent and experienced actress and model. I know I can fit the bill. Won't you please give me a direct contact? ...'

'Schuyler Van Parsons, the producer, just arrived in town. Do you think if I sent a script directly to his hotel he would give it some attention? By the way, where is he stopping? ...'

'Marcia Amber makes her television debut on Sunday next. Will she wear a low cut gown or street clothes? ...'

'Which advertising agency is the easiest to crack in applying for a radio job? ...'

'Did you ever hear of Johnny Swing's Swingeros, an orchestra which last appeared in Bijou, Texas? ...'

'This is Benton of the Evening Flash. Is it true that there's a rift between Geraldine Powers and Martin Stancing? Who are her attorneys? ...'

'This is the Blankety-Blank News Service. We'd like to ...' and so it goes on.

It's doubtful if we ever had to formally establish an information bureau. It probably created itself through sheer pressure. It just seems to have narrowed itself down to anything and everything, directly or indirectly, pertaining to the show business. Anything and everything depends entirely on the individual point of view.

The other day an exacting little lady phoned to find out the lengthy cast and other data of a particular radio program.

After a completely exhausting response to all her queries, the topper was, 'When are the closing hours of Klein's 14th street dress emporium? The comeback to our slight verbal amazement was, 'Well, I thought VARIETY could know and then I would save myself another call.'

What, No Sure Winnahs?

Another time a guy asked us, in season, detailed questions about Belmont Park; exact opening date and hour, number of days, trains, buses, nags running, etc. When we asked why a call wasn't made directly, we were told that it was too much trouble to get the number while everyone knew ours offhand. Besides which, of course, we were well-informed on the subject anyway—or should be, he observed.

The publicity department of a swanky hostelry wanted to know if one of their guests, a renowned film star, had come to this city for the purpose of entering the legitimate fold. We had nothing about it but rather curiously inquired why he did

not check the guest personally, especially since he could do so easily. Well, it seems that the temperament of the famed one did not allow for too pressing questions. Anyhow, he knew we could give him the correct dope.

On another occasion, being asked by the president of a girls' social club for a list of favorite perfumes used by a number of outstanding legit stars, she proceeded to read off an imposing list before we could stop her.

Another phone call came from a hero-worshipping jeune fille who was sure we could arrange a personal interview with her adored one, a visiting celebrity. It was a pretty hard time convincing her that it just couldn't be done.

A doctor once called us for advice, although what he asked for was the informative data department. He had been solicited by an out-of-town educational film company to lend his voice and necessary commentary to a film which was to be distributed among medical schools throughout the country. Before committing himself to the chore he wanted VARIETY's rating of the company and its general academic standing. Would have been interesting to know what eventually happened, but he absolutely refused to give us any facts unless we first assured him we were directly able to be of assistance.

Queries are put to us in person, over an incessantly ringing telephone and through the mails. No matter what, we simply gotta have some answer which is where, we suppose, the trouble begins, but never ends. However, why, oh why, on a telephone, must there often be a routine preface before the actual question? A bandying of wasteful time and words. Why can't the question just be asked, right out?

## Foreign Jive

Interrogations in two fields offer the greatest opportunity to get stuck. Those concerning the myriad bands or orchestras from one coast to the other, whether it be swing or string, jive or symphonic, or just the plain garden variety, there'll always be some new combo, no matter how hard we try, one never has heard of.

Those pertaining to foreign productions are the other problem, if only because of titles. While our files are extensive enough, linguistic demands in spelling or translation can set one way off the track.

Here's a good example of what we mean. The film department of a top magazine consulted us one evening, just as we were about to make another attempt to leave for the day. Across the wire floated an uncertain foreign title, a more uncertain classification—either picture, short, play, charade or radio skit—they knew not what, except that all possible information was demanded. We literally hunted, but to no avail. However, the tail end of the title tantalized us, and while later it was relatively unimportant, it struck some chord of recognition that refused to be downed. To the tune of a trolley car's grinding wheels, noisy traffic and accompanying lights of the Gay White Way, homeward bound, we suddenly had a flash of remembrance. For the record, the title of the play contained three words, the first of which our questioner neglected, and the second he distorted by error in spelling. Thus, again, all was well that ended well.

## Checking Up on Columnists

Interesting always is the demand for addresses of spots mentioned in the various columns of the daily papers. We have discovered that this occurs not so much because of any particular delinquency on the part of the dailies, but rather because the query has to be made directly and somehow they just never seem to be there—while we're always around. Another thing too. A good portion of our public is the information departments of so many other publications that we couldn't enumerate them all if we could.

Coincidence of a kind also keeps us on the qui vive. An artist came in one day. Said he had to illustrate the new 'Lawaltza' dance for a story but didn't know where to go for a demonstration. He no sooner walked out of the door when the phone rang with a similar request in slightly different form. The party wanted to be taught the step.

Two networks once called us almost simultaneously seeking the whereabouts of the same comedy team. We don't know the outcome, 'cause they're still sotto-voce, the

## Just Another Anni

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Twenty-sixth anniversary of the start of the first feature film made here, 'The Squaw Man,' passed with only a brief notice and no celebration in Hollywood.

Picture rolled Dec. 29, 1913, as a Jesse L. Lasky Feature Play Co. production, with Cecil B. DeMille as director general, Samuel Goldwyn as chairman of the board and Dustin Farnum heading the cast.

# CLEAR DECKS FOR U.S. TRIAL

A stipulation between the Government and major counsel was filed in N. Y. federal court last week extending the time of the U. S. to object to any of the film companies interrogatories to Jan. 15. Questions have been filed by all majors except Universal, that company is due in this week.

The Government plans, and has so stipulated, that it will answer all questions by March 1. All major companies answers to the Government questions must be in by Feb. 15, except those of Columbia, and in this case, since Columbia was the only company to object to the interrogatories, a hearing will be held on Jan. 19, at which time a judge will decide if Columbia must answer. This refers to the nine questions only, which Columbia objected to, as answers to the other 50 must also be in by February. The U. S. expects to shoot the works, giving every bit of information it has on hand, so that no possible delay of the May 1 starting date for trial can be brought forth. Paul Williams, prosecutor of the action, arrives in N. Y. the latter part of this week to consult with major company counsel.

comedy team we mean. Early in the evening, not so long ago, one after the other, eight local daily papers waited on the wire to obtain personal data on an actress who had captured the temporary fancy of a dictator. Incidents such as these are not rare and help form the pattern of our erratic existence.

Occasionally we refer queries to specialized organizations, only to be told, 'But we were referred to you by them?'

What gets us down too is when info desired is not asked all at once. We often pull down heavy files to look up data only to have to go back and do it all over again when something else was not asked in the first place.

To be confronted with a request about something that appeared in the paper, of which we know nothing, is the No. 1 bogey. That must ever be! But when asked about a one-line squib that appeared months back in VARIETY, that's something else again.

We had a rather trying experience once. Our job was comparatively new and we were endeavoring to be competent, diligent and ladylike. A simple query came over the phone, to which we responded with quiet efficiency. However, apparently we were not heard, or understood, so we repeated ourselves. After the fifth time, we forgot our surroundings and our voice.

The range of inquiries—from, essentially, a show biz trade paper—is ever a point of wonderment. They embrace such things as male or female fashion reviews, cosmetic shows, furniture, art, china and silver exhibitions, interior decoration in general; advice on prospective purchases from liquor to fine editions; counsel on sartorial raiment and the choice of technical or educational books, ranging from photography to ordinary bookkeeping; most desirable restaurants to dine, dance, or ogle celebrities.

More personally, we are regularly offered commissions for purchase of tickets that are practically unavailable because of sellouts, or for the use of our influence in getting reviews or items published. We've been asked to substitute for dates that cannot be located or never showed up; to share a pair of tickets so that the second one may not go to waste; to be used as reference for a job, or endlessly solicited for jobs; promised the moon if we can satisfactorily answer countless and almost impossible questions. By now, I suppose, we're even known by detectives and cops within the precinct. Heck, we're innocent, but we do come in contact with all kinds.

# Negro and Yiddish Film Boom

By Herb Golden

Upturn of interest during the past year in Negro and Yiddish film production—although only the average number of such pictures was turned out—portends a banner 12 months ahead for the lensing of this type product.

Intensified gandering at the possibilities for profits in producing these films of strictly limited appeal results, at least partially, from the large number of houses which opened their doors to them during the year. With bingo and dishes either outlawed or not the lure they once were, exhibitors floundering for a hypo have discovered that Yiddish and all-Negro cast pix, spotted into proper houses can magnetize considerable U. S. coinage through the grill.

Both Yiddish and Negro films have forged ahead on the exhibition side during the year, while the number produced stands still. That's due mainly to financing difficulties. Regular banking sources are unwilling, in most cases, to put up coin because of the vague nature of the market and because most of the producers are of the shoe-string variety who don't fit into orthodox patterns as borrowers. As a result, producers must either finance themselves, resulting in a cheapie type of product, or find personal friends or businessmen to advance funds.

This lack of financial stability creates a vicious cycle which holds back such production despite the potentialities for profits offered. It prevents a sufficient number of good pictures being made to create a steady market. And without a steady market, money can't be obtained to consistently make good films.

## Income

Producers' income on the pix from New York runs from \$6,000 for the quickies to \$21,000 for the exceptional. Average is about \$16,000. New circuit hopes to push this up to about \$35,000. Tops for the country is about \$55,000, with \$38,000 the average. In addition to this, foreign exhibition before the war was bringing in an average of about \$15,000, which has been cut in half now. Considerable part of the foreign take lost was from Poland and France, particularly the former, which was the largest single market. England, Belgium, Holland and the Baltic states also provide income which has been hit. Good remaining markets include South Africa, South and Central America (Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil, particularly) and Canada.

Much slower in playing out than regular Hollywood product, Yiddish product continues to bring in income for some seven years after initial release. Most comes in, however, during the first year, with the remainder a tedious but important dribble.

Top number of Yiddish films made in past years has been five. Average cost is about \$25,000, although plenty are turned out for less. Cheapies get through at as low as \$8,000 and are shot in five days. Better quality producers take two and a half to three weeks for camera work and have spent up to \$50,000, but this is far from the rule.

Principal producers now include Roman Rebush, who operates under the name Credo Pictures; Ira Green and Joseph Landy, Elite Pictures; Joseph Green, Sphinx Pictures; Joe Seiden and Henry Lynn. There have been numerous other producers who jump in to make one pic but run into difficulty and drop out. Most of the films are made in the east, with a few turned out in Hollywood.

Star system has not been developed to any extent, but there are several faves, including Moishe Oysher, Molly Picon and Maurice Schwartz.

## Hypo to Negro Pix

One of the principal hypotes to Negro film production in the past year has been the opening of balconies in southern theatres to Negro trade. Formerly all Negroes patronized segregated houses, and there was plenty of profit for ops of these spots in showing regular pictures with white casts. However, since it has become possible for Negroes to attend white houses, owners of the Negro spots find that the specialized product gives them an additional selling point. In addition, in the south a practice has been growing in one-house towns of running occasional special showings of Negro films at the conclusion of the day's regular program.

Catering to United States' 12,000,000 cullud folks are approximately 500 theatres which show the all-

Negro films. Most of these are in the south, although New York's Harlem alone has 17. Producers' share of the gross runs all the way from \$12,000 to \$60,000 (very exceptional), averaging about \$15,000. About three-quarters of exhibs buy the film on flat rental, the rest on percentage, with the distributors getting 25% of the take. First run in Harlem will cost the exhib about \$1,000 for a good pic, while top southern spots pay around \$500. Average is considerably lower, however, many flat rentals being \$6 or \$7. Two biggest grossers of all-time were 'Harlem Is Heaven,' with Bill Robinson, and 'Siren of the Tropics,' with Josephine Baker. Former was made four years ago and the latter eight years ago, but coin is still trickling in from them.

## Average Cost, \$10,000 to \$15,000

Cost of making the average Negro pic is \$10,000 to \$15,000, but plenty have been known to be produced at \$3,500. Recently-released Henry Armstrong starrer, 'Keep Punching,' is said to have cost about \$28,000, but is expected to be an exceptional grosser. More than a single week is never spent in turning out the average sepia film. About 12 pictures a year are made, about half in New York and half in Hollywood.

Important producers include Million Dollar Productions, which release through Sack Amusement Co.; Oscar Michaux, a Negro who releases independently, and five others who release through International Road Shows, Inc., major Negro distrib. Latter group includes Jubilee Pictures, George Randol Productions, Ernest Steiss Productions, Argus Pictures and Bert Goldberg-Port, Inc.

Even more than in the Jewish field, there are producers who step in and try a single Negro production, only to find it unprofitable. One of the principal points in success or failure is said to be the knowledge of what the Negro audiences regard as tabu. Absolutely verboten is the portrayal of Negroes in bandana handkerchiefs or as believers in voodoo and spirits. Colored audiences like to see themselves treated in the same manner as white folks. Also out is any mixing of Negroes and whites in a film. Picture costing \$100,000 was made in England with Paul Robeson and an otherwise okay cast. It grossed virtually nothing among Negro audiences in this country.

## No Negro Pic Stars

There has definitely in the past been no such thing as a regular Negro star in the films. Person is a star in one picture and has a walk-on part in the next. Big Negro names, such as Bill Robinson, Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong, won't work in all-Negro productions, since they occasionally get into major Hollywood productions.

Foreign field for the colored films consists mainly, at the present, of Cuba, the West Indies, Bermuda and Bahamas, which have about 500 houses. Once in a great while, the films get playdates in England. An attempt is being made now to explore the South American market and Spanish subtitles have been added to several pix for export down there.

One of the most popular features in Negro houses during the past two years has been a blackface version of 'The March of Time.' Produced monthly by International Roadshows, it is labeled, 'The Negro Marches On' and shows shots of Negro Elks' conventions and other fraternal gatherings and whatever else in the line of newsreel stuff can be occasionally bought on the q.t. from cameramen for the major newsreels, which have no use for this material. Runs about a reel and a half in length.

# Dailies' Flaying Of 'Nazi' Spurs B.O.

Mt. Vernon, Ind., Jan. 1.

Editors of three rags, the local American Legion and Boy Scouts got plenty steamed up over 'Nazi Spy' (WB), booked by Lou Davis into his theatre here, and the combo efforts resulted in sock biz. Screening got editorials and plenty other cuffo space in the dailies and two weeklies. Editors emphasized local 'must-see' as patriotic duty.

Editorials were quoted in theatre's ads and out front. Before pic hit screen for each performance, Legion and American flags, flanking screen, were spotlighted. Boy Scouts, who tramped into house, stood and gave oath of allegiance to the flag.



# Newsreels In War 'Time

By Mike Wear

The wide-scale European war brought American newsreels to the fore more than ever during 1939.

Where recent years saw the five American newsreels ringing the gong with the Hindenburg disaster, the dual coverage of the Panay gunboat sinking in China and the labor-police clash in Chicago, the past year chronicled the start of a new war soon after the civil warfare in Spain had halted. Germany's march into Poland and the blitzkrieg of Hitler's armed legions against the outnumbered Poles, together with the mop-up by the Russian bear and the Soviet invasion of Finland, was a moving record of momentous world events.

The Nazi march into Poland and preparations of both France and England, as these two nations again declared war against Germany, were rated by newsreel executives as the most vital subjects of 1939. Prize camera shot was the bombardment of Westerplatte, ammunition stronghold of the Poles near Danzig, by a German pocket battleship. This was regarded as one of the most graphic pictures captured by a motion picture photographer in the last 10 years, being topped only by the Hindenburg disaster.

Newsreel coverage of the invasion of Poland thus far have been the top pictures to come from the European struggle, this being partially due to the lack of activity on the western front and partly because only a few scattered shots of ship sinkings were obtainable. The warfront so far has been chiefly on the high seas, particularly in the North Sea. Airplane raids over Scotland and Germany are considered dramatic enough to warrant taking, but are staged so suddenly as to catch cameramen unprepared.

## Top News Stories

The Russian invasion of Finland provided the newsreels with another story of world interest, cameramen getting pictures of the bombing of Helsinki and some early maneuvers by Finnish white-clad troops. Reels missed the naval battle between three British battlewagons and the Graf Spee off Montevideo, Uruguay, but covered the dramatic quitting of the Montevideo harbor by the German pocket battleship and subsequent scuttling of boat by the German commander. These and films of the Columbus, Nazi passenger ship, being burned off the Atlantic coast to escape capture by a British cruiser were late news headlines of 1939.

Visit of England's king and queen to U. S. and Canada; Coronation of Pope Pius XII after the death of his predecessor; rescue of part of crew from the Squalus, sunk off the New England coast; Soviet invasion of Finland; Graf Spee's escape from British warships to Montevideo and subsequent scuttling; refugees from Spain arriving in France; the German refugee boat with 1,000 aboard that attempted to land in Cuba and then wandered for days on the seas; dispatching of children from London at the start of the European war; pictures inside of captured Barcelona; opening of the World's Fairs in San Francisco and New York, and the Chilean earthquake furnished top news stories for the reels in order named with European war, of course, heading the whole list.

While stories from the Poland battlefront supplied some action, including unusual views of bombings and scenes from Nazi warplanes, much of subsequent material leaned on mobilization and war preparation scenes. Newsreels were handicapped at the start by rigid censorship by Allies, which subsequently loosened up slightly when German military permitted certain battle pictures to get through. Then it became a race of propaganda forces on opposing sides to land their best scenes with the reels.

Inauguration of regular passenger and mail service by British and American clipper ships across the Atlantic brought closer the dream of several U. S. newsreels of having one big world newsreel edition. This service meant that material photographed in Europe (until war censorship rules were slapped on) could be flown to U. S. and put on N. Y. theatre screens in little more than 72 hours. American reels took advantage of this service to speed the story of England's royal visit here back to London.

It was this same service which made possible the showing of Poland's invasion in this country less than two weeks after it happened.

Paramount took a gamble with one print and shoved it across by plane ahead of the other reels by several days. Because the bulk of the European war coverage is obtained by all cameramen simultaneously, only scoops possible are those obtained by swifter transportation from Europe to N. Y. labs. Sole catch to using Clipper planes is the excessive cost presently, reels having to pay first-class mail rates.

Advent of the war into newsreel material gave exhibitors a chance to bally newsreel issues for added business, with many cashing in. It naturally also meant an uppage in biz

## Cost of War Coverage

Despite the fact that the European imbroglio already extends over far-flung fronts, the U. S. newsreels thus far report no greatly increased overhead. Two factors make this condition. First is that there is more or less consolidated story coverage on the war in Europe. Second is a tendency to supplant footage in each issue from the domestic area with war material.

Besides the photographic work done by each government, usually via their signal corps cameramen, seldom does the propaganda ministry of a belligerent permit a worthwhile story to go out to one reel. Reasoning of governmental officials is that if the news item is unfavorable, no reel should be permitted to make it. If worthy of the warring power, it should go to all five American newsreels, thus being given five times as much publicity throughout the world. Which is one very good reason why there is so much consolidated treatment of each yarn.

This joint coverage, plus gratis material, keeps down overhead to an appreciable extent on the war front. Where costs have counted up is with reels still maintaining a full camera crew of high-priced technicians in Europe (even though seldom used).

Excessive cost of transportation, outlay for cables and for shipping prints to this country, add to the total. Fact that each reel must submit a print to censors in England, France, Germany, and several other countries also increases the expenses.

Terrific amount of interest in any and all material from the war zone, among American theatregoers, makes newsreel editors feel justified in playing up—and thus taking up a large part of each edition—the European conflict. In this manner, the war material supplants a healthy portion of each newsreel issue which ordinarily would be taken up with domestic, or less expensively obtained stories. This saving on domestic and extraneous coverage helps to equalize the war expenditures.

Past season's Pathe (RKO) lean more toward radio announcers for newsreel commentation, with Paramount alone sticking to voices deemed best to put over the photographic story, no matter what radio name they possessed. Universal continues stringing along with Graham McNamee, who probably will be given a new pact shortly. One of the first air-wave names grabbed by newsreels, and still going strong, John B. Kennedy remains top news commentator for News of Day (Metro), while Lowell Thomas sticks as veteran narrator for Movietone (20th-Fox).

Low Lehr continues as most consistent newsreel punster. Bill Stern figures as a new strong entry in the sports field, with Art Thorgersen still ace sporting commentator for Movietone. Stern is with News of Day. Paramount continues with Bill Slater, who first won attention on networks. Clem McCarthy, long associated with calling races, is still identified with Pathe.

## Proving—Dualers Pay

Chicago, Jan. 1.

Balaban & Katz will finish up the year of 1939 to a profit of over \$2,000,000, biggest in the history of the firm.

Most of it came from the big nabe houses which have been coining heavily on a double feature policy.

## REPUBLIC SIGNS GRAY

Robert Gray, legit and radio actor, has been signed to a one-picture deal by Republic and left last night (Tuesday) for the Coast. He'll do an untitled picture now being scripted.

Deal was set by William Liebling.

# Films' Technical Advances In '39

By Walter R. Greene

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Despite the general trend of major studios to reduce overhead and operating costs of backlog technical and production departments during the past year, the engineers maintained strides of recent years in continuing to improve present equipment and introduce new procedures and apparatus to materially assist in reducing costs and production time.

Improvements on the technical and engineering sides are divided into two classes—new apparatus and materials made available by the manufacturers, together with suggested use of the new tools; advanced technical engineering by major studio departmental staffs.

Studio executives have not yet credited the advantages along research lines available through contact with the large suppliers and manufacturers. The latter have access to research laboratories and experimental apparatus and expend millions of dollars annually for their own progress in other fields, out of which comes numerous by-products applicable to improvements in motion pictures that are immediately made available to the studios.

The sound companies and raw film suppliers, Erpi and RCA, DuPont and Eastman Kodak, respectively, through association with research laboratories and engineers in the east, are continually providing new materials and equipment to increase picture quality and many times reduce costs.

Erpi has access to research of the Bell Laboratories, out of which comes continual improvements for sound recording and new accessories and apparatus connected with the recording of voice or music. RCA's eastern laboratories also develop improved methods of sound quality applicable to studio work while delving into increasing quality of radio voice transmission.

On the raw film side, DuPont and Eastman Kodak eastern laboratories, both expending millions annually on research work in their affiliated fields, have provided studios with new, faster and finer grained negatives and positives to allow for reduction of production costs, while at the same time increasing quality of both the picture and sound track.

Bell Telephone Laboratories, RCA,

## NEWSREELS' GRAF SPEE COVERAGE VERY COSTLY

Newsreels which had cameramen covering the Graf Spee burning and scuttling near Montevideo, Uruguay, are still getting the backwash of this financial headache. Several reels had to depend on freelance photographers, while Paramount pressed its general manager of Uruguay into action.

Reports on the coverage indicate that nearly every crew or director in charge was imbued with the idea that use of airplanes was prerequisite in handling such a yarn. Hence each company had at least one chartered plane ferrying back and forth over the bay and finally catching the burning from the air. Number of cables exchanged between these freelancers and the N. Y. homeoffice was the largest on any recent news story.

Fox Movietone attempted to contact a feature production crew on location at Buenos Aires (about 90 minutes from Montevideo by plane) but the crew was reported to have left for Hollywood two or three days previously.

Added to these expense items was the cost of speeding footage by airplane from Uruguay to New York City.

Expense of such coverage recalled other instances of costly news handling on past big events among newsreelers. There was the freelance lad who was detailed to handle the Ethiopian campaign at the last moment but only after a promise of \$250 per week plus expenses. First expense bill showed a total of \$500, with itemized account showing only expenditures for liquor and one can of peas. The photographer explained it by saying this only actually was his outside expense since he was eating with the army mess.

Also recalled was the instance where a cameraman refused to handle some earthquake yarn in the tropics until a case of gin was rushed to him.

DuPont, Eastman Kodak, four of the largest companies in the country maintaining huge research staffs and laboratories that expend millions annually, are continually available to the motion picture studios for only a small percentage of the annual costs. Add to this group the research facilities of National Carbon Co. and General Electric, both working closely on improving set lighting with carbons and incandescent lamps of greater efficiency, and the research brains cover a wide scope for the benefit of the studios.

## New Film Stock Important

Faster and finer grained film negatives were introduced by DuPont and Eastman early in the year. DuPont's Superior 2 and Eastman's Plus X, in addition to speedier and finer grain characteristics, allow for extreme latitude in photography. Materials provide for cost reduction through production speedup on sets through minimum rearrangement of lights between scenes and sequences, besides providing better quality negative for all-around effectiveness.

Most important film stock contribution of the year, according to sound experts, is DuPont's fine grain print stock (DuPont 222), which was primarily introduced for use as a sound-track film in various stages of sound processing between original set recording and the release print. Replacing two previous types of film used in the sound-recording stages, the DuPont product carries through the high quality of the original recording, with minimum loss of quality and lessened background noise. It is being used extensively by several of the major studios.

Introduction of DuPont 222, although pointed for sound-track use, was picked up by Paramount technicians for testing as possibility for use on release prints. Loren Ryder, Roy Hunter and Ray Wilkinson, heads of Paramount sound, camera and laboratory departments, respectively, reasoned that utilization of the finer grain stock through various stages of sound recording after the original recording on the set, would provide higher quality to the theatres if carried directly through to include the release prints also. Tests were successful, with the laboratory readjusting processing satisfactorily to take care of the emulsion speed of the new-type film.

## Sound Quality Improves

Erpi and RCA Hollywood engineers, working closely with studio sound departments, assisted in consistently improving sound recording and reproducing quality during the year. In addition, improved equipment was made available by the sound apparatus manufacturers. Erpi's new accessories for recording included the cardioid microphone, which combined the former separate ribbon and dynamic type mikes in one housing; wax recording pickup and playback system; portable sound channel of lightweight for remote location work, providing quality of recording comparable to permanent studio channels, and multi-duty motor system, operating by either AC or DC current, which can eliminate several different types of camera and sound recording motors generally used.

RCA provided improvements to its recording system for the benefit of licensees, most important step being development of variable density recording via RCA channels, and extensive use of the latter by Warner Bros. for push-pull recording. At the end of the year, RCA had cooperated with Republic on new class B recording, which uses push-pull on recorded track as against the more familiar push-pull. Method is claimed to provide greater fidelity, with less noise than heretofore with regulation straight track recording.

As an aid to better sound recording quality, General Electric introduced a high-pressure mercury lamp which overcame many problems of sound engineers by projecting a greater amount of light on the track for the original recording. With the fine grain film of DuPont, and the GE lamp, sound engineers hope within the next year to have a more efficient lens in the recorder which will also raise the quality of sound.

## Do Much with Little

Process and background photography have made rapid and important strides during 1939. Departments are becoming more important on all lots, not only for great improvement in quality, but for vast savings that can be accomplished on production costs.

Widening the scope of their work, the process departments have solved many complex shooting problems

that ultimately were made on a studio stage, rather than on location at cost of thousands of dollars.

Both Paramount and Warner technicians devised triple-headed projectors for process background work. Apparatus allows for greater latitude and larger screen to be used through synchronized projection of three prints of the background plate simultaneously on the screen thus securing sufficient illumination to accommodate a larger screen, which could not be accomplished with light source of a single projector.

Development of the split screen, in which broad action required before the process background is shot in two separate films and then projected to match side by side for the process shot, is another contribution of importance by the process experts.

## Minor Improvements Important

It is interesting to note the several minor technical devices developed for production use that ultimately save the individual studios thousands of dollars a year. For example, Paramount is installing new motor systems to eliminate manual synchronization of cameras and process projectors used on transparencies and process backgrounds. The system automatically lines up the shutters of both the camera and projector prior to start of each shot, and will prove an estimated saving of \$35,000 annually in time previously consumed on the process stage in making the proper alignment between camera and projector. Paramount engineers have also developed what is termed 'slate-on-the-run,' a device which fits on the side of the camera and turns up in front of the lens as the cameras start rolling for a take, registering number of scenes, etc., on full size screen when projected. Estimated saving by this improvement over one of the oldest practices in production, whereby camera was turned for individual slate markings, is around \$5,000 a year at the studio.

In line with specifications outlined by the Academy for noise reduction on process background work, engineers of Paramount and Mole-Richardson developed a new high-powered arc lamp for transparencies which will deliver 24,000 lumens to the screen for the projector. This is accomplished through a relay optical system, delivering greater efficiency while doubling the previous 12,000 lumens possible for this type of work.

Warner technical group devised a special type mike boom for the operator, which has proven amazingly efficient on locations where a long boom is required. The same studio's sound department worked out a procedure to cue singers for song playbacks more efficiently and conveniently through concealment of a small radio reproducer in the vocalist's clothing to keep time to the previously-recorded musical accompaniment of the song. Warners have found this method to be better than practice in use generally where orchestral accompaniment is played back softly through loud speaker horns on the recording stage.

Both Mitchell Camera Co. and Twentieth Century-Fox studio technicians introduced new cameras of compactness and greater silence during the year. Metro camera engineers devised new type camera booms that aid and speed up production, especially on big sets.

## Technicolor's New Process

Technicolor took advantage of the faster negative introduced for general production use early in the year by having its stock manufactured with the new emulsion. The faster film for color work allowed for reduction of lighting on Technicolor sets and greatly increased quality of color negatives shots. In addition to the improved negative stock, the Technicolor laboratory engineers, headed by plant superintendent Gerald F. Rackett, devised a new processing procedure in handling Technicolor negative and positive to make rapid strides in presenting finer and more uniform prints.

For the coming year indications point to great strides in the field of sound, process background, raw film stocks, and color. The engineers realize there are several bottlenecks along the lines of various possible improvements and are quietly concentrating in attempts to overcome these handicaps. When they do, theatres will obtain fullest benefit of many technical advances being made in the studios.



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Directed by WILLIAM KEIGHLEY

Original Screen Play by Norman Reilly Raine, Fred Niblo, Jr.  
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## JANUARY, TOO!

**'A CHILD IS BORN'**

Geraldine Fitzgerald • Gladys George • Jeffrey Lynn  
Gale Page • Spring Byington

**'BRITISH INTELLIGENCE'**

Boris Karloff • Margaret Lindsay

**HAL B. WALLIS** Executive Producer



INVISIBLE STRIPES

Hollywood, Dec. 27.  
Warner Bros. release of First National-Louis F. Edelman production. Stars George Raft, Jane Bryan, William Holden; features Humphrey Bogart, Flora Robson. Directed by Lloyd Bacon. Screenplay by Warren Duff, from story by Jonathan Finn; based on book by Warden Lewis B. Lawes; camera, Ernest Haller; editor, James Gibbon; asst. director, Elmer Decker; dialog director, Irving Rapper; special effects, Byron Haskin. Previewed at WB Hollywood, Dec. 27, '39. Running time: 81 MINS.

Cliff Taylor.....	George Raft
Peggy.....	Jane Bryan
Tim Taylor.....	William Holden
Chuck Martin.....	Humphrey Bogart
Mrs. Taylor.....	Flora Robson
Ed Kruger.....	Paul Kelly
Molly.....	Lee Patrick
Parole Officer Masters.....	Henry O'Neill
Tommy.....	Frankie Thomas
The Warden.....	Montoni Olsen
Sue.....	Margot Stevenson
Lefty.....	Marc Lawrence
Johnny.....	Joseph Downing
Jimmy.....	Leo Gorcey
Shrank.....	William Haade
Old Peter.....	Tully Marshall

George Raft's second co-starring feature for Warners indicates that the studio has the right story formula for him, from which both should benefit during his new three-picture deal for the coming year. 'Invisible Stripes' is a fast-action melodrama, with pistol-popping and gangster trimmings, that should hit satisfactory biz in the regular runs.

Raft is handed a dominating, albeit sympathetic, role as a released convict who determines to go straight, regardless of consequences. It's a familiar cinematic yarn, but strengthened by a zippy pace, excellent performances and deft direction. Raft makes the most of a meaty role, playing with effective restraint. William Holden extends himself as the hot-tempered brother who is prevented from stepping outside the law by Raft's fists. Jane Bryan is okay for romantic interest with Holden, while Humphrey Bogart, Paul Kelly and Marc Lawrence are grooved in typical gangster spots. Flora Robson ably portrays Raft's mother, although her makeup is most obvious.

Script is slightly thin in spots, but these passages are overcome sufficiently by the fast tempo and direction. Clipping of several minutes from the running time would tighten the picture into a compact package.

Raft, after serving time for one misstep, returns home to go straight. His criminal record while on parole forces him out of several jobs. Learning his lesson, he's kind to his mother, and a watchdog on his brother's threats to commit petty theft. Sacrificing his own freedom, Raft joins up with Bogart and his mob for a wild spree of bank robbery, in order to provide money to buy a garage for his brother's security. Ditching the mob prior to another big job, Raft later discovers the gangsters implicated his brother in the holdup by using his garage for getaway station. Raft forces Holden to identify the mobsters, and then calmly walks out to take his medicine as a squealer.

Production has been provided with an overall good script, with dialog crisp throughout. Camera work by Ernest Haller is exceptional, especially the photography and lighting on Raft. Picture is neatly mounted, with chase scenes in rat-tat-tat gun battles cut sharply to accentuate dramatic suspense.

The Earl of Chicago

Hollywood, Dec. 26.  
Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer release of Victor Saville production. Stars Robert Montgomery, Edward Arnold, Reginald Owen, Edmund Gwenn. Directed by Richard Thorpe. Screenplay by Lesser Samuels, from story by Charles de Grandmont and Gene Fowler; adapted from book by Brock Williams; camera, Ray June; editor, Frank Sullivan. Previewed at Westwood Village, Dec. 26, '39. Running time: 85 MINS.

'Silly' Kilmount.....	Robert Montgomery
'Doc' Ramsey.....	Edward Arnold
Gervase Conwell.....	Reginald Owen
Munsey.....	Edmund Gwenn
Redwood.....	B. E. Clive
Gerald Kilmount.....	Ronald Sinclair
Maureen Kilmount.....	Norma Varden
Lord Chancellor.....	Halliewell Hobbes
Reading Clerk.....	Ian Wolf
Judson.....	Peter Godfrey
Guide.....	Billy Devan

'The Earl of Chicago' was originally planned by Metro as a British production last summer but outbreak of the war chased Robert Montgomery and others of the contingent back to Hollywood for the making. Story, which reports state Montgomery persuaded the studio to purchase after he made 'Night Must Fall,' is decidedly unusual in texture—a comedy drama up to a point, and then a sudden swing into ironic tragedy. As was the case with 'Night Must Fall,' it carries a psychopathic tone which is present, but not too apparent, until the latter portion of the tale. At the boxoffice, 'Earl of Chicago' will enjoy a spotty reception.

For audiences looking for the unusual in screen fare, picture will be thoroughly enjoyable. Critics will also point to it with confidence that the producers can turn out the type of pictures they have been requesting, but for general appeal, patrons will generate mixed reactions.

The plot, in introducing Montgomery as a former Chicago bootlegger gone straight in the legit liquor biz, has numerous surprise twists. Montgomery, allergic to guns, tax raps and double-crossing associates, is sought out as the missing heir to the Earldom of Gorkley. Taking along Edward Arnold, supposedly an honest lawyer, Mont-

gomery goes to England to collect his estate. Slow procedure of British law, and final realization that he cannot sell his heritage, is a blow to the mobster. But while he is succumbing to the traditions of his position as lord and master of his estates and tenants, Montgomery discovers that the honest man he trusted, Arnold, has scuttled his Chicago enterprise for personal revenge. Gone berserk, Montgomery shoots Arnold, and is tried and convicted for murder before his peers in the House of Lords. But he walks courageously to the scaffold to uphold tradition of his rank.

Montgomery, in handling the title role, turns in a fine performance, although it seems in many spots he endeavors to carry over the moronic grimaces and expressions from his characterization in 'Night Must Fall.' This is particularly true in the early Chicago sequences, where he should have been a definitely suave and dominating character. Montgomery also essays a frequent cackle which could have been eliminated.

Edward Arnold, as the honest lawyer who stood a prison stretch on a frame during prohibition, provides a substantial supporting characterization, and adds much to the picture's strength. Edmund Gwenn is neatly grooved as Montgomery's English butler and counsellor. Balance of support is excellently set up.

Picture has a neat mixture of comedy and dramatic suspense in the first half, but gets into heavy tragedy when the Earl, who finally catches audience sympathy through his interest and sympathy for his tenants and traditions of his family, commits murder and finally faces the death penalty. It's an unusual twist in dramatic motivation, far off the beaten path of accepted formula.

The trial in the House of Lords is dramatic in its presentation, and still brief enough to prevent sagging of pace at an important stage of the picture. Setting for the trial is impressive and true to tradition and procedure. Photography by Ray June is of exceptional merit, and settings of English countryside and castles carry authentic mounting.

Richard Thorpe's direction is workmanlike from every angle, keeping the picture moving at a steady pace, despite several slight detours of brief footage that might have detracted attention from the main line if they had been more extended.

'The Earl of Chicago' is the first production effort in Hollywood for Metro by Victor Saville, who produced 'The Citadel' and 'Goodbye, Mr. Chips' in London. This is Saville's second trip to Hollywood—first occurred 10 years ago when he made one feature for Tiffany.

OF MICE AND MEN

Hollywood, Dec. 23.  
United Artists release of Lewis Milestone production for Hal Roach; associate producer, Frank Ross. Features Burgess Meredith, Betty Field, Lon Chaney, Jr. Directed by Lewis Milestone. Screenplay by Eugene Solow; adapted from stage play produced by Sam H. Harris; staged by John Steinbeck; camera, Norbert Brodine; special effects, Roy Seawright; editor, Bert Jordan. At Four Star, Dec. 24, '39. Running time: 104 MINS.

George.....	Burgess Meredith
Mae.....	Betty Field
Lennie.....	Lon Chaney, Jr.
Slim.....	Charles Bickford
Candy.....	Roman Bohnen
Curley.....	Bob Steele
Whit.....	Noah Beery, Jr.
Jackson.....	Oscar O'Shea
Carlson.....	Grant Tinker
Crooks.....	Leigh Whipper
Susie.....	Helen Lynd

John Steinbeck's 'Of Mice and Men' reaches the screen after noteworthy success in both novel and play form. It should repeat its b.o. as a picture. Under skillful directorial guidance of Lewis Milestone, the picture retains all of the forceful and poignant drama of the author's original, in presenting the strange palship and eventual tragedy of the two California ranch itinerants. In transferring the story to the screen, scripter Eugene Solow eliminated the strong language and forthright profanity of the book and play. Despite this requirement for the Hays whitewash squad, Solow and Milestone retain all of the virility of the piece in its original form.

The picture is a close adaptation of the Steinbeck play, with wider latitude allowed by film technique accentuating the dramatic factors and increasing somewhat the pace of the story. Critics and class audience will give it top rate attention; while the strange quality of appeal wrapped up in the dramatic tragedy through excellent presentation of characters and situations—combined with wide discussion of Lennie's mouse-crushing episode in the play—will catch profitable audiences to turn in a good account of itself at the boxoffice.

Milestone, in producing and directing the film version of Steinbeck's work, declined to tinker with the leisurely-paced, stirring dramatic details of the original. Result is a close translation of the author's piece in film form, and a most sincere job of expert screen craftsmanship.

Picture's opening is novel, quickly introducing George and Lennie eluding a sheriff's posse and hopping a freight. Then the credits come on, with a box car side for background. In one brief sequence, Milestone establishes his premise—George and Lennie get into trouble frequently, and George looks after his pal.

As in the play, all of the action

Miniature Reviews

'Invisible Stripes' (WB). George Raft in top grade underworld melodrama. Good biz for general audiences.

'The Earl of Chicago' (M-G). Robert Montgomery offer intriguing character portrayal for class trade; limited general b.o.

'Of Mice and Men' (Roach-UA). Excellent production of Steinbeck's vivid drama. Cinch for critical praise and b.o.

'Amazing Mr. Williams' (Col). Comedy cops and robbers, Melvyn Douglas and Joan Blondell starred, able to stand alone.

'North Sea Patrol' (Alli). British-made thriller about spies and His Majesty's navy. Bad entertainment.

'Stars Look Down' (GN of England). Filmed from A. J. Cronin novel, looks like B. O. in Britain and America.

'Money to Burn' (Rep). Latest in the Higgins family series. Okay for duals.

takes place on the San Joaquin valley barley ranch. George and Lennie catch on as hands. Former's strange wardship of the half-wit possessed of Herculean strength is never quite explained—in fact he wonders himself just why. George keeps Lennie close to him always—continually fearful that the simpleton will kill someone with his brute power. The pair plan to buy a small ranch of their own, where Lennie can raise rabbits, when disaster strikes. Lennie crushes life out of the wife of the rancher's son, and rather than turn his pal over to the law, George kills him before arrival of the posse.

Despite the lack of boxoffice names in the cast setup, the players have been excellently selected for their respective assignments. Burgess Meredith is capital as George, and Lon Chaney, Jr. dominates throughout with a fine portrayal of the childlike giant.

Betty Field is the sexy wife who encourages approaches from the ranch workers; Bob Steele is her jealous and hard hitting husband; Charles Bickford is the muleskinner; Slim; Roman Bohnen is Candy; and Noah Beery, Jr. is Whit. Leigh Whipper, from the original Broadway cast, handles his stage role of Crooks, the Negro helper forced to live in the barn.

Film script has Lennie continually hankering for rabbits—rather than mice. Given a puppy by Slim, the half-wit's mania for stroking soft fur is successfully established. His innocent crushing of life from the pup is indicated through shot over a stall board in which his reaction is only shown. This handling of what was a powerful punch in the play, achieves its purpose for picture audiences without being too graphic for general consumption.

Milestone has exercised skill in retaining the poignant and dramatic motivations of Steinbeck's work. His deft direction provides one of the best production achievements of the season, despite the simplicity of background and settings. Despite the slow pace, and large amount of dialog, picture maintains constant interest.

Production has background of a medium-sized barley ranch of the mid-California valley, and although moderately set up with both interiors and exteriors, it carries the authentic ring. Milestone judiciously refrained from attempting to inject sweeping panoramas of harvesting in the fields, and maintains the intimacy of characters and drama of the stage play.

Amazing Mr. Williams

Columbia production and release. Stars Melvyn Douglas, Joan Blondell. Directed by Alexander Hall. Story, by Bartlett; screenplay, Dwight Taylor, by Bartlett, Richard Maibaum; camera, Arthur Todd; editor, Viola Lawrence; music, M. V. Stoff. At Liberty, Lincoln, single. Running time: 86 MINS.

Kenny Williams.....	Melvyn Douglas
Maxine Carroll.....	Joan Blondell
McGovern.....	Clarence Kelly
Effie.....	Ruth Donnelly
Moseley.....	Edward Brophy
Bixler.....	Donald MacBride
Deever.....	Don Beddoe
Mayor.....	Jonathan Hale
Stanley.....	John Wray

'Amazing Mr. Williams' won't do big biz, but it's a picture to make no enemies for film entertainment. It's cops-and-robbers, with a comedy romance stealing the interest, making nice enough fare to stand alone in many cases. Melvyn Douglas and Joan Blondell provide catchy celluloid billing.

Douglas is one of those slick cops who uses his noodle instead of his knuckles. Result is that he's a clever mystery untangler, but very poor in his girl friend's eyes as a romantic. He'll unwind from a breath-taking climax at the sound of a siren, and the screenplay sees to it that the siren pipes up often. All very exasperating to Miss Blondell, who tries to catch him between cases and get him legally and matrimonially hog-tied, but it's no good.

Comedy sessions are liberally sprinkled in the film. To keep a date with her, Douglas takes along

Ed Brophy, handcuffed to him and bound for a 40-year stretch, and they go dancing. Brophy blind-dates with Joan's roommate, Ruth Donnelly, who wears a number of the laughs with her dance floor conduct. It all leads to a near break, which wins for Douglas an assignment to make up as a decoy (a woman), to set himself as bait for a degenerate femme slugger who is terrorizing the city. Female impersonation makes him the butt of plenty of ribbing. Last case concerns John Wray, a parolee, who appears to have committed murder and robbery, but who Douglas is convinced is innocent. In helping him escape, the dick gets on the wrong side of the law, which gives the camera a chance to ring in some of Hollywood's fave background, a hossrace, where the film winds up. Closer is a good gag, Miss Blondell made a deputy the day of her marriage, and when about to fold up for the wedding night, she ditches her husband to follow a police siren.

Brophy makes good work of his short term under the lens, and bites out a giggle with nearly every line. Donald MacBride goes into the dumb cop routine and explores it for every possibility, and Clarence Kolb, the boss of the homicide squad, is nifty.

Miss Blondell is longer on s.a. than she has been in any of her recent films. Gowning, low cuts and voluptuous accenters give her plenty of charm, and she turns on the eye and lip aplenty when there's call for warmth.

Alexander Hall's direction is okay, and the pace of the film is maintained throughout with a minimum of dead space. Camera work of Arthur Todd is on the better side, too. Screenplay is bright, at hands of Sv Bartlett, Dwight Taylor and Richard Maibaum.

NORTH SEA PATROL

(BRITISH-MADE)

Alliance production and release. Features Geoffrey Toone, Judy Kelly, John Wood, Clifford Evans. Directed by Norman Lee. Screenplay, Clifford Grey; from play, 'Luck of the Navy,' by Mrs. Clifford Mills; camera, Walter Harvey; editor, Walter Stokvis; director of production, Walter C. Mycroft. At Central, N. Y., Dec. 28, '39, dual. Running time: 65 MINS.

Commander Clive Stanton.....	Geoffrey Toone
Cynthia Maybridge.....	Judy Kelly
Lieutenant Peel.....	Clifford Evans
Suk-Lieut. Wing Eden.....	John Wood
Naikes.....	Albert Burdon
Tomkins.....	Alf Goddard
Commander Perrin.....	Henry Oscar
Admiral Maybridge.....	Edmund Breon
Mrs. Maybridge.....	Doris Hare
Dora Maybridge.....	Daphne Raelan
Col. Savaroff.....	Kenneth Kent
Anna Savaroff.....	Marguerite Allen
Mrs. Rance.....	Olga Lindo
Hicks.....	Leslie Perrins
Francis.....	Frank Fox
Mille.....	Diana Beaumont
Cook.....	Joan Fred Emney
Crump.....	Laurence Kitchin

If 'North Sea Patrol' is a sample of the kind of pictures the war is going to bring, the non-combatant nations, as well as the belligerents, are going to suffer. Opus was produced in England, but it must all have been a dirty plot by German spies, for it certainly doesn't reflect much credit on Britannia.

Similarly titled picture was produced in England in 1927, likewise adapted from Mrs. Clifford Mills' play, 'Luck of the Navy.' According to VARIETY's files, it drew just about the sourest review that ever gave a producer apoplexy. Well, the yarn has been altered considerably for this remake, but the opinion still stands.

According to the dope, the picture was made shortly before the outbreak of war. It was obviously aimed to cash in on the growing tension of that period and, with current headlines playing up the warfare at sea, is likely to stir some marquee interest now. Picture itself will beat 'em into insensibility, however, and the press and word-of-mouth will be brutal.

Although it contains a few striking shots of battleships at sea, the film is almost entirely a melodrama about espionage and a villainous plot to land an invading army on the shores of England. The scurrilous spies invade an admiral's household in the guise of servants, but the Rover Boy young naval commander and the admiral's daughter save His Majesty's navy and the Empire in just about the most incredible sequence of events ever conceived by a propaganda ministry. They might cut the picture down to just the shots of the ships, carefully eliminating the painfully phoney battle at the end and particularly retaining the views of anti-aircraft defense. That would provide about 10 minutes of vividly interesting film. But the rest is obvious, extraneous and dull. Direction and acting are worthy of a 1905 stock company.

Hicks, Zukor Sailing

John W. Hicks, Jr., head of Paramount's foreign department sails on an extended tour of Latin-American countries, Jan. 12. Adolph Zukor, chairman of Par's board of directors, and his wife, will accompany him on the trip. First stop will be Panama.

Contemplated tour by Paramount executives probably will last 10 weeks or possibly until the last of April.

The Stars Look Down

(BRITISH-MADE)

London, Dec. 15.  
Grand National production and release. Stars Michael Redgrave, Margaret Lockwood, Emyln Williams. Directed by Carol Reed. Screenplay by J. B. Williams; adapted from novel by A. J. Cronin; camera, Mutt Greenbaum. At Cambridge, London. Running time: 104 MINS.

David Fenwick.....	Michael Redgrave
Jenny Sunley.....	Margaret Lockwood
Joe Gowan.....	Emlyn Williams
Martha Fenwick.....	Nancy Price
Robert Fenwick.....	Edward Rigby
Richard Barras.....	Allan Jeayes
Stanley Millington.....	Cecil Parker
Laura Millington.....	Linden Travers
Harry Nugent, M.P.....	Milton Rosmer
'Slogger' Gowan.....	George Carney
West.....	Ivor Barnard
Mrs. Sunley.....	Olga Lindo
Hughie Fenwick.....	Desmond Tester
Arthur Barras.....	David Markham

'The Stars Look Down' is a visual education on local mining. A picturization of a subject long an uncomfortable wedge in the English social-political scheme, 'Stars' would merit laurels alone for a faithful and gripping treatment. But film goes for more; it is a splendid dramatic portrait of those who burrow for the black diamond in England's north-land. It is a tragedy of the best. Direction is of class standing and picture is mounted with exactness of detail and technique.

Criticism from outside England may be from the standpoint of its treatment, but it must be remembered the problem and the people dealt with are intrinsically English, and consequently the production is based correspondingly. Picture's chances as b.o. are aces here, but it might be militated against by war and the present laughter trend. But in United States its excellent standard should reach adequate appreciation, and the 'Citadel' prestige of its author will help considerably.

Adopted from A. J. Cronin's novel of the mining town from where two sons seek different roads to success, one returning to foster misery, the other to fight on for its alleviation, film unrolls at steady pace a wealth of dramatic incident.

There are some gaps where treatment is not on par with dramatic situation. The Emyln Williams part, the focal point of the tragedy, is under-developed, but Director Carol Reed has guided well a cast that exacts the utmost generally.

Michael Redgrave, as son of the strike-leader; Williams, a ne-er-do-well, and Margaret Lockwood, as a slut, share the starring honor. Jolo.

Money To Burn

Republic release of Gus Meins production; directed by Meins. Features the Gleasons. Screenplay, Jack Townley, from his and Taylor Caven's original; editor, William Morgan; camera, Ernest Miller; musical director, Cy Feuer. Previewed in Projection Room, N. Y., Dec. 28, '39. Running time: 69 MINS.

Joe Higgins.....	James Gleason
Lil Higgins.....	Lucile Gleason
Sidney Higgins.....	Russell Gleason
Grandpa.....	Harry Davenport
Betty Higgins.....	Lois Ranson
Tommy Higgins.....	Tommy Ryan
Mr. Ellis.....	Thurston Hall
Mrs. Davis.....	Winifred Harris
Bill.....	Douglas Meins
Irving.....	Lucien Littlefield
Mr. Dover.....	Herbert Rawlinson
Thorne.....	Jack Rice
Brown.....	Andrew Tombes
Miss Pida.....	Gladys Blake
Miss Murphy.....	Jean Fenwick

This latest in the Higgins family series is mildly amusing dual fare that'll click especially in the nabes. Some of its humor is questionable, and so's the story, but with the Gleasons—Jimmy, Lucile and Russell, their son—heading the cast, the film has a good selling point for the family time, for which this series is aimed.

Yarn has a familiar ring, concerning the trials and tribulations of the Higginses as they particularly affect the head of the household, played by Jimmy Gleason. The guy's always getting it in the neck in the series, so this pic creates no surprise on that score. This time mom has the contest bug. Pop works for an advertising agency handling a \$50,000 dog biscuit contest, and therein hinges the story, the meddling little lady learning, after buying out the town's biscuit supply in order to get the lucky coupon, that she's ineligible because of her husband's affiliation with the account. Of course, no tale could be more simple, but then again no one is more simple than Lil Higgins.

Gleason, of course, carries most of the pic, with Mrs. Gleason, as Lil, doing well enough. Russell Gleason, Lois Ranson and Tommy Ryan, as the young Higginses, and Harry Davenport, as grandpa, particularly the latter, do well in support.

Le Chasseur de Chez

Maxim's

('Chez Maxim's Doorman') (FRENCH-MADE)

Paris, Dec. 18.  
Gray Films release of Stella Production. Stars Bach; features Roger Treville, Genevieve Calix, Marcel Carnier. Directed by Maurice Wolf; story and dialog by Yves Mirande and Gustave Quinson. At Max Linder and Caesar, Paris. Running time, 90 MINS.

The adventures of Julien, doorman at Chez Maxim's, famed Paris landmark, is an old favorite with French pic and legit audiences. The present remake is the best in the series and should enjoy a long, successful run in the capital's neighborhood show- (Continued on page 42)



# "OF MICE AND MEN"

Hailed as one of the best 1939 Films—says Associated Press in 1200 newspapers, reaching 10 million readers. Hal Roach's production of John Steinbeck's best selling novel and stage play hit responds with record holdover business in Los Angeles at the Four Star, and the Orpheum Theatre, Montreal. Two openings—two long run holdovers as thousands flock to see the picture Hollywood said never could be made.



HAL ROACH *presents*

## "OF MICE AND MEN"

by **JOHN STEINBECK** • Produced and Directed by **LEWIS MILESTONE**  
with **BURGESS MEREDITH** • **BETTY FIELD** • **LON CHANEY, Jr.**  
Associate Producer **FRANK ROSS** • Screen Play by **EUGENE SOLOW**

**RELEASED THRU UNITED ARTISTS**

P. S. Read Quentin Reynolds' article on "OF MICE AND MEN" in the January 6th issue of Collier's Magazine, it is thrilling 3,500,000 readers right now!



# LEO BERGERE HUDDLES N.Y.'S MAYOR

A new development in Mayor LaGuardia's eastern production move came to light Friday (29) when Leo Bergere visited the Mayor to talk over things with him.

Nothing authentic could be ascertained as to what the producer and the Mayor discussed, but by piecing together the various rumors circulating the Mayor's office it appears that Hizzoner has not been successful in getting major production heads interested in producing films in the east. The Mayor was also unable to get anywhere with independent production, as many indies who might have been willing to produce here, found it impossible, due to lack of releasing arrangements. Bergere has been prominent in Grand National's reorganization moves the past three weeks. His background is Metro in Europe. Should Bergere be able to swing the Grand National deal to a successful conclusion, he will be ready to put up \$1,000,000 for production for that company, or so he has informed referee Peter B. Olney Jr. in N. Y. federal court.

GN has a good exchange setup but it is dubious that Bergere can supply sufficient 'A' films to keep these exchanges going. Should he be able to work out a deal with the Mayor, he may produce all but the GN westerns in N. Y., and the Mayor in return might use his influence that GN handle independent pix produced by others in the east.

## MARTHA RAYE DECIDES ON JOLSON'S LEGITER

Pittsburgh, Jan. 1.

Of all Broadway musicals for which she's already been mentioned, the only one Martha Raye is considering, singing comedienne said here last week, is show Al Jolson will do for Vinton Freedley in spring. Furthermore, it's the lone legit future that would fit in with her current schedule, since her unit's bookings extend into March.

Although at present not under contract to any studio, Miss Raye said she's had offers from both 20th-Fox and U, but in future would consider only one-picture deals and no star billing. Gal attributes much of her professional unhappiness in Hollywood the last couple of years to quick stardom she originally fought against and still doesn't want.

## Henigson In Exec Post With Roosevelt Outfit

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Henry Henigson, onetime general manager of Universal studio and later producer at Metro, joins James Roosevelt's Globe Productions as v. p. and associate producer. First job is to line up production personnel for the new outfit. Roosevelt has slated his first picture for April 1 start.

John LeRoy Johnston, p. a. for Walter Wanger, has been named to handle similar job for the Roosevelt production unit. He'll do double duty temporarily.

Roosevelt bought 'Storm in Paradise' as his second Globe production. First is 'The Bat.' Henigson named Guy Trosper, story editor; D. Izzard, general production manager, and Henri Verstappen, production assistant.

## U.S. Nabs RKO House Man

The long arm of the law after four months reached out to nab Gerard Sloane, who was at the RKO Uptown theatre, New York, until he left without notice, taking \$264 of the house's money with him.

He was arrested in New Orleans during the past week and is held there by Federal authorities. The arrest was made by Federal inspectors as result of another theft by Sloane which involved use of the mails.

# FILM BOOKING CHART

(For information of theatre and film exchange bookers VARIETY presents a complete chart of feature releases of all the American distributing companies for the current quarterly period. Date of reviews as given in VARIETY and the running time of prints are included.)

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Rev. in Var.—Reviewed in Variety Key to Type Abbreviations R. T.—Running Time  
M—Melodrama; C—Comedy; CD—Comedy-Drama; W—Western; D—Drama; RD—Romantic Drama; MU—Musical

WEEK OF RELEASE	Rev. in Var.	TITLE AND COMPANY	TYPE	TALENT	R. T.
10/27/39	10/25	BEWARE SPOOKS (Col)	C	J. E. Brown-M. Carlisle	65
	12/6	BAD LITTLE GIRL (M-G)	D	V. Weidler-G. Reynolds-R. Owen	77
	11/1	MUTINY IN BIG HOUSE (Mono)	D	C. Bickford-B. MacLane	84
	11/22	DANGER FLIGHT (Mono)	D	J. Trent-M. Reynolds-M. Stone	61
	10/18	DISPUTED PASSAGE (Par)	RD	Lamour-Tamiroff-Howard	89
	10/18	SUED FOR LIBEL (RKO)	D	K. Taylor-L. Hayes-R. Lane	65
	10/25	20,000 MEN A YEAR (20th)	D	R. Scott-P. Foster-M. Lindsay	83
	9/13	HOUSEKEEPER'S DAUGHTER (UA)	C	J. Bennett-A. Menjou-W. Gargan	80
	11/1	LITTLE ACCIDENT (U)	CD	H. Herbert-B. Sandy-F. Rice	65
	10/25	THE ROARING TWENTIES (WB)	D	J. Cagney-H. Bogart-P. Lane	106
	11/1	JEEPERS CREEPERS (Rep)	CD	Weaver Bros.-R. Rogers	69
11/3/39	11/8	BLONDIE BRINGS UP BABY (Col)	C	P. Singleton-A. Lake-L. Sims	67
	12/27	STRANGER FROM TEXAS (Col)	W	C. Starrett-L. Gray-D. Curtis	54
	10/11	NINOTCHKA (M-G)	CD	G. Garbo-M. Douglas-I. Claire	111
	11/22	OVERLAND MAIL (Mono)	W	Jack Randall	57
	12/13	FIGHTING MEN (Mono)	D	J. Newill-S. Blane	65
	10/11	THE FLYING DEUCES (RKO)	C	S. Laurel-O. Hardy-J. Parker	61
	12/27	MARSHALL OF MESA CITY (RKO)	W	George O'Brien	61
	12/6	HEAVEN BARBED WIRE FENCE (20th)	CD	J. Rogers-R. Walburn-M. Rambeau	61
	11/1	LEGION OF LOST FLYERS (U)	M	R. Arlen-A. Nagel-A. Devine	63
	11/18	CALL A MESSENGER (U)	M	B. Halop-H. Hall-M. Carlisle	64
	11/22	KID NIGHTINGALE (WB)	C	J. Payne-J. Wyman	58
11/10/39	11/8	REMEMBER? (M-G)	D	R. Taylor-G. Garson-L. Ayers	82
	12/6	HEROES IN BLUE (Mono)	D	D. Purcell-B. Hayes	60
	11/1	CAT AND CANARY (Par)	M	B. Hope-Paulette Goddard-J. Beal	72
	11/8	MAIN STREET LAWYER (Rep)	M	E. Ellis-A. Louise-R. Baldwin	72
	11/8	ALLEGHENY UPRISING (RKO)	D	J. Wayne-C. Trevor-C. Sanders	98
	11/8	DRUMS ALONG MOHAWK (20th)	D	C. Colbert-H. Fonda-E. M. Oliver	103
	11/8	FIRST LOVE (U)	RD	D. Durbin-R. Stack	84
	11/8	ONE HOUR TO LIVE (U)	M	D. Nolan-C. Bickford-J. Lital	61
	10/4	ELIZABETH AND ESSEX (WB)	D	B. Davis-E. Flynn	106
11/17/39	11/15	ANOTHER THIN MAN (M-G)	RD	M. Loy-W. Powell-C. A. Smith	101
	11/15	THE PHANTOM STRIKES (Mono)	M	W. Lawson-S. Hale	58
		RAIDERS OVER ENGLAND (Mono)	D	No Cast	
	9/20	RULERS OF THE SEA (Par)	D	D. Fairbanks, Jr.-M. Lockwood	96
	11/22	TOWER OF LONDON (U)	C	B. Rathbone-B. Karloff	92
	11/15	THE COVERED TRAILER (Rep)	M	J. Gleason-L. Gleason-T. Ryan	63
	10/18	MEET DR. CHRISTIAN (RKO)	D	J. Hersholt-D. Lovett-P. Lee	63
	11/1	TOO BUSY TO WORK (20th)	C	J. Prouty-S. Byington-K. Howell	64
	11/1	ON DRESS PARADE (WB)	M	Dead End Kids-J. Lital	62
11/24/39	11/22	AMAZING MR. WILLIAMS (Col)	C	J. Blondell-M. Douglas	80
	12/20	SECRET OF DR. KILDARE (M-G)	D	L. Ayres-L. Barrymore-L. Day	83
	12/20	ROLL, WAGONS, ROLL (Mono)	W	Tex Ritter	58
	11/8	OUR NEIGHBORS (Par)	CD	F. Bainter-F. Craven-E. Lowe	83
	11/22	THAT'S RIGHT, YOU'RE WRONG (RKO)	MU	K. Kyser-A. Menjou-E. E. Horton	91
	11/15	DAY-TIME WIFE (20th)	CD	T. Power-L. Darnell-W. William	71
	11/29	BIG GUY (U)	D	V. McLaglen-J. Cooper	78
	11/15	WE ARE NOT ALONE (WB)	D	P. Muni-J. Bryan-F. Robson	112
12/1/39	12/6	A CALL ON THE PRESIDENT (M-G)	CD	A. Sothorn-W. Gargan-L. Stone	69
		CAFE HOSTESS (Col)	CD	P. Foster-A. Dvorak	
		GENTLEMAN FROM ARIZONA (Mono)	W	C. Reynolds-J. King	71
		YUKON FLIGHT (Mono)	D	J. Newill-L. Stanley-D. O'Brien	
	12/6	COWBOYS FROM TEXAS (Rep)	W	R. Livingston-R. Hatton-D. Renaldo	57
	11/29	NIGHT OF NIGHTS (Par)	CD	P. O'Brien-O. Bradna-R. Young	85
	12/13	RENO (RKO)	D	R. Dix-G. Patrick-A. Louise	73
	11/22	CITY IN DARKNESS (20th)	M	S. Toler-L. Bari-R. Clarke	72
	10/25	INSP. HORNELEIGH ON HOLIDAY (20th)	M	G. Harker-A. Sim-L. Travers	90
	12/20	LAUGH IT OFF (U)	C	J. Downs-C. Moore	64
	11/29	RETURN OF DR. X (WB)	M	H. Bogart-J. Lital-R. Lane	60
12/6/39	11/15	FUGITIVE AT LARGE (Col)	M	J. Holt-P. Ellis	66
		TAMING OF THE WEST (Col)	W	Bill Elliott	
	12/13	HENRY GOES ARIZONA (M-G)	CD	F. Morgan-V. Weidler-G. Kibbee	
		LUCKY TEXAN (Mono)	W	John Wayne	
		THE LLANO KID (Par)	W	T. Guizar-A. Dunn-A. Mowbray	69
		TWO THOROUGHBREDS (RKO)	D	J. Lydon-J. Kerrigan	
	12/13	BARRICADE (20th)	CD	Alice Faye-W. Baxter-A. Treacher	70
		MAN FROM MONTREAL (U)	D	R. Arlen-A. Devine	
	12/6	PRIVATE DETECTIVE (WB)	M	J. Wyman-D. Foran	57
12/15/39	12/13	NICK CARTER, DETECTIVE (M-G)	M	W. Pidgeon-R. Johnson-H. Hull	
		THE SECRET FOUR (Mono)	D	F. Lawton-H. Sinclair-A. Lee	
		WESTBOUND STAGE (Mono)	W	Tex Ritter	
	11/22	ALL WOMEN HAVE SECRETS (Par)	RD	J. Allen, Jr.-J. Cagney-V. Dale	59
	12/13	SOUTH OF THE BORDER (Rep)	W	G. Autry-S. Burnette-J. Storey	
	12/20	THE HONEYMOON'S OVER (20th)	D	S. Erwin-M. Weaver-P. Knowles	69
	11/22	MISSING EVIDENCE (U)	M	P. Foster-I. Hervey	64
		THE MAD EMPRESS (WB)	D	M. Novara-L. Atwill-C. Nagel	
12/22/39	12/13	HIS GIRL FRIDAY (Col)	CD	C. Grant-R. Russell	
	12/20	JUDGE HARDY AND SON (M-G)	CD	L. Stone-M. Rooney-C. Parker	88
		GULLIVER'S TRAVELS (Par)	CD	Cartoon	75
	12/20	MONEY TO BURN (Rep)	CD	J. Gleason-L. Gleason-T. Ryan	60
		HAPPENS AT NIGHT (20th)	RD	S. Henie-R. Milland-R. Cummings	76
	12/20	CHARLIE MCCARTHY, DETECTIVE (U)	M	E. Bergen-R. Cummings	78
	11/22	FOUR WIVES (WB)	RD	Lane-Sisters-G. Page-E. Albert	110
		SLIGHTLY HONORABLE (UA)	CD	R. Terry-B. Crawford-E. Arnold	
12/29/39	12/20	BALALAIKA (M-G)	MU	N. Eddy-I. Massey-C. Ruggles	102
	11/29	GREAT VICTOR HERBERT (Par)	MU	M. Martin-A. Jones-W. Connolly	84
	12/13	THOU SHALT NOT KILL (Rep)	D	C. Bickford-O. Davis, Jr.-D. Day	
	12/27	DAYS OF JESSE JAMES (Rep)	W	R. Rogers-G. Hayes-D. Barry	63
	12/20	HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME (RKO)	D	C. Laughton-M. O'Hara	115
	11/29	CISCO KID AND LADY (20th)	RD	C. Romero-M. Weaver-C. P. Martin	73
	12/6	DESTRY RIDES AGAIN (U)	W	M. Dietrich-J. Stewart-M. Auer	90
		INVISIBLE STRIPES (WB)	M	G. Raft-J. Bryan	
	12/20	RAFFLES (UA)	CD	D. Niven-A. de Havilland-D. Digges	70
1/5/40		TWO-FISTED RANGERS (Col)	W	C. Starrett-I. Meredith	
		THE EARL OF CHICAGO (M-G)	C	R. Montgomery-E. Arnold-R. Owen	
		EMERGENCY SQUAD (Par)	RD	W. Henry-L. Campbell-R. Denning	
	12/27	LEGION OF LAWLESS (RKO)	W	G. O'Brien-V. Vale	
		SWANEE RIVER (20th)	RD	D. Ameche-A. Leeds-A. Jolson	85
		FRAMED (U)	C	C. Moore-F. Albertson-R. Armstrong	
		A CHILD IS BORN (WB)	RD	G. Fitzgerald-J. Lynn	
1/12/40		SHOP AROUND CORNER (M-G)	CD	M. Sullivan-J. Stewart-F. Morgan	
		DANGER AHEAD (Mono)	M	J. Newill	
	11/22	GERONIMO (Par)	W	P. Foster-E. Drew-A. Devine	89
	12/13	MEXICAN SPITFIRE (RKO)	RD	L. Velez-D. Woods-L. Errol	67
		HEROES OF THE SADDLE (Rep)	W	R. Livingston-R. Hatton-P. L. Parsons	
		CITY OF CHANCE (20th)	M	L. Bari-C. Aubrey-Smith-D. Woods	
		INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS (U)	M	V. Price-N. Grey-J. Sutton	
		OF MICE AND MEN (UA)	D	B. Meredith-B. Field-L. Chaney, Jr.	
		BROTHER RAT AND BABY (WB)	C	J. Bryan-P. Lane	
1/19/40		MUSIC IN MY HEART (Col)	M	T. Martin-R. Hayworth-E. Fellows	
		CONGO MAISIE (M-G)	C	A. Sothorn-J. Carroll-R. Johnson	
		UNTITLED (Mono)	M	Boris Karloff	
		UNTITLED (Mono)	M	Frankie Darro	
		REMEMBER THE NIGHT (Par)	RD	B. Stanwyck-F. MacMurray-B. Bondi	
		MARRIED AND IN LOVE (RKO)	RD	A. Marshall-B. Read-P. Knowles	
		HE MARRIED HIS WIFE (20th)	C	J. McCrea-N. Kelly-R. Young	
		WEST OF CARSON CITY (U)	W	J. M. Brown-B. Baker-F. Knight	
		REBECCA (UA)	M	L. Olivier-J. Fontaine-J. Anderson	
		BRITISH INTELLIGENCE (WB)	M	M. Lindsay-B. Karloff	
1/26/40		LONG WOLF STRIKES (Col)	M	W. William-J. Perry	
		LAMBETH WALK (M-G)	C	L. Lane-S. Gray-S. Hicks	
		PIONEER DAYS (Mono)	W	Jack Randall	
		SANTA FE MARSHAL (Par)	W	W. Boyd-R. Hayden-B. Hayes	
		SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON (RKO)	D	T. Mitchell-E. Best-F. Bartholomew	
		HIGH SCHOOL (20th)	C	J. Withers-L. Brown, Jr.-C. Edwards	
		GREEN HELL (U)	D	D. Fairbanks, Jr.-J. Bennett	
		FIGHTING SIXTY-NINTH	D	J. Cagney-P. O'Brien	

## Film Reviews

Continued from page 40

cases and in the provinces. It will certainly rate abroad if it doesn't incur the censor's wrath, for cutting will make it as flat as champagne without the pop.

Plot is not much in originality but the ensemble puts the pic across. Atmosphere of Chez Maxim's, where most of the action takes place; the beautiful, handsomely gowned femmes who live just over the borderline of respectability, the dialog and amusing sequences—they're all exploited to the fullest by Maurice Wolf, who has transposed Yves Mirande's and Gustave Quinson's play with considerable adroitness. It moves along at a fast, smooth clip, with lapses few and inconsequential. The cutting might have been more judicious.

Bach portrays Julien, as he did in the stage version at the Palais Royale years ago. His is the name draw, but paradoxically enough, he contributes little else, being carried along by the pic's action. He still holds audience appeal, however, by capitalizing on a rep made years ago.

After years at Maxim's, where, nightly, he greets customers and does a thousand and one little chores, the doorman is tired of Maxim's ambience and heartsore at suddenly learning that his mistress, played by Genevieve Callix, one of the girls of the house, has been unfaithful to him with a customer (Roger Treville). Latter abandons her just about this time upon inheriting a title and fortune, and falls for a youngster, Bach's daughter. The rest of the yarn hinges on the complications that result.

Marcel Carpentier, as the Abbot, tops the cast. Fat, gluttonous, but spiritual and glibly quoting the scriptures, his performance is superb. Treville and Miss Callix turn in sophisticated performances. All minor characters are topnotch. Photography is mostly bad but the genuine atmosphere contributes considerably to the pic's sincerity and conviction. *Ravo.*

## ABUNA MESSIAS

('CARDINAL MESSIAS')  
(ITALIAN-MADE)

Rome, Dec. 18.

General release of R.F.F.-Luigi Glacosi production. Stars Camillo Pilotto, features Mario Ferrari, Ippolito Silvestri, Enrico Glori. Directed by Goffredo Alessandrini. Camera, Aldo Tonti, Del Frate and Fosati. At the Barberini, Rome. Cast: Camillo Pilotto, Mario Ferrari, Ippolito Silvestri, Enrico Glori, Corrado Rocca, Francesco Sala, Amedeo Trilli, Roberto Pasotti, Berche Zaito, Tacle, Morka, Abel-Urb. Running time, 95 MINS.

Winner of the Mussolini Cup as the best Italian production of the year, 'Abuna Messias' is not going to cop any cups abroad. Prize donors evidently had size and scope of production in mind when they doled out the honors, for pic is one of the biggest things ever tried here. It should have fair returns domestically, but would be classed as run-of-the-mill abroad.

Yarn is historical, concerning Ethiopia, its Menelik and the Franciscan monks' attempt to spread christianity among the natives. Messias was one of the latter, gaining the confidence of Menelik because of the work he had done in the country. Jealous of Messias' power, Abuna Atanasio, head of the native Coptic church, demands that Menelik expel Messias. When Menelik refused, Atanasio took the matter to Negus Johannes, who was persuaded to make war on Menelik.

Pic is based mostly on the Messias character, the intrigue within the Coptic church and finally the war. First two phases are convincing enough, with some fine acting by Camillo Pilotto as Messias, Ippolito Silvestri as Johannes and Mario Ferrari, Atanasio, Enrico Glori, as Menelik, is on the short side.

Shorter still is the war. Excellent mob scenes show the gathering of the clans, with some 250,000 natives being used. And even though some good clashes are shown, there is no means of distinguishing who is who and the outcome of the battle is only known through the word of mouth and not by action. Too, some of the horsemen riding to the fray smell of Hollywood's frontier-men chasing Indians. Photography is good but cutting is spotty. *Hugo.*

## Eddy Renews at M-G

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Nelson Eddy inked a new contract with Metro to take effect at the close of his concert tour, which begins next month.

First picture under the new pact is 'I Married an Angel.'

## PAYNE'S 'TWINKLE'

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

John Payne gets the male lead spot opposite Linda Darnell in 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star,' at 20th-Fox.

Mary Healy is assigned to a featured role in the film.



# 6 SCANDALOUS NAMES out to make box-office history!



Webb was a lawyer who practiced at the bar...any bar...and won all his cases out of court!



Sampson was the silent partner who had the whole town talking by the way he carried on... and on...and on!



Cushing was the big boss who ran the city from the bottom down and even made a racket out of love!



Alma was too beautiful to live...but her murder blew the lid off a lot of private lives!



Joyce was the District Attorney who sold out his police department and then forgot to ask for a receipt!

AND THEY WERE ALL

## SLIGHTLY HONORABLE PAT O'BRIEN

A TAY GARNETT PRODUCTION with

EDWARD ARNOLD • BRODERICK CRAWFORD • RUTH TERRY

Directed by TAY GARNETT • Novel by F. G. PRESNELL

Screenplay by KEN ENGLUND • JOHN LAY • ROBERT TALLMAN

Music by WERNER JANSSEN

Released thru UNITED ARTISTS



## RATING THE CAMERAMEN

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

With studio economies and practice of reducing shooting schedules on big productions instituted during the year, the ace cameramen, with few exceptions, found little opportunity to smack through with outstanding jobs in the photographic line. Over all, quality of photography has greatly improved during 1939. The faster and finer grain negatives of Eastman, together with general acceptance of new and more sensitive photoelectric exposure meters, gave impetus to raising quality of cameraman's work all around.

But studio economies necessitated that the contract cameramen, most of whom had been accustomed to standing by waiting for the big pictures to get to the starting line, take the rank and file of pictures in turn.

Six of this year's top 10 are there because of consistent assignments on A productions. Tony Gaudio remains the standby of Warners, recognized for his exceptional photography under any and all conditions, and had several top productions to work on during the year. Joe Ruttenberg and George Folsey have continued their fine standards at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and split most of the big ones on that lot between them. Gregg Toland had the advantage of shooting Samuel Goldwyn

productions, all of which were made with plenty of time and attention to general production quality. Theodor Sparkuhl rolled into the first 10 for his photography on 'Beau Geste' and 'Rulers of the Sea,' two of Paramount's big ones for the year. Rudolph Mate is credited with 'Love

### Top Specialists

#### SPECIAL EFFECTS, PROCESS AND BACKGROUND SHOTS

Farciot Edouart—Paramount.  
Gordon Jennings—Paramount.  
Byron Haskins—Warners.  
Vernon Walker—RKO.  
Fred Sersen—20th-Fox.  
Jack Cosgrove—Selznik.

#### AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Elmer Dyer.  
Charles Marshall.

#### EXTERIORS

Archie Stout.  
Wilfrid Cline (Technicolor).

'Affair' and 'The Real Glory,' while Ernest Haller's photographic direction of 'Gone With the Wind' is one of the finest jobs of the year. Joseph Valentine, who has been in the

select 10 for the two previous years, photographed the Deanna Durbin features and other A's at Universal.

Rudolph Mate has a hankering to get into a post of either director or producer and is aiming towards that goal. Karl Freund may also take another crack at directing this year although he still ranks as a top cameraman. Hal Mohr, who attempted a short stretch at directing, got back behind the camera to photograph 'Destry Rides Again.'

Stuart Thompson was the only cinematographer during the year drawing promotion from a second to first. Russell Harlan, photographing the Hopalong Cassidy features for Harry Sherman, gained attention for his exceptional exteriors which did much to lift the values of the pictures through scenic beauty and camera effects.

Harry Stradling and Fred A. Young, two of the top cameramen in England, arrived in Hollywood during the year and found no trouble in getting local assignments. Stradling photographed 'Pygmalion' in London, while Young handled camera direction on the Herbert Wilcox-Anne Neagle features, and 'Mr. Chips.' Young came here in the spring to collaborate on photography of 'Nurse Edith Cavell' with Joe August.

Special effects and process engineers distinguished themselves during the year with some outstanding work in their fields. Farciot Edouart's process shots for 'Rulers of the Sea' and 'Geronimo' were most effective, and saved Paramount thousands of

dollars through his short-cutting magic. Byron Haskins at Warners provided a consistently high quality of process and background work, which included such shots for Technicolor productions. Fred Sersen of 20th-Fox provided some most effective special effects for 'The Rains Came,' while Jack Cosgrove's wizardry is studded throughout Selznick's 'Gone With the Wind.'

Aerial camera experts, Dyer and Marshall, had less work the past year

## First 10 Cameramen

(Listed Alphabetically)

George Folsey  
Tony Gaudio  
Bert Glennon  
Ernest Haller  
Rudolph Mate

Joe Ruttenberg  
Leon Shamroy  
Theodor Sparkuhl  
Gregg Toland  
Joseph Valentine

### SECOND TEN

Joe August  
William Daniels  
James Wong Howe  
Charles Lang, Jr.  
Peverell Marley

Victor Milner  
Ernest Palmer  
Sol Polito  
Karl Struss  
Ted Tetzlaff

### THIRD TEN

George Barnes  
Karl Freund  
Merritt Gerstad  
Ray June  
Oliver Marsh

Arthur Miller  
John Seitz  
Leo Tovar  
Sid Wagner  
Joseph Walker

# CHARLES BOYER

# RONALD COLMAN





# MONEY TALKS!

*Spend your advertising dollars where they sell the most seats at lowest cost per ticket sold and your money will be talking for you in the only language that counts... PROFITS!*

The Prize Baby  
of the Industry  
watches over  
SPECIAL  
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TRAILERS  
too here at  
NATIONAL SCREEN  
SERVICE

**NATIONAL SCREEN TRAILERS** reach more people... reach more customers... present more selling points from more different angles... quicker... more dramatically than any other advertising you can buy.

- That's how **NATIONAL SCREEN TRAILERS** have proven themselves the best seller in the business for more than twenty years... making more profits per dollar spent...

- The most concentrated... quick-action... lowest cost advertising in the field.

**NATIONAL** *Screen* **SERVICE**

..PRIZE BABY OF THE INDUSTRY



## 1939 Hollywood Toppers

Continued from page 29

big. Studios also had one from 'Little Tough Guys' that was oke as well as bringing to the fore a couple of kidlet stars, Baby Sandy and Gloria Jean, whom it figures cashing in on during next couple years and before Durbin value subsides.

Studio has a fairly promising feature contract list with couple of the femmes and juves giving indications of development. For its stellar feature players it contracted during year with freelancers for individual commitments and got some potent supporting strength to aid in box-office consumption.

### UNIVERSAL

#### Stars

DEANNA DURBIN  
IRENE DUNNE-CHAS. BOYER  
BING CROSBY  
DIETRICH-JAMES STEWART  
W. C. FIELDS-EDGAR BERGEN  
DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS, JR.  
BASIL RATHBONE-LUGOSI  
LITTLE TOUGH GUYS  
BABY SANDY  
GLORIA JEAN

#### Featured

Adolphe Menjou  
Mischa Auer  
Vincent Price  
Jackie Cooper  
Nan Grey  
Boris Karloff  
Barton MacLane  
William Lundigan  
Preston Foster  
Hugh Herbert  
Richard Arlen  
Constance Moore  
Robert Cummings  
Joy Hodges  
John Mack Brown  
Frances Robinson  
William Gargan  
Sigrid Gurie  
Barbara O'Neil  
Buster Crabbe  
Juanita Quigley  
Irene Hervey  
Peggy Moran  
Anne Gwynne  
James Craig  
Robert Stack  
Lewis Howard  
Andy Devine  
Fuzzy Knight  
Frank Jenks  
Dorothy Arnold  
Helen Parrish  
Sam S. Hinds  
Bob Baker  
Alice Eylan  
John Sutton  
Jerry Marlowe

### 5 Producers Swelled

#### United Artists List

United Artists had five C-list producers during 1939 with more volume from here than ever in the past.

Sam Goldwyn's star mainstay was Gary Cooper, with Merle Oberon also getting equal billing and David Niven elevated to top rank toward end of the year. Laurence Olivier also got into star bracket as did Jascha Heifetz. Jon Hall was not used by his discoverer but farmed to Walter Wanger. The Goldwyn age in feature roles is Walter Brennan, with Andrea Leeds also figuring in this division as well as Virginia Gilmore and Dana Andrews. Miss Leeds got her release from Goldwyn recently.

#### Wanger Shopped

Wanger did shopping for his stars and individual commitments and in this way obtained Loretta Young, John Wayne and Claire Trevor. On loan from other studios he obtained Niven, Jon Hall, Maureen O'Sullivan and Ann Sheridan, elevating latter to stardom. His feature group were all from the freelance rank.

Vivien Leigh, due to 'Wind,' heads the Selznick-International star group, with Janet Gaynor the other S-I star also being used. Others that figured in the company output were freelance and loanouts, as were the supporting players for the S-I product.

Edward Small, new addition this year to the UA group, used Louis Hayward, his own star discovery, in two pictures. He was co-starred with Joan Bennett in one of them. Small also had potent feature support in these pix. Likely that he will develop small stock group that will be utilized in his and other UA producer pics as they show promise.

Hal Roach used trio of stars for his output of five. He had his old

standbys, Laurel and Hardy, in one and used each of the Bennett gals, Connie and Joan, in others. Roach has but couple of people on contract for feature parts, John Hubbard and Victor Mature, with rest employed from freelance field mostly and couple of loans.

### UNITED ARTISTS

#### (Samuel Goldwyn)

##### Stars

GARY COOPER  
MERLE OBERON  
DAVID NIVEN  
LAURENCE OLIVIER  
JASCHA HEIFETZ  
JON HALL

##### Featured

Walter Brennan  
Andrea Leeds  
Virginia Gilmore  
Dana Andrews

#### (Walter Wanger)

##### Stars

LORETTA YOUNG-DAVID NIVEN  
JOHN WAYNE-CLAIRE TREVOR  
ANN SHERIDAN  
JON HALL-MAUREEN O'SULLIVAN

##### Featured

Thomas Mitchell  
John Carradine  
Hugh Herbert  
Billie Burke  
C. Aubrey Smith  
Raymond Walburn  
ZaSu Pitts  
George Bancroft  
Donald Meek  
Barton Churchill  
Broderick Crawford  
Osa Massen

#### (Selznick-International)

##### Stars

VIVIEN LEIGH-GABLE  
CAROLE LOMBARD  
JAMES STEWART  
INGRID BERGMAN  
DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS, JR.  
LESLIE HOWARD  
JANET GAYNOR

##### Featured

Paulette Goddard  
Joan Fontaine  
Alan Marshall  
Richard Carlson

#### (Edward Small)

##### Stars

LOUIS HAYWARD  
JOAN BENNETT

##### Featured

Adolphe Menjou  
Warren William  
Joan Fontaine  
Tom Brown  
Richard Carlson  
Alan Curtis  
Dolores Costello  
Alan Hale

#### (Hal Roach)

##### Stars

LAUREL AND HARDY  
CONSTANCE BENNETT  
JOAN BENNETT

##### Featured

Roland Young  
Brian Aherne  
Adolphe Menjou  
Victor McLaglen  
Lon Chaney, Jr.  
Billie Burke  
Burgess Meredith  
Charles Bickford  
John Carradine  
Douglas Dumbrille  
Paul Lukas  
June Lang  
Betty Field  
George Zucca  
Noah Beery, Jr.  
Roman Bohnen  
Virginia Field  
John Hubbard  
Victor Mature

### Columbia Keeps Its

#### Jean Arthur Busy

Columbia's sole star, Jean Arthur, was plenty utilized on the year, having done both Capra pictures and also in 'Only Angels Have Wings.' This naturally gives her biggest star value in company's calendar for period. James Stewart, though on loanout from Metro, had spots in both Capra pictures and can be listed

in the Columbia grouping. Studio had group of other stars for individual commitments who enhanced draw value of their bigger budgeted pictures. Its stock is small in feature players, Walter Connolly and Thomas Mitchell the outstanders from the home lot.

In 'Golden Boy' studio brought to the fore William Holden, whose contract it holds jointly with Paramount, which studio had not utilized him prior to the Columbia production. Company also has good team in Penny Singleton and Arthur Lake, combo doing the 'Blondie' series, and also for the action field has Jack Holt and Charles Starrett.

With ambitious plans being launched for 1940, likely Columbia will start the nucleus of a stock company that may bring number of players to important stature in the feature ranks.

### COLUMBIA

#### Stars

JEAN ARTHUR  
JAMES STEWART  
CARY GRANT  
IRENE DUNNE  
BARBARA STANWYCK  
RANDOLPH SCOTT  
MELVYN DOUGLAS  
RALPH BELLAMY  
JOAN BLONDELL  
JACK HOLT  
EDITH FELLOWS  
ARTHUR LAKE  
PENNY SINGLETON  
CHARLES STARRETT

#### Featured

Walter Connolly  
Adolphe Menjou  
Thomas Mitchell  
Warren William  
William Holden  
Three Stooges  
Rochelle Hudson  
Rita Hayworth  
Jacqueline Wells  
Robert Paige  
Dorothy Peterson  
Joan Perry

### Gene Autry Yippee

#### Boxoffice for Repub

Gene Autry is the Tiffany for Republic, and getting to proportions in sales value that Tom Mix held with Fox years ago. With his Wrigley broadcast chants during 1940 he will no doubt strengthen his draw power to spot himself in keys where heretofore he was of little consequence or unknown. Autry, too, is of great value to Republic outside of the domestic market. Another cowboy, Roy Rogers, is developing fast on this lot, with the John Wayne out-

### REPUBLIC

#### Stars

GENE AUTRY  
ROY ROGERS  
JOHN WAYNE  
THREE GLEASONS  
THREE MESQUITEERS  
RICH'D DIN-GAIL PATRICK  
CHARLES BICKFORD  
BARTON MACLANE  
BRUCE CABOT  
PHIL REGAN  
WEAVER BROS. and ELVIRY  
RALPH BYRD

#### Featured

James Dunne  
Smiley Burnette  
Rochelle Hudson  
Paul Kelly  
George Hayes  
Robert Armstrong  
Henry Wilcoxon  
Frieda Inescort  
Billy Gilbert  
Edward Ellis  
Helen Mack  
Jean Parker  
Tommy Ryan  
June Storey  
Donald Barry  
Otto Kruger  
Marie Wilson  
Harry Davenport  
ZaSu Pitts  
Doris May  
George Barbier  
Ralph Morgan  
Beverly Roberts  
Lyle Talbot  
Chick Chandler  
Anita Louise  
Mabel Todd  
Mary Carlisle  
Kay Sutton  
Frank Jenks  
Mary Hart  
Roscoe Turner  
Warren Hymer  
Harold Huber  
Owen Davis, Jr.  
Charles Grapewin

## La Guardia Wants N. Y. to Take Part Of the Rap for Bad Pix, Lefty Thinks

By Joe Laurie, Jr.

New York, Jan. 1.

Dear Vic:

It's certainly been great to be here all this time seeing shows, meeting old friends and making new ones. It has done wonders for Aggie and Junior; he has grown so that soon we will have to start lying about his age on trains and in picture shows. I sure agree with the guy that said 'New York is the world seen in samples.' It frightens a lot of guys and makes 'em feel like a lion in a den of Daniels, but me and Aggie love it and will be sorry when we soon will have to leave to go back to Coolacres, which will be around Christmas time. By then our fatigued bank account will be entirely de-moneytized.

Glad to hear you did such a swell job of exploitation on 'Golden Boy.' It's a good picture. Your idea of giving out small toy violins and boxing gloves as a souvenir to the customers was swell, even though it cost you more than the picture drew. I realize you can't make money on every picture; even guys that sell French postcards lose money sometimes. But I do wish the producers would send us pictures once in a while that would give our seats some exercise. We have some that haven't been turned down in a long time.

I copied a blurb outside of a 42d street picture house that you may be able to use sometime, especially for an extra bad picture. Here it is: 'A heart-gripping drama of an underworld ruler who ripped the White Way wide open with souls stripped bare; and a beautiful, voluptuous woman who betrayed her lover to his enemy to make room for another aspirant for her favors. This drama will sweep your emotions to fever pitch.' The customers are usually in a fever pitch when they come out after seeing the picture. So hide.

Well, our Coolacres banker friend Flint is still doing the town with his chorus-girl friend. You wouldn't know the old buzzard; he has been restocking himself with new parts, from a suit with three belts in the back to a new set of teeth that are a size too large for him. He sure is nuts about the dame, not only heartsick, but he doesn't feel so well in the stomach either. He has been trying to be one of those 'life of the party boys' whose presence throughout the country has been so depressing. When a guy his age who has been raised on country air and counting his money towards him starts on a diet of gin symphonys, love, and bad night club air, he is practically setting up type for his obit.

#### Abner's Philosophy—An Einstein

My brother-in-law Abner is still living on philosophy and what few dollars he can borrow. He has lost half of his memory; he remembers what he lent, not what he borrows. Aggie has told him a dozen times that he'll never make money playing the horses; but all he sez is, 'If I'm not going to make money I'd rather not make it doing the things I like than not make it doing the things I don't like.' We both tried to figger that one out, but so far the score is nothing-nothing.

No doubt you've read about Mayor La Guardia of New York trying to get the producers to start making pictures in N. Y. I think it's a good idea to spread picture making all over the country and then one town won't be blamed for all the bad pictures. If the Mayor has his way it will soon be a case of an actor going 'Astoria' instead of 'Hollywood.' I don't see why they can't make pictures in New York as well as they can in Hollywood. We have polo fields, racetracks, football, golf links and relations in New York too. And you can look just as bad in a sweat shirt and dark glasses in New York as you can in Hollywood.

Well, we'll be seeing you soon. Give our regards to the wheat-benders back there sez

Your Pal,

Lefty.

P. S.—J. C. Nugent sez, 'The greater part of men harm one another for the sake of doing something.'

put, especially since he hit the major field, very dominant in the draw.

James, Lucille & Russell Gleason trio with their domestic series are going along in good shape, as are the combination of Bob Livingston, Duncan Renaldo and Raymond Hutton in 'The Mesquiteers' series. Other feature stars outside of Phil Regan were in on a couple of pic commitments, with Weaver Bros. and Elviry showing promise of value in the sticks for this outfit.

### Life Is Just a Flock

#### Of Series Pix at Mono

A check over the support or feature list stacks up as a who's who of major screenom of a few years ago. All of these people have had marquee value in past and Republic in

casting them aims to cash in on this asset.

Monogram has close knit schedule with series by all of its stars, outside of single picture commitment of Jackie Cooper. Balance with exception of Tex Ritter and Jack Randall, who make eight, do four pics on the year. Top selling factors are Boris Karloff and Tex Ritter next to Cooper, whose strength is his major past and also outside commitments at other studios.

Dramas and outdoor product of this outfit fits in with the tone of patronage that is catered to principally by Mono. Though company has few featured players on its weekly roster, the list shows that all of them have long experience in films and names that are adaptable to marquee illuminating to bring in trade.

Besides those listed as appearing in major and indie productions there are several thousand players who fill the casts and get support billing, but cannot be grouped in the feature contingent. A good proportion of these work an average of six to fifteen weeks a year.

### Study 'Swiss' for Road

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

RKO is mulling a roadshow tour for the Towne-Baker production, 'Swiss Family Robinson,' a nine-reeler which cost about \$1,000,000.

Studio's other big production, 'Abe Lincoln,' is already on the upped-price list.

### Lydon One of 'Em

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Jimmy Lydon has been set for top male role in Gene Towne and Graham Baker production of 'Little Men' at RKO.

Filming will start early in March.

### STORY BUYS

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

20th-Fox bought film rights to the James Oliver Curwood novel, 'The Hunted Woman.'

Metro purchased 'Whitechapel,' by Leo Birinski and Kurt Siodmack.

### MONOGRAM

#### Stars

JACKIE COOPER  
BORIS KARLOFF  
TEX RITTER  
JACK RANDALL  
FAY WRAY  
FRANKIE DARRO  
JOHN TRENT  
MARCIA MAE JONES  
MARJORIE REYNOLDS  
ROBERT KENT  
JACKIE MORAN  
MOVITA  
JOHN CARROLL

#### Featured

Sidney Blackmer  
Charles Bickford  
Ann Nagel  
Barton MacLane  
Grant Withers  
Warren Hull  
Marsha Hunt  
James Stephenson  
Shirley Deane  
Dorothy Tree  
James Newill  
Sally Blane  
Dick Purcell  
Bernardine Hayes  
William Pawley  
Louise Stanley



Norma Shearer



SEASON'S GREETINGS

+

# Paramount Theatres Service Corporation

+

PARAMOUNT BUILDING  
NEW YORK

SEASON'S GREETINGS

## HORACE MacMAHON

HOLLYWOOD

•

ROWAYTON BEACH

•

NEW YORK

## ADOLPHE MENJOU



# *Season's Greetings*

**AL JOLSON**

as E. P. Christy in the

20th Century Fox Production

**"SWANEE RIVER"**



**MAINE AND NEW HAMPSHIRE  
THEATRES CO.**

**WE ARE STILL STRONG  
FOR *VARIETY***

*JOHN J. FORD*

**SEASON'S  
GREETINGS**

**FABIAN THEATRES  
CORPORATION**

Suite 2101

1501 Broadway

NEW YORK, N. Y.

**FLORENCE  
ROGGE**

**ASSOCIATE PRODUCER  
and BALLET DIRECTOR**

**RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL—NEW YORK**

Congratulations *VARIETY*

*Rennie Simon*  
20 W. 57th Street, New York  
BRUCK-WEISS HATS



HAPPY NEW YEAR

to

EVERYBODY IN THE WORLD

*Shirley Temple*

HAPPY NEW YEAR

**Mervyn Leroy**

M-G-M STUDIOS

Best Wishes

**Robert Hopkins**

20TH CENTURY-FOX



# The Middleton Family at the New York World's Fair

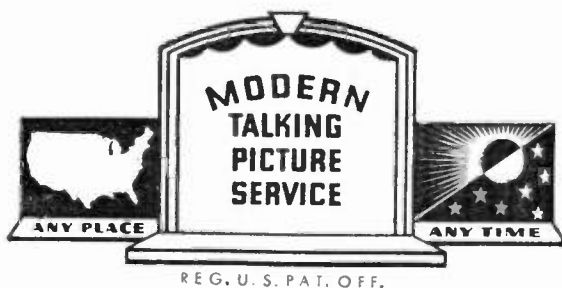
## A Nationally Advertised Family's Visit to the 'World of To-Morrow'

The Middletons are pretty well known folks. There's not a State in the Union where people don't know them. Why? Just this! Ever since April, Westinghouse has been using the Middletons' visit to the Fair as the theme of their advertising.

### A Sponsored Feature—6 Reels—Technicolor

Here is one of the biggest treats you can possibly give your patrons—A trip to the New York World's Fair.

Bookings now being made—all you pay is transportation one way



## MODERN TALKING PICTURE SERVICE

9 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N. Y., or Your Exchange City

## ERNST LUBITSCH

PRODUCTIONS

presents

AN UNTITLED SCREENPLAY

PRODUCED and DIRECTED

By

ERNST LUBITSCH

## SOLLESSER

PRODUCTIONS

presents

"OUR TOWN"

The Thornton Wilder  
Pulitzer Prize Play

Directed by

SAM WOOD

RELEASED THROUGH UNITED ARTISTS

# RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL

SHOW PLACE OF THE NATION

## ROCKEFELLER CENTER

NEW YORK CITY



# SEASON'S GREETINGS

**NATIONAL  
THEATRES  
AMUSEMENT  
CO., INC.**  
*Spyros Skouras*

1940

**FOX WEST COAST AGENCY CORPORATION**

CHARLES P. SKOURAS

**FOX WEST COAST THEATRES of *Northern California***  
ARCH M. BOWLES

**FOX *Wisconsin* AMUSEMENT CORPORATION**  
HAROLD J. FITZGERALD

**FOX *Midwest* AMUSEMENT CORPORATION**  
ELMER C. RHODEN

**FOX *Inter-Mountain* AMUSEMENT CORPORATION**  
FRANK H. RICKETSON

***Evergreen* THEATRES CORPORATION**  
FRANK L. NEWMAN



34—Years Continuous Service—34  
 IN  
 1905 MICHIGAN 1939

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**W. S. BUTTERFIELD**  
**THEATRE'S INC.**

---

—A MICHIGAN INSTITUTION—

*Season's Greetings*



**WESLEY RUGGLES**

PRODUCER ★ DIRECTOR

**"TOO MANY HUSBANDS"**

COLUMBIA



*Season's Greetings*

**HARRY REVEL**

COMMITMENTS  
 Via  
 ORSATTI & CO.  
 HOLLYWOOD, CALIF.



HAL ROACH *presents*

THE *Biggest Thrill* IN A MILLION NEW YEARS!

# "1,000,000

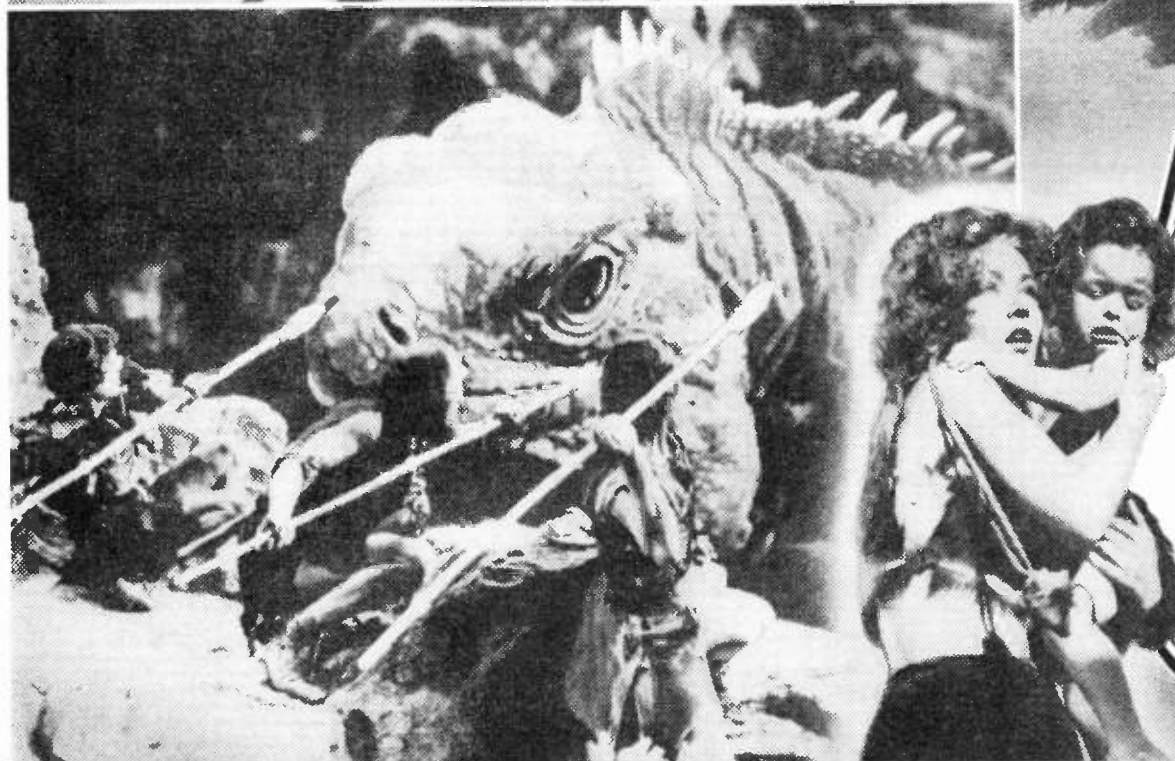
SIGHTS...WONDERS...ACTION NEVER BEFORE BEHELD  
ON THE SCREEN...THE STAGGERING SPECTACLE OF  
MAN AT THE DAWN OF TIME!

Directed by HAL ROACH

A D. W. GRIFFITH Production

# B.C."

SOON  
TO BE  
RELEASED



Current HAL ROACH Productions  
"Of MICE and MEN"  
by JOHN STEINBECK  
Produced & Directed by LEWIS MILESTONE

"THE HOUSEKEEPER'S"  
DAUGHTER  
Directed by HAL ROACH

Soon to be Released  
THORNE SMITH'S  
Most Hilarious Novel  
LAUREL and HARDY  
in "A CHUMP at OXFORD"  
and "TWO'S COMPANY"  
Released thru United Artists



SEASON'S GREETINGS

**UNA MERKEL**

**WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

Congratulations *VARIETY*

**WILLIAM C. THOMAS**

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

PARAMOUNT PICTURES

**EUGENE ZUKOR**

Associate Producer



Congratulations

**JOE MAY**

DIRECTOR

CURRENT

"THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS"

Universal Pictures



pat casey

*Season's Greetings*

**GEORGE RAFT**

For WARNER BROS.  
'EACH DAWN I DIE'  
'INVISIBLE STRIPES'

**Famous Players**  
**Canadian Corporation Limited.**

ROYAL BANK BUILDING

**Toronto,**  
CANADA

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

N. L. Nathanson, the Executives and Managers of our Company from Coast to Coast join in extending heartiest congratulations to "Variety" on its 34th birthday!

Here's wishing you many more years of splendid service to Showmen . . . everywhere!

Sincerely,

*J. J. Fitzgibbons,*

Vice-President.



*Season's Greetings*

**BORIS MORROS**

SEASON'S

GREETINGS

**BOB BURNS**

Management

William Morris, Inc.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

**FRANCES DEE**







AND FOR A  
BIGGER AND BETTER  
NEW YEAR

**EDWARD SMALL**

Presents

**MADELEINE CARROLL AND BRIAN AHERNE**

in

**"MY SON, MY SON!"**

Howard Spring's Great Novel with

**LOUIS HAYWARD**

**Henry Hull**

**Josephine Hutchinson**

Directed by **CHARLES VIDOR**

Screenplay by **LENORE COFFEE**

Released Thru United Artists

**EDWARD  
EVERETT  
HORTON**

ON TOUR

**"SPRINGTIME  
FOR HENRY"**

**WILLIAM ANTHONY McGUIRE**

STORY and SCREENPLAY

**"ZIEGFELD GIRL"**

M-G-M

STORY and SCREENPLAY

**"LILLIAN RUSSELL"**

20th CENTURY-FOX



DAVID O. SELZNICK



## SEASON'S GREETINGS

**ROY DEL RUTH**

DIRECTOR

**"HE MARRIED HIS WIFE"**

20th Century-Fox

**"HERE I AM A STRANGER"**

20th Century-Fox

**"THE STARMAKER"**

Paramount

Exclusive Representation

PHIL BERG - BERT ALLENBERG, Inc.

9484 Wilshire Boulevard

Beverly Hills, Cal.

Season's Greetings

**HUGH RUDOLF  
HARMAN - ISING**

CARTOON PRODUCTIONS

METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER

*Season's Greetings***NAN GREY**

Current Release

'THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS'

Under Contract to

UNIVERSAL PICTURES

SEASON'S GREETINGS

**JESSE L. LASKY**



# HOLIDAY HITS FROM MONOGRAM

**ROARING THRILLER OF THE MEN WHO GUARD YOUR LIVES WITH THEIR OWN!**

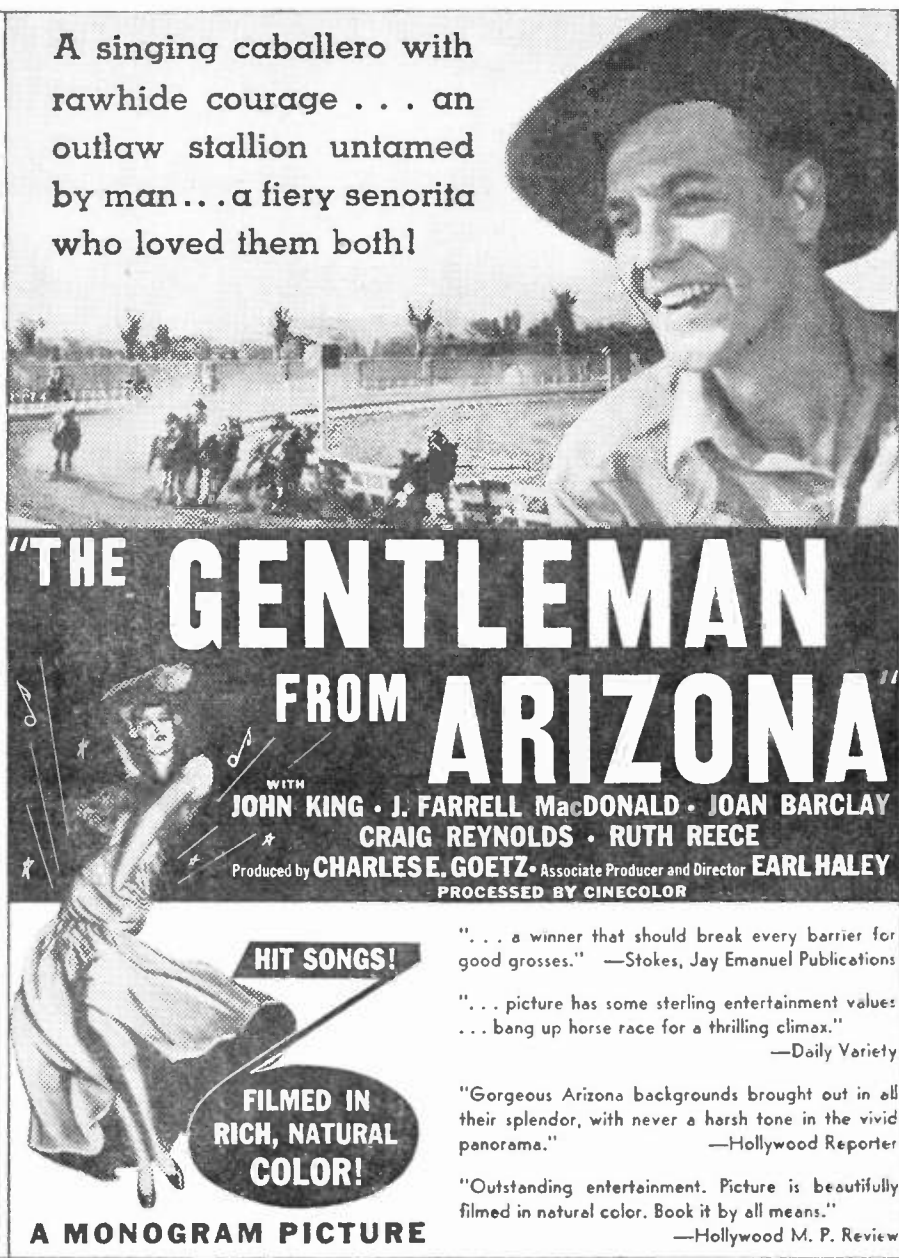


**"HEROES in Blue"**

WITH  
**DICK PURCELL  
FRANK SHERIDAN  
BERNADENE HAYES**

Produced by T. R. WILLIAMS · Directed by WILLIAM WATSON · Screenplay by C. B. WILLIAMS · Original Story by C. B. WILLIAMS and CHARLES CURRAN

A singing caballero with rawhide courage . . . an outlaw stallion untamed by man . . . a fiery senorita who loved them both!



**"THE GENTLEMAN FROM ARIZONA"**

WITH  
**JOHN KING · J. FARRELL MacDONALD · JOAN BARCLAY  
CRAIG REYNOLDS · RUTH REECE**

Produced by **CHARLES E. GOETZ** · Associate Producer and Director **EARL HALEY**  
PROCESSED BY CINECOLOR

**HIT SONGS!**

**FILMED IN RICH, NATURAL COLOR!**

**A MONOGRAM PICTURE**

"... a winner that should break every barrier for good grosses." —Stokes, Jay Emanuel Publications

"... picture has some sterling entertainment values ... bang up horse race for a thrilling climax." —Daily Variety

"Gorgeous Arizona backgrounds brought out in all their splendor, with never a harsh tone in the vivid panorama." —Hollywood Reporter

"Outstanding entertainment. Picture is beautifully filmed in natural color. Book it by all means." —Hollywood M. P. Review

*Congratulations VARIETY*

**HUNT STROMBERG**

*M-G-M Studios*



*SEASON'S GREETINGS*  
**M. E. COMERFORD**

**INTERMOUNTAIN THEATRES INC.**

CAPITOL THEATRE BUILDING  
 SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

P. O. BOX 1018

WABATCH 7088

TO VARIETY :

You have long been known to us, out here in the West, as one of our closest links with the happenings throughout the industry. We compliment you not only on your speedy reporting of vital screen news, but on your complete coverage of the entire amusement world.

We heartily extend our best wishes for a long future as pleasant and fruitful as the past thirty-four years.

Sincerely,  
 INTERMOUNTAIN THEATRES, INC.,  
 Utah and Idaho

*Harry David*  
 HARRY DAVID  
 General Manager

*Season's Greetings*

**M & P  
 THEATRES**



NEW YORK  
 Leo Morrison, Inc., & Jack Curtis  
 1776 Broadway

**LEO MORRISON, INC.**

BEVERLY HILLS  
 204 South Beverly Drive

*Holiday Greetings to the Trade*  
**George B. West**

*Season's Greetings*  
**RODGERS and HART**





*Season's Greetings From*

**WILLIAM BOYD AND HARRY SHERMAN**

(HOPALONG CASSIDY)



# JACK CONWAY

## DIRECTOR

### PREPARING "BOOM TOWN" (TENTATIVE TITLE)

METRO - GOLDWYN - MAYER

## Chaos to Confidence

Continued from page 3

without a single major catastrophe. Many of our own fighting boys of those days can vouch for this.

There were one or two cases of casualties outside theatres, such as a call boy being killed because he had run outside the Gaiety stage door to look at 'the fun'; but no case of a big gathering of people being hit in a place of entertainment, although such gatherings were taking place in thousands of spots throughout Great Britain every day and night for four years.

Anyway, I was not the only one to appreciate these facts.

During the first week of war, with streets in absolute darkness at night, of course; with every theatre and cinema door shut; and with the additional worry for us personally of transferring a staff of hundreds from London to what had once been a water mill in Rickmansworth, 20-odd miles out of town, we may have felt a little depressed, but we did not give up hope.

The heads of the film and theatrical industries were in constant con-

ference, determined to get reopening at the earliest possible moment. Several deputations put our case before the Government, and incidentally, the case of the average Britisher who at that time had literally no form of public entertainment except the public bar (what we Americans call the saloon), and possibly the radio—which just then was not very bright, as the British Broadcasting Corp. was thoroughly disorganized by its move from London to 'somewhere in the country.'

Must say the British press played a splendid part during the period. From 'The Times', which printed a typically trenchant letter from Bernard Shaw, to the biggest-sale 'Daily Express', which carried several articles inspired by one of our own publicity men, it campaigned tirelessly for a Brighter Britain, and especially for a resumption of organized entertainment.

All this had its effect. First, permission was given for cinemas in the districts regarded as 'safe' to reopen. The official decision was made

almost overnight, and you can imagine the chaotic struggle to get pictures to the cinemas from hastily improvised store houses in various parts of the country. Our own boys responded magnificently to the big effort demanded, and I do not think a single Metro film failed to reach its destination on time. We were even able to help out a few cinemas which were unable to get certain other companies' films they had booked. But, generally speaking, the entire industry conquered vast difficulties with remarkable success.

That first black week, by the way, must have cost the whole film industry fully \$5,000,000.

From that time onwards it has been a matter of getting concessions one by one, and little by little.

The number of deputations which have visited the Home Office from this industry alone has been awe-inspiring. Am glad to say the authorities have been most cooperative, and genuinely anxious to help in any way which seemed to them consistent with public safety.

The struggle regarding the big West End cinemas has been the greatest of all. At this writing, we have been allowed to remain open until 11 p.m., instead of alternately to 6 p.m.

While business is remarkably good, considering the complete blackout and other existing conditions during the 11 o'clock closing weeks, it suffered badly during the 6 p.m. weeks, when we had to stop selling tickets at 4:30 in the afternoon.

The authorities were possessed by the fear that too many people were on Leicester Square, for example—where there are five key cinemas, including our own Empire and Ritz—at one time, which might have coincided with an air raid.

While realizing the force of this argument, we met it by offering to stagger the closing times between, say, 10 and 11 p.m. at intervals of 10 minutes or so, in order to allow each audience to disperse separately. There is, of course, always the chance of an air raid warning during the evening. But recently, when we had a false alarm one morning, fully two-thirds of our audiences remained in their seats. During the last war, even when air raids over London took place on 10 successive nights, the vast majority of the crowded theatre and cinema audiences stayed in their places, watching and enjoying the show.

So the main—I think the only—danger in keeping theatres open at night is that of a direct hit. And the chances against a direct hit are astronomical.

You cannot imagine New York without Broadway. It is even less

possible to think of London without Leicester Square and Piccadilly. The boys are home on their holiday leaves. Shortly, the big battalions from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India and all parts of the British Empire will begin to arrive in this country.

#### Look to West End

They will automatically come to the West End, as they did in the last and every other war, looking for recreation and entertainment. Surely, if we must give them darkened streets, at least we can give them that passport to the land of blessed romance, laughter, and make-believe, which only the cinema and the theatre can offer.

On the whole, I feel justified in concluding, as I began, on the note of confidence.

A war like this cannot fail to strike heavy blows at every industry which is not directly engaged in the business of armaments or other military needs. Vast sums have been lost by the entertainment industry, and considerable sums are still being lost. The extra taxation burdens—well, one can only say they are commensurate with the colossal efforts Britain is putting forth in this war.

One thing is already proven. The public, struggling at night through pitch-black streets, burdened with gas masks, risking the danger of air raids—a danger which, rightly or wrongly, has deliberately been emphasized—is still finding its way to the cinemas and theatres. No reasonably good film, or stage play, need fear neglect.

In fact, although the show business in Britain may not be the joy ride which it was for a good many theatrical and film folk from 1915-1919, it is definitely not going to be the 'procession of protracted death' which the pessimists were prophesying on Sept. 3, 1939.

## PAR NOW CARRYING 65 PLAYERS, 10 DIRECTORS

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

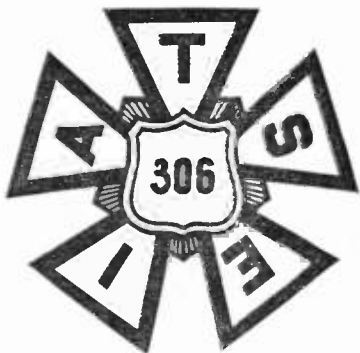
Paramount started the year with a contract list of 65 players, 13 writers, five producer-directors and 10 directors.

Producer directors are Cecil B. DeMille, Edward Griffith, Henry Hathaway, Mark Sandrich and William A. Wellman.

The Same Old  
Greetings From  
the New Rialto,  
New York City

Arthur  
Mayer

## Moving Picture Machine Operators Union



LOCAL NO. 306, NEW YORK CITY

JOSEPH D. BASSON, President

MORRIS KRAVITZ  
Vice president

CHARLES BECKMAN  
Financial Secretary

BERT POPKIN  
New York Business Agent

HERMAN GELBER  
Recording Secretary

JAMES AMBROSIO  
Treasurer

JACK TEITLER  
Bklyn. Business Agent

## HOLIDAY GREETINGS

From

# N. S. BARGER

RIALTO THEATRE  
CHICAGO

## HOLIDAY GREETINGS

# HARRY A. GOURFAIN

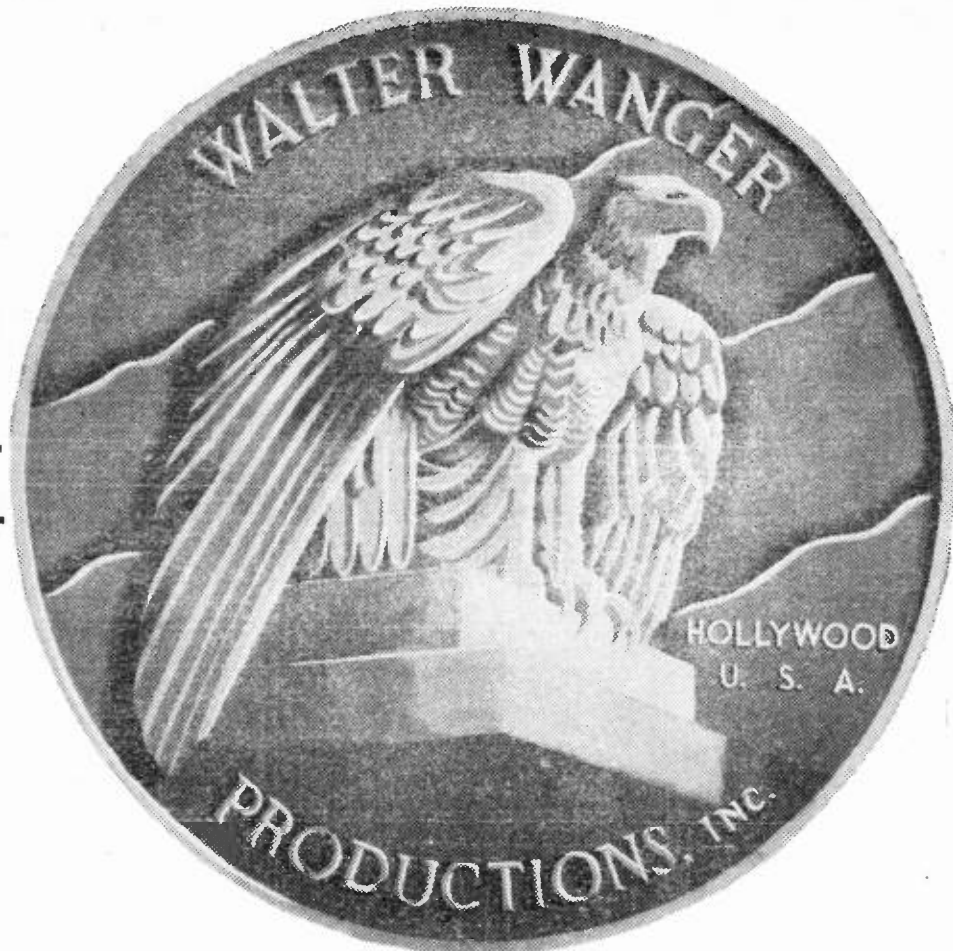


Let's Make

**1940**

A Year of Sound

Showmanship!



NOW PLAYING—

**"SLIGHTLY HONORABLE"**

featuring

**PAT O'BRIEN,** EDWARD ARNOLD,  
BRODERICK CRAWFORD, RUTH TERRY,  
CLAIR DODD, ALAN DINEHART, PHYLLIS BROOKS, EVE ARDEN

*A Tay Garnett Production*

Music by WERNER JANSSEN

RELEASED SOON—

**GEORGE RAFT**

**JOAN BENNETT**

co-starring in

**"HOUSE ACROSS THE BAY"**

with Lloyd Nolan, Gladys George and WALTER PIDGEON

Directed by ARCHIE MAYO

NOW IN PREPARATION—

ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S Production

of

**"PERSONAL HISTORY"**

**"SO GALLANTLY GLEAMING"**

Successor to the Spectacular Attraction, "Stagecoach"

**"DYNASTY OF DEATH"**

Taylor Caldwell's Best Seller

**"AROUND the WORLD in 80 DAYS"**

A Pretentious Production of JULES VERNE'S Sensational Novel

RELEASED THRU  
**UNITED ARTISTS**



# JAMES KEVIN McGUINNESS

M-G-M

## Mae to Stay at U

Hollywood, Jan. 1. Universal is building a four-room bungalow for Mae West, indicating that the femme star plans a long stay at the studio.

Only star bungalows on the lot at present are occupied by Deanna Durbin and Marlene Dietrich.

## Iowa Always Wins Its Tax

Des Moines, Jan. 1.

Iowa's tax collectors always win at bingo games. The state sales tax is collecting articles the promoters buy for prizes, so whoever else wins, the state still wins 2%.

The Tax Commission has recently investigated reports that operators were evading the tax, but investigation showed it was being paid.

## Much New Theatre Building

### Much St. Loo Building

St. Louis, Jan. 1.

Charles R. Rudolph, owner of the Colonial, 400-seater, Troy, Mo., planning another in same town.

A. B. Jeffries, owner of the New Piedmont, 206-seater, Piedmont, Mo., will augment his operations with another house in same town.

Paramount will build its own exchange on film row.

The Idle Hour, 600-seater in Festus, Mo., relighted by Harry Miller. House shuttered several months.

Construction starts soon on new house in New Haven, Mo. Walter J. Buchholtz of New Haven will own and operate.

New theatre to be erected in Roxana, Ill., for Albert Crichtlow.

Mrs. D. E. Williams new manager of the Hermo, 250-seater, Hermann, Mo.

The Jersey, Jerseyville, Ill., damaged \$35,000 by fire recently, will undergo face-lifting and reopen.

Keresotes Bros. will close Senate, 800-seater, Springfield, Ill., after holidays for extensive face-lifting.

Paris, Ark., theatre men will erect new house in Poplar Bluff, Mo., where the Rodgers Circuit owns and operates the Criterion, 650-seater, and the Jewel, 500 seats.

N. Carter, Lawrenceville, Ill., will erect new house in Lawrenceville to provide opposish to the Frisina Amusement Co.'s Avalon, 500-seater.

### New Texas Houses

Dallas, Jan. 1.

A new Dallas nabe and a new Port Arthur house soon will grace the Texas skyline. P. G. Cameron is having new 750-seater built here, with body parkers arranged on a stadium-like ramp that will eliminate steps.

The Sabine, 800 seats, is being built for Sam Hyman at Port Arthur. Hollis Boren, operator of two houses at Memphis, Texas, has added theatres at Tulia, Dimmitt and Jacksboro, Texas, to his properties.

### Wilby's Fourth Drive-In

Atlanta, Jan. 1.

George Wilby and associates, of here, last week opened Drive-In theatre in Jacksonville, Fla., their fourth. They operate two here and one in Savannah, Ga. Horace Denning, ex-manager of Kirkwood here, is in charge of Jax outdoor cinema.

Wilby outfit operates Cameo, downtown indie, and Kirkwood and Fairview, nabes here in addition to

the two local Drive-Ins. They recently sold their five North Georgia houses, Star and Ritz, at Toccoa, Dixie in Cornelia. Habersham in Clarksville and Franklin at Lavonia, to Fred McLendon, of Union Springs, Ala., who operates 11-theatre chain in that state. Mrs. A. S. Kerlin and Bill Collins, Ritz, at Toccoa, is new 780-seat deluxor skedded to light up Christmas Day. Bill Collins, former National Screen Service salesman here, will manage.

Al Whittle, who managed North Georgia properties for Wilby and supervised construction of Ritz, will return to Wilby here.

Curtis Ware, who formerly operated theatre in Jefferson, Ga., has opened 250-seat Royce, at Royston, Ga.

### New N. Y. Newsreeler

Grand Central Theatre, Inc., has signed an agreement to open a new newsreel theatre in the Airways Terminal on East 42d street, near Park avenue, N. Y. Terminal, now under construction, will be the main station in N. Y. Airways Theatre will seat nearly 600 and will probably be ready by next July or August. Grand Central Theatre, Inc., also operates the newsreeler in the G. C. Terminal.

### Thornton's New House

Watsonstown, Pa. Jan. 1.

H. J. Thornton, Watsonstown, will erect a new one-story brick and steel picture theatre late next spring.

### Ft. Worth Suburbans Increase

Ft. Worth, Jan. 1.

Fort Worth's seventh suburban theatre, The Hemphill, is under construction and due for completion late in February. M. S. White, of Dallas, is building it. Modernistic structure, it will seat 800.

Interstate, which operates seven theatres in Fort Worth, four downtown and three suburban, will build a new suburban in Arlington Heights in the spring. Plans are expected by Jan. 1.

### Detroit's Class Nabe

Detroit, Jan. 1.

Operated by Jake Sullivan, veteran manager here, new nabe, Van Dyke, will open in mid-January. New 600-seater, equipped with all the latest stuff, will operate on a noon to midnight policy. Sullivan formerly managed Delthe. New nabe financed by Moss Investment Co. and will be in Van Dyke chain.

## SHERMAN'S 18 PIX FOR PAR OVER TWO YEARS

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Harry Sherman inked two-year deal with Paramount to produce six Hopalong Cassidy westerns, two Zane Greys and one special per year.

William Boyd continues as star of the Cassidys under a new contract with Sherman for the same duration.

### DOC TAKES COURAGE

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

'The Courageous Dr. Christian,' second of the Jean Hersholt starrers for RKO release, gets under way Jan. 15 as a Stephens-Lang production.

Director is Bernard Vorhaus. Ian Hunter and Ring Lardner, Jr., are polishing the script.

## New York Theatres

### The Rivoli Theatre

NEW YORK

Ace Run Time of the Country Presents Its Best Wishes to Variety for the New Year

"The LIGHT THAT FAILED"

UNITED ARTISTS RIVOLI Broadway at 40th St. Doors Open 8:30 A.M. MIDNITE SHOWS

**"four wives"**  
THE HAPPY SEQUEL TO 'FOUR DAUGHTERS' **ABE LYMAN** IN PERSON  
His Orchestra and an 8-Star Revue!

**STRAND • 25c** To 11 A.M. Mon. to Fri.  
B'way & 47-Opens 9 a.m.-Late Film 12:15 a.m.

**RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL**  
"HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME"  
Spectacular Stage Productions

**LOEW'S State** TIMES 50  
Last Times Wed. James Stewart Jean Arthur "MR. SMITH GOES TO WASH."  
In Person Cross & Dunn  
Thurs., Jan. 4th GABRO "NINOTCHKA" Melvyn Douglas  
In Person Frankie Masters and His Orch. Others

**HELD OVER**  
"GULLIVER'S TRAVELS"  
JIMMY SAVO MERRY MACS  
GLENN GRAY  
A Paramount Picture AND HIS ORC.  
**PARAMOUNT** TIMES SQUARE

**Lennon's Addition**  
Susquehanna, Pa., Jan. 1.  
Jerome Lennon will erect a new theatre here in the spring.

**GONE WITH THE WIND**  
While these engagements are limited, G.W.T.W. will not be shown except at advanced prices... at least until 1941.  
**ASTOR** Daily 2:15, 8:15. Prices: MATINEES (Exe. Sat., Sun., Hol.) 75c to \$1.10. EVENINGS \$1.10 - \$2.20.  
**CAPITOL** Come in at any time and see an entire show. Last presentation starts at 9 P.M. PRICES: Before 8 P.M. (3 P.M. Sat., Sun. & Hol.) Orch. & Bal. 75c; Lower \$1.10. After 8 P.M. (3 P.M. Sat., Sun. & Hol.) Orch. & Bal. \$1.10; Lower \$1.65. All Prices include tax.  
Doors Open 10:30  
Cont. Performances  
No Reserved Seats

## GRAND CENTRAL THEATRE

(In Grand Central Terminal, Opposite Track 17)

Your Trip to New York Is Not Complete Without Visiting the Most Charming Little Theatre in the World.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## IN THE HEART OF NEW YORK

Just a Step From the Roosevelt, Biltmore and Commodore Hotels.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

All Newsreels  
Travel Pictures, Sports  
Reviews, Famous Cartoons

Continuous Performance

SEASON'S GREETINGS

# EDMOND SEWARD

Original Story Adaptation

\* Screenplay

## GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

Management  
ROSALIE STEWART

\* In collaboration



*SEASON'S GREETINGS*

**FRANK CAPRA**

**ROBERT RISKIN**

*Season's Greetings*

**MARLENE DIETRICH**

*Congratulations* ***VARIETY***

its staff and correspondents throughout the land  
and thanks for your kind plugs during my personal tour

**HUGH HERBERT**

Personal Management—PAM-LANG AGENCY, Hollywood, Calif.



## Congratulations to *VARIETY* On Its 34th Anniversary

# WARNER BAXTER

### RKO SCORES ON NOTES AND CLAIMS

Federal Judge William Bondy in N. Y. on Wednesday (27) approved two applications by Irving Trust, RKO trustee, the first extending the time for RKO to pay off the balance due on its gold notes, and the second settling claims against the company. There had been no opposition to either request.

As result of the judge's order RKO now has until April 1, 1940, to pay \$50,000 as the balance due on a \$6,000,000 issue of secured gold notes made July 1, 1931. The balance has been paid off. Chemical Bank & Trust is the trustee, and the notes which were due Jan. 1, 1940, will draw interest at 2% annually. The reason for failure to pay them off now is that consummation of the plan of reorganization is just around the corner, and the company needs all available cash for that purpose.

The claims against the company, which total \$2,775,142, were settled for \$107,264. The first of these was the claim of Joseph J. Cavanaugh and the Union Guardian Trust, covering a lease on the RKO Downtown, Detroit, which was filed for \$208,333 and settled for \$45,000. The second claim was that of Laura F. Albee, filed for \$187,500, and settled for \$21,000. This claim was based on a note guaranteed by RKO Rhode Island Corp.

The claim of the U. S. National Bank of Denver, filed for \$407,335, based on a defaulted bond issue of Denver Orpheum, was allowed at \$37,522.

A claim of the First National Bank of Birmingham for \$14,549, based on a lease guarantee of RKO Southern Corp., was settled at \$204. Lastly, a claim of the American Co., for \$1,857,425, based on a guarantee of

bonds of RKO Western, was allowed at \$3,558. This latter amount represents interest, as the big claim had been allowed at a larger amount previously.

Judge Bondy Thursday (28) also granted Irving Trust an extension to July 1, 1940, to affirm or disaffirm any leases, contracts or agreements of RKO subject to the approval of the court. Another proviso was inserted in the order which declared that Irving Trust's functions can be terminated, if the proceedings should end. This marks the first time since 1934, when the RKO trustee first received permission to carry on company business, that such an optimistic note has been introduced.

At Friday (29) hearing, Judge Bondy was informed by Hamilton C. Rickaby, representing Atlas, that Irving Trust is now preparing an order for Judge Bondy's signature, which would transfer all assets of the company from the hands of the trustee to those of the new company. This transfer is expected to be completed within this week, although actual business of the company will remain for some time in Irving Trust's hands.

In order to expedite matters, the court was informed that Atlas has set Jan. 8 as the expiration date for unsecured creditors and Rockefeller Center to subscribe to the new RKO stock, this meaning that Atlas' offer is outstanding for 16 days, thus cutting their commission slightly.

An adjourned date of Jan. 9 was set for the next hearing, at which time it is expected that the supreme court will have decided whether to hear the appeals or not. The hearing concluded with Judge Bondy expressing the hope that the entire proceedings will be terminated early in 1940.

#### Ready with 'Cheers'

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Richard Rowland's first production for United Artists, 'Three Cheers for Miss Bishop,' rolls Jan. 15.

Producer is seeking a femme lead to replace Barbara Stanwyck, who is tied up with another commitment.

#### Just Fits

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Frank Morgan, who recently had a close brush when his car overturned, killing his chauffeur, started work at Metro in 'Hooray, I'm Alive.'

Both he and Mrs. Morgan were painfully injured, the latter more seriously.

#### ADD: GN AND RFC

\$450,000 Loan Still Vamping Till Ready—Meeting Today

Reconstruction Finance Corp. again skipped consideration last week of \$450,000 loan requested by Grand National and matter lies in the hopper for the next meeting of the directors, slated for today (Wednesday). Necessity of GN providing more data for the RFC examiners delayed last week's presentation. Earle W. Hammons, GN prez, was in Washington to speed things along; but to no avail.

In the meantime Leon Bergere, European film man who has made a tentative offer to provide the money needed by GN if the RFC does not come through, has been going over the company's books and records. Bergere has made no written commitment, but is slated to make a proposal to the court in the event he finds the company's books to his liking.

If the RFC comes through with the loan, Bergere may put up a production fund—to which a syndicate of bankers headed by Irving Felt had previously committed itself and may still carry out if it chooses. If the RFC nixes the request, Bergere has indicated he may be willing to put up coin to continue the company in operation.

#### New 2,000-Seater

Warren, O., Jan. 1.

A new theatre, to seat 2,000, will be built here in the near future by Daniel Robins. Robins Enterprises Co. now operates two theatres on East Market street here.

### Exhibs Beef at 5,000-Capacity County Center, Tax-less, Hurting Their B. O.

Burning over the opposition caused by the band and vaude shows given Sundays at the County Center near White Plains, N. Y., theatre operators of the region are preparing to lodge a vigorous protest with Westchester county authorities. They will seek abolition of the performances, it is stated, on the ground that the Center does not pay taxes to the county, yet theatres within its borders or in other parts of New York state or lower Connecticut are forced to meet such bills in support, through their businesses, of the communities in which they operate.

Theatres in all of Westchester as well as other portions of New York state, not too distant from White Plains, and those in nearby Connecticut, are affected seriously, it is claimed, but added that the name orchestras booked into the County Center may be also drawing patronage away from N. Y. city itself as well as parts of Jersey. The Center itself is located on one of the main Westchester highways, the Bronx River Parkway.

#### All Hurt

Operators involved, all of whom are expected to file complaints, are Loew's, the RKO circuit, Paramount, Skouras Bros., Brandts and lesser independents. Loew's, RKO, Par, Brandt and Skouras are all within the Westchester county borders. What steps may be threatened or taken by the theatre interests if the County Center is continued with orchestra bills are not indicated at this time.

Center, booking two bands for Sundays each week, plays a matinee at a 40c general admission and an evening show at a 55c general admission. Reserved seats are 75c afternoons and 85c and \$1.10 evenings. Shows have been played four Sun-

days to date, but the next will be given Saturday (16) instead of Sunday, due to a previous commitment on the Center for the Dec. 17 date. Capacity is 5,000.

On opening of the double-bill band shows at the Center, with only an evening performance given, the business was near capacity at a gross of \$3,750. Bands were Paul Whiteman and Bunny Berigan. The second Sunday's gross, with two performances given, was higher. Booked through Jan. 1, with Gene Krupa set for the New Year's date, the Center has played Hal Kemp, Bob Crosby, and Charles Barnet in addition to the opening Whiteman-Berigan combination.

### FOUR MORE ON LINE IN 20-FOX SPEEDUP

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Production at 20th-Fox speeds up this month, with four new pictures slated to roll in addition to four holdovers from December.

Newcomers are 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star' and 'Earthbound,' Jan. 8; 'Sweetheart of Turret One,' Jan. 15, and 'Lillian Russell,' Jan. 22.

#### McGuire Held at 20th

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

William Anthony McGuire, currently finishing the script on 'Lillian Russell,' was signed to a new writing deal by 20th-Fox.

In addition to his studio pact, he has a commitment with Random House for a novel based on Miss Russell's life story.

Congratulations *VARIETY*

# HENRY KING

20TH CENTURY-FOX



## REGIMENTED BERLIN GOES BULLISH ON NIGHT LIFE

By Claire Trask

Berlin, Dec. 20.

Six years of coercion is no cinch for any human being. If it doesn't wear him down, out of sheer-self-protection it dulls his senses. And that's about the spot most of the Germans had reached by 1939. They seemed to have dropped into a chronic state of stupor.

Amusement became perfunctory, nothing much mattered any more. 'Mitgefangen, mitbehangen!' they felt. Night life was more a matter of routine, somewhere to go after dining out or the cinema. The exclusive Quartier Latin soon found it advisable to chuck its traditional Saturday night ruling of swallow-tails. Dolling up turned out too much of an effort for the customer. He preferred to find places that smacked less of restrictions. Too many around already.

The diminutive Ciro never split hairs over togs and so kept a steady front place as Berlin's vogue nitery catering to the upper strata with an international sprinkling. Flaunting more champagne gab than actual hoofing is the custom here since Ciro's postage stamp dimensions with a three-man corner band curbs the swing. But at all times Ciro was the only frolic that looked prosperously crowded.

Not so the wider-spaced dance-bars like Barberina, Fiametta, Kakadu, Rio Rita, all of them hugging the Kurfurstendamm in the West End. Here business most certainly was having the doldrums with visitors holding long sessions over a long drink. And even the generous display of low-backed taxi girls was to most of these wilted looking pleasure seekers as stimulating as a subway ride.

No turnaway business was hitting the numerous small bar joints resounding with a keytickler and crooner duo to fill the alcoholic gaps. Such places as Konigin, My Sister

and I, Pompey, Freddie's, Cascade kept going only because of the transient trade periodically cluttering up the city when the annual exhibitions got going at the giant fairground in Charlottenburg, Berlin's twin city. Whatever they are, auto or radio shows or Green Week for the farmer, they all and everyone turned out to be Berlin's honey to the hinterland bee. These expos frequently set up a spectacle of their own to keep the visitor's cash on the grounds. But as a rule the reputedly wicked night life of the big city turns out the bigger attraction.

It is the generous sized hoofing places like the Delphi, with a two-floor building all to itself, or the three-divisioned Femina offering, next to the ballroom Casino a Pusztia bar, with Magyar strains, and an intimate Schoppenstube for the wine connoisseur, that pulled in the ephemeral customer. So did the downtown mass premises seating up to 2,500. Here it's the pennies that count and terping is tops. Each place has its own tag. Resi boosts postal and phone service, connecting the numbered tables, to help ease up the stranger. Atlantis holds it more with the coffee-and-cake family purse. Berolina on Alexanderplatz gives them two-a-day and no entrance fee. But Schonborn, topping them all in size, has just recently joined the ranks. And thereby hangs a tale:

### Why Stick Home Nights?

Berlin has kicked off its lethargy! Only a few weeks of blackout and things started going. What for stick home at nights? A skimpy meal served up by a much harassed housewife is hardly the thing to put any German with a healthy appetite into the right frame of mind to listen patiently to the gush of admonitions and propaganda tossed off by the state-controlled radio. Just as the sale of newspapers has gone back alarmingly since the war began, so

the interest in radio has slackened since all the seasoning has gone out of home fare; and listening in on foreign stations may be punishable as treason.

Lolling around on long, wintry evenings gets one itchy. And if the Government won't let you spend your hard-earned shekels on a good meal; won't let you purchase more than two pairs of boots a year because you already possess one, with the buying of other clothes in ratio; frowns at leisure travel because of coal shortage; requisitions your motor car or forces you to put it up in mothballs for lack of gas, no use trying to sell it—nobody wants it; clamps down all sales of valuables like jewelry, rugs, furs (things that tided a good many over the last inflation); in fact, restricts you on everything that money could be spent on—what in blazes is there left for you to do?

The experience of one inflation was enough for any German. It looks this time as if the coin is going to be gone before anything like another inflation can catch up with it. And it is filling the long dried up coffers of the amusement industry!

### Blackouting a Big Biz

The latest job also in for a boom is ray-light window darkening. It shuts the houses so that the sharpest spy, peering around, can't hang a 50-mark fine on you for careless blackout. And while along the thoroughfares the city is wrapped in pitchblack cotton, Berlin flares up and makes whoopee on the inside.

The major worry now is how to replace the worn-off soles of your dance slippers. For it doesn't matter what the gambol is, waltz, tango, rumba, anything goes. Even the old-fashioned three-step polka has been pulled off the shelf. Likker, hard or mild, as long as it is the native brand, has as yet no rationing card pinned to it. Beer has lost none of its tangy flavor and the 1939 Rhine, Mosel and Saar wines, favored by an extra supply of sun rays, turned out a tasteful vintage.

### Dodging the Censors

Vaudeville holds its own in this dance on the volcano. The two-a-day Scala and the Wintergarten cheerfully keep on trying to dig up an international program. They are off by a long shot, but the public isn't squeamish. Minor acts flow over into the spacious and low-priced Plaza in the north. Willi Schaffers, ace emcee, is now in his fifth season at the Kabarett der Komiker on Kurfurstendamm. This Berlin headliner of intimate variety has had numerous raps and subsequent shuttering, hence finds himself under continual blackshirt supervision. But by now the spot has its formula down pat as how to get by the censor, and still put in a few muffled digs of political satire.

Floorshows are now filling practically all the bigger places. Haus Vaterland, one of the biggest, maintains its tradition, merely priming the miniature "thundershower along the River Rhine" by a fresh coat of paint. All its other attractions, Casino, Bavarian, Turkish, Viennese, still get the awed goggle of the yokel as it did at its inception 10 years ago.

Most of these places dim out with a 3 o'clock curfew. But a few, such as Bender, serving a peppery goulash soup to wash down the mealy midnight taste, and the Taverne, hangout for the international press boys, keep the latch-string loose till the milkman comes round.

But in the category of all night carousers the KddK, (Klub der deutschen Kunstler) has a unique glamour. This club, a spacious villa in the Viktoriastrasse close to the Tiergarten, was founded half a decade back by Dr. Joseph Goebbels for his minion, the German artist. Far and above the most interesting part of this high-class nocturnal retreat is that not only the propaganda minister, and many of the Nazi satellites, but Hitler himself, frequents it. In fact, the richly interior KddK has seen a good many midnight suppers, mass as well as the exclusive duo kind, with Herr Hitler as host. He rarely mingles with the house, but has his own room reservations. The club has all the appearance of a discreetly, but thoroughly sleuthed abode with every hand a disguised SS man.

## Kohlmar Leaves Col

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Fred Kohlmar, producer at Columbia for past year, checked off the lot.

Final picture was 'Double in Diamonds,' directed by Sid Salkow.

## War Cues French Pix Trend To Drama; Gabin Tops B.O.

By Joseph C. Ravotto

Paris, Dec. 20.

In a year full of vicissitudes and trials, culminating in a conflict whose full implications are still reserved for the future, the 1939 French motion picture public refused to be amused and selected as its favorite star, Jean Gabin, portrayer of life in the raw.

Fifth in 1937, third in 1938, Gabin was boosted to the pinnacle this year by events and a series of international caliber pictures in which he was given a chance to show his worth. Comics, who for many years held on firmly to the place of honor, were swept off the film throne with little ado.

Viviane Romance, Gabin's femme counterpart, also climbed a few pegs to take second place. Miss Romance's promotion to runner-up position served to convincingly demonstrate that the French public's liking for Gabin and the type of picture in which he starred was no accident but a definite sign of the times.

The others, in order of their pulling power, as reflected by b.o. returns, were Hollywood alumni Charles Boyer and Danielle Darrieux, comedians Michel Simon and Fernandel, Louis Jouvet, Arletty, Michele Morgan with Gary Cooper, American and only foreigner, winding up the list.

Despite the altered order of film name draws, the public showed a certain degree of consistency with its likes of former years. In a changed order, Gabin, Boyer, Fernandel and Cooper appeared among the first 10 for the third successive year, while Romance, Darrieux and Jouvet were in fast company for the second year running. Simon, Arletty and Morgan were the newcomers.

Charles Chaplin (Charlot to the French), 1937 tops, and 'Snow White,' last year's choice, are both missing. The first because the comic failed to turn out anything since 'Modern Times,' and the Princess because hers was a solo appearance. Sacha Guitry, Raimu and candied singer Tino Rossi, who were in last year's roll of money makers, are also among the missing.

In the past, the French public sought relief from the worries that beset a troubled world. In 'Snow White' last year it escaped into a fanciful, illusionary world where goodness triumphed over wickedness. It was 1938, too, which brought Munich and with it belief, or at least the hope, that reason could prevail over might.

### No Escapist Complex in '39

Early 1939 brought a cruel denouement to those hopes. It was a world in which the French, like other peoples, were made acutely aware of stark realities. These realities were now too close and pressing to permit flights into the realms of idealism and romanticism. Gabin, as the unimaginative brute with primitive instincts and slow comprehension, had great appeal because he best typified an age which found its expression in carnage—brute force triumphing over rationalism.

Possibly the connection between the public's likes and the times may appear exaggerated. Yet it cannot be denied that what 'Snow White' in 1938, and Gabin in this year, represented best reflected world conditions. Directors also felt this and specialized in realistic, morose subjects this year instead of the former popular light farcical comedy and extravaganza.

Moreover, troubled times stifles liberalism and makes a people more chauvinistic and nationalistic. This, too, found an echo here with fans switching their preferences for native idols. Two years ago the list contained four foreign stars, while 1938's and 1939's included only one, Cooper. More than being American and foreign, he personifies the universal male with inherent qualities of character, sobriety and sense of responsibility, and it is easy to understand why he goes over big with the French fans.

To say that these signs were the only reasons for local fans reverting to native talent for entertainment would be false. Continued improvement of a fast growing local film industry, and increasing familiarity of native talent with the techniques of the profession were other factors responsible for the popularity of the home-bred variety.

Not to be overlooked is the fact

that French fans in the provinces are not as familiar with the Hollywood product as the Parisian dweller. The latter has been educated through an intensive and years-long campaign. Thousands of Parisians know and enjoy hearing English spoken. The provincials on the other hand do not understand anything but their own language and dubbed versions must lose much of their sincerity and authenticity. Furthermore their outlook is French throughout and they better understand the logic, humor and gestures of their own actors.

### Blvds. Differ From Provinces

Were a list to be made for the Paris deluxers it would vary to some extent with the foregoing one and would probably be in the following order. Gabin would again lead the list followed by Boyer, Guitry, Cooper, Simon, Darrieux, the team of Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire, Arletty, Romance and Jouvet. Rogers-Astaire and Guitry here would replace Fernandel, whose humor is not understood by the class that frequents the deluxers, or Mlle. Morgan, who is still a relatively new product.

A third list reserved for Hollywood stars would see Boyer as ranking actor with Cooper, Rogers-Astaire, Darrieux, Jimmy Cagney, Deanna Durbin, Irene Dunne, Errol Flynn, Claudette Colbert and Shirley Temple following in that order.

The first roll of honor, however, is the most representative one and the one with which we are concerned. It was compiled after consulting distributors, exhibitors and operators from many sections of the country such as Sammy Sirtzky, whose merged Gaumont-Sirtzky circuit controls 125 showcases throughout the country.

Gabin's climb to head the money makers was earned by his excellent portrayal of raw and unsavory parts to which French audiences responded with enthusiasm. He was at home in such roles in 'La Bete Humaine' and 'Le Jour Se Leve,' two tragic psychological studies.

### Mae West's Counterpart

Miss Romance's popularity with the masses is based on the same factors which have boosted Gabin to the top. She has established herself as the 'bad girl' of French films. She is Mae West's French equivalent, although the French actress packs far more 'oomph.' She went to town in risque sexy roles in 'Tradition de Minuit,' 'Esclave Blanche' and 'Gibraltar.'

Boyer and Miss Darrieux, products of Hollywood's finishing school, both climbed a peg this year. Boyer's popularity is pretty well established here. He was especially liked in 'Love Affair' in which Irene Dunne starred with him. Darrieux's Hollywood training did her no end of good and the French, who like her type of vivacity, welcomed her with open arms.

Michel Simon and Fernandel were both high on the ladder of public choice for much the same reason that Chaplin has always been popular here. Theirs is an admixture of comedy and pathos that is always bound to draw a tear. Simon, the newcomer to the list, usually interpreted roles of the awkward, dull-witted person of the milieu while Fernandel's art is more of the slapstick variety. He slipped from second to sixth due to circumstances. Fernandel's and Simon's biggest success of the year was scored together in 'Erie Frac,' an amusing story of Paris' underworld.

Jouvet assured his inclusion in the list by his excellent interpretations in 'La Fin du Jour' and 'Hotel du Nord.' He is an old favorite due to his supporting roles and as a personality of the local theatrical world.

Arletty too is new and another 'bad girl' of the screen. Her hard-boiled, slangy roles struck the right chord due to a touch of humaneness which usually redeems her and sets well with her public. With Simon and Fernandel she formed a trio of well-applauded stars in 'Erie Frac' and co-starred again with Simon in 'Circumstances Attenuantes.' These two pix definitely established her.

Michele Morgan is relatively new but her sincere, convincing interpretations alongside of Gabin landed her in the first 10. Cooper maintained No. 10 by virtue of his leads in 'Bluebeard's Eighth Wife' and 'Marco Polo' which reaped rich harvests in the provinces.

## THE THEATRE IN WAR TIME

By Charles B. Cochran

London, Dec. 20.

At the outbreak of war I said in an interview, 'I do not agree with the people who think the war will kill the serious theatre. Naturally, there will be a big demand for light and frivolous fare; that is, only reasonable. But you must remember that a great number of playgoers dislike revue and musical comedy. To many people such shows are a means of escape. But if you don't happen to like them in peacetime you won't like them any better because there is a war on. If you are a lover of serious plays you will still want to go to see them in wartime. What could be a finer means of taking your mind off present-day troubles than a vivid production of a Shakespearean play, for instance?'

To begin with, we may expect a great proportion of light entertainment, but the serious theatre—I don't mean highbrow experimentalism or gloomy, depressing plays—will always have its supporters in the long run.

And whatever lies in store, I am confident that the theatre will prove itself to be as essential to the well-being of those on the home front and those on leave as it was in the last war. I personally gave London those witty, intimate little revues at the Ambassadors Theatre where an unknown French actress named Alice Delysia began her London career at a salary of £6 a week. Then 'Carminetta,' that charming romantic operetta in which Delysia, now growing rapidly in popularity, rose to real heights of drama and pathos. And 'As You Were,' with this same Delysia, radiant with versatility and high spirits, bringing down the house with her delivery of that dandy line, 'Are you married, single, or in Paris on leave?' This was done in New York later with Irene Bordoni, Sam Bernard and Clifton Webb.

Then 'Houp-la,' which opened the St. Martin's theatre with stalls at a guinea a time—a revolutionary idea in 1916—and a cast headed by Gertie Millar, George Graves and Ida Adams (you may not remember her name, but you know that of her understudy—Binnie Hale). 'The Better 'Ole,' scorned by rival managements, justified my faith by running for more than 800 performances.

### Now, as Then

Today's war puts me in mind of an early Cochran revue, 'Odds and Ends,' which was staged entirely in black velvet curtains, and remarkably effective they were. But a program note stating 'Mr. Cochran wishes to announce that he has spared no economy in mounting this revue' caused a dramatic critic to point out, next morning, that Mr. Cochran should really employ someone to correct him, when he obviously intended to say 'expense.' I must add that the critic was a Scot!

Last July I commenced planning a 1939 revue to be a 'London Charivari,' with a definite link-up between the episodes, but that will have to wait for happier times.

I decided to put on an economic wartime revue, and by Sept. 15 I had Noel Gay and Ronald Jeans busy on music and book. We opened to pre-war business in Manchester. Manchester, of course, has seen the launching of many of my new productions. I used to call it my 'Riviera of the North,' for at a time when many of my fellow-managers were holidaying in the south of France I would be up north, often round about Christmas or the New Year, putting in days and weeks of intensive rehearsals for a big musical show.

John Gielgud, Edith Evans and company preceded the opening of my revue, 'Lights Up,' at the Opera House, Manchester, with the 'Importance of Being Earnest.' They took away £2,200. My curtain went up with an advance booking of £4,000, and in the first five performances we played to £2,400. And we have been maintaining that average.

In London the Palladium is doing record business with the new crazy show; The Hippodrome is playing to capacity; 'Under Your Hat,' an old show, still grosses £2,000, and the favorite of the Great War, Delysia, has a big hit at the Criterion.

The blackout, curtailed train services, the risk of air raids and other considerations are all against the theatre, but the good show goes on and will continue to go on.



# THE FILM BIZ DOWN UNDER

By Eric Gorrick

Sydney, Dec. 15.

There were many boxoffice surprises during 1939. Payees shopped wisely for attractions, irrespective of star value. If the stories appealed to them they bought, stars notwithstanding. Proof of this is provided by the huge disappointment by 'Idiot's Delight' (M-G), starring Clark Gable and Norma Shearer.

One of the brightest stars at the b.o. proved to be Mickey Rooney, mainly through his work in 'Boys' Town' (M-G) and the 'Hardy' (M-G) series. Rooney may be classed in the topflight in Antipodean pulling power. Another star, once b.o. poison here, but now on the up-and-up, is Bette Davis, whose 'Dark Victory' (WB) hit high success everywhere.

On the juves once topping everything, Shirley Temple slipped badly during 1939. Whether this moppet can win back success in 1940 is regarded as doubtful by local managers. Jane Withers, also once a prime fave, can't draw a decent gross nowadays in any center. Deanna Durbin has slipped somewhat during the year because of a similarity in pix offered by Universal. Given a better story break, this star may build considerably again in 1940.

## Taylor Skids

Biggest male lead slip during the year was Robert Taylor. Once a hot-shot with the femmes, Taylor's b.o. power was killed by lack of suitable yarns. Gary Cooper, spotted in a couple of quick flops, is another on the skids for the time being. Robert Donat, always a prime favorite, won further laurels with 'Good-bye Mr. Chips' (M-G), and should advance strongly next year. Charles Laughton is another Britisher highly thought of at the boxoffice.

The best British comedian throughout 1939 was George Formby. And Formby, if the war doesn't interfere with production plans, looks like going places again in 1940. Leslie Howard, too, got top response with 'Pygmalion' and appears a solid bet for next year.

A comeback of b.o. worth was made by Lew Ayres via the 'Kildare' (M-G) series. Clark Gable hasn't been too fortunate during the year, but given good pix should do okay again in the new span. Errol Flynn maintains his romantic appeal with the masses, and Nelson Eddy did very well with femme patronage. Spencer Tracy remains in favor generally, but Wallace Beery must be spotted in suitable houses to catch anything worthwhile. Tyrone Power holds his place with some solid work in pix of popular appeal.

## Few Femmes Clicks

Outside of the quick rise of Bette Davis, and apart from the hit made by Merle Oberon in 'Wuthering Heights' (U-A), very few femme stars have been strong enough on solo to chalk up smash trade. Irene Dunne and Myrna Loy look the best right now.

In the double field, Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers won back some lost b.o. ground with 'The Castles' (RKO), but are not the same pull as of yore. Undoubtedly, the best team for '39 was Nelson Eddy-Jeanette MacDonald, with every likelihood of a repeat if co-starred in 1940.

No local star of marquee worth was unearthed during the year, and there is nothing to indicate the possibility of any home talent hitting the high spots next year owing to the deadness of local production.

Supporting players favored by Aussie audiences included Walter Brennan, Frank Morgan, Mischa Auer, Billie Burke, Don Ameche, Richard Greene, Greer Garson, Lewis Stone, C. Aubrey Smith, Donald Crisp, Reginald Owen and Charles Winninger. The most favored horse-opera star was William Boyd in the 'Cassidy' (Par) series.

## Political Pressure Eases

Politically, most of 1939 turned out to be pretty tough for the major U. S. distributors operating in this territory. Two highly important factors, however, were responsible for a lift in the political pressure. The first covered the resignation of B. W. Stevens as Premier of New South Wales, together with the wipeout of Jack Lang as Labor leader. The second, and most important of all, was the outbreak of war in Europe.

Misjudgment by the Motion Pictures Distributors Assn. in handling political matter was seen as one of the reasons why the Stevens government became so bitter toward U. S. interests in N. S. Wales. Jack Lang,

as labor controller in the same state, was also strongly opposed to any type of U. S. pic combine. Unhealthy unrest, too, within the ranks of the MPDA did little to combat the political stuff prevailing at the time. A new setup, with Bernie Freeman as the head, may assist in restoring happier results in 1940.

Earlier in the year pressure had been put on the Federal government to bring about a national quota, including a general 25% right of rejection of U. S. product in favor of home exhibs. In South Australia and Queensland the pressure was heavy for a quota-rejection lineup similar to that in force in N. S. Wales. The outbreak of war swung the Government's attention away from the pic industry to more highly important matters. A fresh lineup of politicians in N. S. Wales—where most of the quota-rejection bother cropped up, also witnessed a swing away from pic affairs. Nevertheless, in N. S. Wales there are sufficient imposts in operation against the U. S. distributors to carry their headaches along for a time next year.

## Will There Be a Change?

Major concern of the U. S. distributors is whether there'll be a lift of quota-rejection restrictions in 1940 because of a contemplated product shortage. That 25% right of rejection is a definite law and can only be revoked by an act of Parliament. This also applies to the 15% compulsory British screening. An acute product shortage situation brought to the notice of the Films Commission might force this body to recommend to the Government a lift in such imposts. However, any such move would have to be in complete agreement with the Motion Picture Exhibs' Assn.

The British distributors are keenly anxious to hold the ground gained in N. S. Wales on quota compulsion. A survey discloses that there will be British product on tap in 1940. Gaumont-British expects to have 26 pix for distribution; Associated British, distributed by Universal, already has 11 pix here for quick release; Associated Talking Pictures-CAPAD, via British Empire Films, report sufficient product to carry on with, including the George Formby comedies.

## Monetary Restrictions

It's anticipated that the Government will impose added restrictions on remittances overseas. Current rate allowable, and then only with the permission of banking officials, is rated at \$15,000 per month. This amount principally covers the cost of importing goods from abroad and whether films will continue to come under this category is problematical. However, there is a possibility of arrangements being made by distributors to cover the question of remitting coin to the U. S. under Governmental supervision. One of the biggest monetary headaches to the distributors arises from the exchange rate on the Australian pound for conversion into U. S. dollars showing a considerable slip in recent times.

There is, too, every reason to believe that added taxes will be imposed upon film traders during 1940 to meet the huge defense expenditure under Federal control.

## Increased Film Rentals

It's anticipated that 1940 will also see an increase in film rentals to home exhibs. This in itself will create unrest in the industry, with the possibility of political repercussions at a later date.

For years the home exhibs have protested that they pay too high a rate to the U. S. distributors for product. Tremendously heavy slaps have been taken at Metro by exhibs on alleged unfair percentage charges. Metro has also been slapped for running a chain of seven theatres in opposition to indie operators in the principal centers of the Commonwealth. Practically every major U. S. distributor has had to face charges of unfair price tactics at some time or other on the part of exhibs, and only recently in N. S. Wales a standard form of contract was introduced under the supervision of the Films Commission. War conditions, however, may force some alterations to be made in the contract setup during 1940.

Surveyors in this field give the opinion that rentals must go up some time next year. They explain that the increase in production costs, plus higher taxation, shipping charges, insurance, exchange fall, and the like, must force an increase.

Whether or not the British can maintain a product flow in 1940 does not hide the fact that exhibs depend upon U. S. fare to keep their the-

atres open. And 1940 should see U. S. pix marquee to good b.o. in every Australian spot.

Hopes are held that the MPDA and the MPEA will work along more harmonious lines in 1940 in an endeavor to remove from the pic industry the stigma of political interference.

## Yanks '39 Opposish

Hollywood product had keen opposition from the British during 1939. Next year, providing war conditions had not intervened, the Britishers might have been on top in the ace theatres. Now, however, with conditions as they are, the Hollywood product will no doubt command the majority of the marquees throughout Australia and New Zealand.

In 1939, strange as it may seem, the biggest hits here came from British studios. For instance, 'Pygmalion' (G-B) ran for 30 weeks in one house in this city alone, and an almost similar span was clicked in Melbourne. Other good runners included 'Trouble Brewing' (BEF), 'It's in the Air' (BEF), 'Mr. Chips' (M-G), 'Drums' (UA), 'Clouds Over Europe' (Col), 'Beachcomber' (Par), 'Mikado' (G-B), 'Great Waltz' (M-G), 'Girls Must Live' (G-B), 'Wuthering Heights' (UA), 'Four Feathers' (UA), and 'Four Just Men' (BEF).

## Went for Classy Pix

At one time during the year it was quite a unique sight to see six Britishers marquee in this city, and all drawing big biz over an extended term. Months before the outbreak of war in Europe, and much to the amazement of pic-wised managers, there came into boxoffice being a solid demand for class British fare. For some reason or other the public swayed away from Hollywood material. After an extensive probe this trend was put down to a sameness in the Hollywood output, plus a scarcity of good stories. In other words, the public became tired of cycle fare as offered week after week. The Britishers, by breaking new entertainment ground, hit the fancy of the public and copped surprisingly good grosses.

Even after the outbreak of European hostilities, and not through any flag-waving angles, there still remained a bright market for worthwhile British fare. In fact, it can be said that 1939 was the best year for the Britishers ever experienced in this territory.

A heavy try was made in Sydney and Melbourne to sell Continental pix to the public by Savoy Theatres, Ltd., a company in which Stuart F. Doyle became interested, but later exited. The Continental fare did not click very well in Sydney, but is doing somewhat better in Melbourne. However, Hollywood need not fear any strong opposition from this angle in 1940. Rental grosses gotten on behalf of the U. S. producers from Australia should tally up to a sizable sum. They would have been ever so much higher, however, had not the British companies snapped away quite a nice collection for distribution among themselves.

## Look for Comedy

Next year, managers figure, will see an influx of comedy fare from the Hollywood studios. If the cycle is not overdone, some solid returns should be available at the boxoffices. That the public wants laughter product is indicated by the recent success made by RKO's 'Bachelor Mother.' How long this yen for laughs will remain in vogue during next year is a moot point. War stuff, however, will be definitely taboo, managers declare.

Taking everything into consideration and figuring on a semi-British production ease, Hollywood should come into its own again in this territory during 1940. And most definitely, Hollywood will have nothing to fear from any local production activities.

## Quota Favoring Anglo

### Reels Seen for Canada

Realignment of newsreels in Canada reportedly looms in the next few months. One shift proposed is to place newsreels under a quota arrangement whereby exhibitors would have to make up their newsreel program with at least 50% Canadian or British news.

Tied into this idea is the proposal to start a Canadian government-owned, or operated, newsreel, or perhaps both. Completely dominated home newsreel would be set up as a propaganda necessity.

# Binges Cheap In Budapest

By E. P. Jacobi

Budapest, Dec. 20.

After a brief panic in September, when things looked their blackest, Budapest niteries have gotten back into their stride. In fact, they are recovering lost ground. Palais de Danse, dark for the past two years, during which only the management's summer place on Margaret Island, Parisian Grill, was kept open, has reopened this season and is doing well at moderate prices. A tentative experiment is even being made to revive the variety stage, for years dormant in Budapest. A small spot, closed since last spring, is shortly to reopen as Kamara Variete, with a cabaret and music-hall-variety-show program. All these are symptoms of the never-say-die attitude of Budapest nite life.

This is all the more remarkable since foreign visitors, on whom niteries thrive in the past four years, ever since the Duke of Windsor, then Prince of Wales, put Budapest on the amusement map for British and American money-spenders—are entirely missing. They had grown steadily fewer during the spring and summer months and completely stopped since the outbreak of war. Foreigners in Budapest today are mainly Polish refugees with no spare cash.

Nevertheless, the slump that was expected as a result of the lessening of Jewish patronage in consequence of racial legislation, is hardly making itself felt. True, many Jews have lost their jobs, big incomes have been cut down, a number of young men have emigrated, and those who are left don't go places much. But, on the other hand, the same racial legislation accounts for the cropping up of a new batch of money-spenders: those who got the Jews' jobs and position, who enjoy special privileges.

## Cost of a Binge Is Cheap

Cost of going on a binge in a niterie is very low if translated into American terms. Cover charge even at the best places is 20c, with amusement tax adding another dime. A bottle of French champagne, almost exclusively drunk by foreigners, costs \$13, with native champagne at \$3.50 per bottle at Palais de Danse and lesser niteries, and between \$4 and \$7 at Arizona or Moulin Rouge, the two top places. A bottle of good wine costs \$3, a glass of cognac \$1, coffee 50c. You can entertain a lady for \$10 like a gentleman; if you spend more, you command respect.

Entertainment at both the Arizona and at Moulin Rouge consists of a floor show in the framework of a revue. Arizona employs its own staff, starring Miss Arizona, proprietress. They still keep up the zoo stunts that were successful in former programs, but while they had an elephant and a camel in the show last year, this season they indulge in more domestic quadrupeds. Last year's attractions were boxes sunk into the ground at the pressure of a button; this year Arizona has introduced the stunt of public telephone stations in every box, so that you can ring up your wife and say you are warming your toes by your hotel bedroom fire.

At Moulin Rouge, revues based on old musical comedy favorites were well received last season; this year they have a Fairyland revue, with a few foreign numbers and several popular musical comedy actors featured. Foreign dance acts featured here during the last few months included The Darras, Bernoff and Charlotte, Frederic Victor, Al and Val Reno, Caesar and Doree, Christian and Duroy. Such acts at Moulin or Palais de Danse were paid \$300 to \$500 a month, and the National Bank usually granted them export permits for 35% of their earnings. At present, however, with international demand for such permits at a low ebb, salaries are even lower.

## 3 Classes of Native Talent

Native talent employed in niteries can be classed into three categories. Dancers, mostly under 18, who figure on the floor but do not stay after the show, have a salary between \$40 and \$80 a month. Then there are the older girls who work on the floor, but also stay to act as hostesses. Their pay is somewhat higher. The third category, who merely do hostessing, are paid \$20 to \$50 a month, but of course their earnings, like those of the second category, may actually be anything up to \$200 a month, and more, if they happen to strike a bonanza.

In addition to the three big night clubs, it's still the small bars and

grill rooms that draw the largest patronage. Csakvari's is at present the most popular, with himself and partner at the piano; also Capri, where another pianist, Froehlich, is the chief attraction. Prince of Wales, Taban, Parisette, Dunakorzo, DuBarry are in the front rank. Some of the big cafes: Spolarits, Orszaghaz, Modern, Baross and Belvarosi have also established small, intimate grill rooms, with a pianist and two or three other instruments and maybe a disease for customers who like to dance and don't care for the noise and glare of the big public rooms. Martha Ratkay, Terry Fellegi, Ania Suli, American, and an English girl, Anita Best, are among the most popular diseases. Salaries of torch singers are not big, but they get their share of 'the plate,' placed near the exit for the benefit of the orchestra.

There is dancing at some of the smart hotels: Dunapalota, Hungaria, Gellert, Royal and Bellevue, but no floor shows or professionals. These are mostly patronized by bourgeois families; here even such obsolete phenomena as young girls chaperoned by their mothers may occasionally be observed.

# Chinese \$ Worth 7c, Hence Few U.S. Acts in Far East

By HAL P. MILLS

Shanghai, Dec. 15.

Since the commencement of Sino-Japanese hostilities in the Shanghai area, American musicians have virtually faded from the picture and have been supplanted by Russian and Filipino musicians, and to a large extent by European refugees. Time was when American musicians were regarded as tops and ruled the roost here, but at present less than a dozen are to be found in Shanghai, and of the remaining ones fully 50% have been here many years and are generally regarded as Old China Hands who have 'missed too many ships.'

The same is true with reference to American artists. Barring the Reynolds Bros. and the Dixie Sisters, American colored artists, no other American performers are in Shanghai.

Reasons? Poor remuneration due to the unfavorable rate of exchange. The Chinese dollar today is worth exactly 7c U. S.—and all Shanghai night spots pay only in Chinese national currency.

Less than three years ago nearly all leading local ballrooms and night clubs employed American entertainers and paid in U. S. currency. Also provided transportation to China and return to America. Under the deplorable rate of exchange no Shanghai niterie can now afford to employ American performers and pay in U. S. currency.

For these reasons American artists in the Far East are steering clear of Shanghai. On the other hand, ready employment for first-class American artists is to be found in Hongkong and Manila, where salaries in U. S. currency are not uncommon. At the present time upwards of a dozen American artists are employed in Hongkong hotels, while twice that number are employed in Manila.

So long as the situation here remains unchanged it is extremely unwise for American artists to visit Shanghai in the expectation of finding worthwhile engagements. Engagements are available but the remuneration is poor.

## Wartime London

London, Dec. 20.

Mai Bacon, who recently lost her only son in the Air Force, left for France to entertain, in place of Violet Loraine who, with Binnie Hale, is on the sick list there following an auto accident.

Cyril Raymond a flying officer. Alister MacIntyre in the army and William Gell, Jr., eldest son of W. J. Gell, managing director of Pathe here, is on active service in France. Jockey Gordon Richards a black-out victim, suffering concussion when his car struck a lamppost while he was returning from Newmarket races.

Charles Coborn ('Man Who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo') singing to the soldiers at the age of 87. This makes the sixth war in which he has given his services for entertainment.



# GERMAN SCREEN AND THEATRE

By Claire Trask

Berlin, Dec. 20.

Like the rest of the nation's amusement industry, the picture business in Germany is getting the biggest rakeoff from the war boom. There's nothing like restrictions to make a man spend his money recklessly and the Germany of today has its plethora of sour grapes. The average Teuton is up against it when it comes to spending, except on charity, likker and amusement. And of these even charity has a prescription tag tied to it.

Food, clothes, travel, almost anything money will and is supposed to buy, is beyond his pale. The rationing system, rigorously put into effect during the very first days of the Polish invasion has definitely cramped his style. But as yet the sky is wide open when it comes to amusements, cinemas, theatre, vaudeville. The swing-band joints, low-priced and high-toned, pull in the jam trade as do all the beer and wine-guzzling places.

No more wasting time strolling leisurely along Kurfurstendamm or Friedrichstrasse. Blackout and the long wintry evenings have put a stop to that. Now everyone heads straight for the spot, his place of amusement. Up to now, booze has escaped stinting. No doubt, when the government gets around to it, here too public indulgence will be curbed. But for the moment, alcohol and amusement are the two diversions which haven't soured yet. They draw all the surplus coin, and what nation ever thought of saving when the clash of arms dings in its ears?

Up to the outbreak of hostilities and in spite of an ever-increasing war scare swinging the country, no backward slide was apparent in the production schedule of the German film industry. Quite the opposite; activity had intensified. The national theatre park, consisting of around 350 houses, had shot up suddenly to approximately 550. For the Fatherland had been doing considerable spreading. Starting with the grab of Austria the previous year, it added a well-nurtured screen territory by elbowing into the Sudetenland, followed by the rounding up of an exceedingly film-conscious Czechoslovakia this spring. The thoroughly rehearsed slogan 'Heim ins Reich' also did its duty and brought the Memelland as well as Danzig 'back to the fold.'

This was the situation, by the end of August, when Germany started out on new conquests ending up with the lightning bagging of Poland. And although up to the present little has been done or could be done regarding the enormous screen potentialities of this latest annexation, there is no doubt that the industry has already been given the usual forceful official hint to take it into earnest consideration. By the map, Poland is easily 75% the size of the Germany Hitler took over in 1933.

## Melodrama Rates First

So far as film tastes are concerned, the mellers with the heart twist rated No. 1 on the screen in 1939. The state-controlled pix concerns grossed heavily. Along this line, and a good league ahead of the rest, coasted the Ufa film 'Heimnat' ('Home') based on a play by the late Herman Sudermann. Directed by the white-haired craftsman, Carl Froelich, who has that unforgettable 'Maedchen in Uniform' to his credit, this starrer for the low-piped Zarah Leander filmer ensconced the megger on the apex of this year's German film constellation. Some hands and voices rose in horror at the sacrilege of using the hallowed music of Bach's 'St. Matthew's Passion' for Leander, the Swedish torch singer, but the success din of the picture drowned out those feeble, well-meant objections.

It was the political developments which prevented 'The Governor' (Ufa) from turning into a close runner-up. This heroic tear-jerker, screened by the white-Russian Viktor Tourjansky, unfortunately did not foresee events. Its glorification of a Baltic dictator, unflinchingly downing Communistic intrigue, no longer dovetails since the German-Soviet hookup. The picture showed a skilful blending of love interest with a rather muddled display of heroism and sacrifice. Nevertheless, the German auditor voraciously gobbled this up since it was dished out to him by two of Germany's screen favorite lovers, Brigitte Horney and Willi Birgel.

Much more on the legit side of

the drama, taken from plays, were the two Tobis pictures, 'Das unsterbliche Herz' and 'Verwehte Spuren'. They were penned and directed by the former stage mummer Veit Harlan with the blonde Kristina Soderbaum, another Swede, getting star honors. But neither of these supers hit the high water mark reached by the inexpensive 'Jugend', the initial film turned out by this team. (Miss Soderbaum has become Mrs. Harlan since).

A tastefully done bit of cynical fluff, with period costuming, was Willi Forst's 'Bel Ami' based on a DeMaupassant novel. Its sophisticated pyrotechnics sizzled against the Nazi bromides and gave the dialog that special tang dear to the more worldly-minded German souls. An ace director, Forst had succeeded in moulding a somewhat licentious story into an amusing satire on the democratic France of the late Eighties. This Viennese picture marks his comeback to the position 'Maskerade' had gained for him. His struggle for independence from political bossing is one of the most interesting chapters in Nazi screendom.

## Curt Goetz's Progress

A sizeable newcomer to screen ranks was the playwright-actor-director Curt Goetz, a stage veteran. His initial Tobis effort, 'Napoleon is to Blame for Everything', had the ingredients of a real satire glossed over by a crazy rigamarole. By far the best part of it was over and above the cranium of the average. Not resorting to one of his many stage successes, but rather penning an original, shows that Goetz is on the right track. Simplicity and directness marked one of the finest pictures shadowing last year's screen. 'Du und ich' ('You and I') was a genuinely told pre-World War love story of two young workaday people, sincerely directed by the youthful Wolfgang Liebeneiner. The one point against it was its forced ending, heralding the glories of impending Nazism.

There is nothing new or surprising in the fact that the straight comedy type of film was almost entirely crowded off the screen. The light, humorous touch is rare in Germany. It has either the corroding component of bitter satire or the slapstick crudeness of cheap farce. Nevertheless, three prime comedies hit the screen with a bang, two of them scripted, and not by mere coincidence, by the same youthful author, Jochen Huth. He screen-adapted his stage success, 'Die Vier Gesellen,' as a vehicle for Ingrid Bergmann, the Swedish girl, who recently crashed into Hollywood. Its black-and-white interpretation became a bracing counterpart to his legit version plus a pleasant varnish of that warm human touch. Huth's second script, 'Ein Hoffnungsloser Fall,' was an original penned for the star comedienne, Jenny Jugo, who had lost some of her shine. It turned out her best in years and instantly yanked her back into top places showing that, if fed the right substance, her comedy is as bright as ever. Together with her favorite director, Erich Engel, this picture was rolled off for an indie concern. It shot new energy into these down-in-the-dumps outsiders in their stubborn struggle against being ingurgitated by the state. Rounding out the comedy trio was 'Lauter Lugen,' the directing debut of Heinz Ruhmann, Germany's ace screen comedian. His characteristic touch trademarked the film and rib-tickled his fans, giving Ruhmann the boost into the directorial chair he has coveted for so long.

The customary annual production of Emil Jannings, starring himself, turned out a superior money-maker. In 'Robert Koch' he chose an apt story but the restrained power of Werner Krauss playing opposite knocked the star's position off the center spot. No potential luminaries were unrolled on the screen. Such femme leads as Viktoria von Ballasko, Irene von Meyendorff and Hertha Feiler did push up further front, the latter two gradually showing international outlines.

The German stage can hardly be looked upon as a business any longer. With the dictum of the Propaganda Ministry hanging over it like the sword of Damocles, i. e., that the public be educated rather than entertained, each and every theatre professed to art with a capital A, with only a furtive squint at

the capital on the material end of the game. And since every play produced anywhere in the country first passes through the rigorous thumbing of Goebbels' ministry, there is no loophole left for private enterprise.

In sheer self-defense, legitimate business had to look for cover. And so the stage, down to the smallest Westend house, has managed in these six years of state supervision to horn in on some kind of state support, whether by straight subsidy, eased taxes or by striking a bargain with such state-decreed ticket organizations as the KdF ('Strength Through Joy'), which in Berlin alone boasts around 600,000 members. That assures a minimum but steady intake and if, perchance, a house meets up with that lucky strike, a success, the additional coin is usually sunk in the venture. It's a strange business, that of the German legit manager. I haven't met one of the less dependent ones who could be said to do more than just tide over. And still they keep on.

But these houses make up a small contingent nowadays. The bigger lot are state or municipal theatres, with all the deficits conveniently shouldered by either of these two factions. And since Germany boasts around 200 of these playing legit and opera, support runs into staggering annual figures. A million marks (about \$400,000, current rate of exchange) last year for a city like Dusseldorf with its 500,000 inhabitants is nothing out of the ordinary. Yet Germany always had subsidized theatres, the private luxury of its numerous crowned heads, foremost among them the Meininger, sponsored by the Duke of Meiningen over 100 years back. But it never before now boasted of a triumvirate on the top, each with a definite yen of his own for the entertainment game called 'Kunst' over here.

## Hitler and Wagner

The big boss, Hitler, is exclusive. His interest is music, but even in that field, it's a special kind. Not the orchestral, operatic or oratorical works of Bach, Beethoven, Mozart. His auricle is attuned only to the heroic blasts and turgid alliterations of Richard Wagner's operas. Recently he has been known to look for relief from the war din in the melodic strains of the Viennese Johann Strauss. But never once did the fuhrer miss turning up at the annual Wagner Festival at Bayreuth which he generously endows. Years before, it had been the eager American summer vacationer who had filled the barn-like sanctuary of the attractive Bavarian town. Travel agencies saw to it that their customers upheld a tradition which Germany itself had outgrown. But now Wagner again heads the billing, not only at Bayreuth but at all the Teuton opera houses.

As for legit entertainment, Hitler rarely sees a play. He leaves that to Goering whom he placed at the theatre helm. And the field marshal's friendship with the actress, Emmi Sonnemann, now Mrs. Goering, made this job a cinch.

Though Joseph Goebbels, third in the trio, was awarded complete control of the film industry, a thwarted playwright's ambition prompted his not easily placated foot to step inside the stage just before it slammed, only to discover that Goering had already skimmed the theatrical cream. He firmly held the reins of the three key houses of the whole country. The only ones that bowed to no selection of its plays by the

Propaganda Ministry, headed by Goebbels, are the Opera on Unter den Linden and the State Playhouse, both in Berlin, as well as the Opera in Kassel. Formerly all of them were in royal hands and subsidized from the Emperor's private budget. During its 15 years' rule, democratic Germany had kept them intact as Prussian state theatres. The instant the field marshal took them over, both the Berlin houses (Kassel has become a minor issue) were rebuilt and sumptuously refurbished at enormous cost and their new productions showed none of the proverbial Prussian parsimony. They are as extravagant as is possible with the Germans.

## Mrs. Goering's Interests

Emmi Goering's former affiliation with the Playhouse assures this theatre a particularly good break. Productions here justifiably set the pace for the rest of the country, for much of Germany's finest dramatic talent is associated with it. Gustaf Grundgens, who heads it, is a versatile actor-director and the main stem of players, directors and scenic designers are recruited from the pre-Nazi theatre. Such acting names as Krauss, Kayssler, Dorsch, echo back to the old times. Directors like Fehling, Muthel, are holding long stage records. So are its scenic artists' Gliese, Neher, Muller.

In keeping with the tradition of this house, this year's outstanding productions were mainly classical. Shakespeare's 'Richard II,' with Grundgens in the title role, was a sensational successor to 'Richard III' which came out the season before. Both of these productions were the startling work of the brilliant director Jurgen Fehling. Shaw's 'Man and Superman' and 'Mrs. Warren's Profession' were resuscitated for a brief spell. The adroit Grundgens is still going strong in his fourth year of 'Hamlet.' His position is by now so consolidated that even his incredibly mannered Hamlet cannot disrupt it.

Of the younger authors, poets in the German vernacular, Richard Billinger has shown the most lasting qualities. His newest play, 'Am hohen Meer,' though uneven, had enough consistency and characterization to brilliantly offset the exceptional gifts of two young star players. Kathe Gold and Gustav Knuth. As a rule two or three of the youngest authors are given a hearing seasonally. But just as in previous years, this last one did not unearth any persistent talent. Hanns Rehberg continues to write his competent Prussian heroics and this fall's first offer, Curt Langenbeck, just passed muster with his drama, 'The Traitor.'

## Lighter Stuff

Flitting about more lightly among the dramatic bric-a-brac is the job of the Kleines Haus, the fashionable Westend theatre which Goering added to his stock some four years back. Here the more frivolous entertainment takes the floor and though it, too, hugs closely to the repertory scheme, like its big brother, occasionally it takes a fling at a run. But as a rule a successful piece is kept on the bill as straight repertory, often overlapping into the following season as is the case now with Theo Lingen's mystery farce, 'Was Wird Hier Gespielt?' Today, Lingen is Germany's vox populi comedian on stage and screen. In 'What Is Being Played Here?', a hoked up, nimble bluff, he made his initial three-way haul as playwright, director and star mummer.

The five theatres assembled

around Goebbels (Volksbuhne, Saarland, Nollendorf, Schiller, as well as the Charlottenburg opera house) are down several pegs compared with the state houses. Here, too, three of them underwent immediate major operations. Also practiced players were put at the head. Eugen Klopfer is in charge of the Volksbuhne, sometimes called, 'Theatre am Horst Wesselplatz,' for short. Harald Paulsen heads the Nollendorf and Heinrich George conveys the Schiller. The rejuvenation of the latter turned a barn into a festive building but one which is definitely stamped to cater to the sturdier type of drama with an ample display of lung power.

Last spring George experimented successfully with Shakespeare's 'Henry IV' first and second part in one consecutive show. 'Falstaff' is pie for this obese, good-natured comedian and the test definitely pushed the production into a fair run.

Volksbuhne and Saarland stuck closer to the moderns, though not too close. But they did not honeycomb one outstanding success. At the Nollendorf the classical operetta has made a definite niche for itself. Strauss, Millocker, Heuberger were pulled from what turned out to be a regular beauty sleep. They still deliver the goods when it comes to melody.

## Hilpert Vice Reinhardt

For five years now Heinz Hilpert, a more or less independent producer, has managed to hold on to his former Reinhardt theatres, the Deutsches and the Kammerspiele. The latter was reopened last season having been shuttered for three years and its bright coat of paint covering up the original sombre woodwork gives it a most cheerful appearance. From the very outset Hilpert collected a standing ensemble, now current in most Berlin theatres, which he augments by an occasional find from the hinterland. His schedule backbone is the English comedy — Shaw, Jerome, Maugham, Galsworthy, Dodie Smith, alternating with the classics. You can't get away from them in the German theatre.

With the exception of the Theatre des Volkes, a popular priced subscription house playing in the former Grosses Schauspielhaus of Reinhardt where it alternates spready operetta with classic rantings, the small fry just hangs on. Occasionally, but very rarely, a house has a long run because of personality draw, as in the case of 'Aimee' at the Kunstlertheatre, formerly the Komische Oper. The play is an evident crib from some French opus with a few alterations to justify Heinz Coubier to by-line as author. Star billing is given to the picturesque Olga Tschekova, of the famous Russian acting family.

Personality is also keeping the boxoffice going in the characters of the old-timer Agnes Straub and the not exactly new-timer Hilde Hildebrand. Their vehicles are trimmed to snugly suit their very different proportions, upsettingly alike when it comes to stagey mannerisms. But neither of them has become a full-fledged owner of a theatre like the comedian Ralph Arthur Roberts. Nazis come and Nazis go (maybe) but Roberts carries on. He has just started on his ninth season at the Behrenstrasse and all he ever needs to do is to change locale and name of his play. His audience is content to laugh at what it has laughed before.

Heinz Hentschke's fall opening, 'Die Oder Keine,' is a misnomer. It should have been called, 'Die Revue Oder Keine,' and you would have had the whole business in a nutshell. For Hentschke has completely monopolized the revue business and squeezed it into one theatre, the Metropol. Once the head of the biggest ticket agency, in the good old Rotter days, he pushed himself first into line when the brothers found their ignominious, but tragic, end. Whatever else they were not, the two Rotters were great showmen. Those days when they starred Gitta Alpar and Richard Tauber, Germany's music stage rocketed sky-high.

But Hentschke is content to get the transient and yokel trade which enables him to maintain a show a season. He is said to dicker also for the nearby Admiralspalast but up to now its shutters are still down.

## DELIBERATELY UNDERMINING U. S. PIX

Berlin, Dec. 20.

The American picture has become a negligible quantity in Germany. With the exception of an occasional Gable or Shirley Temple opus, very few starrers are shown. The usual American product passed by the German censor is the dualler of the adventure or mystery species.

From the outset it has been evident that the propaganda ministry was determined to kill foreign film in all those cases where no reciprocal exchange could be effected. America is one of the lands that turned a cold shoulder on Germany. It manifested no interest in German product. So Germany hit back and gave deliberate preference to second-rate U. S. film ware. By so doing it gradually choked the American market in Germany.

The public judges by what it sees and it certainly isn't handing any laurels to the majority of the Hollywood product set before it today. Goebbels would have long ago liked to shut out American competition altogether. But there always remained a generous margin for foreign films because German supply fell short of demand.

With 'protective' areas continually being added, instead of easing up the situation it becomes intensified. Meaning that, in time, neutral America should be getting a break again in those countries where it formerly held control, such as the late Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland.



# War Curbs France's Greatest Cinema Advance In 25 Years

By Joseph C. Ravotto

Paris, Dec. 20.

The outbreak of war on Sunday, Sept. 3, brought to a screeching halt what was probably the greatest year in the history of the French film industry.

The first eight months of 1939 saw production stepped up to the fastest rhythm of its existence, with quality keeping pace with quantity and with improved technical skill and photography all maintaining the same fast tempo. These factors combined to make a willing public daily more film conscious and proud in a nationalistic sense that the wailing, puny infant of a decade ago had grown into a lusty, strong youth who could be classed with the half-dozen largest industries in the country and, what is more important, a fairly serious competitor to Hollywood.

All this steady growth took place despite heavier taxation, severer legislation, higher costs, the constant threat of armed conflict and a scandal which shook the industry to its very foundations.

B. O. grosses showed a corresponding increase as the public began to go less to legit, variety and opera and turn more and more to pictures.

Despite a devaluated franc, tougher competition and the constant threat of new legislation which would have endangered its future in the country, the American industry consolidated its position here, with more and better pics being sent over from Hollywood in original and dubbed versions. The American and French product both profited from the bull movement and everything pointed towards a still sharper climb on the chart of fall and winter business.

## Most Ominous Period Since '14

All this occurred during the most ominous and threatening period in world history since 1914 and paralleling in striking fashion the months preceding September, 1938. Either the belief that no man or regime could be sufficiently mad enough to want to plunge the world into another holocaust which might end with chaos and the destruction of western civilization, or the more realistic belief that war was inevitable but that the time had not yet arrived for its outbreak, led business men to continue investing heavily in the growing home industry and to harvest some of the biggest returns yet registered.

In some respects the situation closely resembled that of the eve of another war 25 years back. At that time the French industry had just swung into its stride and the feeling was general in the country that a few more years would give France a dominating position in the world's film mart. War broke out and all industry, except that having to do with the big job at hand, was halted, or keyed down for four long years. And in some cases the effect was drastic. During these four years, Hollywood grew to striking proportions and French cinema waned to practically nothing. It was not until four or five years ago that it began to assume a new and perhaps more promising character than that of 1914.

After September, 1939, everything crumbled like a house of cards. Lots were abandoned, studios deserted, cinemas partly shuttered and producers and distributors' offices locked up, while thousands of actors, directors and technicians flocked to the colors and thousands of others were put on the unemployed list.

## Authorities' Curbs

Efforts of exhibitors to continue operations somewhat near the former scale were ruthlessly stifled by the authorities with severe restrictions. Blackouts forced the darkening of marquees. Reduced taxi, 'metro' (subway) and bus service did the rest. Authorities were guided by one ominous fact—enemy air raids—and the precautions they took were sincerely dictated for the best interests of the civilian population.

As the days passed into weeks and the threats of the enemy air raids became a passive rather than an active fear, and civilians, puzzled by the curious way the war was being fought, showed need of amusement and distractions, complaints began to be registered from all sides.

The steady barrage succeeded in having some minor restrictions lifted, but production failed to rally. Showcases were permitted to remain open until 11 p.m. and audience limits were boosted from 300 to

higher figures, depending on exits and nearby shelters.

Exhibitors began to rally and at the end of November some 275 out of 353 houses in the capital were again doing business. Limited audiences, however, reduced gross returns and exhibitors, instead of buying new pictures, ran reruns and a few new class B pics. Distributors refused to release costly, high class films, awaiting a time when authorities might show greater benevolence in order to be assured of clearing their investments.

Producers made an effort to get going, but with the army refusing to release actors and directors, or doing so at the wrong time, and inability to find financial backing kept new production stagnant. Several pix, started before the war, were completed and a few new ones with propaganda themes were started before the end of November, but this was a small beginning and a far cry from the pre-war activity.

American distributors began doing business on a modified scale, through release of a few new class A's in Paris and almost normal biz in some of the unaffected westernmost districts in France, and at least succeeded in covering operating expenses.

## Scandal Tee-off

The year 1939 began in auspicious fashion with the largest scandal ever recorded in the French cinema world cracking wide open. During Xmas week, 1938, Bernard Natan, driving power behind the Pathe-Natan Co., Jean Cert and Alexandre Johannides, three naturalized Frenchmen, were arrested, charged with fraud and embezzlement of funds involving 140,000,000 francs (\$3,600,000).

At this stage of proceedings it was believed that the embezzlements went over the 1,000,000,000 franc mark and was already being ranked in magnitude with the Stavisky scandal of a few years back.

Natan was charged with watering stock and forming fictitious subsidiary stock and holding companies. He built up a monster organization without sound financial foundation and it collapsed by its own dead weight, although it required more than 10 years to bring him to justice. Natan started his film-flaming in 1928, was declared bankrupt in 1935, but it required four more years to assemble the figures so charges could be brought against him for his arrest.

Others were arrested and in June the Tribunal finally sentenced Natan to four years in prison and Cert and Johannides to three and two years respectively. Judgments were also entered against the three defendants individually and collectively for about \$133,000 damages due Pathe receivers.

## Citywide Cinema Shutdown

January, 1939, also saw a citywide cinema shutdown of 353 houses as a protest against new city taxes on gross receipts, which, added to already existing taxes, would have boosted taxes paid by some houses to as high as 40%. Operators claimed that of 400,000,000 francs grossed by them yearly, about 30,000,000 went for poor taxes, 30,000,000 for state and 28,000,000 in city tariffs, not to mention producers' taxes, rights and royalties. They added that the new taxation charges, varying between 3½ and 15% increase, depending on the size of the houses, would unjustly add a 30,000,000 franc burden on them.

The showcases went dark from Jan. 4-8, when the Government stepped in, promising to arbitrate the agreement within 10 days. The total losses during the three-day strike was estimated at \$150,000. The Government did nothing, however, and on Feb. 3, the cinema owners planned a drastic solution when the city decided to maintain the taxes.

The operators decided to suppress all newsreels and documentary films of a propaganda nature which might be considered favorable to the Government. They also decided on the darkening of electric and neon lighting displays and total suppression of all signs and billboards publicizing films throughout the city. This would have deprived the Government of about \$7,000 weekly.

## Compromise

After a few temporary compromises an agreement was reached, temporary in principle but permanent in practice. Taxes were increased so that the new maximum

rate averaged between 10.75 and 25.51% on admissions, depending on the category of the houses. The state reduced taxes 25% on houses in the 100,000-franc category, which helped with low revenues. Exhibitors on the other hand agreed to increase admission prices 20% on admissions under 20 francs (at the time about 50c).

An old measure of the Blum government introduced by Communist deputies, imposing an extra 25% levy on existing taxes for large houses which failed to employ orchestras and variety, was also abolished. Instead of taxing houses which refused to employ entertainers, the Government rewarded those that did with 25% tax reductions.

## Siritzky-Gaumont Merger

One of the biggest deals of the year was the establishment in August of a working agreement between the Siritzky and Gaumont circuits to eliminate competition and reduce overhead. This brought together 125 cinemas into one single block and permitted better distribution of pics formerly cornered by one or the other circuit. Bigger things were hinted at, such as entering the production and distribution field, but the war stifled all the anticipated moves.

Exhibitors found the first eight months of 1939 one of the most prosperous to their knowledge. The Siritzky-Gaumont circuit revealed that its receipts during this period showed a 30% increase over the corresponding eight months in 1938. This increase was attributed mainly to the steady improvement of French production. The summer season also accounted for the upward trend, as it failed to show the usual seasonal decline. Most Parisians remained in the capital due to the war threat and went to the cinemas for amusement.

## 1939 Top Year

There is no doubt that French production would have hit a new mark had it not been for war. Some 56 pics were completed during the first six months, compared to 55 for the same period in 1938. With the huge total of films in the cutting room still in work on Sept. 1, 1938's total of 122 would easily have been surpassed by between 10 and 20. There were 111, 116 and 115 in 1937, 1936 and 1935 respectively.

Although the quality average of French pix was generally higher and more commendable than at any time in the past, it cannot be said that there were any of the individual outstanding bell-ringers of the previous two or three years. Generally lower production costs than in the States permitted French producers to stress name talent and pay generously for it. Outlay for executive and director salaries and studio costs were ridiculously low compared to Hollywood and furnished the answer why French producers could spread it on thick in salary outlay.

## Gabin's \$32,000 Per Pic

Before the war it was revealed that Jean Gabin was being paid about 1,200,000 francs per film. At 38 francs for the dollar this represented about \$32,000 per pic. Fernandel, the buck-toothed comedian, rated about 600,000 francs per pic, plus a percentage of the gross, which usually boosted his take to between 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 francs (between \$40,000 to \$53,000). Viviane Romance took in about 800,000 francs (\$21,000), with Danielle Darrieux topping her by at least 200,000 francs (total \$26,000). With French films turned out quicker than the American product, French marquee names during this period probably drew a higher salary per pic per week of work than the average American star.

Some 15 pics were first rate and deserve being bracketed along with some of Hollywood's best. Gabin gave two outstanding performances in 'Le Bete Humaine' ('The Human Beast') with Simone Simon, and 'Le Jour se Lev' ('Dawn') with Arletty and Jules Berry, both profound studies of the human character. Another forceful psychological study of the 'over-the-hill' class of humanity saw Louis Jouvet co-star with Victor Francen and Michel Simon in Julien Duvivier's hit, 'La Fin du Jour' ('The End of the Day').

## 'Entente Cordiale' Best

Among the outstanding super-productions of the year, 'Entente Cordiale,' with a battery of draw names headed by Francen, Gaby Morlay and Andre Lefaur, easily rates first place. Extolling the history of amicable relations between the two great European democratic powers, it could not have been more timely for its propaganda value. Also in this group belong 'Trois Valses' ('Three Waltzes'), with Yvonne Printemps and Pierre Fresnay, and Sacha Guitry's 'Remontons les Champs Elysees' ('Remounting the Champs Elysees'), loaded with an imposing list of b.o. names,

including Guitry himself, Jacqueline Delubac and Julien Baroux.

On the lighter side were 'Fric Frac', with Michel Simon, Fernandel and Arletty, giving a cross-section of the capital's underworld, 'Circumstances Attenuantes' ('Attenuating Circumstances') with Simon, Arletty and Dorville, another pic dealing with Paris' second-story men; and 'Le Bois Sacre' ('The Sacred Woods'), a witty piece dealing with adultery and Legions of Honor, one perforce depending on the other.

Three others high on the standard scale were the anti-war picture, 'Les Heros de la Marne' ('The Heroes of the Marne') with Raimu; 'Conflict', with Corinne Luchaire, which was a great follow-up to her 'Prisons Without Bars' of the previous year, and 'Gibraltar', with Viviane Romance, based on the Spanish War.

## Threats to Americans

For Americans, 1939 was essentially a year of threats which failed to materialize and surprisingly a year which culminated with the removal of the long standing contingent system of dubbed pics.

In February, 1939, it was reported that the Statute du Cinema had been drafted and was ready for submission to the Chamber of Deputies for ratification. Consisting of some 50-odd articles, it would have had a drastic influence on the entire industry and primarily on foreign business.

Several articles which would have affected the Yanks were control of b.o. receipts, tax on dubbing and limitation of program lengths. Through control of receipts, the Government intended taking a small percentage of the profits to subsidize the native industry. This meant that Hollywood would have had to help foot the bill to boost a rival industry. Furthermore, Americans would have been taxed on dubbing, which had its ironic side since the Yanks built up the dubbing business in the country. Limitation of programs would have brought about the elimination of all double features, one of which invariably was an American pic.

## 50-75% Loss

It was estimated that the passage of the statute would have cost the Americans between 50 and 75% of their biz in France between losses and taxation. The Americans charged that its passage would have had to be considered as a violation of the Franco-American treaty of June, 1936.

Also considered in the statute was the creation of a Commission of Cinematographic Control under the direction of the Ministry of Education. This would have made a virtual dictator of the minister. The press belabored the then Minister Jean Zay with all sorts of charges and accusations, saying that his ambition was to become a film fuhrer. The industry believes that Zay had been inspired by the Italian monopoly and German legislation, with Hollywood marked as the victim.

At the end of March, the section limiting programs to 3,200 meters was struck out through the concerted action of the exhibitors and the American embassy.

The fight shifted on the rest of the statute until it was indefinitely shelved. Echoes of the statute were heard in August, when the Government issued a decree calling for closer supervision of receipts for taxation and royalty, but it had little effect upon American biz.

On June 21, the Official Gazette carried a decree renewing the contingent system but authorized 188 dubbed pictures per annum instead of 94 every six months, as formerly. Americans were pleased with this change and prepared to gobble up the greater part of the visas. Shortly afterwards however, another decree appeared allocating visas by countries, effective Jan. 1, 1940. The United States received 150.

## Contingent System Out

The bombshell landed on Aug. 10, however, when a new decree eliminated the contingent system altogether. French exhibitors were happy as they were assured of a product that had a definite, marketable value. Independent distributors were tickled because they reasoned that the new system enabled them to go to Hollywood to buy all the films they needed, permitting them to compete against the American distributors here, who formerly took up the licenses on the first day of each period.

All of this post-mortem analysis was shortlived, however, for less than a month later the war broke out. Although the law remains on the books it is certain that independent distributors won't be able to exploit it until the end of the war. By that time the opposition shown in

some circles may succeed in having it removed from the books.

Another event of great interest to Hollywood was France's decision to stage a film festival along the lines of the Venice Biennial. With Hollywood's and Great Britain's refusal to go to Venice, due to awards made the previous year that were claimed by the Yanks and English to have been based on political considerations, France decided to exploit the situation. The Festival was set for early September at Cannes, with 11 nations, including the U. S. and Britain, competing. Japan, Germany and Italy refused to attend, the latter holding its Biennial as usual in August but on a smaller scale than in the past. The war put the kibosh on this also before all the awards could be made.

Early in April, the French government took exception to Warner Bros.' release, 'Devil's Island,' by withdrawing its film visas for three months. A number of lawsuits affecting American interests were brought during the year. The De Lesseps family and Alvarez de Toledo, great-grandnephew of Empress Eugenie of France, sued 20th-Fox because of its film 'Suez.' The court tossed out both suits. Universal and Danielle Darrieux continued their differences in court with Universal failing to make any headway.

Franco-American pic relations were reciprocally encouraged by various awards. Jean Renoir was granted the National Board of Review prize for the best foreign film presented in America in 1938 for his 'La Grande Illusion.' The French Academie du Film in April dished out prizes for the best foreign films shown in France during 1938, with the United States getting five of them.

With the nation becoming adjusted to new conditions brought on by the war and the authorities sincerely doing their utmost to normalize conditions among the civilians, indications are that the industry in 1940 will recover some of its former luster.

With the prospect of a long war ahead, the nation will have to be amused and cinema is the nation's best vehicle for assuring it. Soldiers on leave and even in the war zones will require some form of distraction during their idle moments and once again the call will certainly be made on the cinema. Of no less importance is the fact that big business interests in France are acutely aware of the new place that the native industry had won for itself in the domestic and world markets and they may probably exert their influence and power on the authorities to loosen up some restrictions.

The constant and locally expressed threat that Hollywood may exploit the situation may be the deciding factor in gaining passage of new measures, financial aid and elimination of restrictions to assure the industry's functioning to some proportion of its former self.

Only the next 12 months will furnish the answer.

## Canadians' Film-Spending Rose in 1938 Above 1937

Vancouver, B. C., Jan. 1.

Canadians are spending more money on motion pictures, recently-revealed government statistics show. Per capita outlay rose from \$2.93 in 1937 to \$3.02 in 1938.

Receipts (exclusive of amusement taxes) rose from \$32,499,300 in 1937 to \$33,635,000 in 1938. Theatres increased from 1,047 to 1,133, although the number of film exchanges dropped from 63 to 62.

British Columbia fans spend more money per capita on pictures than in any other province at \$4.81, with Ontario second at \$4.07. The latter province, most densely populated in the Dominion, led in revenues with \$15,202,600 with Quebec second at \$6,898,000.

## Vancouver Merger

Vancouver, B. C., Jan. 1.

Radio station CKCD and CKWX, both of this city, will merge after the New Year. Deal on at present with the government for increase in power to 5,000 watts, with new wave-length expected. Daily Province, newspaper from which CKCD leased space, will continue newscasts via CJOR.

Canadian Broadcasting Corp. is examining Coast situation with view to increase in power. Engineers studying layout in attempt to determine whether it would be wiser to place two or three 5,000 outlets between Vancouver and Prince Rupert, or go up to 50,000 in this city. It's a question of coverage, mountainous territory shutting out CBS in some spots now.



# Italy Emphasizes Monopoly Terms As Price of U.S. Biz

By Hugo Speck

Rome, Dec. 20.

Film biz was a flopper in upper case for the Yanks in Italy this year. Regardless of who is justly to blame for Hollywood's withdrawing from the Italian market, the fact still remains that Mussolini's Italy has been a mammoth zero as an outlet of the bigger American producing companies since they withdrew from distribution here the first of the year.

And despite all that has been said on either or both sides of the Atlantic about the Yank product going or coming back into Italy, official sources here state there is no chance of American films again being distributed here unless it is under the terms of the monopoly.

In a last minute check, **VARIETY** obtained official word that the Italian government 'is in no position to allow American films into the country under any terms other than those set down by the monopoly.' To enlarge upon the subject and more fully explain the Italian point of view, the spokesman contacted had the following to say:

## Strictly Economic Clamps

'Italy would be glad to see American films here again. It is not a question of politics with us as some American observers seem to think, but one of economics only.'

The spokesman stressed that always, and more especially since the war began, Italy is doing everything in her power to become self-sufficient in every field. That means in her scheme of controlled economy she can only afford to allow a limited amount of valuable foreign exchange needed to buy raw materials to be spent on films.

'We would like to have American films,' the informant continued, 'but we can only offer so much for them. And the monopoly is in no way against any particular country. We buy French and German films under the same conditions which the Americans refused. It is not our fault if we can only spend so much and no more.'

Asked about the numerous reports that had arisen abroad that Italy was now negotiating for the purpose of 'coming to some arrangement' which would allow the Americans to re-enter the Italian field during the coming year, the informant denied that any such move had been made. 'But we are always ready to listen to proposals,' he continued. He emphasized, however, that those proposals would have to be within the possibilities of the monopoly.

## Universal Looks Out

He also asserted that the contracts which Universal now has with Italian distributing companies will not, so far as he knew, be continued for the coming year. 'There is no question of carrying on the same relations under the same terms,' he said. 'It was only because contracts with Italian companies were signed before the monopoly came into effect that they were allowed to continue this long.'

During the current year, the Universal contract called for something like 18 films being distributed in Italy. But it will evidently be another question for the 12 months to come. Just what kind of arrangement, if any, will be reached could not be determined at this writing.

That any American films coming into Italy in the future will have to come under the terms of the monopoly was also expressed by Bruno Mussolini, son of Il Duce, in a recent issue of Cinema, a mag of which he is the editor, young Mussolini's official position is well known in Hollywood, so his words take on a special significance. While being more lenient towards what the future might bring for the Yanks than was the official spokesman, the Duce's son had the following to say when speaking of the absence of their films from Italian billings:

'It is not that I don't like American films. I have been, on the contrary, one of those who has always maintained that in certain respects the American cinema is superior to the European. However, the monopoly exists and must be respected for the protection of Italian production. A few more American films will enter Italy, but certainly not with direct distribution.'

## Open for 30 U. S. Pix

Bruno Mussolini went on to say that the problem of furnishing prod-

uct for the Italian cinemas for this winter's season had been settled, but he admitted that for the coming year it will be another question. But even with the European production cut to at least half by the war and the Italian market deprived of that product, he still believes that 30 Yank films will be a sufficiency with the Italian output on the increase. 'There is a place in Italy for about 30 good American films,' he wrote, 'and if maintained in such numbers they will not be dangerous for Italian production.'

The 30 films to which Mussolini refers evidently mean those of the small indies that are willing to sell for a set price, or old pix which can be picked up from various sources and palmed off on the Italian public as late productions.

## U. S. Absence Dents Biz

That's from the official standpoint, but **VARIETY** was also assured in other circles that the lack of the American product has put a great dent generally in film business here. Certain distributors are not reluctant to admit that the absence of American films has greatly reduced the cinema-going public and done much to destroy this most popular form of ordinary amusement.

The unusualness of a trouble-torn year, with the clouds of war hovering over the northern frontier from the first of September until the end of the year, also took its toll on the b.o. returns of every kind of amusement, cinema included. Politically, it was one concentrated headache after another and that unsettled condition was felt all along the line. Despite a comparatively quiet summer, the usual number of tourists was lacking and the needed foreign exchange they would bring remained on the other side of Italy's frontiers.

And in this respect the year to come promises nothing better. A meeting of the Fascist Grand Council early in December reaffirmed Italy's alliance with Germany. The country's determination to remain a non-belligerent was also reaffirmed. But with the latter contingent upon the workings of the former, it cannot be said that 1940 will be a year free from all worries and that the delicateness of the situation will be removed.

All of this means that Italy cannot be expected to change anything of a capital nature in her foreign policy for some time to come. Problems more weighty and far-reaching where the future of the country is concerned, than that of film importations, will have to be confronted and decided during the coming months. So it is not now expected that any radical changes can be expected in the immediate future.

## Little Hope

Some quarters were inclined to draw some measure of relief in the appointment of a new Minister of Foreign Exchange in the cabinet shakeup in October. It was then thought that because of his liberal views some change in the monopoly might reasonably be expected.

Reliable sources always stated that the Ministry of Popular Culture was against the monopoly, but could do nothing as it was imposed by the Ministry of Foreign Exchange. So, when Riffaello Riccardi was appointed the new minister, it was believed some change would be possible, as it was thought he would allow a more supple adjustment in the matter of importations.

While American films cost Italy \$1,000,000 in gold each year, their exclusion from the market here means a loss in revenue of \$5,000,000 in the form of taxes on films, dubbing costs, duties and work lost by hundreds of Italian employees.

But if Riccardi is inclined to lift the limit on how much can be spent abroad for films, no indication has so far come forward. To the contrary, those hopes which arose with his appointment have just about disappeared, as Italy more than ever is bending every effort to become completely self-sufficient. With the political outlook being what it is, this is not believed to be the propitious moment to change any of the delicately balanced machinery of foreign exchange.

On the other hand, if some means of obtaining a greater amount of foreign product is not found, many quarters predict a film shortage here before 1940 is out. It is true that Italian production is increasing at a

good clip, with 100 pictures being claimed as the output of the calendar year of 1939. In all fairness it must also be said that the quality—taken on a proportionate basis—is also improving. But this will not answer the needs of the market here, which is clocked between 250 and 300 films. With the Americans out and European production outside of Italy on the downgrade, it is anyone's guess where the pics will come one's guess where the pics will come from, particularly since Italian production facilities aren't sufficient to meet the exhibitor needs.

So with the political situation being what it is (many quarters are predicting that the fireworks will spread during the coming spring), and officials saying the Yanks will not be allowed back in the market here on their own (American) terms, it looks like a red year for the cinema business here during 1940. In any case, there is nothing in the cards at the moment that allows any optimism either from the American or the local viewpoint. So if this year was a flopper, the next appears as though it may be worse.

# LONDON YENS FOR LAUGHS

By Joshua Lowe

London, Dec. 20.

Throughout the past year, with very, very few exceptions, legitimate show business was definitely on the skids. There were, of course outstanding exceptions, and several hold-over successes which kept up remarkably well.

This time, with notice from the Government that on declaration of war all places of amusement would have to close down, the producers suspended all preparations for forthcoming attractions, and the entire show business came to a dead halt. In due course the picture houses were permitted to remain open until 6 o'clock, at which time of year it was still broad daylight. Gradually staggered hours were inaugurated, and the time for some of them was extended to 11 p.m. One or two theatres tried matinees only, but this was far from profitable, and later they were permitted to keep open until 11 p.m., the West End houses being the last to be accorded this privilege, because of the shutting down of transport facilities which, in event of an air raid, would cause terrific congestion in the neighborhood of Piccadilly Circus.

The immediate effect upon the legit houses was the cutting of prices for seats, as it was figured some inducement should be accorded the customers to travel from the outlying districts to London's nerve centre. Producers are still loath to risk a heavy type of show, as past experience has proved that in such parlous times the 'tired business man' and servicemen on leave evince a desire for the lighter forms of amusement, especially comedy and musical entertainment.

## Only 2 Serious Plays

At this writing there are only two serious plays on the boards—one in the West End, the other in the Victoria district. The West End one is a revival of Elmer Rice's 'Judgment Day' at the Phoenix. This is a relatively small gamble with one set, and while the cast is long, there are no important salaries. During the play's New York run, the characters by inference, were adjudged to be of Nazi officialdom, but with the revival they are now unmistakably identified. The other is Priestley's 'Music At Night' at the Westminster, and the cast is on an 'if' basis. The house is small and an inexpensive one to run. They are doing well enough to continue indefinitely.

All the other shows are of the lighter kind, mostly musical, the remainder farcical, and one of them is a comedy with a whodunit background. The three outstanding successes are 'Under Your Hat,' at the Palace, which went on tour with the outbreak and returned to resume its London run; 'The Little Dog Laughed,' the 'Crazy' Gang show at the Palladium, and 'Black Velvet' at the Hippodrome. Both the latter are playing two shows nightly and three matinees. With 15 performances a week, they are mopping up.

On this showing, the apparent indication would be little immediate chances of any new production; but on the contrary, no West End legit theatres are available, all of them having been optioned by shows either being tried out on the road, or in active preparation.

# Shaking Out The Shut-Down

By E. J. Hinge

(President, Cinematograph Exhibitors Association)

London, Dec. 20.

Showmen got up on Sept. 3 to find themselves closed down. Got up? I know war was announced at 11 a.m., but it was Sunday and I'm talking about showmen.

So the next day fun and games began.

I happen to be—well, not 'happen,' I was elected—president of the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association (C.E.A. to you and hereafter) and around 99% of British exhibs are not only members but wanted to know what their Association was going to do about it.

And wanted to know PDQ.

So did the distribs. Especially the Americans. They had bookings up to six months ahead on the greatest concatenation of all-time phenomenal epics the world had ever seen. They even had contracts for good films. For wasn't the fall season just about to begin? (Has anyone ever figured when that fall season starts it's usually the exhib who is the Fall Guy?)

## Joint Trade Committee

Anyway, we set up a joint trade committee by the following Wednesday and went to the Home Office. We told the Government the film trade's standing charges were more than \$5,000,000 a week, and some of this would have to be unloaded by wholesale staff cuts unless we opened up our theatres. We told them how already the public morale was suffering and anyway Mr. and Mrs. John Q. Public were safer inside modern cinemas than on the streets or in glass-roofed saloons and cafes where they were already gathering in mobs.

By Saturday, Sept. 9, only six days after the shutdown, we had succeeded in persuading the Home Office to let us open in 'reception' and some neutral areas. 'Reception' areas are places to which kids, oldsters, sick and others have been evacuated; 'neutral' areas are where folk stay put if they want.

There was a catch in this part-opening. We had to close by 10 p.m. And the idea was full of anomalies. Shows in some evacuated boroughs were still shut with others a block away open because they were just over the border of a borough which was a 'neutral' area.

So we hiked down to Whitehall some more, and especially on Wednesday, Sept. 13, told the Department all about the snags. By now our agitation was front-page news. Leg-men lounged against the sandbags round the Home Office portals for hours waiting for our deputations to come out. Picture-snatchers shot us as we went in. The war hadn't warred, and news was short... so was showbusiness advertising till all the shows opened up again, but that had nothing to do with our news value, of course.

## 75% Off

But with more than half the theatres still dark and the rest losing a good 25% of their cash customers through early closing and blackout, we were at a point where we had to consider what we were going to do about keeping on staffs any longer. A large part of us were now in the second week of carrying them on the payroll with nothing in the kitty. Exhibs aplenty were readying to shut down on paychecks and air the workers. But they responded 100% to a request from the C.E.A. to hold up on this for another week. Remember, this meant carrying around 30,000 employees on capital... if the bank would pay your overdraft!

And we asked our members not even to give their staffs notice before the following Friday, which would still mean carrying workers some a week, others two and even four weeks more, on pay. In this country (sorry, it's territory, isn't it, Mr. Hays?) workers don't take their time and quit or get fired at a moment's notice. They get anything from one week to as much as six months' notice to quit according to law and the custom of their particular job.

Thus it is not a rostrum bromide if I say here the way in which every member of the C.E.A. responded to this call to give the workers a break is a striking tribute to their loyalty to their Association.

Now from Home Secretary, Sir John Anderson, we got action. By Friday, two days later, all picture houses were allowed to reopen, but still with a 10 p.m. curfew, except an area which the Home Office

mapped as the West End, which had to go dark at 6 o'clock.

This general opening went for all other 'places of entertainment'; they got the benefit of the film trade's persistence and work.

We only got the info on this from the Home Office late on the Thursday evening, and believe me our telephone bill at Head Office went up 1,000% blowing the good news to branch offices and circuit heads all over the Kingdom.

But were there headaches ahead! More than half the shows had been dark two weeks and the rest a week, and if any foreign manager in New York does happen to know anything about this territory's release system, with its bars, late runs and what have you, he'll be able to figure the jam the whole business was in.

Not to mention most of the big distribs having scampered to the wilds of Devon and other spots supposed to be safer than London.

## Shifted Playdates—More Woe

Anyway, we fixed up an arrangement with the distribs association (KRS) to shift playdates two weeks on and play spot-booked substitutes.

More trouble! What distribs dug out of the junk bins and asked 50% for as 'substitute' was nobody's business. And that same nobody's business was what they registered at the boxoffice!

Exchange managers pulled all the rackets and gyms they had out of their beards and then thought up some more. Substitutes? It was ersatz.

Meanwhile the CEA found that, although we had got the Home Office to agree to a much smaller area as the West End, the 6 o'clock curfew was losing those in the area their shirts. Arthur (G-B) Jarratt closed up the Tivoli, New Gallery and Astoria. Earl (Par) St. John did ditto to the Carlton. Same went for Stoll's Kingsway house, and the rest of the West End houses were threatening to follow suit unless something was done.

Staffs were under notice, and losses were running around \$150,000 a week. Soon 2,000 employees would be out.

Then, after more deputations, Home Secretary Sir John Anderson said he would consider staggered closing time for the West End if we could figure it out, and on Sept. 27 a deputation spent over two hours at the Home Office battling over plans to stagger.

By Sept. 29 we got 14 houses let out of the West End and open till 10, but in the center of town 10 theatres still had to pipe down at 6. By a week later we got Whitehall to agree to putting these into two groups, one staying open till 10, the other till 6, and alternating weekly.

It was soon found this didn't work so well, either. Not so bad on the 10 o'clock week, but the next week at 6—curtains! If Max Milder put a super into the Warner, the edge for the 10 o'clock week just blunted like an old razor blade the next week, closing at 6.

## More Deputations

So more deputations and then deputations! Sir Alexander Maxwell, Home Office Permanent Under-Secretary, got almost to calling us by our first names, he saw us so often. But he was always helpful and considerate, and a lot of what we finally achieved is due to him.

For we were now asking for abolition of 10 p.m. closing, so we could go back to more or less normal. Blackout and transport shortage stops us from getting back to actual norm, but we wanted to get as near as possible.

Anyway, on Oct. 19 we asked for full-time opening, and on Nov. 3 we got it as from three days later. So now, after two months, all pix shows except in London's center night spot could stay open till 11 p.m., which was something, for we had figured the audience reduction through closing at 10 has been costing the boxoffice around \$500,000 a week.

For staggered hours in the West End were losing the houses there over \$5,000 a week each. Ask Sam Eckman! And at last, on Dec. 1, we got Home Office and Police Commissioner's consent to let 'em all stay open till pre-war hours so long as they arranged their programs so their big pix ended at different times, to avoid having crowds turn out onto the streets at the same moment, which worries the police in case there is an air raid, and jams up the transport, too.

And that is how we shook out the shutdown and got exhibs allowed to stay up till bedtime.



# Non-'Aryan' Blackout In Hungary

Budapest, Dec. 20.

By E. P. Jacobi

Year 1939 marked the greatest ups and downs that the native motion picture industry has yet experienced in the course of a single year. Until mid-August things looked as if production in Hungary were definitely dead. Since the outbreak of the war, however, it has not only come to life again, but there is a distinct improvement in quality that promises well for the future. What is more, production and promotion, to a great extent, is now based on permanent foundations that will outlast the present boom.

Production has jumped because there is an increased demand for local product, imports being limited to half of the number they were in recent years. But for the first time now it has a backing that is really serious. It looks as if the hand-to-mouth days of Hungarian films are over. No more starting to make a \$20,000 picture on \$2,000 cash, with the rest trickling in by credits, advances, loans from the composer, the assistant supervisor, or the featured actress' sugar daddy. Financial backers, like the two important banks that have lately taken an interest in local production, the State Film Fund, which owns the most important studio, and the transport company, which has a monopoly of film import shipments, can afford to be discriminating in the way of artistic direction. Material security and moral support tend to improve the general standard of pictures, though certainly not to encourage great originality.

## 'Aryan' Laws

These are the reasons why local production, at a complete standstill in spring and summer when activities were at their height in previous years, is underway again and working at full capacity with a higher average standard. This is all the more remarkable since extensive personnel changes had to be made owing to the rulings of the 'Aryan' Law. No producer, production manager, supervisor, director, cutter, title-maker may at present be a Jew, or of Jewish origin (certain exceptions have been allowed). Of the artistic, technical and administrative personnel, 6% may be Jews. The same rule applies to the distributing and exhibiting end of the trade; persons of Jewish race are barred as managers, theatre owners, booking managers, etc., that is to say, from all executive positions. In subaltern positions, only 6% may be held by Jews, who are also forbidden to earn more than 6% of the sum total of salaries and fees. Every person employed in the motion picture business in whatever capacity must be a member of the Film Chamber, of which Jews may only be members to the extent of the same percentage.

This explains why early in the year local production received a shock from which it could not be expected to recover as fast as it actually had done. The 'Aryan' Law, applied to every other field of economic and professional life, caused a crisis which, coupled with a general atmosphere of political uncertainty, made Jewish and also non-Jewish capital shy of investment in film production.

Hungary's film production now averages a fairly high level in the way of direction and camera work, but one can't expect super-features to be produced within the margin of \$20,000 to \$30,000. Hungarian language limits warrant no higher expenditure. There is no getting round these financial limits, but they are no excuse for the lack of originality and dramatic power of script writers.

## No Standout Stars

What Hungarian films lack more than anything else, however, is a star. There is no outstanding personality, either male or female, for whose sake the public would be eager to see a picture, unless it is one of the popular comedians in smaller parts, such as Piri Vaszary, Julius Gozon, Gero Maly, or the character actor Julius Psortos. The two foremost leading men are Paul Javor and Antal Pager; the third, Imre Raday, has not been admitted as a member of the Chamber and no longer appears in pictures. He was the only one who had any charm.

The feminine prospect is even more hopeless. There are a number of pretty girls aspiring to stardom and playing the leading parts in Hungarian pictures, but not a single one of them has personality. Zita Szelezky, who plays at the National Theatre, Elizabeth Simor, the best looking in Magyar pictures, Bella Bordy, who arrived in films via the ballet stage, are the best current

propositions, with a few others for choice, but no one has ever heard anyone say: 'I am going to see such-and-such a picture because so-and-so is in it.' A drawback, too, is that cosmetics lag far behind in the art of screen makeup, and that none of the girls in Hungarian pictures dress well.

Accordingly, most local pictures have a run which can be calculated pretty closely in advance, but there have been no outstanding money-makers in the Hungarian market since 'Fairy-Tale Car' three years ago. They are made pretty safe against losses, however, by the Government decree which rules that 20% of all features shown must be made in Hungary.

## Imports Cut in Half

Distributors of imported films naturally suffer from wartime restrictions. Six months ago there was joy among their ranks because at long last an agreement was reached with the National Bank anent liberation of frozen assets, and transfer of approximately \$160,000 per annum in foreign currency was granted for the import of foreign product, mainly American, French and British. Now this has been reduced to rather less than half. Instead of 100 American features, import permit will be granted to about 50 per annum. Number of French imports in the next year will be reduced to 27, and of British, to a mere three. Number of German imports is still uncertain, pending negotiations of exchange with Hungarian product, or dubbing German-made in Hungary. There have been talks about film exchange with Italy, but Italian pictures have not yet been shown here with any success.

From the business viewpoint, however, it is only American and French pictures that count—and to a certain extent German ones, their number, however, being steadily on the decline. French pictures, on the other hand, are gaining popularity year by year. Outstanding recent hits were:

**American pictures:** 'Suez,' 'Love Affair,' 'Stolen Love,' 'Alexander's Ragtime Band,' 'Boys Town,' 'The Great Waltz,' 'Robin Hood,' 'Zaza,' 'Huckleberry Finn,' 'The Story of Irene and Vernon Castle,' 'That Certain Age.'

**French pictures:** 'Derrier la facade,' 'Hotel du Nord,' 'Mr. Flow,' 'Remontons des Champs Elysees,' 'J'etais une Aventuriere,' 'Abus de Confiance,' 'Le Voleur des Femmes,' 'Quai des Brumes.'

**Hungarian pictures:** 'Istvan Bors,' directed by Viktor Banky, Vilma Banky's brother; 'Toprini nasz.'

## Neutrality Observed

The government takes great care that strict neutrality is observed by exhibitors and public alike on the score of newsreels. Few war pictures are shown, horrors are suppressed as far as possible, and the balance between German and Allied pictures is carefully maintained (for every picture from the German front there is one from the Allied side). It is strictly prohibited to applaud, to make loud remarks, or give any other signs of approval or disapproval.

Nevertheless, the newsreels are one more reason why film audiences are not diminishing in number. During the war outbreak crisis it was observed that afternoon performances were crowded, but people sat at home evenings listening to the radio. Now trade runs in normal channels again.

## Stage Emerges Okay

After going through two dangerous crises in 1939, the Hungarian stage has emerged without grave damage and is fit for further work and development. A good many personal changes have been made by compulsion. Mental and moral reservations momentarily hedge in free speech on the stage here as in every country in Europe. There is no trace of a war boom in Hungary: audiences are short of cash to spend on theatre tickets. All this is not conducive to progress. Yet while lights are out and doors closed in half the theatres in Europe, neon lights blaze over Budapest's 14 theatre marquees as brightly as a year ago. Two theatres closed, but two new ones opened and are putting a brave face upon things that look none too cheerful at the moment, except by comparison.

Of the key cities of the Continent, Budapest is the only one at present which is working at full capacity in the show trade. With a considerable amount of optimism invested in the business, the Budapest stage

is tiding over difficulties and there is no doubt that it will win through to new development.

The first crisis with which the Hungarian stage had to cope during the current year was the racial legislation. Parliamentary, press and private debates poisoned the atmosphere, already heavy with political unrest and uncertainty. Next step was to ascertain who was a Jew and who wasn't. The discrimination was made on racial, not religious grounds. The law made certain exceptions for war veterans, for counter-revolutionary fighters during the Bolshevik period in 1919, etc., and stipulated that persons baptized in the Christian faith over 20 years ago, whose parents and grandparents had all been born and resided in Hungary since 1848, should be regarded as Christians and be exempt from the law.

Begun was a search for documents of parents and grandparents of Jew and Gentile alike, membership in Actors' Chamber depending on complete documentation. The Muses wept, but theatres struggled on.

## Autocratic Authority

In addition, Stage Chamber began to assume autocratic authority over a number of fields. Appointment of representative managers of every theatre was subject to the Chamber's approval, even if legal considerations were complied with. Another fundamental change from tradition was brought about in the matter of provincial companies. So far, permanent companies playing in municipal theatres of large cities were subsidized out of community and Government funds; even third-rate companies enjoyed some subsidy and always toured the same circuit. This tended to establish personal contact of the public with managements and companies; towns felt proud of their own stage, their own company, their own theatrical season. However, with subsidies scant and business at a permanent low ebb, provincial companies had been in a bad way for years.

The Stage Chamber, motive power behind which is its ubiquitous president, Ferenc Kiss, the eminent actor and head of State Dramatic Academy, now proceeded to organize the provincial stage on entirely new lines. Twelve touring companies were formed, under managers appointed by the Chamber; the whole country divided up into circuits allotted to these companies. No other companies beside these, licensed by the Chamber, have the right to hold performances anywhere in the provinces. Those in favor of the new organization argue that in this fashion it will be possible to present the provincial public with far better performances than heretofore.

The Chamber also gave financial support to a group that took over the Belvarosi theatre, whose management voluntarily quit without waiting for the term stipulated by the Aryan Law. Plans were also afoot for the Chamber to take over the entire business of booking and cut-rate agencies, but these have been abandoned for the moment. The idea was for the Chamber to gain increasing control, not only over actors' material interests, but also over the artistic and moral aspects of the Hungarian stage.

## Actors Uncertain

Instead of feeling added security under the Chamber's protection, actors felt uncertain about the future during the summer, when managers, doubtful whether the Chamber would approve their appointment, postponed organization of companies, contracting actors and purchasing plays. Openings were delayed in consequence. Things looked even blacker in the critical late August and early September, when war loomed on Hungary's horizon and finally broke out at her very doors, but fortunately stopped beyond her frontiers. The watchword 'Business as usual' soon took effect; there was no panic in Hungary.

Agitation of local Nazis, prevalent a year ago, has been completely suppressed, anti-Semitic measures do not exceed legal bounds and do not overlap into social or private life; strictest neutrality is enforced in every respect. Hungary's policy, and the leanings of the overwhelming majority of its people, have always tended towards friendship with Italy. Traditional friendship and nationwide sympathy for Poland could only find expression in hospitality offered to refugees, and increased the determination to stay out of the war, together with Italy and the neutral states of southeastern Europe.

Under such circumstances the management of every theatre in Buda-

## Forget It, Moe

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

M-G-M Corp. bloomed suddenly and faded out abruptly at a profit of \$175.

Moe G. Miller incorporated himself, and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer thought it might cause various confusing ideas to arise. Moe was paid to disincorporate himself.

pest considered itself duty bound to open in the second half of September. Management of state-supervised theatres—Opera, National, Kamara—is unchanged; privately-owned theatres have, with the exception of Belvarosi, remained in the same hands as last year, but partly with new figureheads as managers, to comply with the requirements of the 'Aryan' law. In the case of Magyar theatre, a first-rate stage of old standing and best repute, the Chamber refused to approve the person nominated as manager. Magyar, failing to open, some 200 actors and technical personnel were added to the list of Chamber's unemployed members. The theatre, however, may open at a later date, if and when the owners and the Chamber agree upon the person of a responsible executive manager.

## Proposed Comedy Theatre

The only other theatre to close down was Terezkoruti, a small independent stage. Instead, Fovarosi Operatic theatre, dark for over a year, opened under new management, proposing to give Budapest what it lacked for years—a permanent comedy stage. Dunaparti theatre is another new venture, a small stage playing mainly one-acters. This brings the number of theatres now playing in the capital to the full 'peace-time' total of 14.

So much for the good intentions of the Hungarian stage to go on as if nothing had happened. The theatres are playing, but how do they play and what? The 'Aryan' law has not brought about very substantial changes in the construction of companies. A few outstanding actors of non-'Aryan' extraction are missing—several have gone abroad—a few are left and are playing, but the percentage of Jews among actors here was always small. Of course it is not a healthy state of things when the religion of an actor's grandmother is being discussed instead of his artistic performance. But this period being over, simultaneously with a political trend to let the question of anti-Semitism come to a rest, the theatres have also settled into their stride. The average standard of acting in Hungarian theatres is high. Character actors are excellent. The Magyar stage may lack a quite outstanding personality at present—there is neither actress nor actor who might lay claim to be that—but the general level has not sunk in these times of storm and stress. Indeed a new note has lately been added to the orchestration of Hungarian acting; some exceptionally fine performances of folk plays and types, genuine and sincere, in the place of the semi-humorous, semi-romantic make-up in the light of which 'the people' used to be presented on the stage.

## Play Outlook Glum

As for plays, the outlook is glum. Of course there can be no question of politics on the Hungarian stage; right or left, totalitarian or democratic are strictly taboo; utter neutrality pervades the theatre as does it the press. Even Bekeffi, confederer of Podium Cabaret, who dared to drop a few political hints six months ago, has gone completely colorless. But neither is the Magyar stage guilty of any propaganda.

Plays must move in a timeless, remote atmosphere, far from the things that occupy the thoughts of every single person in the audience. Not an easy job for the playwright, especially when catering to an essentially politically-minded public like that of Budapest. New plays this season have been few and unimportant. Except for an ambitious but not very successful problem play by Zilany, most authors tackle things the easier way and seek refuge in farcical comedy, of which audiences appear to be duly appreciative. Some weightier plays are scheduled for later production. A revival of Shaw's 'Pygmalion,' Sari Fedak in the one-time Marie Tempest vehicle 'The Marquise,' and revivals of various classics at the National go to prove that there is no great supply of new plays to pick and choose from. An improvement can hardly be expected before the peoples of Europe can breathe that great and much-longed-for sigh of relief which will burst all fetters of censure, of political consideration, and make way for free expansion of talent again.

## ANZAC LEGIT, VAUDE IN '39

By Eric Gorrick

Sidney, Dec. 10.

Throughout the major portion of 1939, legit under the misplaced guidance of Australian-New Zealand Theatres, took a drastic boxoffice beating. Too many cooks frazzled the ANZT setup and sent the stage to the cleaners. The picture-minded moguls were brought into the ANZT hook, and the majority of them, including George Dean, Snider-Dean, and Stanley Crick, former 20th-Fox exec, had their bankrolls dented considerably before bowing out in favor of a re-takeover by the Williamson-Tait group under the direction of E. J. Tait.

Early in the setup, many of the ANZT directors, including Ken Asprey, attorney for various pic units previously, couldn't see eye-to-eye with producer-director, Ernest C. Rolls, with a result that Rolls quit after certain financial arrangements had been completed. However, the damage had been done and flop followed costly flop. The only real hit clicked by ANZT was 'The Women,' with a U. S. cast. 'Idiot's Delight,' 'Personal Appearance,' 'Black Lime-light,' 'Casino Revue,' 'Around the Clock' and 'Yes My Darling Daughter' all helped to set legit back plenty.

Williamson-Tait, on retake, demothballed 'Wildflower' and got by for a spell. First real hit, however, came to the unit with Switzerland Ice Show, brought over from South Africa. Another Britisher, 'Under Your Hat,' recently completed a nine weeks' run in Melbourne for W-T. Major attractions under the same management for 1940 include Covent Garden Russian Ballet, a Gilbert-Sullivan opera season, and possibly a grand opera bid later in the year. It's also expected that W-T will make a play for U. S. attractions from time to time.

## Martin's Brave Try

Dave Martin has made a brave attempt to build legit into something worthwhile at his Minerva, located in a semi-nabe Sydney center. Martin had a tieup with ANZT, but dropped plenty with 'Idiot's Delight' and others. He then tried solo when ANZT folded, but again met with only so-so success. Martin now has a working arrangement with W-T for shows and players, and currently is running a stock unit headed by Ian Keith and Doris Packer. Shows presented so far include 'Dinner at Eight' and 'Elizabeth the Queen.'

In Adelaide and Brisbane, a couple of attempts were made to sponsor an interest in legit under indie managements. Old fare was offered and the efforts hit the skids, but without very heavy losses.

## Vaude Paced OK

Vaude-revue was paced along at a nice speed to return satisfactory profits for Tivoli Theatres in 1939. It's still a two-a-day lineup in Sydney and Melbourne, with no Sabbath shows. Frank Neil firmly believes that sufficient overseas talent will be available in 1940 to maintain this schedule without difficulty. Best b.o. bets were Will Mahoney (several repeats), Larry Adler (also on repeats), Nick Lucas, George Robey and the Mills Bros. Biggest disappointment was Anna May Wong.

Tivoli spots a certain number of U. S., British and local acts into units, with each unit averaging a five weeks' stay in Melbourne and Sydney. Occasionally a troupe is routed to New Zealand for a road-showing of some 10 weeks. Of late, however, N. Z. has been dropped owing to difficulty in bringing coin away under Governmental regulations. Next year a fresh try may be made to have the current monetary bother erased.

Major imports in 1940 for Tivoli Theatres will include Stanley Holloway and Sandy Powell, with names of marquee worth from the U. S. On his return from a recent overseas' scouting trip. Prexy Neil reported that he had signed up some 200 players for an Aussie tour.

Costly flop was registered in Melbourne with Casino Revue under the direction of the now defunct Australian-New Zealand Theatres. Acts imported for the show included Six Danwells, Natalie and Darnelle, Maxine and Bobby, and Seven Bodenwiesers. Ernest C. Rolls, who produced this one, is said to have sought six British revues for playing here, but one try was enough, with the rest of the stuff now in the Williamson-Tait storehouse.



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## Amusements Big In Japan Despite Government Curbs

By James B. Harris

Tokyo, Dec. 15.

Approximately three years have passed since Japan entered into warfare with China, during which time the Home Ministry and the police have clamped severe restrictions and control on all of Japan's amusement enterprises, ranging from the ten sen (2½c) taxi dancehalls to big-scale theatrical activities. However, even in face of these stringent measures to preserve the morality of the people (sic), show business in Japan, both stage and screen, has enjoyed a boom the likes of which has never been seen even in time of normal conditions.

This phenomenon can readily be explained by the great demand for workers in the munitions industries, thus providing both work and money for the masses, who hitherto were deprived of the luxury of going to theatres and films.

Previous to the war, the Japanese showed a marked tendency to study the quality of the program previous to entering any theatre. But today people flow to show-houses virtually in hordes, regardless of whether the film is Lillian Gish's 'Way Down East' or Clark Gable's latest.

In order to thwart this tendency of the people to enjoy themselves in times of national emergency, the police have tried placing various obstacles in their path, such as levying taxes on all admission prices, stricter censorship of foreign films, banning of short skirts and permanent waves for show-girls, cutting out of all love-scenes, prohibiting electrical signs, thumbs down on cooling sys-

tems in summer and steam-heat in winter. However, all this has failed to decrease attendance at the theatres.

As a next step, the new motion picture law restricting film viewing by children was put into effect Oct. 1. So far this law has been accepted by the people as appropriate and in keeping with the times, but adult attendance is still going strong.

### Newsreels Prosper

Another enterprise that's prospering is the small newsreel theatres giving one hour programs with admission fixed at 10, 15 and 20 sen (5c). While their prosperity began to show a sharp decline commencing from about April of this year, they are coming up again with the showing of European scenes.

On the other hand, the Sino-Japanese incident has dealt a death-blow to all chances of promoters who were previously engaged in importing foreign talent to Japan, for foreign stage shows are now strictly undesirable by the officials. Last such show here was the Marcus troupe. There's now greater stress on the development of Japanese talent, thus resulting in sending the Takarazuka revue girls to Italy and America, etc.

### Radio and Records

It would be hardly necessary to comment on how the Sino-Japanese incident has affected radio in Japan, for radio is Government-controlled in this country. Unlike in America, radio programs in Japan are not conducted by means of advertising. Funds are supplied by the people, each family possessing a radio-set paying 50 sen (12c) monthly. Pre-

vious to the hostilities, the charge was one yen (23c), but this price was lowered first to 80 sen (19c) and then to the present sum.

The lowering of radio fees is explained by the tremendous increase of radio-owners, principally farmers, who hitherto had relied on the newspapers for information on current topics, but suddenly discovered that radio was cheaper. The two principal stations of Japan at JOAK, in Tokyo, and JOBK, in Osaka, both presenting the same programs daily.

Jazz music is seldom broadcast, although opera and classical music concert programs are sometimes given. Speeches, classical Japanese music and news are the three chief subjects in Jap radio presentation.

This year, the Japan Radio Broadcasting Corp. moved into its new quarters and great improvements were made in its Overseas Section. However, although Japan sends out short-wave programs to foreign countries, short-wave sets in Japan are strictly prohibited, under penalty of heavy fines and oftentimes imprisonment. The explanation given for this measure is that although Japan has no desire to keep out good music and lectures from America and Europe, it can't admit them without exposing the Japanese people to malicious Chinese and Communistic propaganda.

### Big Record Years

This year and the year before have been prosperous ones for Japanese recording concerns, the principal ones being Japan Victor Corp., Columbia, Teichiku and Polydor. They cashed in on the nature of the times and made practically nothing but patriotic tunes, such as the 'Pacific March,' the 'Patriotic March,' etc., which all received Government support and sold like hotcakes. It is only recently that a few songs without patriotic lyrics have appeared on the market.

Foreign gramophone record sales here are not worth mentioning. A tax of 10% has also been levied on all records.

## U. S. Radio Commission Sails for Chile Confab

R. Henry Norweb, U. S. minister to the Dominican Republic, headed the U. S. delegation to the Inter-America Radio Communications Conference. The conference will be held in Santiago, Chile, the end of January.

Norweb said the conference would try to bring Pan-American radio practices in line with policies decided at the World Radio Conference in Cairo in 1938. Spread of Pan-American cultural relations would also be stressed, he said. Last Inter-American confab was held in Havana in 1937.

Other U. S. delegates to the Santiago session are Rear Admiral Stanford O. Hooper, representing the Navy; Gerald C. Gross, head of the international section of the Federal Communications Commission; E. K. Jett, chief engineer of the FCC; Joseph Keating, secretary and technical advisor to the conference; Lloyd Simpson, of the Civil Aeronautics Authority; Capt. Wesley T. Guest, representing the U. S. Army, and A. L. Budlong, assistant secretary of the Amateur Radio Relay League.

## Aussie Chatter

Sydney, Dec. 10.

Hollywood Dick, film chatterer, exits from the air lanes next month after a run for Kelloggs.

Phil Mygatt is handling the Lux shows on Sabbath play dates via the J. Walter Thompson agency.

Mills Brothers will do an extended air session for the Australian Broadcasting Commission under an arrangement with Tivoli Theatres.

Frank Marden, 2 UW, Sydney, has been reappointed prez of Federated

## Smaller License Fees Demanded in Aussie After A Banner Year

Sydney, Dec. 25.

Following receipt of \$2,634,944 in license fees by the Australian Broadcasting Commission on the year's operation, Aussie radio owners plan to make a new drive in 1940 to get the license charge whittled down from the current \$4 dunning. Total of radio licenses amounted to 1,131,800, an increase of 73,949. Fans claim that they get their best ether fare from the commercial units which get no cut in the license take.

Australian Broadcasting Commish also stated it had received \$245,588 from 196 public concerts and interest on investments. ABC employed 13,220 artists. Program analysis shows 79,408 musical hours, 16,650 hours of talk, 4,122 hours of devotional airings, and 9,623 hours of sports.

Commercial Stations of Australia. Marden is also in charge of the censorship board.

Jan Rubini returns to U. S. this month after an air term for a leading oil unit by arrangement with Hoyts Theatres.

Sir Ernest Fisk, chairman Amalgamated Wireless, has been appointed by the Federal Government to an important technical position for the duration of the war.

U. S. DX stations are only sending very weak signals across the Pacific nowadays. British and German units maintain strength okay.

Government will probably extend commercial licenses to three years following pressure from the major commercial units throughout Australia. Currently, the term is only for one year.

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SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM

**DIANA WARD**

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*There's Always A Cordial Welcome Awaiting You At Londo'ns Smartest Night Club***THE COCONUT GROVE, Regent Street, London, W. 1***Favourite Rendezvous Of His Majesty's Forces, Mayfair Society and Leading Theatrical Stars***War's Big Shadow On Pix**

By Mike Wear

War and its effect on film distribution of two continents headlines the story of the U. S. foreign picture business during 1939. It was a momentous year, replete with heartaches, restrictions and implications of purposeful snags placed in the way of Yankee distributors by some foreign governments. But throughout it was a year that saw the American industry maintaining its foreign efforts on Dec. 31, although at uncertain gait.

Actual inroads into foreign revenue showed up only in the final four months of 1939, but the dip in European exchange rates, coin restric-

tions and declines in grosses portended further monetary losses. Repercussions of the war probably will be felt well into 1940, with few U. S. distributors believing a true picture of deflated foreign markets will be available for two years.

European war caused film companies to trim their sails starting early in September. Amortization of negative costs were readjusted to reflect anticipated foreign losses. Blackouts undoubtedly hurt in England, as did shifting of population from metropolitan centers.

Because Great Britain is figured as 45% of the total foreign U. S. in-

come, developments there were closely watched. Remittances from England produced a net loss of 15-50% because of sterling decline. This was partly counterbalanced since operating costs there were figured at the depreciated pound. Biggest concern was over freezing of coin in England, with the government finally ruling that 50% of net revenue of major companies (excepting Universal, with a separate deal) could be transmitted to the U. S. beginning on Oct. 1 last, with maximum figured at \$17,500,000 for one year.

Partition of Poland between Germany and Russia meant a big decline. This change cut foreign revenue about 4%, including the loss of Czechoslovakia. Whole Italian market was lost when all U. S. majors withdrew during the year because of arbitrary terms set by the Italian film monopoly. Soviet invasion of Finland nicked off another bit of foreign take, Finnish territory being rated strong considering small population.

**Biz Below Equator OK**

Despite the rather uncertain outlook in Europe, there are evident signs of improved U. S. film business in India, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and especially in the Latin Americas. Coin restrictions may hurt in British dominion countries and partly overcome expected gains.

Of the foreign countries expected to take up the foreign slack, the Latin-American market looks best. One of the main reasons for this contention is that a greater trade bond has been the rule lately between U. S. and these countries. Hence, American companies are stressing the value of the field by intensive activities there.

**Italy May Return**

Further impetus is anticipated, too, from new markets previously closed or hampered. There is prospect that Italy may be restored to American distributors. About 75% of the playing time in Italian theatres was devoted to U. S. films prior to the decree setting up the government film monopoly. Lack of picture imports from other foreign nations may bring about the return of U. S. product. (Ed. note: Despite this American optimism, the Italian government insists that the return of Yank distribis will not take place except under its own terms. Detailed story elsewhere in this issue.)

There were signs that Spain, always a strong market for American pictures, may be gradually reopened via some small-scale producing on Spanish soil. This would partly unfreeze rental coin that has piled up there during the civil war.

Inclusion of an important amendment in the 'cash-carry' provision of the 1939 neutrality law was rated a victory for American film companies. This exempted copyright articles, thereby allowing films to go through without any red tape to warring and neutral nations alike.

**Foreign Imports**

In reverse proportion, where the distribution of foreign pictures in the U. S. is concerned, importers released more footage in this country during 1939 than in many recent years. Quality was something else again, and distinctly on the downbeat, excepting English-mades. This quality decline showed in boxoffice receipts despite forced runs.

There were more distributors of foreign language pictures than for four or five years, but profits were not up to glowing anticipation. Real money-makers were few. 'Grand Illusion,' 'Harvest,' 'Rasputin' and 'End of the Day' perhaps, stood out. But there were no 'Mayerling' or 'Carnival in Flanders' hits around.

Surprise entry, from a boxoffice viewpoint, from France is 'Harvest,' being marketed by French Cinema Center. Picture critics in N. Y. picked it as the best foreign picture

of the season but what helped its run at the World Theatre, N. Y., was the fight with the N. Y. censor. 'Rasputin' showed up surprisingly strong when unveiled for a nice run at the 55th Street, N. Y.

'Grand Illusion,' which made a record run at the Filmarte, N. Y., carrying over from late 1938 to early last year, stood out as the bright contribution of World Pictures. It is still doing excellent business with its 1938-39 award by N. Y. film critics as year's best foreign film helping. 'Ballerina' is described as a money-maker for Mayer & Burstyn because obtained at a 'right' price for distribution in U. S.

**Trend Toward Horror?**

The success of several indie productions made in Great Britain, released to cash in on the European war or crook-horror angle, indicates that several distributors will try their hand at handling these rather than French-made films if they are forthcoming despite the warfare in England. There is no dearth of French product just now, but it is not measuring up to the standard set by 'Mayerling' and 'Carnival.'

Distributors and exhibitors of foreign-language pictures are not hopeful about getting substantial business via films from other nations. Scandinavian product is trying to gain a foothold again in this country but quality is about as it

formerly was—too weak for much boxoffice. Some hope is held out for productions made in Spain, particularly if American companies are to become interested in a limited amount of film-making in Franco's country.

A little German product may continue to trickle in and find playdates in New York and other bigger key spots. Hungarian and other European product means nothing except in the extremely few foreign-language houses where they go for the native tongue. Films from South America have been unable to crash the American market excepting in a few isolated Spanish-language houses.

**MARCUS UNIT LINES UP 10-WEEK ROUTE**

Chicago, Jan. 1.

A. B. Marcus' unit has lined up 10 weeks of southern and midwest vaude time before heading into Mexico City to take up a three-months' stand at the Teatro del Belle Artistes.

Unit is going to Memphis, Birmingham, Atlanta, Cincinnati, Dayton, Cleveland, Indianapolis and St. Louis following current stay at the Bala-ban & Katz State-Lake.

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CINDERELLA**

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SYDNEY

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Featuring  
**OLIVE LESTER**

Colin Bergerson — Jack Crotty

Arrangements  
**RUPE DUMBRILLE**



## SEASONAL GREETINGS

FROM

# JACK HARRIS

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AND EL MOROCCO, LONDON, ENGLAND

### TO ALL HIS FRIENDS

## ITALY'S CRIPPLED VARIETIES

By Hugo Speck

Rome, Dec. 20.

Show biz, whether it be filmed or unfilmed, dressed in all the gorgeousness of costume or undressed in the scantiest of scanties that Rome will allow, was terrible in the Fascist capital this year.

With restrictions against the exportation of earnings, a continual war scare hovering over this country, and few tourists rubbernecking around the boot of the globe, foreign talent fought shy of Italy last year and producers for the most part did the best they could with what the local bookers could furnish.

Only the world famous spots like the Lido Venice, and the famed Italian Riviera resort, San Remo, made any attempt at cornering foreign talent to parade behind the lights for the amusement of the few visitors who came, and the even fewer Italos who had the coin to frequent such establishments.

But even in those internationally known hangouts for the take it easy folks, business was below the normal level, which means that all class joints in the Italo amusement world suffered alike.

If anyone wants to point an accusing finger at any one country, or get it down even to one single man, the lyric to the tune says Germany and Hitler. Since a year ago last September, when Daladier and Chamberlain scurried to Munich to postpone the war, Europe had the jitters and Italy has had her share.

It was one crisis after another—with at least one centering in Italy—until the German troops crossed the Polish frontier and started their drive for Warsaw. The entertainment world here suffered from the watchful waiting policy of foreign talent and customers who did not want to be caught in the wrong place at the wrong time.

When war did come, there was plenty doubt in this country whether or not Fascist troops would enter the conflict. When it transpired that Mussolini's Italy would take 'no military initiative' it was too late to salvage any of the trade that had been lost.

### Tough Restrictions

And with the commencement of the conflict up north came restrictions that slammed the cash box closed for the few operators who still had a desire to continue and showed a willingness to do the best they could under existing conditions.

Dancehall operators took it in the neck for more than six weeks as the stepping spots were padlocked from almost the start of the war until its second month's anniversary. Variety houses were spared the complete padlock, but they were hampered by inability to get talent for bills that had to be curtailed at midnight. Niteries took the worst kick next to dancehalls, with dancing also forbidden in such establishments for six weeks. And when regulations were eased in November, dancing was allowed only until one a.m., which is early for a town that

dines late and has its liqueurs about midnight.

The class joints also took another kick in early September when all private cars—except for business and official reasons, if permits were forthcoming—were officially garaged to conserve gas. That meant, and still means, no night cruising between favorite night spots. Customers took to home entertainments. Meatless days—Thursdays and Fridays—in effect since early September, have also taken their toll in the class restaurants where dancing and variety might be found. Lack of coffee is also hard on night spots, where payees often came solely to imbibe the favorite beverage of Italians.

### Summer Fairly Okay

Only bright spot in the entire year was the summer. A few straggling tourists did blow this way during the months when the weather, instead of the headlines, furnished the heat. At that time dancing was permitted and sizeable crowds were attracted. The Lido in Venice imported a small collection of American acts, including Marthea Merryfield and a troupe of Chester Hale Girls, who were held over for a repeat at the Municipal Casino there. Booked for other engagements in Italy, like several other American acts here at the time fireworks started, they took advice of American consuls here and scrambled home on first available boats.

Although there was a sprinkling of American dance teams, the Four Stars, a skating act, and a few American comedians, the better attractions never got as far south as Rome. The best summer spots in the capital, like the Villa della Rosa, offering both dancing and variety, the Casino Valadier, Apollo Roof

Gardens, and the swankier spots like the Quirinale, had little to offer but local talent topped now and then by tank towners from Central Europe. Only on rare occasions did any of this hit above the ordinary level.

### Vaude Talent Scarce

Variety houses as such shuttered for the hotter months and the fall reopening occurred after the gunfire had begun, so they had little chance of offering anything better than the local talent, which had been going the rounds during the entire year. A few American performers took refuge here as a neutral country and expressed a desire to stay the winter out, consuls and bookings permitting.

On the whole, the year was a dud from almost every aspect of this type of amusement. What there was of it was from hand-to-mouth throughout the entire year. Not one operator in this town at the close of 1939 had good news to report, and they were gloomier still about the coming 12 months. An uncertainty as to what the spring will bring makes them reticent about prophesying for the future, but there appears to be no hope on the amusement horizon.

The year end, especially the restoration of dancing, did hypo the bright spots a little, but only to the extent that might be expected over the passing of a pretty grim old year and the bringing in of a new. There seems to be little to warrant a belief that 1940 will be better, though the easing of wartime restrictions may bring business back to normal. However, normal in this amusement capital is far from good.

But as the current saying goes, 1939 not only marked the beginning of the second European war in the 20th century, but it also put the

## Yankees Doing Some Wishful Thinking On Japanese Regulations

Consistent with Japanese overtures to the U. S. for a new trade accord, most recently evidenced by her pledge to open the Yangtze River in China to international trade, the American film industry is expected to be one of the prime benefitters in the negotiations. A pact would permit a new film distrib deal and negotiations to withdraw rental money collected in 1939, which has been allowed to leave the country only sparingly.

Japanese have for some time been anxious to renew the American accord, which expires Jan. 26. Most picture officials in New York believe that films will be in the foreground of such agreements because of popularity of U. S. product in Japan.

This attitude was evidenced by the former pact, effective last year, whereby American picture companies, which considered the deal favorable to themselves, removed rental coin collected in Japan for depositing in the Yokohama Specie Bank, San Francisco branch, and were permitted to distribute 220 pictures in Japan in the last 12 months. They're presently applying pressure to obtain a similar agreement.

blackout on the amusement world. Brightest ray for the future now is the hope that it will all be over by 1942, when Italy is planning to pull her International Exhibition.

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# That Persistent NBC Problem—The Blue Web—Finally Solved During 1939

By Ben Bodec

Before business volume for the blue network took a sharp turn upward this past fall NBC and its blue affiliates often used the word 'child.'

To NBC the blue was a problem child. To the affiliates the treatment they received was of step-child character.

Problem child or stepchild, the blue as a chronic headache has been without equal in the history of commercial broadcasting until just the day before yesterday. The resistance of network underwriters is now crumbling under attack and the outlook is cheery. From August to mid-December 16 accounts allied themselves with the blue. With but three exceptions these same accounts had for years confined their operations to the red network or Columbia. But what the blue network had to go through before the breaks came makes one of the more interesting and curious chapters in the development of American radio.

No problem within NBC has caused more heartbreak and sense of frustration than that of putting the blue network on a solid revenue footing. Nothing within that organization has caused so many shifts in policy and personnel. Nothing within the industry itself has served so much as a political football.

## Favored Red

The harrying that the blue used to take was not confined to the outside. That NBC salesmen were prone to take the line of least resistance and switch the conversation to the red network whenever a prospect started asking probing questions about the blue was known to insiders. The querulous pressure from blue affiliates, who kept demanding that the network begin filling some of those wide open spaces with commercial programs, was misery-provoking. But the ribbing which hurt most came from a faction on NBC's board of directors, highly activated by a Wall Street banker, which frequently contended that NBC would be best off if it reposed all its eggs in one basket, the red, and urged that the blue ought to be disposed of to any one with a reasonable offer.

Attempts to promote an underwriting syndicate for the blue became frequent events, with one of these attempts being Richard C. Patterson, Jr., the former NBC executive v.p. Always a stout opponent of the proposed schism was David Sarnoff. He argued that to retain its No. 1 position in the field of broadcasting NBC must retain both links and that with due patience and enterprise the blue could be put on a strong commercial foundation.

There was a time that the blue could match its list of important commercial programs with that of the red. And that was back in the early '30s when it (the blue) had such leaders as Amos 'n' Andy, Jack Benny, the Collier's Hour and the Maxwell House Coffee program. The red really started to forge ahead of the blue as to program dominance shortly after Texaco in late 1932 debuted Ed Wynn. With the latter a rapid click the red became the chosen medium for a parade of other sponsored comics. While Jack Benny had made sound headway on the blue as soon as he went on General Foods' payroll the account shifted him to the red so that he could be with the other laugh-makers who were pulling major audiences.

## Aggravated Plight

As the big-money advertisers swarmed to the red, the plight of the blue was decidedly aggravated by its failure to provide the required supplementary groups for accounts that showed an interest in getting on the blue. The broadcasting organization was equipped with but one set of supplementaries, and these facilities had already been requisitioned by the big advertisers on the red. That made it difficult for blue customers to get their programs anywhere outside of the basic area. Another thing which happened about the same time which didn't help things for the blue was the switch of WJR, Detroit, to Columbia. That move proved fatal for many a blue automobile account.

Faced by this combination of circumstances, NBC undertook to solve it by proceeding along two different tracks. One was to build a second set of supplementaries through the process of expansion of its affiliate

list. The other tack involved a remodeling of its sales policy. Salesmen began to admit that the red had an edge over the blue to the degree that it had many stations in important markets. But the blue, they pointed out, was a still more economical buy.

As time went on it became practically impossible for the blue to deliver coverage west of Omaha. Another sore spot for the blue was KDKA, Pittsburgh, which as a Westinghouse operation made it tough for the network to clear time. By the time that NBC had overcome this situation by taking over the station's operation and by the time it got its second set of supplementaries set up it was too late. CBS had stepped in and, by concentrating its attack on the apertures in the blue and other inherent weaknesses, had grabbed the business. Columbia had meanwhile been vigorously on the move, weaning away some of the big watters from the NBC camp and building up its supplementary groups. Another telling factor that the blue had to meet when it finally got rounded out was the prevalence of high-powered shows on both Columbia and the red. It was no easy psychological complex to hurdle.

NBC realized that unless the blue were transcontinental in its own right it could not justify big talent expenditures for blue programs which had to compete with similarly budgeted shows on the red and CBS. By 1936 the blue's hookup was extended to the west coast. In 1937 the blue's invasion of the south took place, with Birmingham, Memphis, Atlanta, New Orleans each having a blue release. The same year similar arrangements were made in Minneapolis and Montreal, while in 1938 the blue got its own set of outlets in Texas. The drive to improve facilities on the blue has also included a new antenna for WJZ, New York, a new frequency and transmitter location for KECA, Los Angeles, and the complete re-equipping of KDKA and the moving of that station's outlet closer to Pittsburgh.

## Acts, Not Pioneers

Even after the rounding out and filling had taken place the blue found that it had still a tougher nut to crack. Advertisers shied away from pioneering in the use of these new groups of supplementaries, and since, as the network itself put it, commercials beget commercials, the blue inaugurated (Oct. 21, 1938) the blue discount plan, which allowed added discounts as high as 20% for those accounts using the blue southern, southwestern, mountain and Pacific Coast groups.

From time to time NBC has undertaken to solve the blue sales situation by executive and personnel realignments. The first assignment



TED FIO-RITO  
Composer-Conductor

Triple-threat Maestro of Radio, Stage and Screen fame, after successful years along the West Coast, acclaimed Ambassador of Rhythm of the Golden West and Hollywood Film Colony's favorite band leader, shifts eastward, currently appearing at Congress Hotel, Chicago, enroute for stay on Broadway.

of a separate salesmanager for the blue dates back to 1927. This move didn't work out because Bill Ensign, now CBS assistant sales manager, quit shortly afterwards and nothing was done to replace him. The red and the blue continued to operate under a single sales setup until about two years ago when A. E. Nelson was brought in from KDKA to function as sales manager for the blue. (Nelson has since been shifted to San Francisco as head of NBC's local stations management.) During Nelson's stay there were attempts made to bolster the blue's program fare by inducting a few name acts, for instance, Doc Rockwell, but the only thing that really cut a swath of listeners attention and newsprint space was the recruiting of Arturo Toscanini as the blue's No. 1 attraction. It was a coup of coups for radio.

The most drastic executive move to hypo action for the blue occurred last summer when Keith Higgins was taken out of station relations and named v.p. in charge of blue network operations. He was given his own sales setup, his own sales promotion staff, his own stations relations contacts and publicity man. With Canada Dry's 'Information, Please,' Jergens' Walter Winchell, Sun Oil's Lowell Thomas, Anacin's 'Easy Aces' and Alka-Seltzer's 'Barn Dance' already part of the nucleus, the

As predicted by every year-end statement, speech, and tea-leaf reading a year ago, 1939 turned out to be a corker for the radio industry. Insofar as current estimates are valid, the year wound up about 12%-13% better than 1938, a tepid year, and respectably better than 1937, which was a darb. In short, so far as the revenue side of the ledger is concerned, 1939 beat anything the radio industry has yet seen by a mile.

That goes for the networks, too. Their 1939 intake will be around \$83,000,000 (gross), or about 16% over 1938. That's the biggest increase, in dollars and cents (not percentages), the networks have ever registered over any prior year in their history. And these figures, of course, count time sales only. They do not include booking commissions, sale of sustainers, or recoveries on communications line charges, etc.

Counting time sales only (the standard way of figuring), the industry wound up thus:

	1939.	1938.
Network gross time sales.....	\$83,000,000	\$71,728,400
Net industry time sales (estimated).....	131,500,000	117,379,459
Gross industry time sales (estimated)....	165,000,000	143,500,000

Profits, however, may be something else again. Mere broadcasting intake, no matter how big, may be a flopper if expenses and miscellaneous items kill off the gain. Between 1937 and 1938, for instance, the industry dropped something like \$3,000,000 in miscellaneous revenue of all sorts (notably in the sale of talent), and piled on \$1,000,000 more in expenses. That made a big dip in profits, although time sales between 1937 and 1938 had been on a fairly even keel.

Expenses rose unprecedentedly in 1939, and profits, therefore, did not keep pace with the increased intake. With all the experimenting in new technical developments, technical expenses and capital expenditures on equipment surely went up. So did pay scales, what with the organizing of all kinds of unions.

Furthermore, much of radio's future depends on how the 1939 revenue was divided between network intake, national spot, and local. If there was a big rise in national spot business (and there probably was a decent gain in that category), the FCC may be tempted to hand out a batch of new licenses. Anybody who can remember back to 1927 will know what that means—chaos among smaller competitors and new temptations on the part of the FCC to 'help the little fellow.'

For an estimate of what 1940 will bring, the reader is referred to more competent predictions by specialists in the business field. About 50% of radio's revenue depends, after a fashion, on general business conditions. The other 50% (network business) may be assumed to remain okay, barring a violent economic catastrophe.

blue has since added to its roster such accounts as General Foods ('Aldrich Family and 'Young Dr. Malone'), Pepsodent ('Mr. District Attorney'), Groves Bromo Quinine ('Sherlock Holmes'), Ward Bread ('Joe Penner'), DuPont ('Cavalcade of America'), Woodbury ('The Parker Family'), Palmolive-Colgate-Peet and Westinghouse.

And so at last the hex is broken, the tide turned.

## WICC TAKES 'WORK'

Bridgeport, Jan. 1.  
WICC tonight (Tuesday) joins WTIC in taking 'Let's Go to Work,' Herbert Hadel's interviews with job hunters sponsored by Fuller Brush Co. Program switches from Sunday spot.

Since introducing program more than a year ago, Hadel claims making job contacts for more than 160 people at pay ranging from \$9 a week to \$4,000 a year.

W. J. Purcell, WGY chief engineer, went to Lake Placid to handle NBC blue pickups of broadcasts by Lowell Thomas, at the Adirondack resort for Winter Carnival.

## PAIGE HEADS ALL-YANK SHOW

Westinghouse has set Jan. 25 as the debut date for its program on the NBC blue. The half-hour stanza (Thursday, 8 p.m.) will consist of the Pittsburgh Symphony orchestra, Raymond Paige conducting, Deems Taylor as commentator and a local choir of 24 voices. There will also be a guest instrumental soloist selected from among the country's better-known schools of music, with such soloists eventually brought together to form an orchestra of their own for a single broadcast. The programs will originate from Pittsburgh, the sponsor's home town.

American music and talent will be stressed on the series. Paige was booked by the Columbia artists bureau through the NBC artists bureau, this being due to the circumstances that it was CBS that brought Paige east last year under a long-term managerial contract.

business. Blackett-Sample-Hummert execs scouted these implications as silly and added that the agency in due time would come forth with its own explanation of the events that led up to its decision.

Blackett-Sample-Hummert issued the following statement late Saturday afternoon (30):

'The statement of the Transcontinental Broadcasting System which was released today referring to an alleged repudiation of commitments on the part of Blackett-Sample-Hummert for certain hours of radio time has been called to our attention. Conferences between ourselves and representatives of Transcontinental have never passed the negotiation stage. During such negotiations Transcontinental has among other things failed to submit to Blackett-Sample-Hummert evidence of its financial ability to operate a network.'

'Any prospective agreements between Blackett-Sample-Hummert and Transcontinental have always contemplated the submission on the part of Transcontinental of evidence of its financial stability. Such evidence has not been forthcoming and no agreements have been made. We have and will continue to cooperate in every way with the Transcontinental group.'

# Transcontinental Fails To Jell

After eight hectic weeks of organizing and attempts to get properly financed, the proposed Coast-to-Coast network, Transcontinental Broadcasting System, went on the shelf last Saturday (30). The announcement issued by Elliott Roosevelt, as president of the project, was that the starting date of the network had been postponed from Jan. 1 to Feb. 1. Roosevelt's statement laid the responsibility for the situation at the doors of the Blackett-Sample-Hummert agency whom he accused of repudiating contracts it had given him for 15 night-time hours of American Home and Sterling Products business.

The string of incidents which preceded Roosevelt's announcement are without precedent in the history of the broadcasting industry. For four days he put up a bitter and desperate battle to get the network going on the scheduled date. He participated in one conference after another with either bankers or representatives of Frank Hummert, with some of the sessions lasting until 4 a.m. in the hope of finding some solution to the money dilemma.

## Coin Not Forthcoming

The banking syndicate that Roosevelt had placed his final coin-lending hopes in were out of the proposition by last Tuesday (26). Roosevelt had committed himself to put up another \$175,000 but he couldn't produce. H. J. Brennan, of WJAS-KOV, Pittsburgh, who held the post

of secretary-treasurer of Transcontinental, was anxious to salvage as much as he could of the \$100,000 he had put in with the understanding that Roosevelt would augment his original deposit of \$75,000, which latter sum was to go for the first month's payment on telephone lines.

What made Transcontinental's immediate financial outlook awry was that its expenses had been figured on the basis of starting off with 20 hours of business. When it came to the eleventh hour count with Blackett-Sample-Hummert it was found that this agency, the sole source of Transcontinental business, could only deliver 15½ hours, involving both day and night schedules, and even a half hour of this was doubtful.

As the possibility of getting outside money became hopeless Thursday (28) Roosevelt turned to WMCA, N. Y., the network's proposed feeding out, with a makeshift solution and Donald Flamm, head of the station, accepted it. Flamm agreed to make his studio and staff available to Transcontinental at no cost until the network was beginning to show a profit. Under this arrangement Transcontinental would abandon its own offices in the General Electric building and move a skeletonized staff into WMCA's offices or take whatever other quarters they would find in the same building. Roosevelt was then to ask Hummert to put up as an advance on American Home and Sterling Products billings

around \$75,000 which could be added to the little working capital remaining in Transcontinental's treasury.

Blackett-Sample-Hummert became the last resort in more than one way for the network's debut per schedule, and out of this curious combination of circumstances came Hummert's own decision to call the whole thing off. Roosevelt got his final word from that quarter Friday and the meeting in which he sought to keep the thing from blowing up completely and at once was kept going until 5 a.m. the following morning.

## B-S-H Choice Spots

Roosevelt's statement of Saturday said that Transcontinental had had bids from other advertisers but had been unable to provide them with time because the B-S-H accounts had preempted the choice periods. Now that the latter accounts were out of the way the network believed that it would be able to get enough other business to begin operations Feb. 1. One of these other time seekers was Carters' Little Liver Pills, a Street & Finney account.

With the Transcontinental organization on Saturday there were murmurs of the Hummert bowout as having political ramifications. They recalled that it was only last Tuesday that Bill Blackett, Republican National Committeeman from Illinois, had called in Fred Weber, general manager of the Mutual Network, and given him a contract for two quarter hours of Wander Co.



# A LOT OF TACT AND A FEW FIGHTS

In announcing this special edition VARIETY addressed the broadcasting trade as follows:

*'All of us who in our various activities have the welfare of the broadcasting industry at heart must see that in 1939, as never before, radio has performed a genuine public service, as patriotic as it has been brilliant. The impressive fact that we have the best informed public opinion in the world is a tribute to radio's trustworthy contribution.'*

This is repeated here by way of preface to the indisputable fact that above all else in 1939 the accent was on radio news. The historians of the future will study American radio records with particular attention to the part the air played in forming public opinion concerning the events in Europe and the efforts Europe made to influence this vital channel to public opinion.

The various emergencies and disasters of recent years have accustomed us to the miracle of instantaneous transmission. Reminders of broadcasts from precarious row boats tossed around on the flood waters of the Ohio river some springs back will serve to emphasize the on-the-spotness of radio.

## Caused By War

Normandie 100% French.  
Luxembourg 100% silent.  
BBC television suspended.  
Eddie Conne in U. S.  
Raymond Gram Swing sponsored.  
Elmer Davis sponsored.  
Charles Boyer nursemaid to mules.  
'God Bless America.'

Radio has capacities possessed by no other channel of communication and its place in the lives of everyone becomes potentially ever more intimate. Radio may, at any time, be the method of escape and rescue for any human being now living who runs, as all do, the risk of involvement in a group overwhelmed by nature or men gone mad.

Just now the radio is being employed in the cause of the most brazen-faced fibbing ever done by the disciples of Machiavelli. By longwave, shortwave and medium-wave, Europe and the world is sprayed with news that is not news at all, but invention, contortion, omission. Never were there such whoppers. And this condition shows off in sharp relief the comparative freedom of American radio from this degraded employment. Never mind what might happen if we ourselves went to war, never mind the vaunted, dread M-day. Never mind the occasional commercial product that gets wrist-slapped by the Federal Trade Commish. Most of the time our radio is as pure as the driven snow, and not Pittsburgh snow.

### Strict Neutrality

American radio was quick to catch the hint of President Roosevelt's declaration of neutrality, and immediately the White House had spoken and the British Parliament had acted, it was realized a new set of circumstances governed all behavior. From that point onward American radio demonstrated its tact and good sense and it is significant that no incident has since occurred to mar the record with the possible exception of the exaggerated episode involving WMCA's alleged interception of wireless instruction to belligerent ships.

Radio made valiant efforts in other ways through the year to achieve this so-necessary tact. Not without hardship. The National Association of Broadcasters code was intended to be a masterpiece of tact. Actually it had perhaps one or two too many blowout patches when finally taken out for a spin. It was still a brave and, on the whole, a good start down the road of self-regulation, even if some of the fault-finding kiddies,

such as ex-congressman Pettingill, threw tacks along the road.

### Radio Smartens Up

American radio represents now, as always, a nice balance between many weighted factors. In 1939, more than before, the industry was displaying greater adroitness in both the anticipation of, and in adjustment to, the pressures and the criticism. Notably the NBC tie-ups with the General Federation of Women's Clubs and the National Council of Women and the enlarged budget for Columbia's American School of the Air came under this heading of being smart.

Gradually it has become clear that radio must control for the public weal and for its own selfish sake any gentry who are, by native bigotry or publicity-seeking design, merchants in hatred. That these persons are quick to see the value to themselves of radio, and quick to cry out against any curbs of what they call 'free speech,' goes without saying. Every fortune-teller and numerologist in the old days valued radio for the same reasons that the newer charlatans now do, and denounced with the same feeling of bruised pocketbook the curtailment of their radio rights to complete expression.

In the interest of the aforementioned tact it was necessary to split a few hairs perpendicularly during the year. The N.A.B. code had to be eased across to men in whom the spirit of rugged individualism was rampant. Tact wasn't their specialty. They had to be led along soothingly by the halter. But there was not much stubbornly insistent rebellion against the expressed will of the industry. At least many were, in 1939, being made aware of the industry's problems and responsibility. Some broadcasters, with no wife but a cash register, were not, in all fairness mentally equipped to comprehend the talk about 'social consciousness'. That sounded like Junior League stuff to them; and they weren't snobbish. Anybody's money was acceptable to them.

### Top News Scoop

The memorable Montevideo episode of Dec. 17 must stand out for sheer excitement and scooperoo. However, as regards the whole parade of over-ocean transmissions both before and after the declaration, it was a case of the public becoming somewhat jaded from constant melodramatic suspense. A day of great radio activity was Sept. 3 when listeners heard King George, Neville Chamberlain, President Roosevelt, MacKenzie King and news of the Athena sinking.

Not the least memorable trade aspect of the year was the executive vice-president of the Columbia Broadcasting System, Edward Klauber, rolling up his sleeves and personally pitching in as a glorified city editor running the whole CBS news parade. His new star reporter, Elmer Davis, was to draw sponsor blood, Regal Shoes, while Mutual's boy, Raymond Gram Swing, attracted attention and vouchers of White Owl cigars.

### Profitable, After All

It was the addition of new sponsors, many of them at late, odd, hard-to-sell times of the night, that helped make the industry feel it was all very profitable as well as exciting. With it, too, went the sharp rise in listening and a spurt in the sale of new sets. Shortwave listening increased likewise, notably among newspapermen. On the whole, radio came through the first months of the new conditions with little to regret and much to appreciate. This was particularly true for those broadcasters who take note of the sad influence of the war upon the motion picture industry (see special stories elsewhere in this edition) and the prospect of little relief for film-dom until a peace is patched up.

Radio suffered hardly any cancellations, although radio contracts in the last year or two were increasingly containing clauses providing for this privilege. Even in Canada, where the stringencies of militarization, censorship, rising taxes, and other problems have to be taken into account, the tendency has been reasonably encouraging. The case of the Oregon apple-growers illustrates how American radio, fate's darling, benefits from nearly everything. This crop goes, in normal times, largely to England, but the war made deliveries impossible so the orchardmen turned to the domestic market, appropriated advertising funds, and U. S. radio raked in more cartwheels.

### ASCAP Problem

Although presenting to the outward world an appearance of hale

By Bob Landry

and ruddy prosperity, the radio industry held many huddles in 1939 to discuss the never-quiet, never solved problem of music and musicians. The campaign against ASCAP translated itself at long last into a proposal to establish a rival copyright pool, the outcome of which is not now foreseeable. Neville Miller has been touring the country seeking, and to a considerable extent being promised, the necessary financial support to launch Broadcast Music, Inc. Of this much more will

## RADIO HEADLINES

During 1939 in

VARIETY

'AFRA Scorns 4A's Offer'  
'747 Stations in United States'  
'Scan Holding Companies'  
'Strike Talk Overshadows N. Y.'  
'Admen's \$40-a-Week Legit Comparison Irks Radio Actors'  
'Top British Air Comic Gets \$157.50'  
'Miller Tape in on Spec'  
'N.A.B. Library on Market Again'  
'Frank Hummert Gives His Views'  
'AFRA Says 'No Compromise'  
'New Sponsors Get Scarce'  
'Cecil Carmichael to WLW'  
'South America Hoplessly Behind, Says Ray Linton'  
'N. Y. Fair to Regulate Radio Stunts'  
'Canadian Indies Organize'  
'Lewis, Willis, Padgett, Kesten, Outline CBS Culture and Education'  
'Fulton Lewis Reopens Fight for Radio Admission to Capitol Galleries'  
'Air Comics Under Wraps'  
'AFRA's Sweeping Victory'  
'Deutch-CBS Deal Off'  
'Larry Nixon Resigns WNEW for Writing'  
'Monroe Hellinger Heart Victim at 24'  
'Charles Gilchrist to WBZ, Boston'  
'Phil Spitalny Cites Souvaine Before 802'

## Standing Headlines

'Raps Pot O' Gold.'  
'Television Not Selling.'  
'Commish Chides Station.'  
'Court Chides Commish.'  
'Director Has Ulcers.'  
'Serials Get Worse.'  
'Ruppel Shakes Up CBS Press Dept.'  
'Biggest Month in History.'  
'Station Man Buys Yacht'  
'Wasmer Believes State Laws Wrong Way to Fight ASCAP'  
'Writers, Encouraged by AFRA Victory, Talk Doing Something About Rights'  
'Compton 2% Discount Campaign No Hit'  
'Ed Wynn Emotionally Upset'  
'Fred Weber Complains NBC, CBS Retard Mutual's Growth'  
'For \$6,500 Noel Coward Was Willing to Forget He Doesn't Like Radio'  
'George M. Cohan's AFRA Balk Echoes His 1919 Stand'  
'Kate Smith Tops Vallee'  
'WLW Appeals to Court on 500 kw. Issue'  
'A.P. Free Service to Broadcasting'  
'FCC Lists 14 Types of Program Poison'  
'Clubwomen Warn Radio'  
'Ernie Hare, Air Pioneer Entertainer, Dies at 55'  
'Portable Sets a Summer Aid'  
'Gerald Cock, BBC Television Chief, Visits N. Y.'  
'President's Son Says Bluntly What Radio Men Dare Not Say'  
'Russell Seeds Agency Gets More Brown & Williamson Tobacco'  
'Open House at All Radio Stations'  
'Mme. Commissioner Next?'  
'Ted Rogers, Canadian Broadcaster, Dies at 36'  
'Johnny Johnstone Brings Mauretania in Safety'  
'Stanco Checks Radio by All Known Methods'  
'Jack Adams to Texas Web'  
'Lloyd Egner Seeks Lower Wax Tax'  
'Gooderham & Worts Suing CBC'  
'Clark, Rosenberg Buy Control of Transamerican'  
'Sanction DX Sponsors'  
'Name Bands Radio Spurt'  
'AFRA Blasts Air Schools'  
'Radio Is Not as Bad as You Think, Speakers Assure Writers Conclave'

no doubt be heard and BMI will be prominent in the headlines of 1940.

Neither with the broadcasters, nor with ASCAP, was tact on the performance fees question prominently displayed. Each side was good at not listening to the other side's point of view: each was less than candid and nearly all discussions during the year were conducted with the temper rather than with the noodle. The developments of 1940 are forecast, with entirely different outlines, by the contending factors. ASCAP is fighting mad at the tactics of the broadcasters, the 34-odd legislative attacks that had ASCAP lawyers scurrying about all year. At the same time, the broadcasters are furious at the bland take-it-or-leave-it attitude of ASCAP. The latter meantime watches Broadcast Music, Inc., and says almost nothing for publication.

### ASCAP's Lack of Strategy

It became clear, however, that ASCAP has not gotten much beyond Lindy's restaurant in New York City so far as spreading its story or courting goodwill. Edgar Grunwald, of VARIETY, in his recent swing-around the nation, reported back that only ostriches would argue with the fact that part of the stations' peeve was a reflex, almost automatic by now, against the ASCAP poker-face system. The idea had gotten imbedded in the consciousness of broadcasters that ASCAP spelled city slicker and it was well-nigh impossible to get them cooled off sufficiently to see the composer-publisher side of the argument.

For a time the ASCAP feud expressed itself in violent name-calling. Notably following the meeting of station men who came together at the Ritz Towers, New York, expecting, so they stated, to receive an ASCAP delegation, but hearing only John Paine's brief statement that he had come to report that he had nothing to report. This, it was claimed, was the slap direct, calling for pistols at dawn. ASCAP, for its part, said the broadcasters were being melodramatic, were taking things for granted, had not been promised a delegation, and were insincere. (The other side's sincerity was pretty freely challenged in the kibbitzing by both teams!)

### Threatened Arrests

Then, too, there was the classic attempt to cause the arrest of ASCAP's officialdom on warrants issued from a mountain village in Montana charging them with a criminal conspiracy. Mayor LaGuardia of New York City chided his police for even thinking of serving such papers in what hizzoner called a who-owes-what suit. The bailiffs of the state of Washington were more willing than the Little Flower, but, when one of the innumerable ASCAP cases came up a bit later in Tacoma, the big fellows of ASCAP were not present. They were psychic. Or tipped off.

### On Musicians

Relations with the American Federation of Musicians were not without some flickers of cordiality. Upon Vince Callahan leaving WWL for WBZ, Boston, the New Orleans local did highly resolve that these present do regret same and give it as their opinion that more such guys would be a great thing for radio-music relations and Ireland. Don't take this resolution as typical. It isn't. But it hints that some stations and some locals get along. Broadcasters vary a good deal in their attitude toward locally-created radio entertainment and therefore toward paying for musicians. It confuses and renders uncomfortable some few who think references to showmanship in their presence is disguised sarcasm. The minority of stations actively makes the most of its house orchestra. Probably the majority accept the annual burden without too much grumbling. A handful remain bitterly, openly resentful.

Auxiliary problems to performance fees (ASCAP) and live talent (AFM) are implicit in other growing complexities, such as the curtailment of the right to use phonograph records and the threatened limitations upon transcribed libraries. Also the larger cities are, one by one, coming under the scrutiny of the actors union, AFRA, and the two engineers crafts, IBEW or ACA. It's just as alphabetical as ever, or maybe more so.

### Elliott Roosevelt Steps In

The son of the President of the United States was often mentioned in trade news headlines during 1939. The year before the industry had become aware of the ambition, the

push, the personality of Elliott Roosevelt. His connection with Hearst radio and his operations in Texas were partly obscure, but throughout the trade his presence was keenly felt. In March he came before the Federal Communications Commission, the kindergarten at which most broadcasters learned the art of never speaking bluntly to a Government bureau affecting one's prosperity. On this occasion the president's son delivered a load of plain speech. Radio was too much subject to the caprice of politicians, there was an excess of meddling and too little common sense and sympathy for the business.

## Our New Member

Niles Trammell, the NBC board.  
Barlow Roberts, Blackett-Sample-Hummert.  
Bill Stuhler, Lyons & Lyons.  
Don Stauffer, Lyons & Lyons.  
James L. Fly, FCC.  
Fred Thompson, FCC.  
Ken Dyke, NBC sales.  
Irving Auspitz, Erwin Wasey.  
L. B. Wilson, CBS.  
Myron Kirk, Sherman K. Ellis.  
George Jessel, Vitalis.  
Hill Blackett, Republican Natl. Committee.  
H. R. Baukhage, NBC.

Late in the year, Elliott Roosevelt was seen tip-toeing down the corridors of Blackett-Sample-Hummert and then began those events of November and December which were never quite in focus to the outside onlookers.

Mutual shook momentarily (thinking it an earthquake), but went swiftly to work checkmating, opposing, consolidating.

The story of the NBC blue network's ultimate de-jinxing, as achieved in 1939 under a blitzkrieg laid out by Niles Trammell, is one of the real success yarns of the year. It is told in detail by Ben Bodee elsewhere in this radio section.

## Personal

(In 1939)

Ed Scheuing, bankrupt.  
Bob Goldstein, ditto.  
Maurice Scopp, de-appended.  
Dick Richards, dry-docked.  
Ed Kirby, daddied.  
Irene Rich, piqued.  
Franchot Tone, polite.  
Fulton Oursler, irked.  
Doc Rockwell, puzzled.  
Colby Chester, contented.  
Dorothy Barstow, married.  
Reggie Scheubel, engaged.  
Lloyd Yoder, transferred.  
Bob Jennings, divorced.  
Bob Jennings, married.  
Fred Allen, panned.  
Jerry Danzig, stage struck.

When further consolidated and confirmed, the blue network will probably be loaded, its affiliates probably as reasonably satisfied as affiliates ever are. Insiders in the rival CBS camp concede the blue's recent improvements, but privately wonder if the S.R.O. of the red and CBS would not, with greater patience, presently have done as much and at the older rates. But the blue affiliates were already mildewed around the gills from a diet of patience. Something had to be done. And the point is that a lot was done.

## WPEN, PHILLY TOOTERS STALEMATED ON DEAL

Philadelphia, Jan. 1.

Negotiations between WPEN and Local 77, American Federation of Musicians, for a new contract have reached a stalemate, with the announcement that Arde Bulova, operator of the station, had rejected the union's 'last offer.' Officials of the local said they had offered to reduce the station's music commitment by \$5,400, but this was turned down.

The union claimed that WPEN tried to renege on its agreement when it 'locked out' the studio orchestra last October. The musicians were taken back on a week-to-week basis pending final settlement. The union said WPEN had agreed to spend \$30,000 a year for music.

It is believed that further negotiations will be held in abeyance pending the outcome of the confabs in N. Y. between the national officers of AFM and representatives of the radio industry.



# WAS 'THE CIRCLE' THAT BAD?

By Bob Landry

In 1939 a radio legend was born: that the worst program ever produced on big-time radio was the Kellogg-sponsored hour, 'The Circle.' The program ran an unhappy and uneven course and finally petered out. The chart of its path is punctuated by marks (\*) which refer to footnotes reading: 'at this point so-and-so left the program, so-and-so had a quarrel with whatzisname.'

By the time the pack was in full cry yelping for sheer pleasure at a supposed failure, and the yum-yum prospect of grabbing a swell account, maybe, perhaps, the actual merits or demerits of 'The Circle' had long before ceased to be a matter of analysis and become a matter of being smart. It was distinctly smart about March, 1939, to sneer at the program, which meantime was never worse than many programs that were warmed by general indulgence. And at its best, on paper, in basic conception 'The Circle' was often provocative, often highly imaginative and showmanly, and frequently deserving of more sympathy than it got. It fell away from its originality fell under the sway of Groucho Marx, who stole the show—the show's idea—and threw it away.

## On Radio Criticism

'The Circle' is a good case history to use as a springboard for a few remarks on the ungentle art and profession of criticizing radio programs. 'The Circle' was imperfectly drawn, no doubt of that. Its initial fault was to overload with names, thereby creating a staggering payroll, and then, suddenly economy conscious, to neglect the writing. If ever a program was to succeed or fail on its writing, if ever a program idea was only as good as its execution, it was 'The Circle.' In a very real sense, advanced big-time talent and formula collided with old-fashioned penny-pinching on the literary end. And then, in the end, panic and Groucho Marx doing as he pleased.

Had the program clicked, it would have encouraged a little novelty, originality, charm and a free-flying spirit in radio production. Because it failed, and that failure was so magnificently publicized by enemies of the J. Walter Thompson agency, every pussy-footing, inspiration-dry agency has seen its own sterile concept of programming confirmed as the height of everything right and smart. The flop of 'The Circle' (and it did flop) was properly a matter of regret, not of jubilation, in radio. It frightened the suspender buttons off the sponsors, and it made difficult, if not impossible, the chances of persuading anybody to try the untried. Perhaps it is not an unrelated fact that for the greater part of the year 1939, sponsors and agencies wanted to use cash giveaways instead of actors.

## Lifebuoy, Also

It might also be asked with equal pointedness whether the Walter O'Keefe program for Lifebuoy was 'that bad.' This, too, was a flop, although after the first three or four weeks it had been put in pretty good shape. The truly terrible opening broadcast, defying explanation and beyond excuse, combines with the case of 'The Circle' to emphasize how tremendously important the first impressions are. Not because it is then that the professional critics tune in and hand down their verdicts (say what you will of professional critics, their importance or unimportance!), but because—sometimes forgotten—the sponsor listens, too. He listens and he is not nearly as dumb about entertainment as advertising agencies and networks habitually kid themselves he is.

You can't alibi bad talent that gets thousands of dollars an hour in wages. Some shows do overcome bad starts, but its getting tougher every season to square 'The Circle.'

## MBS TRYING TO HYPO B-S-H TO FULL HOUR

Chicago, Jan. 1.

Mutual web here is making a concerted drive to increase to a full hour the time sale to Blackett-Sample-Hummert agency accounts. Last week, Fred Weber, Mutual general manager, and Ed Wood, WGN sales chief, set two 15-minute periods for Ovaltine's 'Orphan Annie' and 'Carters of Elm Street.'

Weber has returned to New York, with Wood continuing almost daily confabs with B-S-H execs here.

## QUOTES FROM 1939 'VARIETY' REVIEWS

**Screen Actors Guild (Gulf, CBS)**—'Bright, brisk, professionally keen challenger for important attention.'

**'Gateway to Hollywood' (Wrigley, CBS)**—'This latest amateur program has a tie-up with RKO pictures, but on a basis of its first broadcast that's about all it has got.'

**Sam Lavene (Royal Gelatine, NBC)**—'If the effort isn't to be an attenuated clambake some intensive writing is needed.'

**D'Artega (Enna Jettick, CBS)**—'Slick little package of musical entertainment.'

**Raymond Paige (U. S. Rubber, CBS)**—'Tackled a tough assignment and on first broadcast emerged brilliantly.'

**Mark Warnow (Lucky Strike, CBS)**—'Best-balanced, fastest-moving and most notable of the Lucky Strike gallops.'

**'Life and Love of Dr. Susan' (Lux, NBC)**—'Everything about the show hews closely to the established formula of daytime serials.'

**A. L. Alexander's Arbitration (Sustaining, WHN)**—'Looks like a certainty to attract listener following.'

**Tom Howard-George Shelton (U. S. Tobacco, NBC)**—'This one is right from the corn-crib.'

**Hal Kemp (Griffin, NBC)**—'Kemp's molasses music should continue to please as heretofore.'

**Knickerbocker Playhouse (Teel, NBC)**—'Initial two programs failed to disclose much.'

**Alec Templeton (Johnson's Wax, NBC)**—'Can boast of a quality not so common in radio, namely, charm.'

**Bob Zurke orchestra (RCA, NBC)**—'A digital virtuoso of hotcha, and good fun.'

**Ford Summer Show (CBS)**—'Sluggishly paced, the items haphazardly jumbled.'

**Percy Faith orchestra (sustaining from Canada, Mutual)**—'Orchestrations with the ripe lusciousness of Kostelanetz - Spitalny - Paige - Gluskin-Gould...consistently first rate and stand out.'

**'The Carters of Elm Street' (Ovaltine, NBC)**—'It still remains a puzzle how unbelievably banal scripts can interest the busy housewife.'

**Bob Hope (Pepsodent, NBC)**—'Well-planned, well-supplied with ammunition, well-rehearsed.'

**'Pot O' Gold' (Tums, NBC)**—'The program sums up as a promoter's idea of something slick. It is basically unsound as entertainment or as radio with NBC's wisdom strongly to be questioned in permitting the use of its facilities, which cheapens all radio entertainment. It is the giveaway to end all giveaways.'

**'Tom Mix's Straightshooters' (Ralston, NBC)**—'Good funny paper dramaturgy.'

**Raymond Gram Swing (White Owl, Mutual)**—'Calm judicious use of language and restrained delivery.'

**Walter O'Keefe (Lifebuoy, CBS)**—'The program jerkily unspooled with spotty performances adding to the bad material.'

**Kate Smith (General Foods, CBS)**—'The whole program stacks up as a good way to sell a lot of Grape-Nuts.'

## ASCAP's Goodwill Reps Going Into Action This W'k; Seek Pros, Cons

American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers is putting its newly created station relations department into operation this week. It's starting off with two such reps. Robert G. Paine and Richard F. Frohlich. Paine, son of John G. Paine, ASCAP general manager, will be routed among New England stations, while Frohlich is slated to call on stations in Maryland, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

The two young men will be on tour for about two weeks. They will then make their preliminary reports on how the broadcasters reacted to them. Through this contacting setup, ASCAP hopes to get its own viewpoints about its service to the broadcasters and to get at the same time the broadcasters' views toward ASCAP.

**Myron McCormick**, legit actor, has joined the cast of 'Joyce Jordan—Girl Interne.'



CHARLOTTE MANSON

The Casting of Charlotte Manson as 'Society Girl' is clicko—VARIETY.

## Management

ROGER WHITE PRODUCTIONS, RKO Building, New York

## 5 STATIONS WORKING OUT SELF-REG

Hartford, Jan. 1.

Automatic granting of juice jumps for five radio stations, operating on the same band, by the FCC is expected if a plan now being worked out materializes. All stations will automatically have their power output for day and night increased to 5,000 watts.

Stations expected to benefit are WNBC, New Britain-Hartford, KQV, Pittsfield, Mass., WSMK, Dayton, Ohio, WKBH, La Crosse, Wis., and KOH, Reno, Nev. All operate on 1380 kc. All these stations expect to apply to the FCC simultaneously for the power increase. In view of the fact that all are applying for increase and there is no one in the band to oppose, expected increase will be automatically granted.

Understood also that a circular letter, explaining the scheme, is making the rounds of the station managements and that all are favorable to the plan. Local officials of WNBC are quite confident that there are no obstacles to the scheme and that they will be automatically granted the increase.

WNBC was recently granted permission to operate on 1,000 watts day and night. Station previously operated on 1,000 watts days and 250 watts nights. Is an optional station on the NBC Blue. Part of the Arde Bulova group.

## FTC SURVEY SPOTLIGHTS RADIO BLURBS' PURITY

Washington, Jan. 1.

Microscopic percentage of radio continuities contained any statements requiring more than superficial checking by the Federal Trade Commission during the year ended last June 30. Censor board's annual report showed better than nine-tenths of the blurbs were beyond reproach, indicating high degree of compliance with cease-and-desist orders, stipulations, and general advertising policies, plus various Federal statutes.

The FTC's radio and periodical division oiled 643,796 individual continuities, comprising 1,384,353 type-written pages in the last fiscal year, according to the annual report. Total comprised 492,540 pages from networks, which report weekly, and 891,813 pages from individual plants, who are called on quarterly to file copies of the blurbs which they air.

As has been the case for years, the questioned radio and printed advertising was preponderantly for drugs of miscellaneous kinds. Propaganda of this sort which necessitated investigation was 42.4% of the total, while drug preparations, cosmetics, health devices and contrivances, and food products accounted for 62.7% of the advertised articles given legal review.

## Voynow Quits WEAN

Providence, Jan. 1.

Richard Voynow, sales manager with WEAN for past three years, resigned (30).

Plans call for short vacation and then return to New York.

## THE CHICAGO AGENCIES

**Blackett-Sample-Hummert:** Remains first in billing and first in the thoughts (the hearts?) of stations and station representatives. Placing accounts wholesale, the agency represents aggressive accounts.

**Russel M. Seeds:** Practically a one-man organization and mentioned second for its remarkable rise in the radio picture in one year. That one man, Freeman Keyes, and his account is Brown & Williamson Tobacco company. In some 18 months Keyes has snatched Avalon, Bugler, Big Ben tobacco, all radio on Wings and a chunk of Raleigh cigarettes. And Keyes did it with a formula for essentially male appeal. He aimed low and will continue to aim low, according to his conviction that most of radio is shot too high for either the public or for genuine sales. Hokey-pokey shows are the Keyes formula, back-home humor and 1902 gags mixed with semi-hillbilly tunes. These have been the Keyes rabbit-foot and Keyes is too superstitious and too wise to change a winner combination. In addition Keyes has Pinex for a mammoth spot schedule and Schaefer Pen which is unconvinced about radio.

**Schwimmer & Scott:** One of the liveliest and most progressive agencies continued its climb during the past year. Aggressive and ambitious, outstandingly No. 1 for local radio business during the past couple of years, S. & S. point to a spread nationally shortly for which they are now already handling Wurlitzer, Lea & Perrins, Fox Deluxe beer and Walgreen's. Flock of local accounts from clothing stores to biscuits to auto dealers make this place a hangout for time salesmen. An agency intensely convinced of the power of radio and an agency which uses radio for almost every conceivable type of sales job.

**Kastor:** Large user of radio time and willing to try anything once and therefore the field of action for radio men despite the belief of many salesmen that you have to leave an eye or an ear on the desk to walk out with a contract. In action for Procter & Gamble's Drene and Teel, Campbell's Cereal, Tums and Welch Grape Juice. Leaning now towards strip shows and dramatic shows, and evidencing no leaning towards the use of headlines or stars.

**J. Walter Thompson:** Inactive locally as far as radio is concerned, with little ether billing.

**Lord & Thomas:** A big-time agency. See N. Y. Comment.

**Presba, Fellers & Presba:** An unusual agency, with one man, Ed Fellers, known personally to perhaps more individual station operators than any other man in the agency biz. Fellers hand-picks his stations for Mantle Lamp, Household Magazine and Olson Rug, all of which are looking for mail. Uses same type of time and shows and stations year after year and gets down to the cross-roads peepul who dote on letter-writing.

**McCann-Erickson:** After a long dormant period, there are some signs of revival on the part of the Chicago office of McCann-Erickson. Standard Oil of Indiana may even use some one-minute platters around this part of the country aimed at the farm audiences. National Biscuit has shifted to the N. Y. office. Maytag remains quiet. But agency here has replaced N. W. Ayer for branches and dealers using spot plugs around the midwest keys.

**Sherman K. Ellis:** Has slipped into a pretty sound radio slumber following the departure of Puffed Wheat and Puffed Rice to other outfits, and the remaining Aunt Jemima portion of Quaker Oats indicates little chance for an ether ride.

**Aubrey, Moore & Wallace:** There is always Campana; but, nevertheless, this agency has demonstrated what can be done with a single radio account. Many years with 'First Nighter' and now returning 'Grand Hotel' for the same account. In addition handing out some spot scraps for International Harvester and 20 Grand Razor Blades. Has a feeling for radio.

**Erwin-Wasey:** Up-and-downer from whom more is expected. Continues on the network for Carnation, but little other action at present, though there are hopes now that Irving Auspitz has joined the organization, since Auspitz is sold to the hilt on the efficacy of the microphone.

**Needham, Louis & Brorby:** And then there is Fibber McGee and Molly. If for nothing else the agency rates in the upper brackets. But indicates a tendency to rest on its laurels of the great find it made for Johnson's Floor Wax. Have plenty of available accounts for radio, but despite this are using only a couple of spot plugs for Kraft's Parkay product and Johnson's Gloco.

**Reincke, Ellis, Younggren & Finn:** Has lost ground and now being passed up pretty much by radio men who have torn their lungs out trying to interest this organization in radio. Presentations by the score have been sent in to them, but the boys here are busy looking out of the window. Some spot shots for Burlington railroad, most of which are sold by the stations locally just about covers the radio picture here in an outfit that generally impresses as lethargic as far as radio is concerned.

**United States Advertising Co.:** At least this office has been out trying to sell radio, and is consistently trying to persuade Wilson & Co. meat account to hop on the ether bandwagon. Has a spot schedule for Wilson's dogfood and readying another for the lard product, but as yet hasn't been able to put over that convincer for the big-time stuff.

**Ruthrauff & Ryan:** Plenty of action here in an organization which has spread its radio department considerably in the past two years, and under the present progressive operation of the radio department even more advancement lies ahead.

**Benton & Bowles-Chicago:** Three boys with a plan, and this small but active agency here is going stronger and better than many bigger and older agencies in town.

**Henri, Hurst & McDonald:** Solid agency that goes along with a good radio job without fuss or fanfare. Loves Smiling Ed McConnell; comes up with Tony Wons to sell Hall's greeting cards, and has a talking dog for Morrell's Red Heart Dog Food. Of considerable importance in the radio picture and turns in consistent ether results.

**Roche, Williams & Cunyngnam:** Cudahy (primarily Old Dutch Cleaner's 'Backstage Wife') and Studebaker with some Milwaukee railroad stuff. Big-time user of radio and buys time by the carload when they get started. Indicates a return to a lavish network show for Studebaker. Another upstanding agency without frills or fancy steps.

**Stack-Goble:** After a couple years of relative inaction, has returned to the radio fray with both hands flying. Turns on the network, Grove's Bromo-Quinine on both network and spot and plenty of spot stuff for Swift's Sunbrite product. Agency is on the march and is rapidly picking up speed, and should pass by a flock of rival agencies during the 1940 scramble.

**Neisser-Meyerhof:** There is the Wrigley account which is nice and pleasant. And then there is Kitchen Klenzer for which this agency has done and is doing a bang-up job with some femme-interview programs, and also some fine work for Sawyer biscuit. Hard-working organization.

## STRICTLY NET

Sue Carol Self-Books Herself on Texaco Show

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Sue Carol didn't have to pay the usual 10% commission for being booked into a guest spot on the Texaco program. Former film player did it herself, being an agent.

Also the first time a percenter was sought for guesting.

## BILL HAY SETTLES LUM 'N' ABNER SUIT

Bill Hay settled his suit against Chester Lauck and Norris Goff (Lum 'n' Abner) out of court. Bucolic air comics were accused of repudiating an agreement which guaranteed the Amos 'n' Andy announcer a commission on radio work he secured for the L. & A. team.

Understood settlement figure around \$5,000.



# AD AGENCY SHOWMANSHIP IN 1939

Less spectacular hits and less spectacular flops—reflecting a generally keener critical sense—marked the history of advertising agencies in network programming during 1939. There were quite a number of banana peel upsets but only one program, 'The Circle,' went down with a crushing budgetary weight in its portfolio. J. M. Mathes agency in New York enjoyed the prestige of picking, in 'Information, Please,' a resounding success. In Chicago the Russel M. Seeds agency came forward with several low-cost programs for Brown & Williamson. Lord & Thomas brought in Bob Hope as a challenger for the comedy leadership of Jack Benny. But on the whole, agency showmanship avoided the extremes and left few mementos to put a red ring around the year 1939 for future students of radio advertising.

Of passing note is the loss of the hour show dominance by J. Walter Thompson. With the beginning of the year agency had five 60-minute stanzas on the fire but at the end of the year there were two, Kraft and Lux, or the same number of that description handled by Young & Rubicam, Lord & Thomas and Ruthrauff & Ryan.

Review of impressions along showmanship lines made by the ad agencies during 1939 follows:

**Aubrey, Moore & Wallace:** Has geared the Campagna perennial, 'The First Nighter,' to the point where it's become an easy weekly habit, and with the result that this same account has been encouraged to bring back 'Grand Hotel' for another whirl.

**N. W. Ayer:** Still responsible for a topnotch hour of class musical entertainment, the Ford Symphony. Weaned the Dole radio account back with Al Pearce as the bait. The merchandising of the product merits a special nod.

**Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn:** Major effort was the Ethyl session in which Walter O'Keefe was first paired with Andre Kostelanetz and then Tony Martin shared billing with Kostelanetz, but the clicksome spark seemed missing in both instances. It scored with the General Electric-Phil Spitalny program, made listeners fairly Royal Crown Cola conscious through Bob Ripley and, for a time, kept DuPont's 'Cavalcade of America' in an institutional class of its own. (Program has just returned.)

**Benton & Bowles:** Didn't fare so happily with its comedy shows and had trouble with Maxwell House's 'Good News' following the exit of Metro. The three comics who wound up pretty much as test campaigns were Joe Penner, Jack Haley and Joe E. Brown. Agency showed a far better flair with daytime serials and gangster dramas. Brought back Wayne King (Cashmere Soap) but felt it necessary to add diamond rings as an inducement for femme attention.

**Birmingham, Castleman & Pierce:** Invested the Hal Kemp stanza (Griffin All-White) with an ingratiatingly intimate touch.

**Blow Co.:** Sticks to the same old rote; either a moderately powered dance combination with vocalists or a quiz-a-magig. Outsmarted itself with 'Where Are We?' Substituted to save coin for 'What's My Name?' Faded in record time. Played around with dramatic interpolations, comedy vignettes, poetry recitals and what not, to successively doubtful results.

**Blackett-Sample-Hummert:** Radio's No. 1 serial mill, with the master pattern unchanged since the early '30s. Same applies to its two Sunday evening musical sessions, 'Manhattan Merry-Go-Round' and 'Album of Familiar Music.' Agency projects one ray of big time sunshine. It's 'Easy Aces.'

**Bowman & Columbia:** Contributed another chapter to the daytime dramaturgy on co-ed medicine. 'Joyce Jordan-Girl Interne,' and without the slightest deviation from the established formula.

**Buchanan & Co.:** 'Texaco Star Theatre' had ups and downs during the past two seasons. Ken Murray formula finally seems straightened out.

**Campbell-Ewald:** Though in theory, or on paper, the show was of the promising sort, '99 Men and a Girl,' with Raymond Paige, failed to make the grade. Agency didn't give up trying to snap the program out of the listening doldrums to the very end of the series. 26 weeks.

**Cecil & Presbrey:** Nurtured 'Uncle Jim's Question Bee' (Bill Slater) to moderate results. G. Washington Coffee has put the quiz in mothballs temporarily.

**Compton:** Procter & Gamble buys 'em for the daytime trade and this agency is the servicing go-between, besides writing the blurbs that go with the serials. Also on its list is 'Hilda Hope, M.D.' (Wheatena), something that NBC first cultivated on a sustaining basis.

**Sherman K. Ellis:** Tagged one of the most promising shows of the season, 'Stop Me, If You've Heard This One,' but had to give it up with the Quaker puffed goods business to Ruthrauff & Ryan. Recruited Joe Penner for Ward Bread with moderate results, but missed out in its efforts to make 'Dick Tracy' a successful nighttime gangbuster.

**Erwin, Wasey & Co.:** From the 'Voice of Experience' to Carson Robinson and his Buckeroos was the range of this agency's programming efforts. Vaughn DeLeath took up where the 'Voice' left off in Lydia Pinkham's behalf.

**William Esty & Co.:** Bought an established package in Burns and Allen for Hinds Honey & Almond Cream and since George Burns runs things his own way or else, this one doesn't count. But the Esty brain trust came out right on 'Blondie,' in keeping the program close to its film counterpart in imbecilic characterizations and screwball vacuity. In catering to the jitterbug element the agency buys top-mountain names and strives to find the key to substantial audiences, but with intermittent success. It even went far afield from swing for guest personalities to bolster the Benny Goodman show, thereby providing for some odd combinations. Finally came Mildred Bailey and just as it seemed that

the right ingredient had been found for the Goodman stanza it was decided to drop him and merge Miss Bailey with Bob Crosby's unit. Crosby-Bailey combination, if properly nurtured, should deliver the goods.

**Gale & Pietsch:** Had that early Sunday evening dramatic tidbit, 'A Tale of Today' on NBC until April for Princess Pat. Series dated back to January, 1934, but the spring had run down long before the fadeout.

**Gardner:** 'The Inside Story' (Ralston), a hybrid of 'We, the People' and 'True Confessions,' didn't turn out so well, mostly because of faulty production, but the agency is still doing a slick piece of showmanly persuasion with the Pet Milk musical session on CBS Saturday nights. 'Tom Mix Straight Shooters' also germinates from this agency.

**Grady & Wagner:** Only claim to fame is that it's the agency for Emerson Radio, which gave Elliott Roosevelt to the country's loudspeakers.

**Henri, Hurst & McDonald:** One of radio's pioneer agencies sticking by a couple pioneer mikers, namely Smilin' Ed McConnell (Acme Paint) and Bob Becker, canine biographer (Red Star Dog Food).

**E. W. Hellwig:** Delivered an outside-produced serial, 'Society Girl,' to Corn Products, and thereby vouchsafing the housewife another peek into the drawing rooms of Park avenue.

**Frances Hooper:** Intermediary for Phil Wrigley on Jesse Lasky's 'Gateway to Hollywood.' Leslie Atlass, CBS' Chicago v.p., picks the shows and the F.H. agency signs the pay-checks, among other details. Lasky show ran its course and off. Wrigley had previously abandoned promising Billy House half-hour.

**Hutchinson:** The Pillsbury Mills contact on 'The Woman in White,' one of the more popular daytime dialog cascades.

**Ivey & Ellington:** Introduced Sam Balter, glib and incisive sports commentator, to midwest and eastern audiences; with Bayuk cigar paying the bills. Agency stuck by Balter when Mutual, seeking to censor him, raised the spectre of controversial issues.

**H. W. Kastor & Sons:** Maintained the Irene Rich program and the Jimmy Fidler chatterbox on even keel, but floundered badly when it came to drama. Latter two flops were 'The Golden Theatre' and 'The Knickerbocker Playhouse.' From 'The Golden Theatre' Lewis-Howe dived into 'The Pot o' Gold.' Kastor this season brought in Professor Quiz for P.G.'s Teel dentifrice and the results have been consistently good.

**Joseph Katz:** Edwin C. Hill in 'The Human Side of the News' has been this agency's speed the past year. American Oil is the moneybag.

**H. M. Kiesewetter:** Has developed for Mennen a low-priced but effective audience participation novelty, 'Quixie Doodle Contest.' Bob Hawk got the thing off nicely and when he quit for another program, Colonel Stoopnagle took hold, and with sparkling affect.

**Arthur Kudner:** Played around with a revival of the 'Mary and Bob' figments (True Story) for a while. Later Macfadden substituted himself and Fulton Oursler, until their controversial slants got too hot for NBC. Agency is still connected with the U.S. Tobacco incident which features Tom Howard and George Shelton, as successors to Pic and Pat.

**Lambert & Feasley:** Bought 'Grand Central Station' from a program contractor in 1937 and kept switching the program's network and time until it settled down next to an established click. 'First Nighter,' and collected some of the reflected glory. Same agency has the 'True Detective Mysteries' on Mutual.

**Lennen & Mitchell:** Experienced extremely mixed results during the year. Built 'The Woodbury Playhouse' into a solid entertainment structure, via Charles Boyer, Herbert Marshall and the combination of Jim Ameche and Gale Page. Got itself into a wracking headache with Artie Shaw, and when the combination of Bob Benchley and Jimmy Durante started showing signs of meshing, Old Gold decided that there wouldn't be any more. Got moderate results for Sensation cigarettes through Larry Clinton, and picked a good possibility in 'The Parker Family.' Has Walter Winchell still doing a marathon for Jurgens.

**Lord & Thomas:** Came through the year with Bob Hope in the upper brackets of both popularity and sock radio entertainment and with Kay Kyser also on the crest. Lent a showmanly and alert mind to the career of the 'Hit Parade.' Put Sophie Tucker on for Roi Tan (outside New York), but the alliance was of short duration. Kept grooming 'District Attorney' diligently and enlisted Hedda Hopper to make listeners Sunkist fruit conscious by the film chatter method.

**McCann-Erickson:** Invested 'Dr. Christian' this season with a good assortment of experienced troupers and more expert production, and the outlook is far more promising. Also continues to jog along with that perennial, 20-Mule Team Borax's 'Death Valley Days.'

**Marschall & Pratt:** Had D'Artega on for a short sprint in Enna Jettick Shoes' behalf. It was one of those off-the-elbow musical quarter hours, even though the orchestral interludes were deftly styled.

**J. M. Mathes:** Inactive in radio for a long time, this agency lifted itself into the class of click-pickers by tagging 'Information, Please' for Canada Dry. Consensus of opinion in the trade was of the dubious complexion at the time the deal was made. Agency has not only cooperated with the program famously but performed a standout merchandising job.

**Maxon:** Did well by Gillette Razor in handling the merchandising and other details on the World's Series broadcasts.

**Morse International:** Dusted off 'Seth Parker' (Phillips

Lord) for Vick but found that as far as the listeners were concerned he could have been left on the shelf. Program rated as among the most macabre ever unveiled in radio.

**Needham, Louis & Brorby:** Continues to hit the bull's-eye for Johnson Floorwax. After nursing 'Fibber McGee and Molly' to the upper rungs, this agency recruited Alec Templeton as pinchhitter for the comedy team last summer and the way he clicked made him a natural for a regular spot. Alka-Seltzer (Wade) is the sequel.

**Newell-Emmett:** Chesterfield is this one's major concern. Account takes an exceptionally active part in putting the finger on what it wants. It became impressed with the idea of using a band in an evening spot across the board and bought Fred Waring, and the listener response has been steadily upward. Within this same camp occurred one of the most curious incidents of the past year. No sooner had the cig roller decided to replace Paul Whiteman with Glenn Miller than Whiteman's rating began to shoot upward in a big way, indicating that the spot on the schedule had been pretty much to blame. For a long while Whiteman was competing against Tommy Dorsey.

**Pedlar & Ryan:** Has performed a neat steering job with Guy Lombardo for Lady Esther, but its efforts with 'For Men Only' have been of hit and miss calibre.

**L. W. Ramsey Co.:** 'Fitch Band Wagon' is the program and since it comes between Jack Benny and Charlie McCarthy on the NBC-red the trade regards it as getting the richest free ride in radio.

**Knox-Reeves:** Alternate go-between for General Mills, with strictly daytime tendencies. Latest pick is the Phillips Lord office's 'By Kathleen Norris' series. Agency's average for skillful grooving of such daytime stuff is pretty high.

**Ruthrauff & Ryan:** Even though it stumbled badly on the Lifebuoy inning, the agency wound up the year with a good record for variable showmanship. Lifebuoy structure started crumbling because of an internal east-executive situation that got out of control and Walter O'Keefe's clambake debut. Also, such competitive items as 'Pot o' Gold' and 'Information, Please' combined to put the finishing touches to it. On the credit side for the agency there's the continued smart handling of 'Big Town'; the experimenting with a name singer (Lanny Ross) in a morning spot and the way it surprised the trade by cashing in substantially on the Tommy Riggs brand of corn. Quaker Oats tossed 'Stop Me, If You Have Heard This One' into R&R's laps, and after a wayward start, the show veered closer to its archetype, 'Information, Please,' with the crossfire of the experts overbalancing the diversion derived from the mail contributions. So, the outlook for the program became much brighter.

**Russel M. Seeds:** Has largely entrenched itself with Brown & Williamson through the process of furnishing extremely low-priced shows that can snare a goodly sized chunk of the constalk trade. If one doesn't pan out after an ample trial, there's another of similar economic and audience-level description always ready for submission to the account.

**Stack-Goble:** Progenitor of the second of two cycles that have done much the past two years to depreciate the show business end of radio. The first cycle, which likewise placed a cash premium on listening, was the quiz or audience participation show. This agency's innovation was the radio bank night, or 'Pot o' Gold.' Nothing has caused agency men to speculate so much over probable trends in programming as Tum's big money giveaway and the show's rise in listening popularity. Stack-Goble has done well in again dramatizing 'Sherlock Holmes' via Basil Rathbone and reaped nice returns with 'The Battle of the Sexes,' in which quiz Frank Crumit and Julia Sanderson prove more folksier than ever.

**J. Walter Thompson:** Fared pretty badly in 1939 in more than one way. In addition to registering the No. 1 program debacle of the season, namely, 'The Circle,' this agency was deprived of its oldest, if not its proudest, child, the Rudy Vallee hour, and had its Chase & Sanborn show shorn to a half hour. Another rap was Lever Bros.' folding of the 'Dr. Susan' serial. The agency which set the pace and the style in big things radio is still up there with the selfsame C&S stanza, 'Lux Theatre,' Kraft Music Hall (Bing Crosby-Bob Burns) and 'One Man's Family.' Trade opinion is that the turn of the graphline illustrates what can happen when too many eggs are carried in one basket.

**Wade:** Swerved away from its hillbilly addiction for Alka-Seltzer to no small degree when it brought Alec Templeton into the ranks. National Barn Dance and 'Uncle Ezra' remain this agency's major responsibilities.

**Warwick & Legler:** For the first time in six years this agency was without its Warden Lawes. It's still doing a suave job with the Metropolitan Opera Auditions of the Air. Its results with the quiz, 'Youth vs. Age' (Vince and Sloan's Liniment), have been just so-so.

**Ward Wheelock Co.:** Has failed to get a substantial reaction with Orson Welles as competition to Charlie McCarthy. Probably due in most part to a loss of interest in Welles' technique. Agency also put Amos 'n' Andy on Campbell's payroll.

**Young & Rubicam:** Had but one serious casualty, the Phil Baker-Dole Pineapple show. Fred Allen stanza started off on its left foot this fall but in a few weeks caught its balance. Gulf's Screen Guild has proved somewhat of a problem child off and on. Agency's only new one during the past year, besides the Dole incident, was 'The Aldrich Family' and it has with diligent and deft treatment succeeded in raising this serial to the click class. Continued to steer 'We, the People' along slick showmanly lines and to make 'The Silver Theatre' one of the smoothest dramatic packages coming out of Hollywood. Also on the spotlight side with Jack Benny, Kate Smith, and Dave Elman's 'Hobby Lobby.'

## Comstock's \$18,000 Suit Vs. Pearce Settled Out Of Court for \$8,250

Suit of Ruth Rubin, assignee of William H. Comstock, against Al Pearce for \$18,000 on alleged breach of contract, was discontinued and settled out of the N. Y. supreme court Thursday (28) for \$8,250 to be paid to the plaintiff.

Suit alleged that Comstock was signed by Pearce for 39 weeks at \$1,000 weekly, beginning Oct. 10, 1938, to present his character, 'Tizzie Lish,' on the air.

The plaintiff claims he was dis-

charged March 14, 1939, when he had 16 weeks to go on the contract. It was also said that Comstock was not paid for the weeks of Jan. 2 and March 13.

## WIL Safety Plaque

Plaque for outstanding service in the field of child safety for 13 years was awarded last week to WIL by Post A, St. Louis unit of the Travelers' Protective Assn. Occasion marked the thirteenth anniversary of the 'Birthday Bells' program, heard daily, which stresses safety rules. Award made by John M. Baggett, national safety chairman, to Edgar P. Schutz, business and commercial manager of the station.

## Power Company Dramas Re-Signed on KMOX

St. Louis, Jan. 1.

For the fourth consecutive year, 'The Land We Live In,' a weekly half-hour series dramatizing the history of Greater St. Louis, sponsored by the Union Electric Co., of Missouri, resumes on KMOX, Sunday (7). First episode deals with founding and development of the St. Louis symph orch which, this year, is celebrating its 60th anniversary.

Arthur J. Casey will produce. Shirley Seifert, native author of 'Land of Tomorrow,' 'The Wayfarer' and other novels, is scripting.

## Harry Johnson Picks Up

Omaha, Jan. 1.

Harry Johnson, KOIL sportscaster who was in a local hospital intermittently since last July, expects to resume his twice-daily sports broadcast from his home.

Johnson is now home after having had 17 blood transfusions to combat a blood disorder.

## WLVA, WBTM Hookup

Lynchburg, Jan. 1.

WLVA here and WBTM, Danville, inaugurated their new hookup today (1) by carrying coast-to-coast Rose Bowl football game.

Local unit recently bought 49% of WBTM

## Lever Bros. Continues Spry Chainbreaks For '40; Starts Lipton Biz

Contracts on Lipton Tea's campaign of daytime chainbreak announcements have been distributed, with immediate starting dates. The Spry chainbreak announcement campaign, but for evening placement, has been renewed, effective Jan. 1.

Young & Rubicam handled the Lipton account, while the Spry business comes out of Ruthrauff & Ryan.



# ARE EDUCATORS BUM SHOWMEN?

I need not say that the intriguing title of this article is not of my selecting, but its import will hardly escape any possible reader.

It is sometimes said that you cannot indict an entire nation and the same thing is true of the genus educator—a word, by the way, which I greatly detest. There are tens of thousands of these persons, both male and female, abroad in the land. Some of them have a very shrewd feeling for effective publicity methods, some are highly successful self-advertisers; others are remote, aloof, futile, and uninterested in publicity stunts. All they want is to be let alone to do their jobs or to follow their hobbies in peace. When one of the latter variety is called upon to gain public notice and promote some educational interest, he is apt to be pathetically inept.

But what are the ends for which an 'educator' may naturally seek publicity?

I fear it must be admitted that for a few of these gentry the first personal pronoun embodies the alpha and omega of the alphabet with which they are predominantly concerned. In this they are like all the other thousands of self-seeking individuals, save that they exploit to their own purposes the institutions with which they chance to be connected.

Here, for example, is an ambitious young college instructor with a strong exhibitionist complex, who leaps at the first opportunity to make a violent radical speech at some political rally. He is referred to by the press as 'Professor X of Winthrop College.' This gives the public the impression that he represents the views of this possibly venerable and reputable institution—which he does not. It also confers upon him the title of professor, one which he may never actually attain and one which he certainly will not gain for many a long year.

From the point of view of the youth in question this may be excellent showmanship, but only if he wishes to get out of college life into some other form of activity. The College he serves is not keen to be thus gratuitously drawn into the circle of acrimonious controversy, nor to be credited with having among its professors an undistinguished and irresponsible stripling who could get no hearing for anything he said were he not connected with the staff of the institution he misrepresents. So it just depends what you are after whether this sort of thing is 'bum' showmanship or good. Fortunately, the number of persons of this type is never very large in college circles.

The educational executive who needs to publicize his institution may and does resort to various devices. An increasing amount of so-called institutional advertising is nowadays in evidence. Circulars, often with illustrations that rival the advertisements of summer resorts, newspaper and magazine articles exploiting the institution and the author, public ceremonials into which eminent names can be introduced, radio deliverances of various kinds, all these and innumerable other devices are employed. No trick of proved efficacy is overlooked, and addresses by the executive on important occasions are welcomed as affording inexpensive publicity of great value.

Conservative and well-established institutions look askance upon much of this kind of thing and some college presidents will not even give interviews to reporters. This procedure may itself have a certain publicity value. At all events, I can testify from experience to the fact that while it may not provoke a very friendly attitude in newspaper offices, it saves a great many headaches and measurably protects the executive from incessant newspaper telephone assault, by day and by night, much of it concerned with trivial rumors from which the predatory reporter hopes to concoct a sensational story possibly of front page value.

In the radio fraternity the feeling has been all but universal that educational folk have only the remotest appreciation of what constitutes an effective broadcast and insofar as broadcasting involves showmanship, either for the speaker or for the institution he represents, the scholar has been given a very low rating by the radio experts. This unflattering judgment is probably in most cases quite justified, although many educational people would regard the opinion as in fact highly complimentary for they entertain a profound contempt for much of what

By JAMES R. ANGELL  
(Educational Counselor, NBC.  
Former President, Yale University.)

they identify with radio. One widely known American university president, for example, has repeatedly stated, both publicly and privately, that the typical radio program is tripe. Of course, some persons like tripe, but the remark in question was not intended to be commendatory.

Despite the fine musical programs, the informative news releases, the admirable speeches and discussions which the radio offers, to say nothing of dozens of other highly valuable services, the tone of the radio is still in the minds of teachers all too often associated with musty and shop-worn vaudeville jokes, with silly and sometimes offensive dramatic sketches, and invariably with what they consider the endless objectionable advertising.

There is, I think, a considerable gulf set between the publicity standards which at least the leaders of

our educational world regard as compatible with the dignity of the institutions they serve, and those which are generally prevalent in the press and in radio. I would not for a moment maintain that this distinction is absolute, for there are many varieties of men and institutions in educational work, and the press and the radio in their sphere each present widely differing ideals and practices in their representations. Nevertheless, the point I am making has real substance and it accounts in large part for the fact that our American advertising fraternity appears often to regard the 'educator' as a 'bum' advertiser. My own impression is that the validity of this judgment rests almost entirely upon one's conception of the proper aims of advertising, and especially the justifiable aims and methods of all educational publicity. There are some poor performers in every profession, but I think that in general the educational brethren know and handle their job with a high degree of wisdom and intelligence.

## SOME TELEVISION 'FIRSTS'

as compiled by  
JOSEPH N. KANE

**Apparatus to operate any considerable distance** was demonstrated April 7, 1927. Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover was both seen and heard by a large group gathered in the auditorium of the Bell Telephone Laboratories, 463 West street, New York city. On this occasion the television systems operated over both wire and radio networks between Washington and New York city. This was the first time there was ever presented to an audience a complete radio broadcast of sound and scene.

**Regular programs** were telecast over Station W3XK, the Jenkins Laboratories, Washington, D. C., on July 2, 1928, at 8 o'clock and continued for an hour every Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights on 46.72 meters (6,420 kilocycles) for distant reception and 186 meters for local receivers). Silhouettes were first broadcast.

**Comprehensive demonstration of the possibilities of television** talking picture reception in the home took place in New York City Aug. 20, 1930, when a half-hour program broadcast from two stations was received on screens placed in a store in the Hotel Ansonia, Broadway and 72nd street, the Hearst Building at Eighth avenue and 57th street, and at a residence at 98 Riverside Drive. On these screens appeared the images of performers talking and singing in the studios of the Jenkins W2XCR television station at Jersey City and the DeForest W2XCD station at Passaic. The distance, approximately six miles, was the greatest transmission, and the longest completed in this country. Harry Hershfield, cartoonist, was master of ceremonies, introducing George Jessel, Arthur (Bugs) Baer, Health Commissioner Shirley W. Wynne, Benny Rubin, Diana Seaby and other entertainers.

**Outdoor demonstration of television** was held in the offices of the Bell Telephone Laboratories, New York City, on July 12, 1928. Scenes which were enacted in the open air appeared almost as plain as those taken in specially designed studios.

**Broadway play** with its original cast was telecast June 7, 1938, by NBC and John Golden, Broadway producer, over W2XBS operating on channels of 46.6 megacycles for picture and 49.75 megacycles for associated sound. The excerpt was from Rachel Crother's comedy, 'Susan and God,' with Gertrude Lawrence, Paul McGrath and Nancy Coleman then playing at the Plymouth theatre, New York city. Exact replicas of the play's setting were built for the broadcast.

**Weather map** telecast from a land station to a land receiving station was sent from Radio Station NAA, Arlington, Va., Aug. 18, 1926, and received at the Weather Bureau Office, Washington, D. C. The demonstration was arranged by the Jenkins Laboratory, Washington, D. C.

**Moving picture** was telecast June 13, 1925, at the laboratory of C. Francis Jenkins, Washington, D. C. The broadcast was sent out by Radio Station NOF, Bellevue, D. C., and was witnessed by Secretary of the Navy Wilbur, Dr. G. K. Burgess, director of the Bureau of Standards, Stephen B. Davis, acting secretary of commerce, and others.

**Talking picture** had its world (television) premiere as a theatre attraction on a seven-foot screen at Proctor's theatre, Schenectady, N. Y., May 22, 1930. The theatre's orchestra was led by a life-size radio-television image of its conductor who, in a laboratory a few miles away, wielded his baton as he received the music of his men by telephone. Other performers contributed to the demonstration by gesture, vocal music and instrumental selections. The demonstration was arranged by Doctor E. T. W. Alexander, consulting engineer of the General Electric and the Radio Corporation of America, to show the possibilities of television as a mode of entertainment.

**Mobile station** for televising outdoor events was station W2XBT, consisting of two large motor vans containing television control apparatus and a micro-wave transmitter was completed by the RCA Manufacturing Co., Camden, N. J., and turned over to NBC Company on Dec. 12, 1937. The television events were relayed to micro-wave to a tower transmitter in the Empire State Building to be rebroadcast.

**Book review** May 3, 1938. Ernest Boyd reviewed Sidney A. Spencer's 'The Greatest Show on Earth,' a new work which combined photographs and text to explain the economic problems of mankind.

**Political campaign** use of television was on October 11, 1932, when the Democratic National Committee broadcast a television show from the Columbia Broadcasting System, New York city.

**Unscheduled event** televised as it occurred was Nov. 15, 1938, by an NBC Mobile Television Unit which focused its lens on a fire in an abandoned barracks on Wards Island. The unit was assigned to taking pictures of a swimming pool when the fire was noticed. On another occasion, the Iconoscope recorded the falling of a girl's body from the Time and Life building, N. Y.

**Wedding ceremony** telecast, first in the history of the world, took place May 2, 1931, in the television studio of W2XCR-WGBS at 655 Fifth avenue, New York. Miss Grayce Jones was married to Frank Borie Du Vail, a television engineer, by Dr. A. Edwin Keigwin.

## BIGGEST HOOK-UPS (of 1939)

CBS	
Client	Stations
Liggett & Myers (Whiteman)....	98
Texas Co. (Ken Murray).....	96
R. J. Reynolds (Bob Crosby)....	92
R. J. Reynolds ('Blondie').....	92
Ford .....	82
Chrysler (Bowes) .....	81
Phillip Morris .....	80
Colgate ('Hilltop House').....	77
Colgate ('Myrt and Marge').....	77
Sanka ('We, The People').....	77

NBC Red	
Client	Stations
Jello (Benny) .....	99
Chesterfield (Waring) .....	85
Maxwell ('Good News').....	85
Firestone (Wallenstein) .....	84
Tums (Pot O' Gold).....	82
Camels (Goodman) .....	81
Kraft (Bing Crosby).....	75
Fitch (Bandwagon) .....	75
Lucky Strike (Kyser).....	69
Raleigh (Uncle Walter).....	67

NBC Blue	
Client	Stations
Sloan's ('Youth vs. Age').....	105
Sherwin (Met Opera).....	89
Alka-Seltzer (Barn Dance).....	89
Bugler ('Plantation Party').....	79
Canada Dry ('Info, Please').....	65
General Foods ('Aldrich').....	64
Jergens (Winchell) .....	64
Jergens ('Parker Family').....	64
Adams Hats (bouts).....	61
General Foods ('Dr. Malone')....	57

Mutual	
Client	Stations
Lutherans League .....	64
Ironized Yeast ('Good Will')....	50
Lydia Pinkham ('Experience')....	50
Wheeling Steel (amateurs).....	46
Gospel Association .....	40
Phillies (Sam Balter).....	20

## Telecasting During 1939

By BOB LANDRY

A question mark still hovers over American television at the end of 1939, and in England the war has locked the door until further notice. The American question mark was drawn by the Federal Communications Commission and underlined by the nosedive of sales expectations in New York City, which did not produce 500 retail buyers for television sets at asking prices and with existing program service.

Television's gains in 1939 were in two fields:

1. Publicity—it was even more successful than the Nazi propaganda machine in winning headline battles. 2. Craftsmanship—the intensive schedule launched in connection with the N. Y. World's Fair has built a backlog of showmanship experience.

While the prophets continue to predict television's real dawn as occurring anywhere from five to 50 years hence, the professional observers could see and hear that the rate of progress in America was encouraging. This writer viewed English television in both 1938 and 1939, and the comparison was not unfavorable to American efforts.

British Broadcasting Corp. has had a more vigorous training in actual production and was, as of last August, less bound down to the authority of the engineer. The director and the writer (in other words, imaginative showmanship) had emerged to an extent not yet duplicated in America. But the toilers at Radio City are on their way and not as out-classed as some BBC stay-at-homes have been led to believe by such British visitors to Manhattan as D. H. Munro, who seems to have implanted in London a conception of RCA-NBC skill based on CBS information. Gerald Cock, another BBC visitor to America before the war clouds gathered, was apparently more generous in giving the Yanks some credit.

The British for some years have, of course, cherished the hope, very plausibly, of making Uncle Sam look like a silly old dear in television. In the first half of 1939 the headlines in VARIETY were enough to support a case that they were actually doing so. There were several very significant experiments with sporting events, notably boxing bouts, and the 90-minute drama was scoring some memorable evenings. The British may be diddled out of their advantage by the unlucky accident of mobilization. A long war will give RCA-NBC plenty of opportunities.

Not that RCA-NBC isn't worried where the money is to come from. The FCC's chary attitude isn't con-

## WHEN RADIO WAS OUT TO LUNCH

By JAMES L. CONNERS

Schenectady, N. Y., Jan. 1.  
The free-and-easy schedule of early-day broadcasting, compared to split-second allotment of time in a big station's programing of today, was vividly illustrated to a WGY official who recently broussed through 1923 logs. At that time, when the Schenectady transmitter was only a year old, broadcasts were not limited to quarter, half-hour or one-hour periods. No definite limits were set; in fact, station went on and off the air most casually. Frequently groups of musicians arrived late at studio, in which case Kolin Hager (then 'the voice of WGY' and now its manager), A. O. Coggeshall (present program pilot), Bob Weidaw or Carl Jester filled in.

On Jan. 10, 1923, the log shows WGY broadcast from 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., signed off until 5:30, returned for Hager to solo 'Down Virginia Way,' shut down, signed on again at 6 p.m. for 25 minutes, and the broadcasting day was ended. The following day, WGY broadcast information at 6:42 p.m. concerning a stolen Maxwell.

The log of May 30, 1923, states simply: 'Holiday—station closed.' In 1923, it was a common practice to interrupt a musical program for a talk on almost any subject, presumably to achieve variety or to give artists a breather. A March 14 program by Schenectady Women's Club, which included two readings, was broken into by Hager for a soundoff on 'Three Centuries of Tobacco.' A popular comedy then, according to 1923 logs, was the broadcasting of phonograph record, 'Cohen at the Telephone.'

In that year, WGY Players, radio's first dramatic group, broadcast full-length air versions of these Broadway shows: 'The Green Goddess,' 'Mrs. Temple's Telegram,' 'Ready Money,' 'The Third Degree,' 'Secret Service,' 'The Price Chap' and 'Why Smith Left Home.' Same year saw the Georgia Minstrels make their air debut and click so resoundingly their programs were carried by wire to WJZ, New York, and WRC, Washington. This was one of the earliest networkers. Hager, Coggeshall, Ellsworth Page and Joseph Culhane were the Minstrels.

A rube program, with the Cornhuskers orchestra, including the late Edward H. Smith, Ed St. Louis, John T. Hill and James Montgomery. Eddie Rice, violinist heard on WGY's initial salvo in February, 1922, and a consistent broadcaster in the early days, is still around as leader of the Symphonettes. A young elocutionist, Dorothy Golub, who gave a reading of 'The Sunset Line' on July 13, 1923, is now Mrs. Dorothy Spira, 'the voice of Central Markets,' heard daily on WGY.

Shots by the General Electric and American Locomotive Company bands were then standard radio fare.

## SEATTLE PIC EXEC BUYS INTO KIRO

Seattle, Jan. 1.  
Al Rosenberg, one of the top execs of the Hamrick-Evergreen Pacific Northwest theatre chain, has bought into KIRO, CBS outlet. Rosenberg said he purchased the stock personally as strictly an investment. The theatre biggie will not be active in operation of the CBS outlet, but will be called into conference pertaining to showmanship angles from time to time, officers of KIRO say.

Announcement of Rosenberg's stock acquisition was made by Saul Haas, one of the station top men at Christmas tree party held in the studios, when the theatre magnate was introduced to the staff. Besides the regular presents for the staff, Haas presented each member with a sizable bonus check.

genial to the development of a money-eating gadget like sky-pictures. Further hearings on television are scheduled for this coming February. Meantime sets at \$600 (plus \$50 installation charge) are not exciting any parade of buyers.



# The Radio Hillbilly Still Wows 'Em

By Edgar A. Grunwald

The fair and outdoor season of 1939 was a whopper for those blow-jug Indians who long ago (according to predictions) were supposed to be ready to bite the dust—i.e., the hillbillies. It may be that stix nix hick pix, but—according to all available information in this sector—it is just as true that the rubes still like the rustic blues.

Basically, the hillbilly and his slicker brother, the Texas cowboy, are radio inventions. Some stations have artists bureaus which do nothing but book 'billies into fairs, strawberry festivals and other plow-jockey events of similar ilk. During the current season one of the most active of these (aside from the well-known WLS bureau) has been the KMBC booking bureau in Kansas City. Operated by Jimmie McConnell (who has been in on similar ventures for WLS, WTAM, KDKA and WGY during the past 12 years), it made 377 bookings during the first 10 months this year. During the past two years bookings have totalled 625, which means that about 1,000,000 appleknockers have stared at the KMBC hirelings when on p.a. tours. On the basis of this increasing momentum, it is not unlikely that McConnell can soon figure on a year which will total around \$100,000 in bookings. Parenthetically, KITE, also in Kansas City, has garnered something like 130,000 letters in five months this year as the result of using principally hillbillies for talent.

McConnell, who would rather hear the coyote wail of a hillbilly than Lily Pons' soprano, believes that the 'billy—far from being burnt out—still has plenty of entertainment vitality. McConnell's argument is that entertainment cycles run through several decades, and that the hillbilly therefore has a long way to go before his demise is scheduled to come around.

Vaudeville had few hillbilly acts (Weaver Bros. and Elviry was an exception) so it was radio that put over the hillbilly. Radio took them out of the Kentucky cabins and cross-roads square dances and popularized them to millions of people. It was through the medium of the ether that the guitar-twangers, originally nothing but amateurs playing for their relatives and friends, were lifted from the parlor to the podium.

The classic radio hillbilly gang (the equivalents of the original Dixieland Jazz Band in the jitterbug field) were the 'Skillet Lickers' whom Lambdin Kay started on WSB, Atlanta. This aggregation was composed of Gid Tanner, Riley Puckett, Clayton McMichen, and Slim Bryant. That was 15 years ago. True to the hillbilly style of that time, this bunch specialized in the 'hoe down'—that is, they played square-dance music. There was very little, if any, singing, and the principal instruments were the fiddle, guitar and banjo. Through later radio production efforts (in part) such frills as the accordion and the girl singer were added. That's another angle that makes the hillbilly unique—he was, and in some places still is, primarily a man's organization. In Kansas, for instance, girls are not a big draw in hillbilly units. A pretty face means less than a snappy fiddle.

## Cheapness Prime Virtue

Radio started the hillbilly, of course, because he was a cheap entry on the payroll—a fact which still holds good today. To overcome this lack of pay, the nasal vocalists soon found new means of revenue. One of the earliest of these gags was selling hillbilly songbooks. The dopier 'billies would let publishers put their pix on the covers of these albums, and thus work on royalty. But the smart guys—like Asher Sizemore—printed their own. Sizemore in one classic week sold \$10,000 worth of songbooks (incredible or not his total intake in the radio business is said to be over \$1,000,000). Bradley Kincaid, another smartie, sold something like 300,000 songbooks between 1927 and 1930. Today the songbook gag is nearly dead, although periodic revivals are attempted.

As a result of this early radio boost, the hillbillies expanded in three directions: (1) Around 1930 they added fairs and similar festivals to their list of revenue-producers; (2) they began to spread their appeal to industrial (city) folks; and (3) they made phonograph records.

Today, a good hillbilly troupe of six people can draw around \$250 per day in Eastern fairs and count about half that in less populous areas. This

intake becomes so great that many stations pay the hillbilly nothing at all. In fact, some of the performers work free and additionally give the stations 15% of their p.a. receipts. The Texas cowboy, or ranger, meantime has come into existence. Frequently a better musician than the true hillbilly, he is also frequently more of a phoney. Plenty of the Texas aggregation are nothing but re-conditioned AF of M boys who were out of a job and looked okay in 10-gallon hats.

## Not Good, But Noisy

But the true hillbilly—the guy who comes from the mountains—is a rotten musician, and his basic melodies are built on fiddle music. Most of these birds can't read a score. They learned their hoe-down from square dances, and their sad songs are really nothing but corruptions of old English folk music which, when isolated in the hills, took on a bit of disguise. Nor is the hillbilly a professional in any sense of the word. He's an amateur, pure and simple. Clayton McMichen, for instance, was an auto mechanic when he got his radio break. Bradley Kincaid was a student in Berea College (and for years afterward went back to old Kaintuck to replenish his repertoire from mountain cabins). Gardner Eckler and Roland Gaines were farmers. And others were village idlers who did nothing at all but drink corn likker and crave dancing.

For this reason, most of the true hillbillies never get into any other branch of the entertainment business. Since they learned to play by ear—usually only major chords in a key requiring no more than three sharps or flats—they stay there. The audience often likes 'em corny. Too good a troupe in Kansas or Missouri would be murder at the b.o. Too poor a one in industrial areas would be ditto. A hillbilly must either make the audience laugh or cry. Anything in between is n.g.

However, between the Texas cowboy and the bookings in bigger cities, some changes have been made. New instruments are being added to hillbilly bands, the AF of M influence is seeping in, and there is even one all-girl hillbilly band with quite a name (the Coon Creek Girls). This influence is far from universal, but it is increasingly felt. Not so long ago the hoit-toity Duquesne Club in Pittsburgh put hillbillies into one of its soirees. And meantime the fiddling aggregations have largely dropped the colorful names they sported of yore—such as Skillet Lickers, Gully Jumpers, and Fruit Jar Drinkers. Gals are also beginning to show silk-encased knees over cowboy boots. But most of the new crop of hillbillies are coming from the same place as their forerunners did—off the farm, and from the pool-room or cross-roads post-office

## Radio in Every Cell

St. Paul, Jan. 1.

Warden Utecht's drive for a radio in every cell culminated successfully at Stillwater (Minnesota State) penitentiary.

So happy did widespread set installation make the cons, that in an effort to lift its esprit de corps, the state reformatory at St. Cloud followed suit although officials said they were merely making a start and would not actually have every cell equipped a la Stillwater for several months.

Utecht has maintained that convicts have it tough enough without having to be deprived of radio fare. Several Stillwater lifers had never heard a radio set before last week—and resultant publicity in Minnesota metropolitan newspapers won't do the warden's scrapbook a bit of harm.

bench. A lot of 'em are joining the union, though in special pay-scale classes.

Jimmie McConnell's nomination for the leading hillbilly specialists of the current day—the so-called stars in the field—would include:

Bradley Kincaid, Hoosier Hotshots, Texas Rangers (now in Hollywood), Lulu Belle and Scotty, Louise Massey and Westerners, Asher Sizemore and Little Jimmy, Pappy Cheshire, Carson Robison Buckaroos, Girls of the Golden West, Red Foley, Arkansas Woodchopper, Mack and Bob (blind), Clayton McMichen, the Ranch Boys, Tex Owen, Zeke Manners and Hiram Higsby.

Meantime in certain sections of the U. S., the total radio volume of hillbilly fare is actually growing. For as new stations get started, they are apt to specialize in 'billies' to get a quick mail count.

## Miss Blackett Debuts To Glenn Miller's Music

Chicago, Jan. 1.

Hill Blackett, of the firm of Blackett-Sample-Hummert, Thursday (28) imported the Glenn Miller orchestra from New York to supply dansapation at the Blackstone hotel for the debut of his daughter, Patricia.

Miller almost failed to make it, due to faulty train connections.

Maestro, incidentally, is sponsored by a competitive agency's (Newell-Emmett) account.

## Phi Beta No Handicap

San Francisco, Jan. 1.

All this talk of radio and the 12-year-old mentality falls on deaf ears at KFRC. Station has hired two members of the intellectual fraternity, Phi Beta Kappa.

Announcer Mark Goodson and Melba Toombs, writer-actress, are the thinkers.

# Radio, Patriotism and Henry Ford

## Station Ideas

### WOL's Double or Nothing

Washington.

Two-way plan to add to listener interest c. WOL and pack 'em in at a local theatre debuts this week with the 'Double or Nothing' quiz program.

Contestants will be interviewed in the audience by Walter Compton, MBS announcer, who offers \$1 for the correct answer to each question. If the contestant can provide additional information on the subject he gets extra dollars for each bit of info.

Novel part of the show is the appeal to the gambling instinct of the interviewee. At the conclusion of the one minute period during which he is allowed to supply all the facts at his command, Compton will dare him to a second question—'double or nothing.' Smarties can double their winnings by a right answer, or lose all. Cautious winners can accept money already won and pass up the chance to increase their take.

Deal was arranged between Loew's Capitol theatre and the Washington MBS outlet. Sponsor for the program—a weekly—will be sought as soon as pulling-power of the program has been checked.

### Liven Up Station Breaks

Washington.

Fed up with monotonous drone at station breaks, Bill Dolph, manager of WOL, has put them to music. With several discs to choose from, stand-by announcers now let the dialers know what station they're hearing with either a four-verse ditty or a football cheer.

Local listeners still haven't recovered from the shock.

### Happy Club for Kids

Fort Wayne.

WOWO has formed a new 'Happy Club' for children. Idea is to aid in keeping the kiddies clean and to develop such habits as regular hair combing, tooth brushing, etc. Jay Gould, 'The Old Songsmith,' is sponsor of the club. Program heard week-day mornings before kids leave for school. In few weeks in existence show is already drawing more than 200 new memberships weekly. Clubs have been formed in 25 smaller towns in area. Kids get official membership card, a daily habits chart and a club song sheet.

### Hunting and Fishing Club

Philadelphia.

Lambert Beeuwkes (cq), sales promotion manager of KYW, has mailed 2,500 compasses to sportsmen in 262 towns in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia.

Part of buildup for the station's hunting and fishing club.

By EDWARD SMITH

The United States has been developing an acute patriotism during 1939. This quickly reflected itself in radio programs. The trend was, in fact, fed and led in some measure by radio. Kate Smith's frequent singing of 'God Bless America' with much feeling and nation-wide reaction was symptomatic of the new trend.

Most prominent change occurred with the Ford Hour which went American with such a vengeance that it provoked strong—if private—grumblings from world-famous musical artists who, although of American nationality as insisted by Henry Ford, had no inclination to identify themselves with the village singing bee type of musical selections regularly handed them since Hitler invaded Poland and anything European became verboten.

One Metropolitan opera singer has been drawing 'Coming Through the Rye' and 'Home, Sweet Home' so much she is reported alarmed that it may affect her professional prestige. All suggestions made to the auspices of arias and semi-bravura stuff have been politely ignored.

Artists take position patriotism and good music ought not to be antagonistic. Unbalanced programs are feared as a blow at the artist.

Another artist on the Ford series, a tenor, was joshed by his musical associates when the aria 'La Donna e Mobile' from 'Rigoletto' which sounded swell in Italian as 'La Donna e mobile, qual piu mal vento, muta d'accento, e di pensiero' was whacky in English as 'Woman is fickle, light as a feather borne on the breezes, as in fair weather.'

## Deliberately Second Rate

While the salaries remain as high as they do, it is not likely that the squawk will be carried to the point of dropping the program. However the singers hope somebody may tell the sponsor American audiences are not so backward musically that they cannot appreciate and desire the same music which fills the concert halls of these singers or instrumentalists every time they make a public appearance.

A case in point was Marian Anderson who guested on the Ford hour Dec. 24, with Fritz Reiner conducting the symphony orchestra. Not for nothing is this Negro femme a topper on the concert lists. Rich, full contralto voice, pure and colorful tone and emotional depth are hers. But as is usual with the Ford series, it was a case of a great talent presented at its commonest common denominator. A spiritual, 'Mary, Where's Yo Babe?' sung without accompaniment, was impressive and stirring, but the rest of the selections she was given to sing could have been handled by almost any proficient vocalist. The Ford hour is thus at the moment probably the outstanding example in radio of a wealth of artistry habitually squandered on deliberately second-rate material.

## Connecticut Radioites Move

Waterbury, Conn., Jan. 1.

Harry DeVorken dispatched by WBRY to commercial managership of New Haven substation, replacing Ralph Gottlieb, who's gone to WGBI, Scranton, Pa. Ted Huston, announcer, has shifted from WBRY to WMAS, Springfield, Mass., to take place of Stuart Wayne, another former WBRY player who's switched to WTHH, Hartford.

Edith Sacco, sister of Tony Sacco the composer, has joined WATR as staff pianist. Truman Craine has shifted from WNBC, New Britain, Hartford, to WMAS engineering department. WNBC's hired Bill Murrough, formerly of WMCA, as well as announcer Harry Robator, ex-WMAS.

## WFAA, WQAM Bonus

Dallas, Jan. 1.

All staff members of station WFAA got a Christmas bonus check. One week's salary.

## Ditto WQAM, Miami

Miami, Jan. 1.

Cash bonuses, amount undisclosed, were distributed at station WQAM by F. W. Borton and W. W. Luce, the toppers.

An optimistic note for 1940 was also sounded with the statement that if business keeps up the bonus next Christmas will be larger.

# Radio's New Talent—Wherefrom?

By Joe Schoenfeld

has been inserted in the fountain of new radio talent.

## 'Same Old Faces'

A VARIETY story last summer stated that the 'same old faces' were coming back on the air for commercial radio in the fall. These naturally included Jack Benny, Edgar Bergen, Bob Hope, Fibber McGee and Molly, Burns and Allen, Fred Allen, Al Pearce, Joe Penner and Tommy Riggs. They are radio's top comedy names, which should more forcibly bring home to radio the importance of the variety shows in bringing out new clicko air personalities. Five of these nine names—Hope, Bergen, Burns and Allen, Penner and Riggs—all came into radio via guest shots on Rudy Vallee's program.

It's also notable that one of the current top names in radio, Alec Templeton, skyrocketed from guest appearances on Bing Crosby's Kraft Music Hall. Latter, incidentally, is now virtually the only program on the air using guest performers, but even here the practice has been curtailed.

The showcasing and development of new radio talent received its severest blow with the demise of Vallee's one-hour show for Standard Brands after 10 years' highlighting of new personalities. The switch in the routine of Kate Smith's program, from guests to set personalities and the Group Theatre players, also will be felt. Miss Smith is probably most identified with bringing Abbott and Costello, former burlesque comedy

team, into radio prominence. She also gave Henny Youngman, comic, a strong buildup, but this didn't take concrete form.

## Exit, More Guest Shows

Another personality identified with building up talent is Eddie Cantor; but he, like Vallee, is now off the air. Cantor played up Deanna Durbin and brought out Bobby Breen, both now in films. The former is one of pictures' top b.o. names.

Besides the fact that the passing of the guest-shot programs will hamper the discovery of radio talent, it also means the loss of a lucrative field for actors and agents alike. The Vallee and Kate Smith programs weren't hard to crack by vaudeville, legit and screen talent, with such bookings paying from \$500 to as high as \$1,500 and more per appearance. Lou Holtz's run on the Vallee program in its closing months, at \$1,000 per week, is an example of the income these shows afforded. Carman Miranda, current in 'Streets of Paris,' at the Broadhurst, N. Y., likewise received \$1,000 weekly from Standard Brands for several weeks. Her salary in the show is \$500 for eight shows weekly; the radio salary was for one show weekly.

The past season indicated further the sponsors' trend towards gimmicks and audience-participation programs. They're cheaper and their popularity hasn't appreciably dimmed—they also perhaps run a more uniform course in the way of entertainment—but when this cycle passes, what next? The same old faces?



## Midway Sucker Psychology Behind Radio Coin Come-On

By Dan Goldberg

Chicago, Jan. 1. Money for listening, money for having a telephone, money for knowing facts, money for just being there, money, money, money—and no thought of entertainment.

Agencies and advertisers group around conference tables to seek out new and fancier means and methods of getting greenbacks, checks and silver into the hands of an apparently willing public. Shunted aside are other program considerations, such as having the people listen because they like entertainment.

This is a real and vital threat to the talent upon whom the entire radio industry has been built. The slickers figure it this way: Why should a sponsor pay \$5,000 for a show and try to win an audience? Better to give away \$1,000 and attempt to 'force' an audience by the sheer power of cash giveaways. Many advertisers reason strictly along those lines at present, and other advertisers are willing to kid themselves that cash awards answer all their radio advertising problems.

Talent is becoming secondary in importance and is being added to programs merely as an appendage. The first point is how money is to be given away, and how much? After that, the question of performers and entertainment is discussed.

It becomes evident among agencies that should the trend continue, entire shows will be devoted to the process of dealing out money at random, with the show reduced to an announcer for the giveaways and plugs and perhaps a small musical ensemble to fill out the wait or maybe an organist. What then is the need for comedians, singers, writers, producers, directors, musical conductors, orchestras? Spin a wheel, give away cash. Wonderful! And so simple.

But the wiser radio men see in this trend a real danger, not only to talent (for whom they have no real compassion), but to the radio industry. For should the trend continue large masses of the public may be alienated, and it will not be the sponsor who will be blamed by the public, but radio itself, for the public doesn't separate the station from the advertiser.

### Sour-grapes Psychology

For every winner, there are thousands of losers, and losers never again feel the same towards the institution or person who designated them as the loser. The wise radio men realize that in a spin-a-wheel game, for instance, the chances against any one listener is up in the astronomical figures, and they feel that it is poor policy for the radio industry to permit a program set-up which gives a huge money prize to one listener and makes losers out of other millions of people. Eventually, the reaction must be against the radio station and radio as the losers begin to raise the old cry of 'fake,' whether or not there is any fake, or even if the listeners don't actually believe there is any faking.

In the background, also, the radio men see the spectre of the Federal Communications Commission, the Federal Trade Commission, and even the Department of Justice. Admitted and agreed that the give-aways are carefully checked and scrutinized to see that they come clearly within the rights and privileges defined by national and state laws, but in spite of the careful conning by lawyers, these games still are believed to hold a quantity of dynamite should any of the federal or state authorities care to start a rumpus or decide to make an issue of the give-away situation.

Whether or not there is any actual infraction of the rules or laws is beside the immediate point. The immediate point is that the radio men see in these give-aways a front which is open to attack at any time, if not by the federal or state authorities, then by groups of citizens. And radio men cannot feel the ultimate wisdom in leaving their business and their livelihood open to such attack.

### Theatre Men Found Out

Theatre men learned the sad story of money give-aways, and are learning the bitter lesson of any kind of give-away at present. Racketeers and authorities made it hell for the exhibitors when the money give-aways became an important part of the theatre policy. Rapidly the theatres were knocked off, and after a

long session of squalls and headaches the theatres backed away (or were driven away) from giving money to their customers as an inducement to buy a ticket.

Pictures became secondary; the producers on the Coast felt their lessening of importance and reduced the quality of their product. People who wanted to gamble on the give-away purchased tickets and didn't even bother to stay for the show. Business was all right for awhile, but just on the money gift nights. On the other days attendance was brutal. When outside forces began compelling the theatres to stop money gifts and return to just pictures, the exhibitors found themselves at a loss, with a poor grade of pictures and a forgotten sense of how to sell those pictures. There were months of torture for the exhibitors. But eventually, the theatres managed to return to their former policy of running theatres for entertainment and not as gambling joints, and the theatres are showing a steady readjustment in audience following and a steady climb in grosses based upon an entertainment policy and not a get-rich-quick gimmick for the public.

The smarter radio men are convinced that the ultimate goal of the radio industry must always be the delivery of entertainment to the listening public if the radio industry wants to continue its real hold on the consciousness of the public and keep away from danger zones of official or non-official enmity. Money as a lure for listening must remain only as a gaff or gimmick such as has been used for years by carnival and side-show operators. It is a fleece-the-sucker attitude on part of the carney owner, and money as a strict give-away must remain in that category whether it be used on fairgrounds, theatre or radio.

### WBTM-WLVA Hookup

Danville, Va., Jan. 1. WBTM, Danville, and WLVA, Lynchburg, have linked themselves into a 'Bi-City Group,' with the lines going in today (1). The two central Virginia outlets will exchange programs for a period of four hours a day. A newly organized special events department will provide material to supplement the inter-feeding of each other's transcription services. Phonograph records are being dropped altogether. WBTM's managerial control was recently acquired by the Lynchburg Broadcasting Corp., which owns WLVA.



Season's Greetings  
**ROY SHIELD**

Musical Director, Chicago Division,  
N. B. C.

## Author Paces Gulf Stars In Homes

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Charles Taswell, who scripts the Tom Mix programs originating out of Chicago and also works on the Gulf-Screen Guild show, does his writing at his home in Hollywood. Before becoming a writer-director he was an actor and is still regarded as a versatile mike performer, although he rarely broadcasts nowadays.

As an economy move to eliminate the lengthy preliminary rehearsals, Taswell frequently takes his script around to the various stars who are to appear on the Gulf-Guild show. He has a couple of informal readings with each, taking all the other parts himself, including femmes, children, character roles and dialects, etc. He thus permits the name players to familiarize themselves with the script and spot any holes, but some of his readings are said to panic the stars.

### Stinson Quits Ayer

Philadelphia, Jan. 1.

Robert W. S. Stinson has resigned from N. W. Ayer & Son, Inc., ad agency, to become assistant to Robert M. Fuoss, Saturday Evening Post promotion head.

Stinson was in charge of the Atlantic Refining Co.'s football and baseball promotion.

## Radio Writing on Spec, Author Credits On Air (or in Trade) Future Issues

By Hobe Morrison

The subject of radio script writing on speculation, raised recently by the Hollywood chapter of the Radio Writers Guild, is only one of the ultimate major objectives of the national organization. Since the matter has been officially brought up by resolution of the Hollywood end, it will probably be considered by the Guild as a whole, but actually it constitutes only a single phase as one of six major points in the union's program.

These points include:

Standard minimum contracts for the lease of different kinds of material for different uses.

Improved prices.

Nationwide closed Writer Guild shop in stations.

Closed Writer Guild shop in the advertising agencies, writer credits.

Legislative changes (as to copy-right, etc.).

It's emphasized by council members that the above is merely the list of ultimate hopes and that all the points enumerated are subject to concession and delay.

Question of speculative writing is figured to come under the more comprehensive classification of standard minimum contracts. Although it's conceded that RWG members might be barred from writing solicited scripts on spec, it's not regarded as either practical or even desirable to prevent members from presenting

their own unsolicited program ideas on a speculative basis.

Whole question of radio writer contracts is extremely complicated, since no two situations or deals are ever exactly alike. There are countless different agency or network situations as well as innumerable writing or staff conditions. Geographical factors are involved and conditions are obviously much different for staff or salaried writers as compared to free-lancers. Radio industry is still relatively new and many unprecedented situations are constantly arising. Guild takes the attitude that with many previously unconsidered problems to be solved, the entire situation must be one of give and take by all groups involved. For instance, Guild leaders explain, the advertising agencies and sponsors are still unfamiliar with show business as such and haven't yet lost their natural feeling of mistrust.

As an instance of how an issue may be satisfactorily adjusted by mutual concessions, members of the RWG council point out that their goal of obtaining writer credits doesn't anticipate any unreasonable demands. Credit in the trade and occasional billing via the air would in many cases be sufficient. Similarly, all the Guild's proposals would be open to reasonable consideration and adjustment. Guild is intentionally moving slowly, it's stated, trying to solve its problems

## STAND BY FOR FLASH

By G. W. Johnstone

(Director of Public Relations and Special Events, Station WOR, New York)

Under the heading 'special events' radio stations loosely catalog almost anything from a political banquet with too many speeches to an announcer with a funny-looking silk hat on Fifth Avenue Easter morning. Unfortunately stunts sometimes are remembered longer than the solid accomplishments of bringing to the public the actual pulse-beat of that feverish patient, the world we live in. Stunts are deservedly being kidded into a constantly lessening importance. And 1939 with the sheer dramatic excitement of a war in the making and the breaking was not likely to encourage many. Special eventsmen were, quite frankly, too busy keeping their eye on the news-tape to send anybody to interview a flagpole-sitter.

### 23% Increase

Probably WOR is more than ordinarily active in special events and it is significant, as a commentary on 1939, that our records show a 23% increase in such activity. More than 1,005 spot news, talk and special feature programs have been broadcast this year against a 1938 count of 720 and some 522 like programs in 1937. This tally does not include other originations for Mutual han-

dled at and by WOR. The place of the special event in station programming under modern, metropolitan operation is, to say the least, prominent.

Besides the war with its many problems of discretion and its many difficulties in getting the news or arranging time-worthy specials 1939 had visiting British Royalty to cope with, the Congressional debate on neutrality, the death of one and the election of another pope, the Squallus submarine disaster, the crash of the Bermuda-bound Cavalier, and John S. Young.

WOR shared with the Mutual network the benefit and prestige of having Raymond Gram Swing, recently listed by VARIETY as preeminent among the commentators to achieve major attention during 1939. It was a great comfort, and no kidding, to have that gent as an ally against the terrific competitive bombardment of August and September. It was reassuring, also, to have Fulton Lewis, Jr., pitching for us in Washington, John Steele in London, Waverly Root in Paris and Pat Maitland in Warsaw.

All of us naturally hope for scoops and WOR in 1939 could crow about some touchdowns. But scoops are not valuable simply for the sport; they are part of the steady week-by-week and year-by-year campaign of a station—any station—to operate in the public interest and to make its personality stand out in the confusion of many call letters and the public's well-known tendencies to be vague.

Another year like 1939 and myself, Dave Driscoll and Alvin Josephy will be eligible as ballet dancers from having to be on our toes so much.

## Prevention of Political Time-Chiseling Causes 1st All-Conn. Confab

Hartford, Jan. 1.

For the first time in the history of Connecticut radio, representatives of all stations in the state met Wednesday (27) at the Hotel Bond and round-tabled their problems, chiefly anent the method of dealing with the forthcoming open season for politicians. Paul Morency, WTIC g.m., arranged the get-together.

Big problem in connection with Connecticut politico airings is that candidates don't have to declare their intentions of running until late summer. That gives 'em eight months in which they can theoretically get free time under all sorts of guises. Station managers want to abolish this situation, and expect that, after March, politicians who may be candidates in fall must pay for time unless broadcasting on out-and-out 'public interest' stanzas. Broadcasters are thinking about getting together with recognized political parties to straighten this matter out. Meantime, a resolutions committee, headed by Cedric Foster, WHT manager, is going to delve into the problem.

Political season in Connecticut is expected to be big, inasmuch as both national and state elections are to be held. Understood that broadcasters in Rhode Island and Massachusetts already have set a deadline, after which politicians must pay for time.

### Zeke Manners Sues

To Retain Baker

Leo (Zeke) Manners filed suit Thursday (28) in the N. Y. supreme court against Elton Britt Baker and WNEW Booking Office, Inc., charging breach of contract. Manners asserts he is a theatrical manager and producer of hillbilly acts for radio and the theatre. On September 6, 1939, the defendant engaged him as manager for three years, and he in turn guaranteed 39 weeks' employment yearly at \$50 weekly.

October 9, says the suit, the defendant breached the contract and signed with WNEW Booking Office. It is asserted by Manners that the defendant's talents are unique and hard to replace in his gang. An injunction to prevent Britt from working for anyone but himself, and damages is sought.

KFUO, the only non-commercial station in St. Louis, celebrated its 15th anniversary with a Bible Sunday rally at Municipal Auditorium.



# Special Song Material Extinct

By Ben Bodec

The use of special song material in radio becomes more rare as the medium grows older. The disinclination among vocalists and band leaders to act on their own tastes or take a chance on something that the other fellow isn't using amounts almost to a phobia. Their choice of numbers is dictated solely by either of two things: (1) the tune has top or close to top rating on the 'most played' list, or (2) the publisher has promised to make it his No. 1 plug. To the mike vocalist or dance maestro rugged individualism is something that helped the Republicans bag Maine and Vermont in the 1936 presidential election.

Some publishers like to recall the days when in going over their current releases they could remark that such-and-such a number would be a natural for such-and-such a vaudeville performer. It was the day when entertainers took a pride in their specialty or strove to identify themselves with a distinct type of material. In those days even the headliners were regular visitors around publishing houses, intent on finding material which by its novelty and departure from the current June-and-moon norm would brighten and heighten their individual repertoires.

Today there aren't more than two or three band leaders that make a practice of seeking out the different. As for radio vocalists, publishers queried have tried to think of even one, and failed. The general run of leader and vocalist knows only what his favorite publishers' contactmen tell him, or what he notes on the 'most played' list. He has heard that this is the age of the machine, that to be popular one must conform and that it pays to let somebody else do all the experimenting or pioneering. All this he accepts as gospel, with the result that the number of singers that mean anything to listeners grow less every year and the roster of real personality bands continues to become more and more restrictive.

## No Selectivity

Occasionally someone becomes identified with a particular novelty tune and rises to national attention, but it isn't long before this same vocalist succumbs to the pressure of the boys with their No. 1 plug and his or her repertoire becomes as select or exclusive as the noon rush at Lindy's. This vocalist is soon picking 'em from among the first 10 'most played'. The individual style that originally caught the listener's fancy is in time lost within this hodge-podge of run-of-the-mill material and the singer fades into the limbo of the has-beens. A clinical case in point that may be quickly identified is a girl who was brought

into New York from Pennsylvania just a couple of years ago. She made a novelty tune and the novelty tune made her and she was aced in practically every medium of entertainment until she and her pilots decided that her fame was strong enough to de-individualize her material.

Publishers say that the only way they can now get a novelty tune started is by placing it with a phonograph recorder and that leaders, with but two or three exceptions, are loath to perform this type of number over the air until it has clicked with the disc trade. That has become the well-worn, and accepted, route of the novelty song, from the coin-operated machine to radio. The average leader doesn't record the novelty number because of predilection. He does it either at the persuasion or at the insistence of the recording manager. If the thing clicks the leader is out taking the bows as the song's discoverer; if it goes the other way, the task of the recorder the next time is so much the harder. The one outstanding exception in this particular line is Horace Heidt. In the past several years he's been identified with more click novelty tunes than any other leader. Another diligent digger is Orrin Tucker, whose reward has come with the success of 'Oh, Johnny, Oh.'

## Dispute Radio Alibi

The cry of some band leaders that radio discourages them from dipping into special material is ridiculed by the program heads of the networks. These executives retort that such statements can only go with a twisted point of view. The novelty number will always be acceptable so long as it does not offend good taste. The network men look upon the censorship excuse as a glib out for taking the line of least resistance. The development of special material is a slow process and requires not only patience but a talent which is several notches above the ordinary. It is much easier to follow the rut made by others and trust that luck will do the rest. As the network execs see it, the band leader or vocalist that stands the greatest chance of success is he that caters more to the public and less to the publisher's No. 1 plug.

In almost every article and interview that was published from Artie Shaw's point of view during the past year he hopped on music publishers for continually hounding him to play current pops. Shaw took the stand that he played music that he liked, taking delight in reviving tunes such as 'Begin the Beguine,' 'Indian Love Call' and others. They helped make him originally.

Latest vogue, of course, is the 'Oh, Johnny' cycle of digging up the oldies.

## SPONSOR ORIGINS

	New Holly- Chi- York wood cage
Columbia ....	46 16 13
NBC-Red ....	35 12 24
NBC-Blue ...	24 3 8

# RADIO GANG IN CONGRESS' DIARY

Washington, Jan. 1.

Charter members of the new radio fraternity whose names will be inscribed in the forthcoming issue of the Congressional Directory will include 21 staff representatives of the three networks, nine toilers for Transradio Press and one each for the Yankee Network, WQXR, New York, and WMAL, 'The Evening Star Station' (NBC).

Scoring a major victory over newspaper scribes who have preened themselves for decades over being listed with senators, house members, high-up administration politicians and other big-wigs in the Washington 'bible,' radio commentators, publicity experts and other broadcasting employees whose work brings them in contact with national news and politics will have their own section in the next issue of the directory.

Inclusion in the directory marks final triumph of a campaign begun last year when Fulton Lewis, Jr., of Mutual, led the fight for a radio niche in the house and senate galleries. Although barred from the sacred precincts where the press has its separate facilities, radio spielers managed to set up their own press rooms, wrangled space in the public galleries for a 'radio gallery' and later won admission to important press conferences in the nation's capital.

Newly-emancipated fifth-estates—who now hob-nob with President Roosevelt in their own right, and cover news which formerly was restricted to accredited press correspondents—include:

For CBS: Albert L. Warner; John Charles Daly, Jr.; Albert Dennis; Ann Gillis; James W. Hurlbut; Stanton Rust Prentiss, and William J. Slocum, Jr.

For NBC: W. R. McAndrew; Charles C. Barry; H. R. Baukhage; Marian P. Gale; E. L. Haaker; Thomas E. Knode; Mary Mason; Fred Shawn, and Carleton D. Smith.

For Mutual: Fulton Lewis, Jr.; Frank S. Blair, Jr.; Walter Compton; Madeline Ensign Cronan; Stephen J. McCormack.

For Transradio Press Service: Rex Goad; Fred W. Morrison; Gertrude V. Chestnut; Robert E. Lee Moore; Clifford G. McCarthy; Theodore Perry Noun; Wilnot Ragsdale; Macon Reed, Jr., and Frederic B. Tuttle.

For WMAL and the Evening Star: William Enders Coyle.

Dorothy C. Rockwell will represent WQXR, with Francis W. Tully battling for Yankee Network.

## Radio Charity Drive Over Top in D. C.

Washington, Jan. 1.

Banner year reported by all local stations in the annual Christmas charity drives, with records doubled in most instances and shoes, toys and clothing provided for the city's needy.

Collaborating with Washington newspapers, CBS, NBC and Mutual outlets supplied local hospitals, schools and sanitariums with an overflow of gifts. Original goal of WJSV for \$5,000 with which to furnish shoes for youngsters was boosted to \$7,750 with checks and cash still coming in. Annual 'doll house' drive, conducted by Gordon Hittenmark, WRC-WMAL, resulted in a haul of 50,000 dolls and toys—more than twice the amount received last year. New toys numbering 1,950, plus \$1,275 in cash, were collected by WOL.

## AGENCY CHANGES NAME

Albany N. Y., Jan. 1.

Hughes, Wolff & Co., Inc., Rochester advertising agency, has changed its name to F. A. Hughes Co., Inc., according to papers filed with the Secretary of State in Albany.

Frederick A. Hughes was president, treasurer and radio director of the old company.

# Film Studio Slants On Radio

By Jack Hellman

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

The World's best collection of headlines - that - didn't - happen embalms the story, as developed since 1936, of the film studios' no-traffic attitude toward radio programs, the great rival for public affection. Who remembers now the last ditch proclamations of the studio officials? Not them. Who sent wires of protest to the distributors way back when the subject was argued with much heat and few facts? Surely not the same exhibs that now make tie-up with station WAWA? Yeah, the same. There has seldom been such a farcial disparity between the things people said about a competitor and the deals the same people made with that competitor. The film biz was, and is, a sucker for any radio publicity tie-up. Radio may keep people at home in droves but what a chance to tell them about the picture they should see next week—maybe!

Here's the way they figure out here. They take one clean tablecloth at the Brown Derby. They write down in large block type:

10,000,000!!!

Even in Hollywood three!!! after a figure like that is considered good form. After writing that down somebody says:

'This is the audience of the Soandso program.'

'How do you know?' says somebody.

'C.A.B.' is the knowing reply.

'Oh,' says the dope who asked the question.

The implication is that if Superfluos can get its next release excerpted and dramatized on the Soandso program the picture will have plenty of prestige behind it. What a picture needs is plenty of prestige. They used to talk about a good rousing exploitation stunt, they used to do fancy things with lobby displays and electric signs and black and white advertising. But that was before prestige, before radio.

Radio trailers are liked, but severely cut down. On this score the doubters are as many as the affirmers. Studio heads still insist that the old 'Hollywood Hotel' formula or air-previewing carries the more potent sock but exhibitors are equally insistent that the sock is not for them. They argue it not only tipped the story but competed against current attractions.

Then there's the viewpoint that young and up-and-coming players, for which exhibs constantly cry, are given valuable aid in winning public recognition via the loud speakers. Other benefits also were derived for the theatre but radio had to take the blame for most of the ills of a new order. Indicative of a recent trend away from too much radio, Metro yanked its studio show from the air, several other front offices made their players hard to get. But just to make things confusing, Kate Smith came

here from New York (incidentals to the round trip and production budget mounted to around \$12,000). 'Twas part of a ballyhoo for 'Drums Along the Mohawk' and Darryl Zanuck of Fox jubilantly hailed radio for the great job it had done. So the love affair was on again.

The arithmetic went on. It was said that \$12,000 bought Zanuck a ready-made audience of some 15,000,000 persons. More C.A.B. A lot of circulation for theatre operators. The masses. Potential theatre-goers. Or so assumed. Cheap advertising for \$12,000. Zanuck will do it again.

Utilization of radio by other plants has varied from the Zanuck formula. Where he has gone out and bought exclusive rights to an event such as the Kentucky Derby to exploit one of his pictures the others have been content with more conventional ways. Metro prefers the transcription method; Paramount likes the out-of-town preview as the ether come-on; Warners and RKO set great store by picture and personality credits on programs displaying their arts or artists. The others haphazardly climb aboard the bandwagon.

Radio has always done a job for pictures and is welcome to hang around. But once its usefulness as an exploitation adjunct peters out it will be shunned like a plague.

# VOICE OF TIME CASE WON BY LUCE ORG.

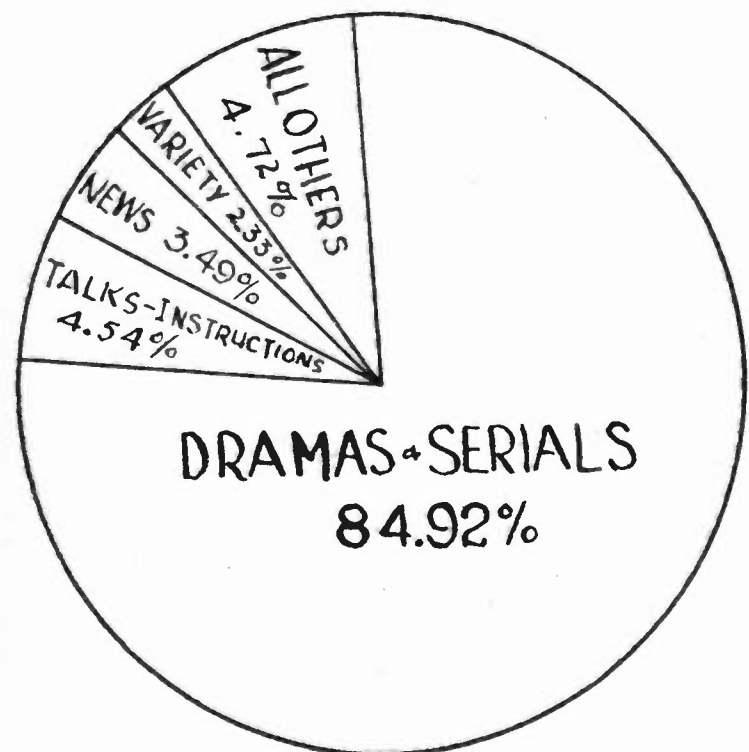
Federal Judge Clarence Galston in N. Y. Wednesday (27) issued a permanent injunction in favor of Time, Inc., against Anshel Barshay, doing business as 'The Voice of Time,' and ordered an accounting for profits, damages and costs. Carl P. Goepel was appointed special master to determine damages.

Barshay was found guilty of unfair trading on the plaintiff's good will and reputation, and misleading the public into believing his radio program was associated with that of Time's. Barshay sold phonograph records on re-broadcast famous speeches over the air since December, 1936. Trial of the action took place in April, 1939.

In finding for Time, Judge Galston declared that the plaintiff had spent \$4,150,000 from 1922 to date in publicizing its name and reputation.

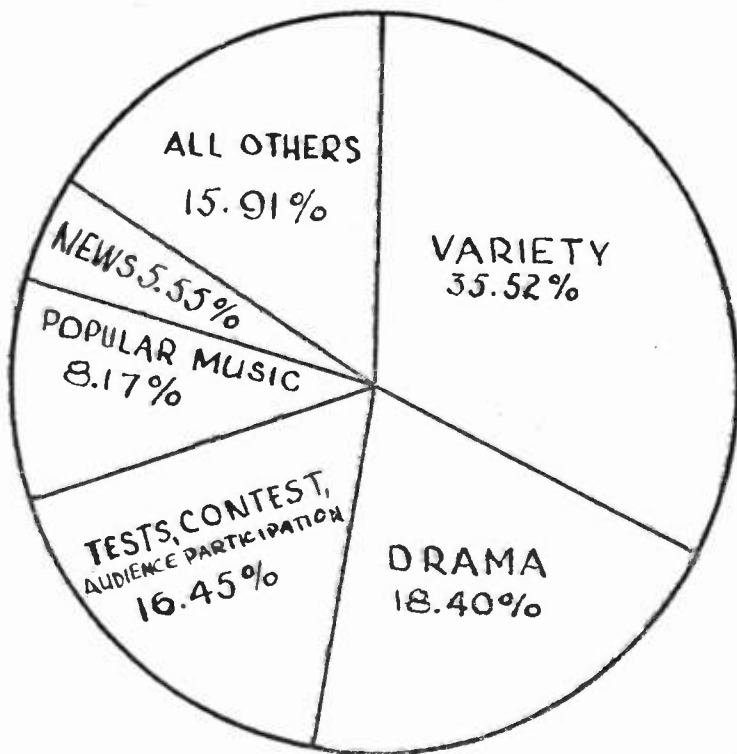
Jack Selon has become an announcer for WSPD, Toledo. Formerly with WFIL, Philadelphia.

## The Unbalanced Daytime



(This chart reveals at a glance the preponderance of serials—the soapy kind—in the daylight hours. During 1939 it was said the stations belonged to Sterling Products before luncheon and to Procter & Gamble after luncheon. There was a lot of talk about this being an unhealthy radio diet, but nothing was done about it. Unbalanced or not, too few persons were enough concerned to change the story.)

## The Harmonious Nighttime



(In contrast to the unbalance of the morning-afternoon stretch, the network program schedule after dark is varied and in accord with commonly accepted notions of arranging entertainment to prevent any one type of turn from over-prominence. Such a chart as this would make sense to an old-time vaudeville booker, even if he knew nothing of radio.)



# A Neville Miller for Canada?

Winnipeg, Jan. 1.

By Norman Chamberlin

In the next few weeks the private commercial broadcasters will gather in Toronto for the annual convention of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters. At that time it is possible a paid president for the association may be authorized and hired in obvious emulation of the American broadcasters who made Neville Miller their trouble-shooter. The Canadian equivalent, if and when materializing, will face problems of much complexity, problems peculiar to Canada and the interplay among the titans in this Dominion.

A paid president would have to be man enough to trade even with Gladstone Murray, general manager of the Canadian Broadcasting Corp., which has a government status recently strengthened by the protection of 'war conditions.' Murray has long been regarded by many as opposed to private radio operation in principle (but others decry this interpretation of his attitude). Some Canadian stations have affiliate contracts with CBC on terms far more advantageous to the local broadcaster than the terms granted affiliates by either NBC or CBS in the states. These stations are, therefore, inclined to be more amiable toward Murray than some of those who have no link to CBC but must shift for themselves under conditions controlled, in part, by CBC.

Probably some lawyer who will be allowed to continue his practice on the side will get the job-to-be, if the decision is made to go through with it. A nominal salary, between \$5,000-\$10,000 per annum, is interpreted as the probable fee the association could afford. But time will divulge the facts. Right now this is all guesswork.

Historically, the big event in Canadian radio during 1939 was the visit to the Dominion of King George and Queen Elizabeth. It also proved, from the standpoint of those whose jobs it was to handle programs, the biggest headache, historically.

## Went Off Smoothly

That it all went off without misadventure is a tribute to the engineers, announcers, program directors and others who were involved in arranging the special and extensive set-ups required to handle the job. Previous extensive hook-ups utilized in this country had only been for one-time shots such as the annual Empire Christmas broadcasts. The Royal Visit, on the other hand, required that the fever pitch, set at the start among radio men, be maintained throughout practically a whole month, the field of operations extending from coast to coast.

Whole thing became ensnared in the red tape of protocol long before it even got under way. Those assigned to the task of covering the event had copies of the tour regulations handed to them with orders to learn 'em thoroughly. Announcers, used throughout the tour, were taken to Toronto for a more thorough grilling on the subject in order that no slips would occur. What had the broadcasters miffed was the long string of 'thou shalt nots' imposed, this implying a lack of trust in their discretion and judgment. Canadian mikemen, like Americans, had long enjoyed practically free rein in all ordinary matters. Toughest to deal with were the small potato officials and cops in the hamlets who had regulationitis and went strictly by the books right down to the finest detail, such as whether a person could cross a certain street at a certain time.

When the royal tour was first being organized it looked as though private broadcasters were going to get the complete shut-out as far as covering the event was concerned. However, long and loud hollering on their part got them a slice of the Royal pie, restricted to the local scene. The government-owned Canadian Broadcasting Corp. handled network matters. As a result of their efficiency both private stations and network came in for plaudits from press and public.

## Lots of Stunts

Canada also went in heavily during 1939 for special events, stunts, outdoor remotes. Broadcasts began popping from all directions until a citizen couldn't be sure he wouldn't have a mike shoved in his face as he was attacking the soup course with the question, 'How do you like Whosis soup?' followed by a double-barrel commercial blast. It seemed Canada had either become 'audience' conscious overnight or was like a kid with a toy that had been kicking around for some time that had suddenly come into prominence.

The past year can also be chalked off as one during which private

operators learned plenty. One thing is that the government-owned network is not immune to legal suits as the CKGW-CBC Toronto case, which had been pretty well mauled around for over a year and isn't settled yet, finally brought to light. CBC felt they were immune from all such legal entanglements, claiming they could not be sued, being an emanation of the Crown. However, the Canadian Court of Appeals held an opposing view and ordered the CBC to be prepared to defend itself. (Case involves CBC and Gooderham & Worts, owners of the now defunct CKGW, Toronto. Distiller claimed \$250,000 for an alleged breach of contract by CBC.)

Through their reported naive trust and inability to act quickly due to a disunity, private broadcasters lost their rights to barter in the open market for sale of time, as a group, when the CBC imposed a control on all network broadcasting. This caught the commercials where it hurts most.

## CBC Very Cheery

CBC answered grumblings by stating that in the end things would work out to the benefit of all, indicating several cases where private stations are carrying network commercials and have managed to sell time on either side of the said commercials purely on the pulling strength of the sandwich filling. CBC argues that without the hefty network commercial spotting stations would never be able to unload the surrounding time on any advertiser. They also point to their promise to limit CBC commercial revenue to approximately \$500,000 net per annum and hinted a second network with all excess revenue going to this secondary network, which, it would logically appear, can only be made up from the private stations. Private broadcasters are still inclined to be a little dubious.

The CBC added a couple of 50-kw

wave tossers to its chain, thus bringing the total to ten stations of various sizes for the Dominion. These are CBA, in the Maritimes, at Sackville, New Brunswick; and CBK, for the Prairie region, at Watrous, Saskatchewan. They were necessary to the CBC plan for national coverage, although private broadcasters, taking the gloomier outlook, viewed them as still another peg in their coffin.

Country's biggest uproar of the year was raised in Toronto when George C. McCullough, publisher of the Toronto Globe and Mail, cried 'foul' when the CBC tried to stop him from using sponsored radio time to air personal opinions. Ultimately McCullough and L. W. Brockington, former chairman of the network, got together and ironed the whole affair out, a report being issued that McCullough was satisfied. Apparently that was that, as the Toronto publisher has been on the air several times since. Just to be sure another such situation wouldn't arise, the CBC grabbed a pencil and did some rapid revamping of regulations, which, according to private broadcasters, appear about as elastic as a fish story. While it lasted the McCullough incident hit front pages and editorial columns from coast to coast.

## Government Probe

Another highlight of the political side of the industry was the second special Parliamentary Committee called in the House of Commons to investigate the conduct of the nationally owned network since its inception. Following the dry cleaning and whitewashing, which stretched into weeks, the CBC came out with the complete blessing of the legislators and a smiling face. Her again private station men have a thought or two, with some maintaining that had they not been out-smarted from appearing before the committee the final report would have borne at least a tinge of tattle-tale gray, rather than the angel white.

L. W. Brockington, who guided the destinies of the CBC for over a year,



FRED WARING

And His Pennsylvanians  
Best wishes for 1940 Pleasure  
Time, NBC Red Network—7 p.m.  
EST.

returned to his home in Winnipeg to attend to his law practice, and as yet no successor has been appointed, although Rene Morin, of Montreal, is presently acting as chairman.

Then came the war and with it censorship—many times rumored in various forms in the past, but now an actuality. Walter Thompson, head of the government-owned Canadian National Railway press bureau, who had been placed in charge of all press relations for the Royal Tour, was appointed to the post of chief blue-pencil. Quebec was the first province to feel the pinch of official restrictions with its election campaign coming soon after the declaration of war. All radio stumping, according to the censor, was to be done from studios with remotes strictly out. The revamped radio censorship reads: 'No person shall—by word of mouth—spread reports or make statements false or otherwise, intended or likely to cause dissatisfaction to His Majesty or to interfere with the success of His Majesty's

relations with foreign powers, or spread reports or make statements, false or otherwise, intended or likely to prejudice the recruiting, training, discipline or administration of His Majesty's forces.'

## The Monopoly Boys

It was during this period that things got hot for American news services (Transradio and B. U. P.) feeding stations in the Dominion. A campaign was launched by monopolistic Canadian interests to have the competitive services banned from the country and force all present subscribers to those services to drop all commercial business thus derived and take officially sanctified news bulletins only which would not be open to sponsorship. This movement, however, met with defeat, with each station being held responsible for news broadcasts over its own transmitter, all news used being forwarded to Ottawa for checking after broadcasting. This was continued for a brief period and then dropped.

Within the last few months broadcasters took a clip on the chin when station fees were suddenly boosted according to the size of the station. Levy had been a flat rate of \$50 per year. New clip had 100-watters paying off between \$50 and \$500; those between 250 and 1,000 watts bouncing for between \$100 and \$700, while the 10,000-watters are taking it to the tune of between \$4,000 and \$10,000 per annum. The sliding scale angle is figured out on the basis of listener coverage.

Brief attention was focused on the east for a few weeks over the question of beer advertising (Liquor advertising nationally in Canada is not permitted, Quebec being the only province to allow such copy with advertisers being restricted to beer.)

Beer programs took to the skids in Quebec for a brief period when the powers that be suddenly found themselves in the center of a whirlpool caused by reform pressure groups. This called for plenty of diplomacy on the part of CBC officials as they had reformers and general public to pacify with all beer programs showing hefty audience response. Final score had advertisers continuing their high grade shows while commercials were sandpapered down to straight institutional copy. Had decision been other way it would have thrown string of actors and musicians out of work and caused plenty of union headaches.

## Murray Anti-Union

During the final week of 1939 it became known labor unions had been working among employees of the CBC. This brought forth a note from the general manager, Gladstone Murray, directed to all network employees, that the 'government' would resent any representations any union might make on their behalf, which could only be interpreted in one direction. The press regarded it as being a high-handed attitude on the part of Murray and promptly wanted to know why such a view had been taken.

As the year staggered to a close broadcasters were readying for the forthcoming (Jan. 22) annual convention in Montreal of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters. In contrast to other years, and possibly taking a cue from N.A.B. in the U. S., more starch had been injected in the industry shirtfront. (Some broadcasters had Publisher McCullough on their side, but now know better.) One of the hottest topics of the convention is expected to be sections of the Havana agreement, for it is reported industry leaders figure the time is ripe to start a little focusing of public attention. Their claims are there is a crying need for power parity with the U. S. transmitters on shared channels. An arbitrary limitation in Canada holds all private stations down to a maximum of 1,000 watts while Yank regionals on the same channels pump out as much as 5,000 watts. It is also thought the convention will go into the much rumored secondary network with an effort being directed toward finding out whether it is just another mirage or the real McCoy. Western broadcasters are expected to be prime movers in this as they have been doing some crystal gazing in search of a working formula for the promotion of a western network. Westerners claim an eastern domination in origination and a government monopoly on broadcasting lines. Third subject due for consideration is thought to be a renewed effort to separate the operating and regulatory powers of the CBC. They have long wanted to see the installation of a separate board (patterned after the FCC of the U. S.) to sit in judgment over the government owned network and private stations.

# INTERNATIONAL RADIO IN 1939

By Bob Landry

The war has probably only slowed down, not killed, sponsored radio in western Europe. Luxembourg is silent, Normandie is devoted to French alone, but in all probability these stations will resume when peace is signed. Moreover, there exists a body of opinion in London and outside that holds it not too fantastic to suppose that a tax-drained Great Britain will at the end of the war be more receptive to any and all money-making possibilities, and that among these might well be radio for profit.

It has long been argued that the Englishman would never tolerate advertising on his loudspeaker, but this may be more of a myth convenient to the press lords, and emphasized by them, rather than an actual fact. That Luxembourg and Normandie prospered on the basis of English listeners and through the support of English advertisers upsets the story to some extent.

Some of the older and more sedate subjects of His Britannic Majesty do rather loosely refer to 'the outlaw stations' as if to suggest that Normandie, Luxembourg, Juan-le-Pins, and others, are too, too deplorable for words. Such persons have been sold hard on the idea that BBC is the net of perfection, that the system of advertising sponsorship is vile, vulgar, and, above all, un-British. These questions are slightly academic. The length of the war may be the determining factor.

Not much has been reported thus far concerning the attempts of International Broadcasting, Ltd., former time brokers for the English language hours on Normandie, to service the British troops at the Maginot Line via a French station (not identified, but possibly Juan-le-Pins) with entertainment, which is sponsored according to the limited method once typical in the U.S.A., namely, mere identification of the sponsor and his product, but with no direct selling angles. How successful this makeshift is or will be cannot be stated at this writing. The IBC organization in London went half-salary at the outbreak of war.

## Sponsored Radio Spreads

Meantime, sponsored radio around the world has continued its slow but steady growth and spread. Backward technical conditions still hamper the broadcasters in many countries, but in 1939 there were several notable improvements. That in Cuba stands out. A radio 'strong man' was appointed by the Cuban government. He was J. L. Govea, and he began telling the stations what was to be what almost immediately, with a subsequent reported clearing up of much radio rubbish and a putting in far better order than ever before of the numerous semi-wildcat broadcasters, whose exploits have been picturesque rather than impressive.

## Mexico Promising

A provocative hint of 1939 concerns Mexico. The Ford Symphony Hour spread into the republic south of the border and was broadcast over some half dozen Mexican stations. With headquarters in San Antonio a Mexican-American (dual citizenship) entrepreneur set in motion the hopes of many more over-border programs to come. If other American sponsors invade Mexico, this may have profound future implications. It might conceivably persuade Mexico that radio respectability is more profitable than the border stations which continue to practice medicine over the air,

spreading superstition and harboring all that used to be dubious in American sponsorship. Mexico, for reasons of its own which are lost to the Yankee eye in the elaborations of native politics, has balked at fulfillment of the pledges of its representatives made at the Havana allocation conference in Havana two years ago.

To the north of the U.S.A. our other immediate neighbor, Canada, has different kinds of radio problems. These will be clearer next year. It may develop that Canada will be more like BBC and less like NBC and CBS than ever. The Canadian private broadcasters have been, on the whole, distinctly timid and rather dumb. They have missed opportunities to defend themselves and chances to squeeze a few concessions. The Government group has been the smart one in strategy, even admitting that the struggle was one-sided and Gladstone Murray had all the aces up his sleeve.

## Canada Radio Censored

Canada immediately went under censorship with the outbreak of war Sept. 3. This has meant that a resident censor has been at most of the stations. It has meant that sundry special rules went into effect, that announcers and programs were to observe specific prohibitions. The stations have been pretty discreet, and only two flare-ups, both in Montreal, have been reported. In one case a McGill professor spoke at a Rotary luncheon with the microphones open and previous suspicions unaroused. He lashed out rather strongly against the war and the Government, causing a dominion-wide sensation. Somewhat thereafter a French station gave further circulation to the phoney anti-Semitic line about the Jews and the Communists being synonymous. This fuss was hushed up.

Australian radio (see Eric Gorricks's story elsewhere in this issue) has continued to prosper. Argentine and Brazil radio has gone ahead. A new station opened in Alaska (see separate story) and the China coast cities continue to have sponsored broadcasting.

## Improved Shortwave

As regards the faraway places, shortwave was more listened to than in the United States. The barrier of language remains a great problem. But the governments have been making a study of dialects and DX stuff is distinctly improved.

Needless to say, the shortwave scoop of scoops was from Montevideo, Uruguay, on Dec. 15, when James Bowen flashed to NBC the first dope on scuttling of the Graf Spee. NBC was fully press credited in the United States for the story.

Under Guy Hickok, the NBC shortwave division established an elaborate schedule, mostly of news. Late in the year United Fruit became the first Yankee sponsor of such a news program (9 p.m. beamed on the Caribbean), although sponsorship was limited, as with the programs to the British trenches, to bare mention of the sponsor's name. Which was all United Fruit wanted.

It is worth postscripting to this sketchy summation of international radio in 1939 that the transmitters in all the belligerent countries, including Canada, are guarded night and day by soldiers with rifles and machine guns. The lessons of the Spanish civil war have not been overlooked.



# Canada's Prevailing Rules

By Edgar A. Grunwald

Despite war, government regulations, and similar factors, Canadian radio was financially in the pink of health during 1939. Stations reps and networks reported increasing business throughout the year, and while Canada does not keep as close tab on radio revenue as the U. S. does, the upswing appears to have been quite sizable.

Elbowing for a spot on the rail was won hands-down by the CBC, much to the natural chagrin of private enterprise. And yet, it's a question whether or not private enterprise is off as badly as its squawks would indicate. It is true that the CBC, which can grab up the best wattage anytime it wants it, does sell competitively to private stations and thus cuts into spot revenue. On the other hand, the CBC has been enlarging and polishing its network to such an extent that this web is a thoroughly respectable venture from a U. S. viewpoint. As a result of this brush-up, many private stations are getting tailor-made stanzas which cut down local program expenses and boost prestige, to say nothing of the network revenue available through the CBC.

## Rate Regulation?

The position of private enterprise in Canada may thus be described as follows: the broadcasters benefited 50% in one direction, and suffered 50% in the opposite direction. That makes everything even unless—and it's a big 'unless'—the CBC one fine day decides to limit the profits of private enterprise and regulate the rate structure. A yearning in this direction has been expressed by the CBC in the following quote from one of ex-chairman L. W. Brockington's 1939 speeches:

Anybody (that is, any broadcaster) who occupies the public domain and enjoys a franchise is in the nature of a public utility...I am going to suggest for the consideration of this Committee some legislation to be passed in the future whereby the profits of holders of a franchise being part of the public domain should be limited rather than increased.

This viewpoint, of course, is quite unlike the U. S. viewpoint on radio as a public utility. The U. S. Communications Act of 1934 specifically states that 'a person engaged in radio broadcasting shall not...be deemed a common carrier.'

To appreciate the tendencies at work in Canada, some historical rehearsal must first be hauled out of the files. Back in 1928 and 1929 the Aird Royal Commission made an investigation of Canada's position in the radio field, and later reported to a Parliamentary Committee that advertising alone would not finance a good Canadian broadcast system, especially from the viewpoint of coverage. Coverage is one of Canada's major problems, for the population is strung out like a chain of beads from the Atlantic to the Pacific—11,500,000 people over more than 3,000 miles of narrow space. Furthermore, by 1932 half of Canada's wattage (all private) had affiliated itself with either CBS or NBC, and that set up an alarm over U. S. domination of facilities and revenue.

The combination of these factors led to the forming of a Radio Commission in 1932, which was succeeded in 1936 by the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. The latter acts as trustee for the public, gets some revenue from advertising on CBC-owned stations and the CBC network, and collects a set tax of \$2.50 per annum. In 1937 some 1,038,000 taxes were collected, although the 'Radio Trade Builder' estimates that currently there are 2,000,500 sets in Canada (or nearly as many as in all of Central and South America combined).

## Press Agreement

In 1939 the CBC again reaffirmed its agreement with the Canadian Press for the broadcasting of news, none of which may be sponsored. (Private stations, however, may buy news from the regular private services, and sell such news). Another reaffirmation was made at a censorship—always a ticklish point. On this subject the CBC said flatly that none of its owned stations, nor any network, may sell time for controversial broadcasts. This ruling does not apply to private stations. Furthermore, 'non-commercial organizations or societies interested in public affairs may purchase subsidiary hookups only. They may also, of course, purchase time on individual privately-owned stations, but not on

individual CBC-owned stations.' Time is sold during elections to candidates, however, and free time is given throughout the year for competent expression of opinions.

Meantime the CBC's network has greatly expanded, and its programming has veered from ultra-conservative to about a 50-50 balance between serious and light fare. Some 81% of the programs are originated in Canada, while the majority of the rest come from the U. S.

## War Rules

Subsequent to the beginning of hostilities in Europe, certain new regulations have been made for the conduct of Canadian broadcasters during the war. These rules include:

1. Representation of the CBC on the Censorship Board of the Dominion Government.
2. Guarding of CBC transmitters and short-wave stations by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to prevent sabotage.
3. Obeying the policies of the Censorship Board, which, however, has promised that 'the ordinary avocations of life and the enjoyment of property will be interfered with as little as may be permitted by the exigencies...'
4. Submission of advance material on all talks to be broadcast.
5. Prohibition of all foreign language broadcasts.
6. Discontinuance of weather reports east of Toronto.
7. Submission of news copy to the Censorship Board.
8. Discontinuance of broadcasts from public meetings. Political material may be broadcast only from studios, provided scripts are submitted in advance.
9. Exemption of CBC employees from military service, except in special instances.
10. Limitation of capital commitments to those 'demonstrably required for efficient working in war time.'
11. Discontinuance of staff expansions.
12. Use of money thus saved for 'strengthening programs and for necessary reserves.'

## Gilleland Upped

Toledo, Jan. 1.

Herbert Gilleland has been named promotion manager of WTOL, Toledo, TBS station, by Art Shawd, executive v. p. of the Community Broadcasting Co., owners of the station.

Gilleland came here from WSGN, Birmingham, Ala.

## The Fawn at Bay

Louisville, Jan. 1.

Ed Barrett, who works for WHAS and loves the ballet, went to Cincinnati to see the Ballet Russe. He sat next a fidgety old codger who proved to be a disturbing factor to the entire audience. At intermission the explanation came.

'Say,' demanded the old timer, 'is this the WLW Boone County Jamboree?'

He had paid \$3 for a front row seat thinking it was the hillbilly frolic going on a block away.

## Pole Commandeers

### WSAR to B'cast

### Anti-Nazi Tirade

Boston, Jan. 1.

Last Friday night an irate Pole, indignant at Germany's rape of his mother country, stormed into Fall River's station WSAR while a Portuguese program was in progress, held up the participants and, speaking in Polish, broadcast for two minutes a tirade against Germany.

When Orville Seagrave heard in the control room upstairs the strange voice coming over the radio, he rushed down and as he entered the studio, diverted the Pole's attention. Manuel Rodrigues, director of the program, reached over and turned off the mike. But Louis Bielecki, the intruder, continued his outburst to the dead mike for 20 minutes before a musician in the studio got out on the pretext of getting a drink of water and called the police.

Bielecki, armed with a toy wooden mallet, was booked on a charge of disturbing the peace.

## Mayonnaise Needed

### To Collect Mazuma

Ft. Worth, Jan. 1.

Bestyett Food Co. will begin a series of bi-weekly, half-hour Treasure Chest programs via KGKO Jan. 16 in which telephone directories from cities in station's primary area will be used to select the two weekly winners of \$25 awards. Unusual wrinkle on series is there must be a jar of Bestyett Salad Dressing in home of person called in order to be eligible for \$25 cash award.

The Treasure Chest program is in addition to the tri-weekly Lone Ranger transcriptions for the same sponsor on KGKO. Ranger discs have just been renewed for 260 times. Ray K. Glenn, Dallas, is advertising agency.

# Radio Is Very Personal in Alaska

By Stanton D. Bennett

(Chief Engineer, KFAR, Fairbanks)

Fairbanks, Dec. 20.

In few places on this earth does radio play a more important role than it does in the life of the average Alaskan. Telephone and telegraph facilities in this extensive territory, nearly one-fifth as large as the United States, are practically non-existent. The trapper mushing his way from cache to trap line returns to his cabin with nothing but a portable battery receiver for entertainment and news of the outside world. Mining camps, isolated except for an occasional airplane dropping food supplies and mail, again rely on radio to shorten the long winter evenings.

And until Oct. 1 of this year the people of interior Alaska were practically without broadcast radio reception nearly 10 months of the year. Programs from shortwave stations were subject to fading and were unreliable to say the least. It remained for Capt. A. E. Lathrop, an old sourdough who has made and spent his money in Alaska for the past 40 years, to bring to the people of interior Alaska their first dependable broadcast reception.

## News Important

News is of first importance to the average Alaskan, some of whom see a daily paper less than once a month in the many remote sections. And news is one of KFAR's primary services to Alaska listeners with five periods a day. A problem not occurring to the average station in the States with telephone, telegraph and teletype machines hourly rolling off volumes of news, is the obtaining of sufficient material for such broadcasts. To supply this service KFAR transmitter engineers have installed the latest in short-wave receiving equipment with directional beam antennas for both New York and San Francisco from which points press is received hourly throughout the day.

Perhaps the 'public service' program most uniquely Alaskan is KFAR's 'Airplane Movements.' Because of its central location Fairbanks is logically classed as the aviation center of Alaska with more planes per capita than any other city in the United States or territories. (One plane per 100 people.) Many mining communities, trappers and prosperous within the radius of 300 to 400 miles depend entirely upon aviation for transportation, communication and supplies. KFAR brings to these isolated communities each morning and evening the latest airplane schedules of departure and ar-

rivals for various points throughout the territory. The information is furnished by the plane companies, themselves, incidentally, participating sponsors of the program.

Programs of KFAR's '2-hour daily schedule are built to fit the North. 'It Happened in Alaska' is a popular one with tales of 'Gold Rush' days that have stuck with the territory. 'On the Spot' is a quiz program of the kind America knows. A variety of local talent from Fairbanks and vicinity is used on a weekly 'Amateur Nights' with the University of Alaska faculty and Associated Students contributing to educational and entertainment features, all of which is important social news up here. Two of the transcription libraries from the U. S. are used in filling out the schedule and of course are a great help in a remote country.

## Emergency Messages

Besides service and entertainment programs, emergency messages to country communities without other means of communication is ordinary, rather than rare, as in the States. Only recently a message was broadcast to a far-off mining camp regarding a medicine prescription which was to be dropped from an airplane the following week. There is heartfelt appreciation of such 'personal' service.

Contrary to the popular opinion that it is a land of snow and ice, Alaska supports some of the largest gold mining enterprises in the world with annual mineral exports exceeding \$28,700,000. The summer salmon industry nets a \$45,000,000 annual export. And Alaskan winters by no means stop the wheels of industry. Airplanes are put on skis, pedestrians pull on mukluks, and business goes forward. Imports from the U. S., \$42,676,000 worth last year, including everything from mining machinery to cosmetics, have caught the attention of national advertisers and many national accounts are represented on KFAR. It is interesting to note that reliable statistics show the average Alaskan citizen has a buying power five times that of the average U. S. consumer.

Radio in interior Alaska, through KFAR, has much of the wonder, thrill, and romance that this industry had during its infancy in the States, but with all the advantages of modern facilities and improvements to begin with.

## NEW CONSTRUCTION

Juice Jumps for KOIN, WDRC, and WPRO Result in New Equip.

Portland, Ore., Jan. 1.

Granting of 5,000 watt night time power rating by the FCC has launched KOIN upon a \$20,000 program of technical expansion. Station will erect a new 555-foot transmission tower alongside the existing tower of the same height. This is to establish directional transmission so that no interference will occur with Fargo, N. D., which uses the same 940 kc wave length.

New equipment is expected to be installed by March 1. Meantime KOIN last week opened an additional 600 square feet of new business offices, all air-conditioned and equipped with daylight, vapor-tube lighting. Expected that the station's basic rate will shortly be increased.

Hartford, Jan. 1.

WDRC early this spring will get underway the construction of an additional tower at its Bloomfield transmitter so as to throw a directional signal. Station was recently granted a juice jump to 5,000 watts for nighttime operation. Formerly was 5,000 watts days and 1,000 watts nights. Estimated cost of tower and antenna is approximately \$20,000.

Construction work is expected to be completed early in the fall.

Providence, Jan. 1.

WPRO climaxed an eight-year record of growth Dec. 29 when W. S. Cherry, an official of the Cherry and Webb Co., which owns the station, threw the switch which officially closed down the 1,000 watt transmitters and put into operation the newly erected 5,000 watt job.

## Pick's Nag Goes West

The apparent tying with too short a halter of a prize saddle horse owned by Pick Malone, of radio's 'Pick and Pat,' resulted in the animal's strangling on the blackface comedian's farm near Fort Edward, N. Y.

# FARM STATION ESSENTIALS

By JOSEPH O. MALAND  
Vice-President, WHO, Des Moines

Des Moines, Jan. 1.

If you lived out on a farm a hundred miles away from a good radio station, you would realize that nearly all program service is arranged primarily for the metropolitan or town listeners and special farm program service is generally given because the station thinks it might give them a good showing in the event of an FCC hearing.

Farm service is, of course, much more important in the Middle West than it is in the industrial East. In the State of Iowa 42% of the families actually live on farms and till the soil. In states like North and South Dakota a much higher percentage live on farms. I don't know how to define 'showmanship' in relation to radio broadcasting service, but I do think that the radio station should do something besides broadcast programs to get distinction or merit as rendering good farm program service.

A clear channel station or a regional, with a good frequency and excellent daytime coverage, should have a farm editor who devotes his entire time to visiting farm organizations and events and studying the special farming problems of his territory. He should furnish a daily news period especially arranged for farmers, including news items of interest primarily to them. He should be well acquainted with the county agents in each community, officers of all the farm organizations and cooperate in every possible way with the 4-H boys and girls clubs. He should arrange to broadcast special farm events such as corn husking contests, plowing matches, athletic events of 4-H boys and girls, tall-

corn contests and cover other competitive events such as state fair exhibits, etc., giving publicity and credit to those who participate because it is very difficult for such farm groups to get more than casual mention in metropolitan newspapers.

## Farmer Headliners

From the broadcasting standpoint there should be at least one program each week which is devoted entirely to presenting headliners in the agricultural field. From the entertainment standpoint a reasonable amount of time should be devoted to good old American Folk Music (erroneously called hillbilly by many). But shows such as the WLS National Barn Dance and our own Iowa Barn Dance Frolic are not crude affairs—they represent a great deal more time and effort and money than almost any other spot show. The fact that 800,000 people have paid admissions to see the WLS show and that we have had more than 650,000 paid admissions to see our show indicates pretty definitely that they have a very wide appeal.

If you could have been with me recently when we conducted a plowing match in a small town, and looked into the faces of several thousand farmers and their families as they watched some of our exponents of American Folk Music entertain on the stage, you would have been tremendously impressed with the great interest that these people have in that type of program service.

## Market Reports

Market reports by radio are just as important to the farmer as the ticker tape is to the broker. It should bring the very latest and up-

to-the-minute price quotations—not a report that is one or two hours old when given. It should also be given at a time of day when the man on the farm is likely to be home—preferably at noon—because mid-morning and mid-afternoon reports have to be listened to by the farmer's wife and then relayed to him at meal time. Quality of the market report is far more important than frequency, if it is broadcast either at noon or early evening.

Another broadcasting service which is tremendously valuable to the farmer as well as the general public is first-class news service. In our territory there are very few morning papers—only two in the State of Iowa. The result is that the farmer, if he subscribes to a daily newspaper, gets an afternoon edition the following morning with the result that he must rely upon radio for national and foreign news.

I have noted many comments during the past few years that farmers in general like the same programs as city people. They do, but with considerable variation. For example, in our territory, the rating given for various programs:

	Urban	Farm
Chase & Sanborn.....	34.3	20.2
Kay Kyser.....	11.9	5.4
WHO Barn Dance.....	3.1	10.2
Fibber McGee.....	14.2	19.7
Fred Allen.....	10.1	10.1

The rating given by women listeners for the same programs:

	Urban	Farm
Chase & Sanborn.....	22.4	14.3
Kay Kyser.....	9.6	5.1
WHO Barn Dance.....	2.2	6.8
Fibber McGee.....	9.8	14.0
Fred Allen.....	4.4	5.3



# CLEVELAND: A TECHNICOLOR FINISH

By Edgar A. Grunwald

Cleveland, Jan. 1. Cleveland is a technicolor finish for a three months' tour covering 17 major radio cities, about 75 stations, 400 executives, and half a dozen networks. The city isn't a pure consumer market like Washington, D. C.; nor a natural giant like Cincinnati; nor a be-monocled affair like Louisville; nor a competitive whirlwind like St. Louis; nor an Oriental bazaar like Dallas-Fort Worth; nor a promotional tuba like Oklahoma City; nor a quiet aristocrat like Denver; nor a Persian Garden like Hollywood (where the C.A.B. is Allah and J. Walter Thompson is his prophet); nor an undeservedly obscure horizon like San Francisco; nor a miniature 'natural' like Salt Lake City; nor the home of 16-cylinder management like Omaha nor the place which the F. C. C. forgot like Kansas City; nor a folk festival like Des Moines; nor a love-bower of newspaper-radio woo pitching like Minneapolis and St. Paul; nor a technical-economic bell-cow like Milwaukee.

Cleveland is a little like all of these, but the resemblance is only enough to show that Cleveland is an important member of the radio family. Cleveland's own particular specialty happens to be ideal employer-employee relations. That's why it's a fitting finale to the trip; the importance of good employer-employee relations has strangely escaped many broadcasters.

It wasn't simply that Cleveland wanted to forestall the inroads of unions. In fact, the Cleveland managers have done notably little anti-union agitation, knowing that their employees are afraid that union minimums might adversely affect uncommonly high pay scales. What intrigued the managers, aside from the fact that a friendly shop is a better place to work in than an embattled dugout, is that national spot business is directly influenced by a smart staff.

Digging deeper into this important angle, brings up the fact that many agencies are afraid to trust stations with really elaborate spot campaigns. Cheap announcers might read the continuity while munching on a candy bar, and slovenly managers might spot the show who knows where, or maybe not even spot it at all. While this fear on the part of agencies never shows up in statistics, it is there nonetheless, and Cleveland broadcasters knew it all along. Cleveland therefore set its house in order early, with the two foremost practitioners in the labor relations art—WGAR and WTAM—each taking a different path.

## Staff Members of WGAR Use Their Own Noodles

At WGAR everyone is his own boss. The story is told here that the switchboard operator once signed a rush campaign when she couldn't find an exec at hand, quoted rates, fixed up time periods, and otherwise assumed responsibility of all mechanical-financial details. The station stuck to these arrangements as faithfully as if John Patt himself had made them. Offhand this sounds like a thoroughly wild-eyed system, but such an estimate is superficial. What WGAR has in mind is the elimination of such tight redtape operation that the minute the boss goes to lunch, the station falls apart.

WGAR employees not infrequently own minor shares in the extensive Patt-Richards properties, and at Christmas WGAR slips them a 10% bonus. Meantime, everyone down to the office boy feels inspired to boost the station, and—just as often—to criticize the daylight hours of mistakes and slip-ups. Of course, this ideal scheme of things is reserved for the upper-crust layer of stations. Any mediocre outfit attempting such a setup would be hopelessly out of tune in a week.

WTAM's scheme, less ebullient than WGAR's, is just as commendable, and perhaps more universally practicable. At WTAM two items are properly enforced: (1) high pay scales; and (2) pride in personal appearance and personal craftsmanship. There is no better-dressed, better-housed staff anywhere. Executives look as if they stepped out of a bandbox, while announcers wear striped pants and Oxford coats in the daytime, changing to dinner jackets after sundown. Engineers and technicians must don similar regalia when on duty, and that's no joke. Working in shirt

sleeves is a bigger offense than shooting spitballs at the audience.

All of WTAM's personnel is provided with individual lockers which lock, more than enough shower baths, and nifty clubrooms. The latter are for use by club members only, and it's a rule that outsiders may not be brought in to goof up the pingpong game or hog the billiard table. Visitors who pay to see the studios are shunted through proper alleys which keep far from the staff's private hangout.

WTAM has made another great advance in employee happiness by preventing minor or major forms of claustrophobia. Ceilings all over the place are high, and roominess is cultivated. Meantime engineers get a special sop in that their control rooms are divided in half by a metal fence. The sponsor, who all too frequently makes the control booth his private library, remains on one side of the fence. The engineer is on the other, and never the twain shall meet. This arrangement also prevents friction between engineers and producers, for the latter are only too adept at grabbing a handful of dials and showing the engineer how to do it. WTAM's motif is individual self-respect and privacy. The success of this angle is only too symbolic in one small incident: although WTAM frequently stages art exhibits and has oil paintings all over the place, no staff member has yet seen fit to put dirty captions under the pictures.

WHK-WCLE operate with a somewhat newer, younger staff than WGAR and WTAM. Labor relations here are hence more difficult to classify under one definitive lid. But so far as could be observed, nobody was cussing the boss, and enthusiasm was very much in evidence.

As for Cleveland in general: the population of the area is around 1,200,000, with something like 65% either foreign-born or first-generation American. Steel, textiles, iron,

paint and chemicals are the principal industries. Art and music are two of the city's cultural boasts. Chain stores have a solid grip on the grocery-drug market, with around 80% of these commodities being sold through a mere handful of chain organizations.

The farm land surrounding the city supports a fairly prosperous population. NBC figures that the rustic plots average 90 acres apiece, and that wheat, corn, and hogs are the chief products.

Cleveland's three newspapers maintain full-time radio editors, Elmore Bacon officiating on the News, Bob Stephan on the Plain Dealer, and Norman Siegel on the Press. All four stations operate on a single rate.

WGAR is the CBS outlet. Owners are G. A. Richards (also WJR, Detroit, and KMPC, Beverly Hills), Leo Fitzpatrick (also WJR), P. M. Thomas (also WJR), and John Patt. Fitzpatrick and John Patt are the two gentlemen who came from Kansas City to build WJR, and later converted two small stations into what is now WGAR. There are other tie-ins severally or individually with football teams (Detroit Lions and Cleveland Rams), and who knows what else.

Suffice it to say, that the owners are bigshots in this area. John Patt is WGAR's general manager and policy setter—one of his recent acts along these lines being a letter to radio stations deploring the prevalence of so many daytime serials.

Patt's front-office assistant and commercial manager is Gene Carr, once program director, and prior to that with WTAM (Carr, incidentally, is one of the few radio men who annually takes a postman's holiday to visit other radio stations and minutely examine their operations). Harry Camp is local sales manager. Merchandising and promotion director is Ellis C. Vander Pyl, one-time Yale football great and Olympic

champ who got into radio via sports and still spels them regularly. Carl George, here six years after a stretch at WALS, is program director. Dave Baylor, once with WJW, WADC, WHOM and WCAE, is production manager. Publicity is in charge of Maury Condon, here since the station opened. Worth Kramer, until recently program director, is now devoting his full time to the 'Wings Over Jordan' troupe which is aired over CBS and this season is expanding its singing tour to major dimensions. This Negro group, originated by the Rev. Glenn T. Settle, pastor of a Cleveland church, is one of WGAR's proudest finds, and the tours being booked by Worth Kramer are virtually putting WGAR into the artists bureau business.

## WGAR Phoned Chrysler Dealers of Strike's End

WGAR's operations are peppy and cagy. And business is immense. Right now about 50% is via CBS, the rest being divided between local and national spot. The staff numbers 64 over all. Nine men comprise the house band. All are string musicians because WGAR thinks strings make the most flexible orchestras and combos. Merchandising is pretty active, including courtesy announcements, tie-ins with theatres, surveys, sales checks, arranging of displays, out-of-town checks, mail, dealer meetings, etc. Publicity is sent to trade papers and the newspapers, while the station rep gets a weekly letter informing him of what's going on. WGAR also harps on sales service niceties. Recently when the station heard that the Chrysler strike was settled, it phoned all Chrysler dealers to give them the news at once.

WGAR's programming is diversified, branching into all directions (including foreign languages). The latter old sod stuff is mainly aired on Sundays from 8 A.M. to 1 P.M. for Poles, Czechs, Hungarians, Italians, and Slovaks; additionally Pillsbury has a shot from 8:15-8:30 A.M. weekdays in which three minutes of foreign chatter (news) is spotted in an otherwise English stanza. There are 10 newscasts daily, spied by Maury Condon, Carl George, and John Murphy. Sidney Andorn handles special events, while Bob Kelley reels off play-by-play football. Franklin Lewis, sports director, does the color end. Civic and community fare is very heavy.

Other stanzas include: a 'Pop Concert' directed by Walberg Brown in which pro singers, selected on a previously aired audition, give out; a 'Gay Caballeros' hillbilly show from 6:45-7 A.M., featuring Bob Armstrong and Lennie Collyer; 'Music for Breakfast' from 7-7:30 A.M., a participating musical clock which is a swell mail puller, and which steers away from dance music; Henry Pildner and Grant Wilson, a piano team, at 8:30 A.M.; Jack Paar's Hollywood gossip at 8:45 A.M. for Contadina Tomato Paste, with a theatre-ducat giveaway for five labels; Ruth Merriam Wells' participating home economics from 9:35-9:45 A.M.; a club bulletin board at 3:35 P.M., with Watson Turner at the organ; Mrs. Jenny K. Zwick's 'Cultural Institute of the Air' at 3:45 P.M. (clubs, PTA, etc.); a quiz about traffic laws, with police help, at 4:15 P.M. Wednesdays; Sidney Andorn's local gossip at 6 P.M.; Ellis Vander Pyl's sports slants at 6:05 P.M.; 'Fiddles and Footlights' house orchestra music on Tuesdays at 10 P.M.; and Kay Halle's chatter twice weekly (she's the local Brenda Frazier here). In summer there's a sports musical clock, and on Saturdays at 7 P.M. the mayor and his staff broadcast.

WTAM, owned by NBC and affiliated with the Red, is said to be NBC's best money-maker in the M & O stable. That's not hard to understand, for the station is well-nigh sold out, and a model of slick operation. Elaborately housed in a Doric temple, which was once a bank, WTAM goes in for such niceties as checking visitors' hats and coats, holding art exhibits in its corridors, and peppering the place full of ashtrays (to avoid butts on the floor, and—more important—prevent fires). The staff is comprised of 82 members. There are seven announcers, and a 15 piece house band. The latter is swanky enough to include a harpist. Business is almost entirely network, or national and regional spot. Reference has previously been made to the station's swell labor relations.

and Bond St. style of dressing. Further reference might well be made to the classy physical plant which escapes the curse of gaudiness.

WTAM's manager is Vernon Pribble, here five years after a period at WGN and the Stack-Goble agency. Program director is Hal Metzger, ex-newspaperman and political writer, who, uniquely, has a musical background and is quite an artist (painter). Howard Barton, with WTAM since 1932 and previously with McCann-Erickson and Fuller & Smith & Ross, is sales and commercial manager. Don Stratton is national representative. Women's activities are handled by Jane Weaver, once with WQAM and WADC. Fred Wilson is production manager. Musical direction is under the baton of Walter Logan, while Lee Gordon maestros the dance and lighter music. Bob Dailey, previously Toledo Blade radio editor, handles the press department. Chester Zohn is night manager.

By way of merchandising, WTAM will do anything the sponsors want done at cost. That includes mailings, contacts, etc. Free stuff is not dished out. Sales promotion and goodwill are, however, strong. Brochures are regularly mailed out on the various stanzas, and talks and personal contact work are standard angles. Currently the station is readying a mammoth presentation on Cleveland and environs which Howard Barton is putting together after 3,500 miles of traveling. Town saluting has been forte in the past, and mailings to radio editors are highly complete. Some 30 papers get editorial stuff, while 75 get logs with corrections thrice weekly.

## WTAM Programing Long On Femme Fare

In the programming field, WTAM harps strongly on women's angles and on civic, educational, and special events. Class music might also be mentioned as another ingredient. On Sunday, for instance, the station has a show for the Cleveland art museum, a broadcast for the Cleveland art school, a roundtable from Kent State University, a physics-astronomy stanza from Baldwin Wallace, and an 'Odd Moments in History' Americana series. On Saturday John Carroll University broadcasts music and drama. Additionally there are broadcasts from the weather bureau, Welfare Federation, library, symphony orchestra, animal protective league, Garden Center, etc. ad infinitum. Sports and all manner of special events are handled by Tom Manning, here 14 years. Manning and Bob Dailey spiel the news.

The 'Pie Plant Pete' hillbilly show (6-6:30 A.M., sustaining) opens the station. Livestock news is aired twice daily. Tom Manning dishes out news and sports from 7-7:15 A.M. Between 8-8:15 A.M. 'Do You Remember?' is fed to the web. Jane Weaver has femme chatter from 8:45-9:15 A.M., participating. On Mondays, 1-1:15 P.M. 'Cobwebs and Cadenzas' is another net feed. Between 6:30 and 6:40 P.M. Jack Starr has a sports shot for a brewing company. At 11 P.M. Tom Manning has a similar stanza, sustaining. And a series of which the station is especially fond is the 'Will to Win' show at 7:30 P.M. Wednesdays in which a dramatic cast airs a Jane Weaver script on the lives of famous people, and Mary K. Browne, noted Cleveland sportswoman, delivers an inspirational talk. George Hartrick has a short musical clock each morning. Featured singers at the station are: Chester Zohn, Vera Cruz, Selm Schuler, George Hartrick and Rance Valentine.

WHK and WCLE, through the United Broadcasting Co., are owned by the Cleveland Plain Dealer. The UBC also holds all stock in WHKC, Columbus, while WKBN, Youngstown, is a UBC affiliate. WHK is a member of the Basic NBC Blue and Mutual, while WCLE, which operates until sunset, is Mutual. The latter station, despite limited operations, is making a swell climb upward, being located on the enviable 610 kc band. Rates were recently jumped from \$112.50 to \$123, and WCLE is now just about sold out cold. Business divides up as 90% local and 10% national spot. WHK has 20% chain revenue, 40% national spot, and 40% local. Studios for both stations are in one plant, and it's a dandy. The staff numbers 81 (and goes as high as 107 with singers).

(Continued on page 112)

## The Mostest and The Bestest

By EDGAR A. GRUNWALD

(Recently Ed Grunwald of VARIETY's home office staff completed a tour of leading radio markets. He started in Washington, D. C. (where all stations start) and continued through Cincinnati, St. Louis, Louisville, Dallas, Fort Worth, Oklahoma City, Denver, San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Omaha, Des Moines, Kansas City, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Milwaukee and Cleveland. From all these spots VARIETY's only member of Phi Beta Kappa (affidavit on request) sent back detailed analyses of the markets and the personnel. Goaded into a grand summary of his findings he has supplied the following chart of the mostest and the bestest encountered along his journey.—Ed.)

### Best Dressed Station Manager

(Three-way tie)

- \*Vernon Pribble, WTAM, Cleveland.
- Don Thornburgh, KNX, Los Angeles.
- Merle Jones, KMOX, St. Louis.
- \* Only NBC manager with fancy cufflinks a la CBS.

### Best Dressed Staff

WTAM, Cleveland\*

- \* Frock trousers mandatory for announcers.

### Most Nifty Girl Receptionist

Inez Yarbrough, KMOX, St. Louis

- \* Remembers your name, whom you want to see.

### Most Impressive Studio

WRR, Dallas

### Most Impressive Offices

WOW, Omaha

### Most Elegantly Mannered Staff

WHAS, Louisville

### Most Diplomatic Executive

Martin Campbell, WFAA, Dallas

### Best Trap Drummer

Don Davis, WHB, Kansas City

### Best Tango Dancer

Johnny Gillin, WOW, Omaha\*

- \* Worst tango dancer: Earl Gammons, WCCO, Minneapolis.

### Most Serious-Minded Staff

WHO, Des Moines

### Most to-the-Point Executive

(Tie)

- Jim Shouse, WLW, Cincinnati.
- Al Nelson, KPO-KGO, San Francisco.

### Best Station Press Agent

Milt Samuel, KPO-KGO, San Francisco.

### Most Unspoolable Executive

Jim Meyerson, WKY, Oklahoma City



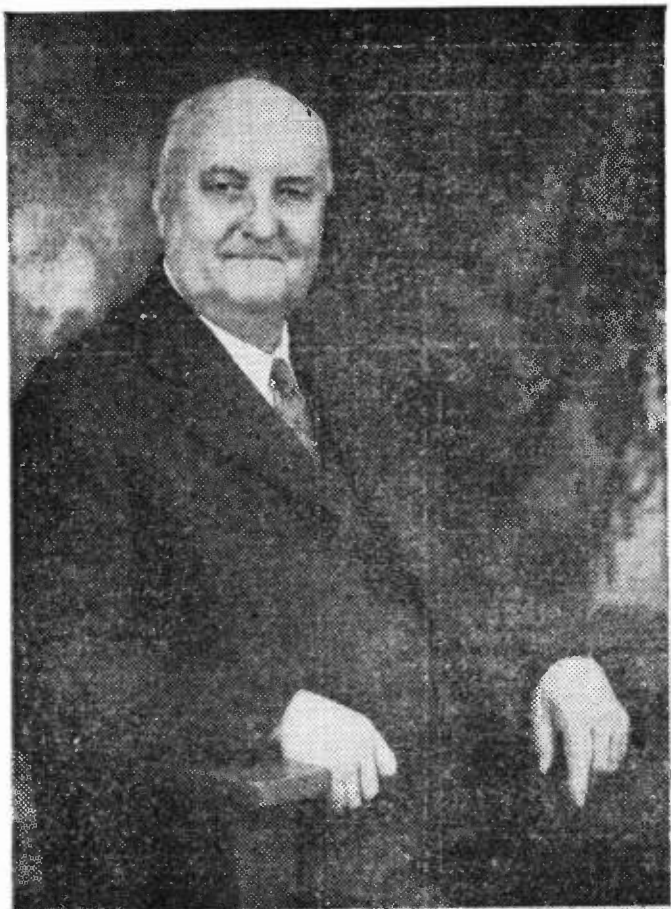
# Season's Greetings



★  
★  
★  
**EDGAR BERGEN**  
**CHARLIE MCCARTHY**  
**MORTIMER SNERD**

Exclusive Management  
★  
M. C. A. Artists, Ltd.  
and  
Music Corporation  
of America





TOM FANSHER  
400 South 9th Street  
Independence,  
Kansas

“Canst thou

December 5<sup>th</sup> 1939

Independence

400 S. 9<sup>th</sup> St. Kansas

Columbia Broadcasting System  
485 Madison Ave. N. Y.

Gentlemen:

I just received your (or rather my) “Magic of Radio Transmission” and have read it with the deepest interest; I have always contended the radio was the most wonderful thing in the world, and now I am more fully convinced than ever that I am right; you described the magic of broadcasting in such a plain-simple-easy-to-understand way, that any one could see through all, except the why.

When we read your explanation in the most minute detail, we could then come nearer understanding what God meant when He spoke the words recorded in Job 38-35.

I sincerely thank you for my “Magic of Radio Transmission,” and I take great pleasure in signing myself a friend of the Columbia Broadcasting System,

Tom Fanshier

TOM FANSHER

If its Columbia, I know its good.



# *send lightnings?"* \*

**R**adio *personalizes* advertising. In radio advertising, words are winged through the air and delivered with the impelling warmth of the human voice.

So it is fitting that we who work with this *personal* medium should maintain informal, intimate contact with the twenty-eight million families we serve.

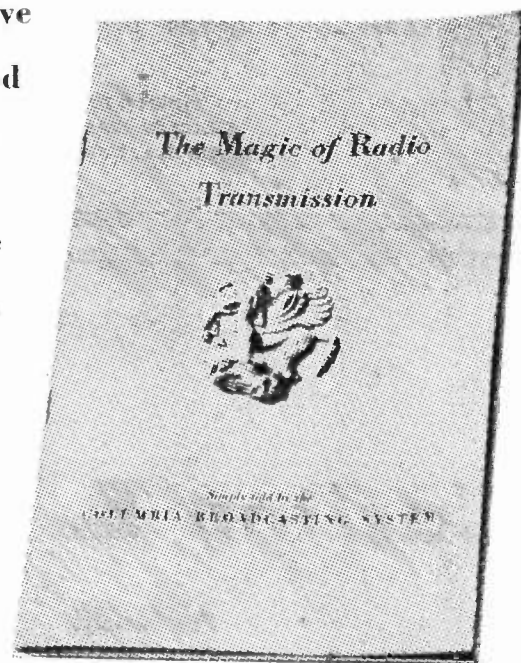
Today, CBS is closer than ever to these people who listen. An unpretentious book has played an important part. It's called "THE MAGIC OF RADIO TRANSMISSION." It tells, in the language of the man on the street, the "how" of radio transmission. For the first time, it brings the clear air of "layman's English" into the esoteric field of technical jargon and engineering impenetrables. It helps make the listener, more than ever before, part of the structure of American broadcasting.

The book has been distributed everywhere. Schools have requested copies for their entire student bodies; clubs and associations and women's groups have used "THE MAGIC OF RADIO TRANSMISSION" as the basis for study and discussion. A third edition is already on the press.

We have been grateful for listeners' letters, such as the one we reproduce here from Mr. Fanshier. Grateful and a little humble. Friends are precious things.

---

Did you receive your copy of "The Magic of Radio Transmission"? We will be happy to make a supply available to all stations, agencies and advertisers (with your imprint) at only the cost of reprinting. Write to the Columbia Broadcasting System at 485 Madison Avenue, N. Y.



## *Columbia Broadcasting System*

\*"Can'st thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?" Job 38:35



SEASON'S GREETINGS

**PROF QUIZ****BOB TROUT****BILL GERNANNT****B E N N Y****G O O D M A N****MYRT and MARGE**

Just completing their THIRD CONSECUTIVE  
YEAR for COLGATE - PALMOLIVE - PEET  
SUPER SUDS . . . signed for another year . . .  
for the same Super Suds.

9th CONSECUTIVE YEAR ON CBS

Direction  
**BILLY JOYCE**  
**WILLIAM MORRIS AGENCY**

Advertising Agency: **BENTON & BOWLES**

Publicity Rep  
**CHARLES MARTEL**  
535 5th Ave., New York

*Greetings*

Exclusive Management  
**MUSIC CORPORATION OF AMERICA**

**Carlton E. Morse**

AUTHOR  
PRODUCER

**"One Man's Family"**

AND

**"I Love A Mystery"****EASY ACES**

*The Season's  
Greetings*

\*\*\*

**KNOX  
MANNING**



GREETINGS

**JACK BENNY**

... and me too ...

**MARY LIVINGSTONE**



Management—ARTHUR S. LYONS • A. & S. LYONS, Inc.

*Congratulations to*

**VARIETY**

*on your 34th Anniversary*

*from*

**GERTRUDE  
BERG**

*and Her Beloved Perennials*

**"The GOLDBERGS"**

*First of radio's script serials, which has  
just celebrated its Tenth Anniversary*



Sponsored by PROCTER & GAMBLE for OXYDOL

CBS Network • Mondays thru Fridays • 1 P.M., EST



EXCLUSIVE MANAGEMENT  
MUSIC CORPORATION OF AMERICA



★

# GEORGE BURNS

AND

# GRACIE ALLEN

★

EXCLUSIVE MANAGEMENT  
LESTER HAMMEL  
WILLIAM MORRIS AGENCY

HIND'S HONEY and ALMOND CREAM

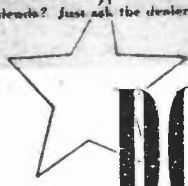
7:30 P. M., E.S.T., MONDAYS • CBS

WILLIAM ESTY AGENCY

I'LL SAY  
**DON LEE'S**  
GUARANTEED TIME  
PAYS DIVIDENDS



You bet your life DON LEE'S time is worth shouting about. In the first place—IT'S GUARANTEED! When you place your advertising message on Don Lee's 31 stations, your good time is protected—and when I say **CAMP TIME** I mean just that. We know it's good because Don Lee has a hat full of surveys to prove it. For instance, get a load of these figures . . . a survey taken at 9:00 p.m. showed News on KHJ leading with 37% of the audience, KNX with music polled 20.9%, and KFI with Carefree Carnival showed 23.42%. Another survey taken at 8:00 p.m. showed KHJ with 35.4% backing KNX with Amos and Andy at 34.6%, and KFI with Fred Waring at 16%. Another poll at 9:30 p.m. gave KHJ 24.7% with Fu Manchu against KNX with baseball at 23.7%, and music on KFI at 22.6%. Admittedly DON LEE dominates the outlying sections of the Pacific Coast, but these figures show what happens in the nation's third largest city where competition for top audience is plenty tough. And does Don Lee's Guaranteed Time pay dividends? Just ask the dealers; they know that Don Lee brings action at the cash registers.

 **DON LEE**  
MUTUAL **BROADCASTING SYSTEM**  
THE NATION'S GREATEST REGIONAL NETWORK

1076 W. 7th St., Los Angeles, Calif.  
Thomas S. Lee, Pres.  
LEWIS ALLEN WEISS, Vice-Pres. and Gen. Mgr.  
Affiliated with Mutual . . . Represented by Blais

**AIR FEATURES**  
INC.

247 PARK AVENUE  
NEW YORK



Established 1898



# WILLIAM MORRIS AGENCY

INC.

*“The Agency of Show Business!”*

**S**incere representation is the first principle of the Agency—a principle established by the founder, WILLIAM MORRIS—a principle to which the entire organization has always adhered.

**E**ntertainment is one field in which human relationship is an important factor, personal integrity is essential and a mutual respect for judgment is paramount in successful operation.

**R**adio, motion pictures and television may have altered the framework of the amusement structure, but the principles of entertainment remain the same, as does the relation between Artist and Agent.

**V**ariety is the essence of showmanship—on the air—on the screen—on the stage. Knowledge born of long experience enables the Agency to provide intelligent guidance for the careers of its Artists.

**I**n more than forty years the WILLIAM MORRIS AGENCY has developed more talent from novice to established star than any other agency in show business, and its trade-mark has become a symbol of service.

**C**afes, hotels, clubs and ballrooms, which for years have been supplied with singing, dancing and comedy talent by the Agency, now obtain their music as well from an impressive list of name orchestras.

**E**very form of public amusement enterprise, including executives, sponsors advertising directors and performers, is encompassed in the far-reaching activities of the oldest agency in the field.

NEW YORK

LONDON

CHICAGO

HOLLYWOOD





Yowsah My Good Friends—  
Smoke a Pipe to Calm  
You Down.

**BEN BERNIE**

BROADCASTING FOR DEAR OLD  
HALF AND HALF ON CBS  
5:30 P.M. EST

Management  
MUSIC CORPORATION OF AMERICA

*Double Happy New Year!*

ONE FROM

*Bud*

**ABBOTT**

AND

ONE FROM

*Lou*

**COSTELLO**

DOUBLING

**"STREETS OF PARIS"**

BROADHURST THEATRE

NEW YORK



AND THE

**KATE SMITH HOUR**

EVERY FRIDAY 8 P.M. (EST)



*America's*  
**PIONEER  
RADIO  
STATION**

Radio station WWJ was not only the first station in America, but it has maintained its position as the first station in listener interest in Detroit since it was established.—a fact proven by every survey that has ever been made!



National Representatives  
**Geo. P. Hollingbery Co.**  
New York Chicago San Francisco Atlanta

Happy New Year  
Everyone

**GABRIEL  
HEATTER**

**POWER**

**W**

*where it  
counts*

**H**

**A**

**S**

**50,000  
WATTS**

AT

**820**

ON THE DIAL

SELLING A  
\$2,214,269,000  
**MARKET**

BASIC CBS OUTLET  
NATIONALLY REPRESENTED  
BY EDWARD PETRY & CO.

OWNED AND OPERATED BY  
**The Courier-Journal**  
**THE LOUISVILLE TIMES**



# Spreading the Good Word



## \*Its Extra Audience is One Reason Why the *Red* is America's No. 1 Network!

Take audience...Take facilities...Take programs...Take selling power. On every count the NBC Red Network is out in front.

The Red's audience is the biggest in the business—by millions of families! Its facilities are the finest—more power, more desirable-frequency stations, more clear-channel stations than any other network! Its programs are the popularity leaders—have been since network broadcasting began, seventeen years ago.

Its selling power is evidenced by the confidence advertisers place in it—a confidence that in 1939 saw them invest \$35,000,000 in the Red Network—more money than was spent in any other single advertising medium in the world!

NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY A Radio Corporation of America Service

Advertising on the NBC Red Network  
means extra sales results!

### NBC *Red* NETWORK

The network most people listen to most

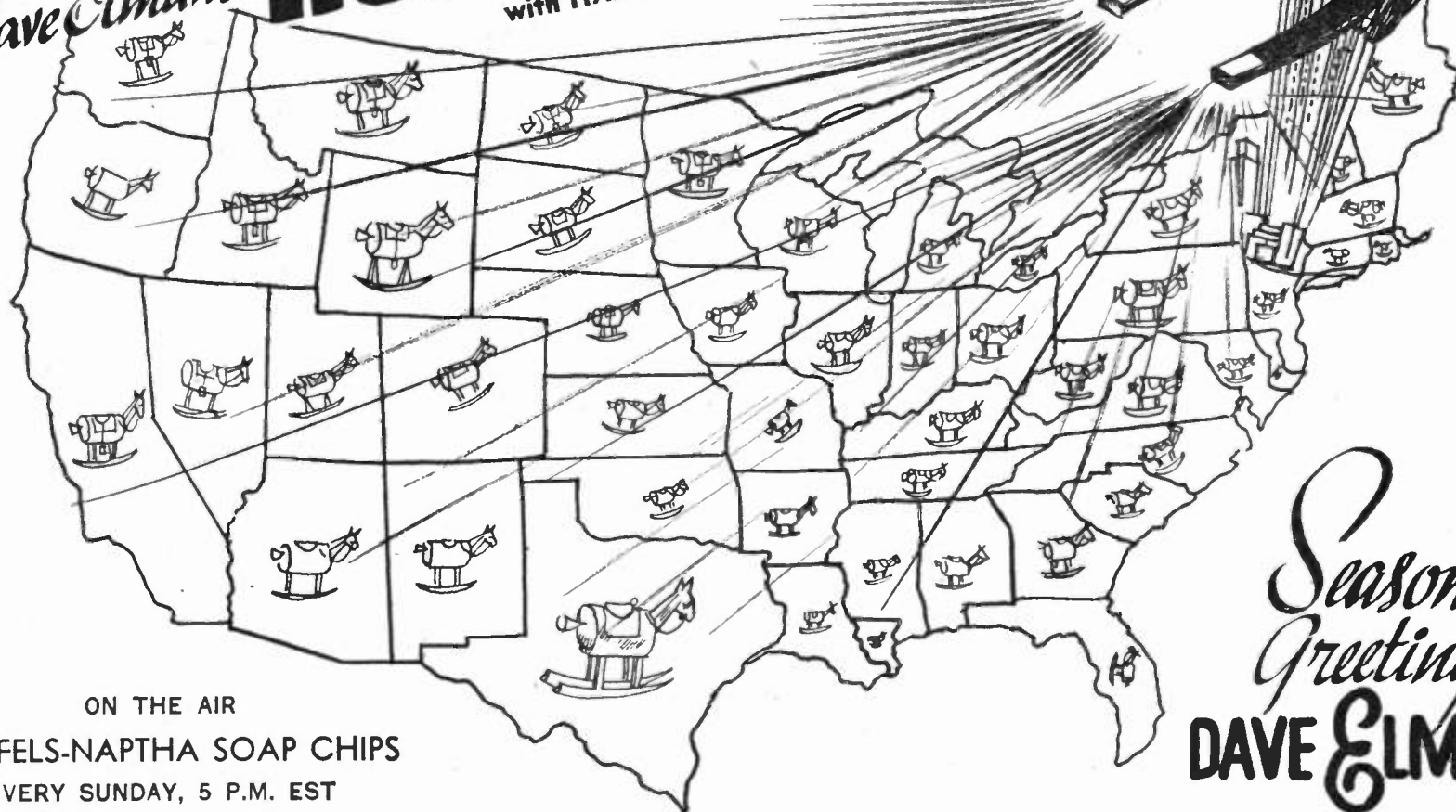


# The Nation's Hobby

## HOBBY LOBBY

Dave Elman's

with HARRY SALTER and his ORCHESTRA



ON THE AIR  
FOR FELS-NAPHTHA SOAP CHIPS  
EVERY SUNDAY, 5 P.M. EST  
WABC Columbia Broadcasting System  
Advertising Agency  
YOUNG AND RUBICAM

Season's  
Greetings  
**DAVE ELMAN**

485 MADISON AVE. • NEW YORK CITY

# VARIETY

## Writes Our Ad!

\* WSYR, Syracuse—Continues to set the pace on special events and educational programs. Turns out a slick promotional job, whether it involves tieup between national advertisers and local distributors or a local client of the station.

\* Reprinted from VARIETY's 1939 Showmanship Survey Issue Dec. 6, 1939.

### WSYR Is The NUMBER 1 Station In Central New York

- NBC Red and Blue
- 41% Farm Audience
- Half-Billion \$ Market



## Tops in Syracuse

PAUL H. RAYMER CO., Representatives

New York • Chicago • Detroit • San Francisco

# BOB HAWK

emceeing

the

## NAME THREE QUIZ SHOW

for  
REVELATION PIPE TOBACCO

8 P.M. Saturdays, EST

MBS

Season's Best Wishes to All My  
Friends and Listeners  
Everywhere

N.B.C.'s  
**ALICE REMSEN**

**PHILIP S. BARRISON**

Director and Producer  
of

"FIVE STAR FINAL"

150 West 55th Street  
NEW YORK

# VARIETY

IS  
THIRTY-FOUR  
YEARS OLD

★ ★ ★

One Question Quiz!

If all of the actors Variety has panned in 34 years were laid end to end . . . How long would it take them to jump up if Vaudeville really came back?

Don't send answers to

## FRED ALLEN

WEAF - - - Wednesdays, 9-10 p.m., E.S.T.

IPANA-SAL HEPATICA

WALTER BATCHELOR,  
Manager



# SEASON'S GREETINGS

*PEOPLE IN SHOWBUSINESS  
EVERYWHERE USE . . .*

*Postal Telegraph*

WHY MAKE A NEW RESOLUTION FOR 1940  
WHEN THE ONE WE HAVE USED FOR YEARS  
WORKS SO WELL.

WE RESOLVE: THAT OUR CONSTANT AIM  
SHALL BE BIGGER AND BETTER PROGRAMS  
SO AS TO EFFECT LARGER AND MORE AP-  
PRECIATIVE AUDIENCES AND EVEN BETTER  
RESULTS FOR OUR ADVERTISERS.

FIRST IN LINE: WJJD ON JANUARY 1, 1940,  
BECOMES THE EXCLUSIVE DAYTIME OUTLET  
FOR THE TRANSCONTINENTAL BROAD-  
CASTING SYSTEM.

## W·J·J·D

20,000 WATTS  
1130 KILOCYCLES

National Representatives: The Paul H. Raymer Co.

## FOR SPORTS FEATURES

in the

## CHICAGO MARKET

IT'S

## W·I·N·D

5000 WATTS D. 1000 WATTS N.  
560 KILOCYCLES

National Sales Office: 201 N. Wells St., Chicago, Ill.



"1938 WAS A GOOD YEAR.  
1939 WAS MUCH BETTER.  
WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO  
A STILL GREATER YEAR IN 1940"

RUSSEL M. SEEDS COMPANY  
CHICAGO—INDIANAPOLIS—CINCINNATI

# WRVA

Is grateful to be among those radio stations to receive one of Variety's 1939 plaques for showmanship. Virginia's ONLY 50,000 watt radio station—located near Richmond—is also grateful for the practical applause we constantly receive from advertisers and listeners alike . . . which enables us to lead the parade in Virginia.

C. T. LUCY, General Manager

PAUL H. RAYMER CO., National Representative

NEW YORK—CHICAGO—DETROIT  
SAN FRANCISCO—LOS ANGELES



COLUMBIA  
& MUTUAL  
NETWORKS

**WRVA 50,000 WATTS**

SEASON'S GREETINGS

## GUY LOMBARDO

AND HIS ROYAL CANADIANS

LADY ESTHER

MONDAYS	FRIDAYS
10 P.M. EST	10 P.M. EST
CBS NETWORK	NBC NETWORK

HOTEL ROOSEVELT  
NEW YORK CITY  
NOW

Management—MUSIC CORPORATION OF AMERICA

*Directed by . . .*

**CARLO DEANGELO . . .**

Palmolive's Hilltop House for . . .

Benton and Bowles . . .

THE O'NEILLS, Presented by  
Ivory Soap . . . Compton Adv.

**CARLO DEANGELO**

Is Available Through . . .

Ed. Wolf . . . Wolf Associates

*Greetings !*

## EARLE FERRIS

10 East 49th Street

CHICAGO

NEW YORK

HOLLYWOOD

Operating: Radio Feature Service, Inc.





MAJOR BOWES'  
ORIGINAL AMATEUR HOUR  
(Chrysler Corporation)

## ENTERTAIN THEM, YES!...BUT DON'T FORGET TO SELL THEM!

• Naturally, the creating of sales is the primary function of every commercial radio program, however large or small.

To this end the Ruthrauff & Ryan radio departments in New York, Chicago and Hollywood maintain special staffs of "commercial" writers whose sole job is to put "SELL" into the radio programs of our clients.

These writers are experts in radio salesmanship—adept at skilfully wringing every last bit

of sales effectiveness out of an entertainment feature which must pay for itself—or go off the air.

Would you like to know more about the radio background of Ruthrauff & Ryan—one of the four or five agencies in America with complete radio facilities in the East, Mid-West and West Coast territories? If so, why not have your secretary arrange an interview at your convenience? No obligation, of course.



EDWARD G. ROBINSON in  
"BIG TOWN" with Ona Munson  
(Rinso)



TOMMY RIGGS with "Betty Lou"  
(Quaker Oats)



ALICE FROST and MARTIN GABEL  
in "Big Sister"  
(Rinso)



MILTON BERLE  
(Quaker Puffed Wheat and  
Quaker Puffed Rice)



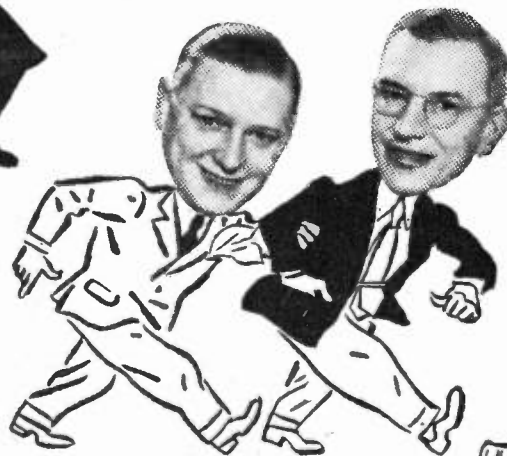
LANNY ROSS  
(Franco-American Spaghetti)



"AUNT JENNY"  
in Real Life Stories  
(Spry Shortening)



"THE SHADOW"  
Mystery Dramas  
(blue coal)



WALLY BUTTERWORTH and PARKS JOHNSON  
in "Vox Pop"  
(Kentucky Club Tobacco)



JOHN J. ANTHONY  
in the "Good Will Hour"  
(Ironized Yeast)



BETTY WINKLER in "Girl Alone"  
(Quaker Oats)



SMOKE DREAMS—Musical-Variety (La Fendrich Cigars)

## OUTSTANDING RADIO SHOWS PRODUCED BY THIS AGENCY

• Among our radio shows for 1939-40 are included every type and size of program: Comedy, Musical, Dramatic, Variety, Daytime, Evening and "Spot" Broadcasting. For Ruthrauff & Ryan is not wedded to any one formula, nor limited to any particular kind of show. Day in and day out we are employing every phase of radio to achieve increased sales and profits for our clients.

**MAJOR BOWES' ORIGINAL AMATEUR HOUR...** Sponsored by Chrysler Corporation for Plymouth, Dodge Passenger Cars and Trucks, De Soto and Chrysler Motor Cars.

**EDWARD G. ROBINSON in "BIG TOWN,"** with Ona Munson. The racket-smashing serial of the newspaper world. Sponsored by Rinso.

**TOMMY RIGGS,** with "Betty Lou," his famous child character creation. Sponsored by Quaker Oats Company.

**LANNY ROSS,** an evening star now shining in the daytime—radio's favorite tenor, sponsored by the Campbell Soup Company for Franco-American Spaghetti.

**"THE SHADOW,"** in a new series of mystery dramas sponsored by D. L. & W. Coal Company for 'blue coal.'

**COURT OF MISSING HEIRS**... A new kind of program dedicated to tracing men and women for whom fortune holds a legacy unknown to them. Sponsored by the Ironized Yeast Company coast to coast.

**"BIG SISTER,"** with Alice Frost and Martin Gabel. Dramatic daytime serial, broadcast five times a week, coast to coast, for Rinso.

**"VOX POP,"** the original and best known of the audience participation type of program, conducted by Parks Johnson and Wally Butterworth. Sponsored by Kentucky Club Pipe Tobacco.

**"GOOD WILL HOUR,"** with John J. Anthony as conductor. Sponsored by the Ironized Yeast Company, coast to coast.

**"AUNT JENNY"...** In the popular daytime dramatizations, "Real Life Stories," broadcast 5 times weekly. Sponsored by Spry Shortening.

**"GIRL ALONE,"** popular daytime serial broadcast 5 times a week, coast to coast. Sponsored by Quaker Oats Company.

**"SMOKE DREAMS"...** In the popular musical-variety program sponsored by H. Fendrich, Inc., for La Fendrich Cigars.

**MILTON BERLE...** "Stop Me If You've Heard This One," with Milton Berle, Harry Hirschfield and J. C. Flippen—an innovation in radio comedy, with guest celebrities supplying the "punch" lines and a sizeable share of the laughs. Sponsored by the Quaker Oats Company.



# 100 Million American Shareholders

## As Radio Enters 1940

**M**ORE than 44 million radio sets are owned by some 30 million American families. These families—more than 100 million people—are therefore shareholders in a great American enterprise. No other nation approaches these figures.

Never before has the importance of the American system of radio been so evident. News must be winnowed from propaganda, fact separated from claims. Our own forthcoming presidential campaign raises further need for radio reporting that is fair and unbiased.

Through great music, famous artists and distinguished organizations, radio provides the world's outstanding programs. The poorest man gets free what the richest man could not afford to buy.

RCA, through the National Broadcasting Company, will continue in 1940 to maintain and improve American standards of broadcasting.

But the activities of RCA extend far beyond radio broadcasting. RCA provides swift message service to all parts of the world, and to ships on the seven seas. In the RCA Laboratories research

constantly develops new services for radio. Thus in 1939 RCA made television a reality; in 1940 will extend it further. RCA services also include activities in every other phase of radio. In all of these, the aim of RCA is to provide the maximum service for the minimum cost to the public.

### These are the Services of RCA

#### RCA MANUFACTURING CO., INC.

Builders of RCA Victor Radio sets, RCA Victrolas, RCA Radio Tubes and radio equipment for broadcasting, transmission and many other radio services.

#### RADIOMARINE CORPORATION OF AMERICA

Manufacturers of radio safety devices for protecting lives and property at sea. Swift message service to and from ships.

#### NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY

Operating the great Red and Blue Networks, and providing distinguished entertainment, including the famous NBC Symphony Orchestra.

#### RCA INSTITUTES, INC.

A school offering technical courses in every phase of radio and television.

#### R.C.A. COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

Radio message service to and from 43 foreign countries, and among principal cities in the United States.

#### RCA LABORATORIES

Continuous research in every field of radio.



# RADIO CORPORATION OF AMERICA

RADIO CITY, NEW YORK

## MUTUAL ADDS 5 NEW STOCK OWNERS

Mutual Network is expanding its stock ownership so that instead of the shares being held strictly between WGN, Chicago, and WOR, Newark, it will also be divided among five other key affiliates. The added stockholders consist of John Shepard, 3rd, as operator of WAAB, Boston, and the Colonial Network; the Don Lee Network, representing 33 stations on the Pacific Coast; the United Broadcasting Corp., which takes in WHK and WCLE, Cleveland, and WHKC, Columbus; WKRC, Cincinnati, and CKLW, Detroit.

The seven organizations have pledged themselves to underwrite the financial operation of the network and to serve as principal program origination points. All of them have renewed their Mutual contract for another five years, effective Feb. 1, 1940. It is intended to enlarge Mutual's board so as to give these new stockholders representation. In addition to the board of directors there will be an Operating Board composed of a rep from each shareholding organization plus spokesmen appointed by the other affiliates in the Mutual setup. It is planned to have this newly created board meet twice a year with Fred Weber, Mutual general manager.

Introduction of the 'mutual' angle in its full sense marks the fourth year of Mutual's existence as a coast-to-coast operation.

### Add: Xmas Salutes

St. Louis, Jan. 1.

Evening shoppers, hotel guests and downtown workers as well as residents in outlying districts were serenaded with carols from an old fashion trolley coach as a special holiday greeting from KMOX during week before Christmas. Carolers were recruited from the Beaumont High School glee club, and, with good weather prevailing the kiddies had a swell time and the station copped lots of attention.

### And in the Northwest

Seattle, Jan. 1.

For the presentation of 'Santa Claus' Chimney Top Survey,' by KIRO (fed Columbia Broadcasting Pacific network Xmas eve) a huge plane was borrowed and whole dramatic troupe, plus a male quartet of carol singers, put on a mythical fantasy of Santa arriving from North pole with his helpers and carol singers. Program started in the studios where staff band set the scene. Controls were then shunted to the plane in the air, which, in the meantime had taken a great circle course over the city with everyone sitting on the floor of the airliner which was kept in a continual bank.

Tommy Thomas, KIRO program director, had standby fast auto with driver to carry him and staff to and from air field.

Season's Greetings From

# RED SKELTON



PERSONAL MANAGEMENT  
**TOM KENNEDY**  
RCA BUILDING, RADIO CITY  
NEW YORK



AGENCY  
**WILLIAM MORRIS**  
RKO BUILDING, RADIO CITY  
NEW YORK



## MEMO

FROM—EDDIE CANTOR  
TO—HELEN KIRK

Remind me to write copy  
for Variety anniversary "ad" -  
something like - Thanks to  
Bert Gordon (the mad Russian)  
Sidney Fields (Mr. Juffy)  
Leni Lynn, Joyce Hunter,  
Fairchild and Carroll, Ruth  
Daze and the Stuart Morgan  
dancers - for helping break those  
house records on my recent  
tour.

If it doesn't crowd the "ad"  
too much, we might also say  
that Busby Berkeley is directing  
my first M.G.M. picture  
"Forty little mothers."



# VARIETY'S award to KOIN of its NATIONAL SHOWMANSHIP PLAQUE

in the classification of

## SOCIAL SERVICE

confirms this station's already established  
claim to local dominance

Showmanship DOES help build audience! . . . and the Social Service kind of showmanship that makes a station a respected leader in its community adds prestige and friendship as well as audience! . . .

BECAUSE OF "listener first policies  
. . . production leadership  
. . . CBS programs  
. . . aggressive public relations work  
. . . AS WELL AS BECAUSE OF SHOWMANSHIP

# KOIN

THE JOURNAL  
PORTLAND, OREGON

Is always FIRST CHOICE STATION in this first choice market

National Representatives  
FREE and PETERS - - - World Broadcasting System



WQXR

and the

Interstate Broadcasting Company

are happy to announce the arrival of a

Construction Permit

from the Federal Communications Commission

for a 5000 Watt Station

730 Fifth Avenue, New York

Hello Folks—

This is

# WGST

in

ATLANTA, GA.

WISHING YOU

A

HAPPY NEW YEAR

WGST—The only Atlanta Station to receive honorable mention for Showmanship in VARIETY's 1939 yearly poll.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

# PETER VAN STEEDEN

## Radio Reviews

**GLENN MILLER**  
With Andrews Sisters, Ray Eberle  
Band, Songs  
15 Mins.

**CHESTERFIELD**  
Tues., Wed., Thurs., 10 p.m.  
WABC-CBS, New York  
(Newell-Emmett)

For his debut (27) Glenn Miller held forth in what had been Chesterfield's Wednesday night spot for several years. His regular thrice-weekly schedule for this, the first, commercial became effective last night (2).

The performance which Miller's band and the Andrews Sisters delivered in that one-time 25-minute period was chockful of auspicious things. It indicated a happy outlook for all concerned, with but one dubious rub, and that is the circumstance that the Miller troupe is pitted against such high-rating competition as Bob Hope, Kay Kyser and Bing Crosby. While these odds are pretty much against him, Miller has a powerful asset in the fact that at the present moment his band ranks as the hottest on-the-rise dance unit in the business. This momentum should prove an important factor on these Chesterfield stands.

Miller's initial program for the show account not only provided swell music in the modern idiom, but reflected a smart hand at the routineing of this type of show. Miller started off on his right foot by giving 'em those very items that have clicked best on his recording list. Every number served either to highlight Miller's sizzling brass or to furnish some rich samples of those instrumental ensemble effects that have done much to make the Miller unit what it is. The over-all impression was that Miller not only had a unique knack for blending rhythm and melody, but that he has struck a telling balance between swing and sweet music.

The Andrews Sisters were deftly fitted into the proceedings, giving it plenty of bounce and crack harmony. As an aid to identification, they opened with 'Bei Mir Bis Du Schoen.' The trio's other contribution, 'Ciri-biribin,' turned out the top sock of the occasion. It's one of the choicest things that the sisters have in their repertoire. Ray Eberle, Miller's staff vocalist, also filled in with a chorus here and there.

Besides the Glenn Miller-Andrews Sisters combination, Chesterfield has Fred Waring routed in a quarter-hour spot on the NBC-blue five times a week.

Odec.

**CHARLIE AGNEW ORCH.**  
With Jean Carroll, Verne Smith  
Music  
30 Mins.

**DODGE DEALERS OF CHICAGO**  
Sundays, 12:30 p.m. CST  
WBBM, Chicago  
(Ruthrauff & Ryan)

Dodge dealers have had this period on Sunday for several years now and have tried sundry and various musical programs, all of which evidently gathered a sufficiently large number of listeners to keep this show going on and on. There is no reason why the switch to a straight band policy should cause any drop in that listening audience. It may, in fact, tend to increase it.

Show is labelled 'Meet the Band,' each week delivering another orchestra to the mike. In addition to appearing on the show, the guest bandleader is given a 'baton of gold,' which is good showmanship.

While the program will remind listeners of the Fitch Bandwagon show on Sunday night, the 'Meet the Band' setup is nevertheless fine for a local show and indicates the growing tendency to aim for stronger local programs.

Agnew's orchestra is good, with plenty of emphasis on the soft and sweeter type of music, which is wise for Sunday noon. Leader has been around a long time without really clicking in a big way, but has a long reputation in show business and his name carries immediate recognition in the midwest.

Agnew goes in for a number of old favorite tunes, which has become pretty much of a trend on all orchestra schedules the past few months. Vocalist is Jean Carroll and she sings neatly enough. Verne Smith handles the splicing assignment capably.

Gold.

**MAL VARCOE**  
Ventriloquist  
15 Mins.

**WRIGLEYS**  
Mon.-Thurs., 7:30 p.m.  
3 AW, Melbourne.

Varcoe, via his doll, Ginger, is one of the outstanding personalities on the Aussie commercial air lanes, commanding a huge audience from Coast-to-Coast. Other ventriloquists here have tried the air lanes from time to time, but with little success. Varcoe has freshness and bright gags to maintain a very fast tempo over his allotted span, never becoming tiresome and hitting with timely topics to bring his sponsors an enormous coverage.

Only setback is a tiresome Irish brogue adopted by announcer to plug the commercial end. It's quite unnecessary and should be dropped.

Rick.



**BRISTOL-MYERS COMPANY**

PRESENT

AMERICA'S FOREMOST RACONTEUR

# GEORGIE JESSEL

For the Second Year On Radio

With the Compliments of  
**VITALIS**

Advertising Agency  
PEDLAR & RYAN, INC.

GREETINGS

## BOB CROSBY

AND HIS ORCHESTRA

**CAMEL  
CARAVAN**

Saturday Nights, 10 to 10:30, Eastern Time,  
Via NBC Red. Starting January 6th.

**HOTEL NEW YORKER**

Starting January 8th

SEASON'S  
GREETINGS

## PAUL SULLIVAN

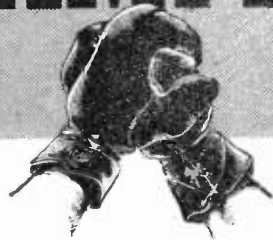
FOR RALEIGH CIGARETTES

WHAS  
LOUISVILLE, KY.

●  
COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM



# EIGHTH YEAR CHAMPION



**It's KMOX again!**

**DIALERS:** More people listen more hours to KMOX than to any other St. Louis station! And each year KMOX leads by a wider margin! Proved by every major audience study for more than eight years.

**DOLLARS:** KMOX carried more local and national spot business in 1939 than the other two St. Louis network stations combined!

**DISTANCE:** The 50,000 watt voice of KMOX is ten times as powerful as any other St. Louis station! Within its primary listening area alone KMOX serves more than 1,800,000 radio listeners who spend close to six hundred million a year! It's the largest market reached—and sold—by any St. Louis station!

The record speaks for itself. Today—as for the eight challenging years before—KMOX is champion.

KMOX can help you be a champion in St. Louis, too. Would you like us to send the details?

## KMOX

50,000 WATTS • A CBS STATION • ST. LOUIS

Owned and operated by The Columbia Broadcasting System.  
Represented by Radio Sales: New York, Chicago, Detroit,  
St. Louis, Charlotte, N.C., Los Angeles, San Francisco

## HAROLD STOKES

AND THE

## W. G. N. DANCE ORCHESTRA

*Sends Season's Greetings to All Our Friends*

When Santa Comes Down the Chimney—Yell  
—MU\$ICO—



## JOSEF CHERNIAVSKY

*Musical Director*  
WLW—WSAI

### Cleveland

Continued from page 94

Together, the stations employ 16 union musicians.

Since this fall, merchandising has become an ace factor in the commercial conduct of the two stations. All accounts now get the following: calls on brokers and distributors; program prevues for retailers; trade contacts; cross-sectional trade surveys; placement of displays furnished by advertiser; pre-announcements; publicity to 52 papers; news pictures in 150 locations to hit consumers; lobby displays; and space in the merchandising display guide. The latter is a swanky, leather folder personally given to 90 wholesalers and jobbers for ready-reference on products using the ether. New sheets are regularly inserted—green for grocery products and red for drugs. Billboards and similar out-and-out free advertising is frowned on, but additional frills are tacked onto each merchandising campaign to give it individuality.

### H. K. Carpenter One Of Radio's 15-Year Men

General manager of WHK-WCLE is H. K. Carpenter, here five and a half years (making a total of 15 years in radio), and once with WTAM and WPTF. K. K. Hackathorn, previously with the Plain Dealer, is commercial manager. Bob Greenberg, also previously with the Plain Dealer, handles merchandising. Russell (Bud) Richmond has had charge of programs for eight years after experience at WTAM and WJAY. Lez Biebel handles continuity. Bob Elliott assists in merchandising, while Milt Hill issues publicity. Baton waver of the house-band is Willard Pott. General musical direction is in charge of Louis Rich, also musical director of the Hanna Theatre. Rich additionally is taking over the newly-formed artists bureau which will book p.a. tours and units.

Both stations put quite a bit of emphasis on music, and carry a large staff of singers. Sports are also well taken care of, being spied by Jack Graney and Pinky Hunter. News is unspooled by Lee Otis, Alan Jenkins, and Nick Burnett. Civic events and boosts for Cleveland industry are adequately handled.

WHK's Sunday schedule includes a Negro choir (participating), a Chamber of Commerce tie-up for salutes to local industries, a series dealing with vocational-social guidance (run by Martin Kohe a la Dale Carnegie), and a tie-in with the camera club. On weekdays, Don Dewhurst emcees the musical clock at 7:30 a.m.; Eleanor Hanson has home economics at 9:45 a.m.; Wayne West and Dick Oheren give out song and patter at 11:30 a.m.; Ethel Hawes has a participating woman's magazine at 2 p.m.; Wayne West, singer, and the house band are fed to Mutual at 4:30 p.m.; Nick Burnett has a 'Fact Finder' stanza at 6:45 p.m.; and between 9 and 10 p.m. is a record show, emceed by Frances Pettay and sold participating. Other shows throughout the week include: Ellen Cornell's club chatter (for Higbee department store); Bonnie Bell's beauty stanza, with Gayle Gaylord, singer, and Nell Riggs and Helen Wyant at piano and electric organ; Guy Wallace's exercise show; Eleanor Hanson's reports on styles; a safety stanza from city hall; and Eleanor Hanson's hints for parties.

WCLE, because of its nifty signal, makes some play for farmers with Lew Henry's farm news at 6:45 a.m. plus stock and market prices at 9:45 a.m. On Sundays, music for foreign nationalities is liberally aired, but all chatter absolutely has to be in English. Sunday also has an amateur show from 3-5 p.m., emceed by Guy Wallace from the Masonic Auditorium, and four years old. Rest of the weekly and Sunday schedule is heavy on music, and—as mentioned before—just about sold out cold. Among the station's personalities are: Eleanor Hanson, with participating women's fare; Al Skully, accordionist; Wayne West, emcee; Ruth Ritchie, conductor of a local bulletin board; Marion Brent, singer; Jim Sands, piano and patter; Virginia Chestnut, singer; Helen Wyant, organist. Civic fare, as in all Cleveland stations, is strong. And there is a stanza on Saturdays for Cleveland's amateur classical musicians.

Les Lindow, head of the WCAE, Pittsburgh, sales department, has been named head of the sales managers committee for the third district of the National Association of Broadcasters.

# GREETINGS

OF THE SEASON

AND THE

# WNEW YEAR

MARTIN BLOCK

"The Make Believe Ballroom"

ELTON BRITT

and His "Bound-T Ranch"

RICHARD BROOKS

ALAN COURTNEY

"Gloom Chasers"

EARL HARPER

"Hot Stove League"

DAVID LOWE

"Sound Track"

MERLE PITT

and His "Five Shades of Blue"

STAN SHAW

"Milkman's Matinee"

ROSALIND SHERMAN

"In The Spotlight"

*Holiday Greetings*

## LUCY MONROE

*SEASON'S GREETINGS*

## LOUIS KATZMAN

*Musical Director*

HEARST RADIO

## PAULINE ALPERT

WHIRLWIND PIANIST

WOR



- Sara Algood • Eve Arden • John H. Auer • Lucille Ball • Wendy Barrie • Richard Barthelmess  
 James Barton • John Beal • Harry Bellaver • Richard Benedict • Jack Benny • Chaffee Blackmore  
 Natalie Bodanya • Roman Bohnen • Phillip Bourneuff • James Bridie • J. Edward Bromberg • Ed Byron  
 Kitty Carlisle • Morris Carnovsky • Paul Vincent Carroll • Tay Carson • Ina Claire • Kendall Clark  
 Russell Collins • Frank Conlon • Joe Cook • Phyllis Cooper • James Corner • Joseph Cotton • Walter Coy  
 Boyd Crawford • Hume Cronyn • Crumit and Sanderson • Shirley Dale • Henry Daniell  
 Dennis Day • Howard Dasyva • Margaret Douglas • Frank Downing • Ashley Dukes • R. S. Eliot  
 Dave Elman (Hobby Lobby) • Seymour Felix • Kenneth Ferrill • Ted Fetter • Barry Fitzgerald  
 Martin Flavin • Rudolf Forster • Sidney Fox • C. V. France • Arlene Francis • Erford Gage  
 Reginald Gardiner • John Garfield • Gregory Gaye • Ira Gershwin • Tamara Geva • Peter Godfrey  
 Arthur Goodrich • Sidney Greenstreet • Harry Wagstaff Gribble • Jack Haley • Robert Harris • Phil Harris  
 Richard Haydn • Julie Haydon • Louis Hayward • Van Heflin • Irene Hervey • Alan Hewitt  
 Peter Holden • Billy House • Dr. H. J. Hsiung • Carol Hughes • Henry Hull • Josephine Hull  
 Hugh Hunt • Denis Johnston • Allan Jones • Robert Edmond Jones • Albrecht F. Joseph • Elia Kazan  
 Jerome Kern • Frances Parkinson Keyes • King Sisters • John Klemperer • Fritz Kortner • Martin Kosleck  
 Hedy LaMarr • Francine Larrimore • Francis Lederer • Melchior Lengyel • Bea Lillie • Mary Livingstone  
 George Lloyd • Charles Locke • Katherine Locke • Roy Lockwood • Loper & Barratt • Marjorie Lord  
 Ida Lupino • Barre Lyndon • Hugh MacMullan • Arthur MacCrea • Harry T. Madden  
 Margo • Somerset Maugham • Lothar Mendes • Frances Mercer • Lewis Milestone • Robert Milton  
 Vincente Minnelli • John Moore • McKay Morris • Dudley Murphy • Sean O'Casey • Nell O'Day  
 Eugene O'Neill • Henry Oscar • Al Pearce  
 Sam Perrin • Arthur Phillips • Zelda Popkin  
 Cole Porter • Otto L. Preminger  
 Gene Raymond • Don Reid • Betty Jane Rhodes  
 Ralph Richardson • Jack Roberts  
 Anthony Ross • Lanny Ross • Herbert Rudley  
 Harry Salter • Jimmy Savo • Dr. Albert Sirmay  
 Ben Smith • Kate Smith • Robert Speaight  
 Eric Stanley • Lynn Starling • Haila Stoddard  
 Lee Strassberg • Ed Sullivan • Jessica Tandy  
 Richard Tauber • Dan Tobin • Vivian Vance  
 Don Voorhees • Albert Warren • Clifton Webb  
 Kenneth Webb • Kurt Weill • Phyllis Welch  
 Sylvia Weld • Francia White • Eleanore Whitney  
 Dame May Whitty • Emlyn Williams  
 Hugh Williams • Geo. Zucco

The Success of an Organization Is Dependent  
Upon the Capabilities of Its Manpower

### PICTURES

ARTHUR S. LYONS  
CLARE OLMSTEAD  
LOUIS ARTIGUE

### RADIO

BILL STUHLER  
DON STAUFFER  
LESTER LINSK

### THEATRES

MARGARET LINLEY  
ROBERT C. KENNEDY  
SAM T. LYONS

### LITERATI

RICHARD J. MADDEN  
CHAS. BEAHAN  
ALBERT H. GROSS

**A. & S. LYONS, Inc.**

515 Madison Ave., New York

Hollywood  
Cal. Bank Bldg.

London  
Connies, Ltd.





for the past year  
and the years to come

One hundred forty-two spot advertisers used WLS, Chicago, in 1939. 58% of them had advertised on WLS at least one year previously. 43% have used WLS three or more years. 24% have been with us five years or more, and one has used WLS every year for eleven consecutive years!

We don't need to tell you that these advertisers were satisfied. Otherwise they would not renew or return to WLS. After all, there's only one way to satisfy an advertiser: Get results. That's what WLS does.



**THE PRAIRIE FARMER STATION**  
Burridge D. Butler, President (Chicago) • Glenn Snyder, Manager

JOHN BLAIR & COMPANY, New York Chicago. Detroit. St. Louis Los Angeles San Francisco

3 GIRLS—3 TIMES A WEEK!  
*The*  
**Andrews Sisters**

Listen to them each Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday (for a limited engagement of thirteen weeks only), on the Chesterfield program with Glenn Miller's orchestra, via CBS coast-to-coast, 10:00 to 10:15 p.m. (E.S.T.)

Hear their latest DECCA recordings, "Yodelin' Jive", "South American Way", "Ciri Biri Bin", "Oh, Johnny" and others!

Direction  
**GENERAL AMUSEMENT CORP.**  
Thos. G. Rockwell, Pres. New York, Chicago, Hollywood, London  
Personal Management—LOU LEVY



**WMCA**

"First on Your Dial  
in New York"

NEW YORK AFFILIATE  
TRANSCONTINENTAL BROADCASTING SYSTEM

HOLIDAY GREETINGS  
FROM

**VIRGINIA PAYNE**  
(MA PERKINS)

NBC

CHICAGO



# PUT IT DOWN, HARRY, put it down!



**I**N A STOP-WATCH BUSINESS like radio, it's necessary to keep some control over audience response—frequently to cue the applause.

But on more than one occasion there has been a kind of spontaneous, un-cued applause on Young & Rubicam shows that's rare and unusual—applause for the *commercials*.

That isn't the result of just luck or accident. It all started seven years ago, when we set up the first (as far as we know)

special department to write commercials. There are now 13 people in the department—13 ingenious men and women who do nothing but write commercials that blend with the script and personality of each program, and frequently succeed in being one of the high spots of the show.

This pays off better than a lot of advertisers realize. It's not unusual for a network show to get as low as 25% sponsor identification. It's not unusual for Young & Rubicam shows to top 90%.

## Here are the Young & Rubicam Network Shows

**BEN BERNIE** for Half and Half Smoking Tobacco

**FRED ALLEN** for Sal Hepatica and Ipana

**HOBBY LOBBY** for Fels Naptha Soap & Chips

**KATE SMITH SPEAKS** and **MY SON & I** for Calumet and Swans Down

**KATE SMITH HOUR** for Grape-Nuts and Grape-Nuts Flakes

**JACK BENNY** for Jell-O

**ALDRICH FAMILY** for Jell-O Puddings

**JOYCE JORDAN, GIRL INTERNE** for La France, Satina and Minute Tapioca

**LUM & ABNER** for Postum

**WE, THE PEOPLE** for Sanka Coffee

**ONE OF THE FINEST** for Silvercup Bread

**SCREEN GUILD THEATRE** for Gulf Oil Corporation

**SILVER THEATER** for International Silver Company

## Here are the Young & Rubicam Spot and Local Shows

MINIT-RUB • SAL HEPATICA • JELL-O PUDDING • MINUTE TAPIOCA • POSTUM • CALUMET • SWANS DOWN  
GULF OIL & GULFSpray • LIPTON'S TEA • R. H. MACY & CO. • SANFORIZING • SCOTT'S EMULSION

# Young & Rubicam, Inc.

## ADVERTISING

NEW YORK • CHICAGO • DETROIT • SAN FRANCISCO • HOLLYWOOD • MONTREAL • TORONTO



**WBBM**  
COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM, INC.  
410 NO. MICHIGAN AVENUE, CHICAGO, ILL.  
WHITCHALL 6333

January 1, 1940

Dear Variety:

We've kept pretty quiet about it until now, but we'd like you to know that we've declared a bonus for 1940. A bonus, that is, for our listeners, and our advertisers, and for the dealers who handle products advertised over WBBM.

That bonus is additional coverage.

A new vertical radiator already in operation has increased our signal strength 55 per cent. And a new transmitter, which will be in operation by February, will further improve our service.

It gives us a good feeling to be able to keep on progressing ... to keep getting better even though for seven years we have led all other stations in Chicago in audience, and, naturally, in advertising.

Sincerely yours,

**WBBM**

P. S. Happy Birthday.

Represented by RADIO SALES - NEW YORK - CHICAGO - DETROIT - MILWAUKEE - BIRMINGHAM - LOS ANGELES - SAN FRANCISCO

## AUSTRALIAN RADIO IN 1939

By ERIC GORRICK

Sydney, Dec. 20.

Although there were natural fears in September that commercial broadcasting would be adversely affected by the European war, such has not proved the case. To the contrary, influx of sterling from London to cover expanded war-time orders for Australian produce is stimulating business generally. Radio benefits. The outlook for 1940 is promising.

The program vogue of the year was the 'jackpot program.' This is an Anzac variation of money giveaways, prizes and coin come-ons generally. While fairly old stuff in the States, it was brightly new here. Prizes from a cake of soap to \$1,000 stimulated much public interest in radio. That pleased everybody, and sponsors multiplied. Nobody bothered, apparently, to ask if this was good for radio. Such theoretical and critical talk is not typically Australian. They don't quibble with success here.

### Lux Clicks

Biggest production click of the year was the Australian Lux Radio theatre. Most of the plays aired were old-time Yankee fare. Presentations were marked by acting of the highest order under the direction of Harry Dearth. Lux will continue in 1940, with Sabbath shows on an hour's playing time.

An individual success a la Edgar Bergen was scored by Mal Varcoe, originator of a ventriloquial dummy, Ginger. This program continues one of Wrigley's programs for 1940. Another sponsored by the same firm is 'Dad and Dave,' also on four times weekly and one of the oldest programmers on the commercial loops.

Outbreak of war encouraged new propaganda program ideas, two of which, 'Radio That Hitler Fears' and 'Nazi Terror,' hit to quick popularity. A very strict censorship, however, saw the culling of many scripts from last September onwards.

## Frisco Radio Columns May Be Back in '40

San Francisco, Jan. 1.

Among the things which 1940 will bring to San Francisco radio will be closer cooperation between broadcasting and the printed page. For the past two months there has been a tendency to kiss and make up on the part of local newspapers and radio stations. For two years the latter have been poison to the former.

The hatchet-burying is largely the result of effort on the part of Al Nelson, manager of KPO-KGO, who recently took over duties here. One of the first things he did was line up mutually beneficial deals between his stations and the morning Chronicle and afternoon News. Next came a new publication called Cavalcade, 100,000 copies of which are distributed weekly in apartment houses. It is featuring a two page radio section.

Climax came this week when the twice-weekly Shopping News, with a circulation of 200,000, decided after 10 years to go for a radio section. It will take up most of the front page, featuring pictures and copy, with a box of best bets. Several stations, including KFRC, KJBS and KSFO, have space-announcement trade deals with papers that are proving mutually beneficial.

It is not unlikely that before the end of 1940 the Bay Area daily papers will have restored radio columns, as such, which were tossed out two years ago.

## WAY OUT WEST IN OREGON



...Where 95% of the homes have Radios...Where folks have more time to listen...And more money to spend...The top radio stations are...

**KGW and KEX**

RADIO STATIONS OF THE OREGONIAN PORTLAND, OREGON  
REPRESENTATIVES:  
**EDWARD PETRY & COMPANY, INC.**  
NEW YORK • CHICAGO • DETROIT • ST. LOUIS • SAN FRANCISCO • LOS ANGELES

DON'T MISS  
PALMOLIVE'S

## "HILLTOP HOUSE"

STARRING

BESS JOHNSON

By Adelaide Marston

Dedicated to the women of America.  
The story of a woman who must choose between love and the career of raising other women's children.

WABC-CBS—10:30-10:45 A.M. E.S.T.  
78 Stations Coast-to-Coast

Direction BENTON & BOWLES, Inc.  
Management ED WOLF, RKO BUILDING, New York

SEASON'S GREETINGS

**JOSEPH GALLICCHIO**

MUSICAL CONDUCTOR

NBC

CHICAGO

IN BALTIMORE  
IT'S **WFBR**  
NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES  
**EDWARD PETRY & CO.**  
ON THE NBC RED NETWORK



# Greetings from Columbia Artists

HERBERT ROSENTHAL  
Executive Vice-President  
COLUMBIA ARTISTS, INC.

JACK BERTELL  
Manager Personal Appearance Dept.  
COLUMBIA ARTISTS, INC.

**THE HARTMANS**

**BARRY WOOD**

Starring

"LUCKY STRIKE HIT PARADE SHOW"

Theatre Appearances Starting March

**GAMBARELLI**

Prima Ballerina

METROPOLITAN OPERA COMPANY

**DORIS RHODES**

THE GIRL WITH THE "DEEP PURPLE" VOICE

**MAXINE SULLIVAN**

STAR OF THE "COTTON CLUB REVUE"

**MICHAEL LORING**

CBS — Coast to Coast

OPENING ROYAL PALMS, MIAMI, JAN. 16

**MILTON DOUGLAS**

HOLLYWOOD BEACH HOTEL, HOLLYWOOD, FLA.

Indefinitely

**DEANE JANIS**

CURRENTLY GLASS HAT

BELMONT PLAZA, NEW YORK

**NAN WYNN**

CBS — Coast to Coast

Three Times Weekly

Opening Feb. 1 — Fefe's Monte Carlo, New York

**FRED FEIBEL**

ORGANIST

Phil Cook's Almanac

Big Sister

Deep River Rhapsody

Our Gal Sunday

Richard Maxwell

**MARTY MAY**

On Tour

"THREE AFTER THREE"

**THE MARTINS**

"A BLUE STREAK OF RHYTHM"

On Tour — "Three After Three"

Personal Direction—FRED STEELE, 745 Seventh Ave., New York

**REX INGRAM**

CBS

*A Happy Song For The New Year*

**THE DEEP RIVER BOYS**

CBS ARTISTS VERSATILE

From Spirituals to Swing

BROADCASTING—Six Times Weekly—CBS. GUEST APPEARANCES—Schaeffer

Beer, NBC; Gang Busters, CBS; Columbia Records, CBS.

PRODUCTION—"Swingin' the Dream"

MGT — COLUMBIA ARTISTS, Inc.

**KEN HARVEY**

And His "VIBRAELECTRON"

Now Under Personal Management of

COLUMBIA ARTISTS, Inc.

**AUDREY MARSH**

CBS — Coast to Coast

THREE TIMES WEEKLY



# FRED ALLEN

BEGINNING HIS SEVENTH YEAR ON THE SAL HEPATICA-IPANA RADIO  
PROGRAM\* FOR BRISTOL-MEYERS

## SALUTES VARIETY

NOW ENTERING ITS THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR OF STAR PERFORMANCE

\*Every Wednesday at 9 to 10 P.M.,  
E. S. T., on the N. B. C. Network

### *Announcers Under Personal Management Of Columbia Artists, Inc.*

*Holiday Greetings*

**DAN SEYMOUR**

**JAMES FLEMING**

Announcer—Salesman

Direction: COLUMBIA ARTISTS, INC.

**RALPH EDWARDS**

PROCTER & GAMBLE  
CHRYSLER CORP. HORN and HARDART

*Many Happy Returns*

**LARRY ELLIOTT**

Speaking for the More Than  
45,000 TEXACO DEALERS  
From Coast to Coast

**JOHN ALLEN WOLF**

Speaking for  
THOM McAN SHOES  
and  
Seven Other CBS Clients

GREETINGS

**FRANK GALLOP**

SEASON'S GREETINGS  
**MEL ALLEN**

SPORTS

BASEBALL—Yankees and Giants  
General Mills  
Procter and Gamble  
Socony-Vacuum  
and Also for CRISCO

FOOTBALL—Giants and Dodgers  
General Mills  
DAILY SPORTS REVIEW  
Raleigh Cigarettes

**TOM SHIRLEY**

*"Doc Barclay's Daughter"*

PERSONAL FINANCE

*"Billy and Betty"*

GENERAL MILLS, INC.



PAGE FOR A TIME BUYER'S NOTEBOOK...

# WJSV is a dominant first in Washington —for the fifth consecutive year!

*Again—for the fifth consecutive year—WJSV is the far-in-front First Choice in the rich Washington market. Here's the record for eleven months of 1939...*

**CLIENTS:** WJSV was the overwhelming first choice of more of the country's leading advertisers than any other Washington station!

**HOURS:** WJSV carried more hours of sponsored programs than any competitor...the greatest amount of commercial program time in the history of Washington radio!

**DOLLARS:** WJSV carried the greatest dollar volume of any Washington station... 42% MORE non-network program business than the nearest competitor— 79% MORE than the third ranking station. The answer was just the same in network dollar volume. WJSV was a walk-away first...with 29% MORE network program business than the next station, and 200% MORE than the third station!

*We leaned way over backwards in the above computations. Not a single one of WJSV's exclusive seventy-two sponsored baseball games was included. If they had been, WJSV would be first by even wider margins.*



## WJSV

50,000 WATTS IN FEBRUARY • THE CBS STATION IN WASHINGTON, D. C.

Owned and operated by the Columbia Broadcasting System. Represented by Radio Sales: New York, Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis, Charlotte, Los Angeles, San Francisco



## Desire to Better Relations With Webs Reported Reason For Mexico's Sudden Pact Okay

Washington, Jan. 1. In a whirlwind about-face, the Mexican Senate on Friday (29) suddenly ratified the North American Regional Broadcasting Agreement, and simultaneously gave evidences of hoping that the plan for putting this far-reaching paper into effect would take hold in 90 days. This move took holiday-minded Washington almost completely by surprise, for only a year ago, on Oct. 26, 1938, Mexico had balked at ratifying the agreement, and thus threw a monkey-wrench into the otherwise well-oiled works.

[VARIETY's presstime comes so close on the heels of the ratification, and during a time when official Washington is celebrating New Year's, that details are tentative].

It was understood here that Commissioner T. A. M. Craven, the FCC's best engineering mind, and the person long interested in a pact ensuring North American wave-length order, called a quick meeting on Saturday (30) with members of his staff to discuss the Mexican ratification. Other FCC Commissioners were not present, nor was the FCC at work because of the holiday.

The reason for Mexico's about-face will have to await further clarification, but first reports indicate that the Mexican Broadcasters' Assn. put the heat on their government. It is known that only a few weeks ago, when rumors began to be circulated that border stations were about to 'jump' onto certain U. S. frequencies, certain members of the Association were directly or indirectly interested in seeing that these reports got full U. S. circulation. As a result of such circulation, the U. S. State Department picked up its ears and started murmurings. Between the U. S. State Department and its own Broadcasters' Assn., Mexico thus probably had the best basis for a hasty ratification.

Why did the Mexican Broadcasters want the agreement signed in spite of the consistent blocking of the powerful border stations? The best guess at this moment is that these broadcasters would like better relations with U. S. networks, particularly NBC. Already Ford is pumping a web program into Mexico, and it may be that the Mexicans feel that if wave-length order is brought about, more business will come their way as a result of the ensuing pleasanter relations. Whether the Mexicans figured it that way or not—and (to repeat) these matters need more time for clarification—such a result is almost certain to ensue, anyhow.

From the U. S. viewpoint, the Mexican idea of causing the paper to be put into effect in 90 days is not too encouraging. This time interval is

so diminutive that it would cause wholesale disorder. For virtually all U. S. stations located on frequencies of 730 kc or over will have to shift from 10 to 40 kc, depending on their present wave-length. Not only that. The FCC will have to undertake all sorts of new wattage assignments, and special wavelength shifts in special instances. Undoubtedly the FCC, and possibly also Canada and Cuba, will want ample time to get the whole thing straight, and would favor setting one certain day when all the nations would start broadcasting under the new regime at once.

Ernest Mobley is a newcomer on the KTOK, Oklahoma City, announcing staff. He comes from KOB, Albuquerque.

### H. A. BELLOWS DIES

Pioneer Radio Man, 54, Had Been WCCO Manager and CBS V.P.

Minneapolis, Jan. 1.

Henry A. Bellows, 54, a pioneer figure in radio and whose last connection was that of public relations director for General Mills, died at his home here Dec. 29. He had been seriously ill for some time. Bellows' career included membership in the original Federal Radio Commission, CBS Washington representation, with the title of v.p.; managership of WCCO, Minneapolis; high officership in the National Guard, English instructor at Harvard and the University of Minnesota, and music critic and author.

Bellows came into the industry in 1925 as manager of WCCO. Two years later President Coolidge appointed him to the first radio commission. In 1929 he returned to his Minneapolis spot, and the following year Columbia made him a v.p. and assigned to Washington contacting. From 1930 to 1934 he was chairman of the NAB's legislative committee. Bellows was a delegate to several international conferences on radio.

He is survived by his widow, a son and a daughter.

## Deadpan, Tongue-Tied Examiners Attacked by Lawyer E. C. Lovett

Washington, Jan. 1.

Ground-work for an important court attack on the FCC procedure placed in effect by former chairman Frank R. McNinch was laid last week in a rehearing petition challenging the proposed decision giving Eugene C. Pulliam, owner of WIRE, Indianapolis, another outlet at Vincennes, Ind. In an ingenious argument which puts the regulators between two fires, Eliot C. Lovett, counsel for Samuel M. Emison, unsuccessful rival for the privilege of building a Vincennes outlet, questions the propriety of taking evidence before an umpire who fails to offer his own report and to recommend the type of action taken on contested applications. Apparent that Emison's attorney hopes to get the matter into court where the entire FCC system may be upset by an adverse decision. Lovett heaped coals of fire on the Commish by pointing out that the

finding in Pulliam's behalf is completely counter to a policy followed in another case which he is still fighting in the courts. The proposed grant to Pulliam's Vincennes Newspapers, Inc., overlooks the fact, the barrister emphasized, that none of the individuals in control of a contemplated local station resides in the community. More than two years ago, the FCC refused to grant the application of the Pottsville Broadcasting Co., which Lovett also represents, because all of the promoters were non-residents.

The most important issue in the petition for reconsideration in the Vincennes matter is the validity of the Commission's trial routine. While the law does not require findings by an examiner, Lovett said it is imperative to have the presiding officer weigh the sincerity and credibility of witnesses if the ultimate settlement of the case is to be just.



## ... FARM SERVICE

Millions of rural listeners call WLW "their station" . . . and no wonder! With one of the oldest and best organized Agricultural Departments in radio, WLW is uniquely equipped to serve its rural audience in one of America's most fertile agricultural markets—17,892,940 is the rural population of its primary area.

Besides daily weather, market and crop reports, WLW originates Everybody's Farm Hour, RFD Mail Box, Truly American and Fortunes Washed Away. Special farm events and features cover agricultural activities ranging from Fairs and Expositions to pickups from actual farms.

To stimulate greater interest in radio among agriculturally trained men, WLW last year inaugurated the WLW Practical Scholarships in Radio Training. Each year, two Agricultural Seniors in Land Grant Colleges are selected for this 6 months training course. Last year's scholarship winners have finished their training period and are now members of the Agricultural Staff of the Nation's Station.

The bond of friendship with rural listeners is further strengthened with the regular personal appearances of WLW's Boone County Jamboree. Farm folks listen because WLW helps them to a more abundant as well as a more successful life.



George C. Biggar introduces Merton V. Emmert and Charlie Grisham, WLW Scholarship Winners, to James D. Shouse, head of WLW.



**WBNS**  
COLUMBUS, OHIO  
All you need in  
Central Ohio

JOHN BLAIR & CO., Representative

**5000 WATTS DAY**  
**1000 WATTS NIGHT**

Happy  
New Year

THE  
**SMOOTHIES**  
BABS-CHARLIE-LITTLE

**WLW** IS REPRESENTED BY  
**TRANSAMERICAN BROADCASTING & TELEVISION CORP.**  
**NEW YORK CHICAGO**



## ASCAP Holds Back So Not to Seem Fighting New Broadcast Music, Inc.

Special radio committee, appointed several months ago by the board of directors of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, now won't make a report on its finding until the board's January meeting (25). The committee wants to consider some angles that have recently come up before submitting its recommendations on what form the next licensing contract with broadcasters should take.

The indications are that no new contract will be made available to the radio industry until late in the spring when the National Association of Broadcasters' project, Broadcast Music, Inc., will have had a chance to get started. It is understood that ASCAP want to avoid doing anything that might be interpreted in Washington as an attempt to trip up the industry-owned music reservoir.

### KOIN Creates Novel Biz-Salve Exec Job

Portland, Ore., Jan. 1.

Creation of an entirely new position in the radio exec field is claimed by C. W. Myers, president of KOIN, in appointing Harry H. Buckendahl to the post of director of commercial relations. Buckendahl is definitely unattached to the sales department or any other established department of the station, and his position is created for the better contact between KOIN and national advertising agencies, together with advertisers in general. For the present he will confine his activities to the local community, but expects in the future to be a sort of traveling ambassador for the station with

### Civic Pride

Ft. Worth, Jan. 1.

When Editor H. I. Trout, of the Glen Rose, Tex., Reporter was asked to appear on a recent KGKO suburban editor program, 15 Glen Rose business concerns subscribed a purse to cover Editor Trout's bus fare to Fort Worth and return. The fare, \$1.50.

commercial contacts in the national field.

Buckendahl comes to KOIN after being the Pacific coast manager for Gilman, Nicoll & Ruthman, publishers' representatives.

### Religious Show Sponsored

San Antonio, Jan. 1.

Dairyland, Inc., local dairy, is presenting a half hour program titled Sunday School of the Air through KABC each sabbath afternoon. Account was placed through Marion Johnson Agency.

Besides religious music a transcribed program, 'The Living Bible,' will also be heard.

## Chicago's Negro Station

By Dan Goldberg

Chicago, Jan. 1.

Chicago has always been a fertile field for specialized racial (language) groups, such as Jewish, Hungarian, German, Polish, Italian, Swedish and with all the local (non-network) stations making a play for these groups. But of all the stations, only one has established itself as the Negro station. That is WSBC, which is at present carrying a schedule of five-and-a-half hours of Negro shows weekly under the direction of Jack Cooper, colored entertainer, producer and salesman who has been with the outfit since 1928 and who in this time has built up a strong race following for the transmitter.

Cooper, who formerly was with Eubie Blake and Noble Sissle, does everything connected with the Negro programs. He sells 'em, books 'em, gets the talent, writes the show, announces and produces the shows, and has established himself pretty much

as the No. 1 Negro entertainer in this territory, with a rep that extends through all the Negro communities in the nation.

### No Accent

Cooper doesn't talk in the typical Negro accent which is common in vaude and radio. He speaks without any hint of 'southern' vintage, and that is probably a terrific advantage since his listeners don't get the impression that he is talking down to 'em.

At present the Negro programs on the stations are scheduled on Sundays at 6-6:30 a.m., 9-10 and 11-12 on Sunday night, Thursdays from 9:30 to 10 p.m., Tuesday-Thursday-Friday 11-12 at night, and Saturdays from 2:30 to 3 p.m.

Among the sponsors are Grove Furniture, Jones Undertaking and Funeral Home, the General Furniture company, Michelson Furniture, Scotland Credit, Monroe-Fox Clothing, Lakeview Dairy and a number of other local merchants who buy announcements.

Unquestionably the most popular type of show for the Negro is the religious choir and gospel programs. Cooper has made tie-ups with 37 colored churches which supply 47 singing groups, ranging from choirs down to quartets and singles. But the Negro listener evidently loves to hear over and over hymns and more hymns. Despite the popular conception that the Negro goes for hot stuff, the church music rates far and away the most popular of programming.

For the late evening hours Cooper has plenty of hot records, however, which are used with announcements under the program tags of 'Hot and Bothered' and 'Sizzling Super-Swing.'

Cooper supplies the talent for all the programs with the exception of the Jones Funeral Home, which furnishes its own performers in the shape of a gospel quartet, rated one of the top-notch attractions on WSBC.

In gathering talent for the shows the main expense is concerned with phone calls, bus fare and money for clean laundry. Most of the performers work for the love of it, though the growing commercial strength of these programs is causing many of the singers to begin asking for folding money for appearing on the commercial shows. They are still willing to warble for nix on the sustaining shows.

WSBC maintains a studio in the heart of the local colored district where most of the Negro shows originate. Not only does this save carfare, but it has been found that the Negroes are more at ease in their own studio than in the uptown broadcasting booth.

Cooper also runs a public service program tagged 'Search for Missing Persons' and in the year that the period has been on he has located some 700 Negroes in all parts of the country. To such an extent has this grown that the Chicago Police Department now actively cooperates with the WSBC program.

### Toledo Disc Firm Formed

Toledo, Jan. 1.

Sweeney Sales, Inc., Toledo, new firm, has been organized to manufacture and distribute a new radio-record player combination. Corporation will also make electrical transcriptions for radio use, and is licensee for Modern Talking Pictures, industrial films.



Ed Mason, WLW farm announcer, interviews Louis J. Taber, Master of the National Grange (left), and Roy Battles, Agricultural Agent of Clermont County, Ohio, at Clermont County Farm Picnic.

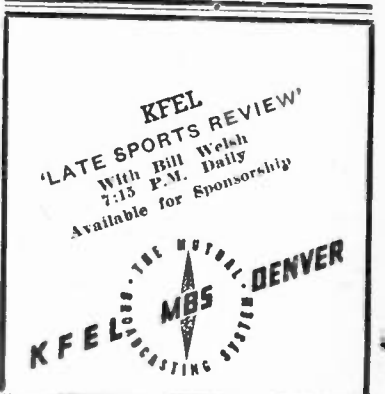
## "Everybody's Farm Hour"—ANOTHER WLW EXCLUSIVE

Typical of WLW's service to its large rural audience is the WLW program, *Everybody's Farm Hour*. WLW originated this program not to compete with the *National Farm and Home Hour* (which it replaced on WLW), but to give its listeners an equally fine program devoted to their particular interests—a sectionalized *Farm Hour*—a program not available from any other station. *Everybody's Farm Hour* deals specifically with the crops and daily activities which vitally concern WLW's rural listeners.

Cooperating closely with farm organizations and agricultural colleges, this program is continuing to bring to the WLW audience: Practical Farmers and Farm Wives—County Agricultural Agents—Home Demonstration Agents—4-H Club Leaders—4-H Club Boys and Girls—Future Farmers of America—Farm Organization Leaders—and Representatives of such Federal Agencies as the Soil Conservation Service—Farm Credit Administration—Farm Security Administration—The Triple A—Agricultural Marketing Service—and other U. S. Department of Agriculture Officials.

Enthusiastic listener response proves that *Everybody's Farm Hour* is truly attuned to life in rural WLW-land.

**WLW** THE NATION'S  
most "Merchandise-Able"  
STATION



**WBAL**  
means business  
in Baltimore



## SALES PROMOTION AMMUNITION FOR THE LOCAL BROADCASTER

(Bureau of Radio Advertising)

By Samuel J. Henry, Jr.

Washington, Jan. 1.

When the NAB gathered in extraordinary session in Washington in February, 1938, the convention theme paraphrased Shakespeare, to-wit: 'Now is the winter of our discontent—and why doesn't somebody do something?'

Under Neville Miller's guidance, the reorganized NAB decided radio was tired of fighting endless rear-guard actions in defense of radio; how about a little good, clean aggression on the broadcaster's behalf? The thought being, of course, that a strong offense is often the best defense.

Broadcast Music, Inc., was one re-

sult of this thinking, the NAB Code another, and the Bureau of Radio Advertising is still a third.

Unlike the Goddess of Wisdom, the Bureau of Radio Advertising did not spring full-blown from anybody's brow. The Sales Managers' Division had long recognized the need for some central clearing house of information and sales ammunition, to be made available to all member stations for local sales and promotion use. The Bureau was duly authorized by the NAB Board, and established at NAB headquarters early in 1939.

The Bureau is designed to promote radio as an advertising medium; to conduct research and studies in all

commercial, industrial and marketing fields requiring the use of advertising; to collect from the industry basic information, in usable form, for the industry; to place in the hands of commercial radio men effective presentations, sales stories and data especially adapted for use in auditions, divisional dealer and salesmen meetings; to develop closer relationships with advertisers, advertising agencies, trade bodies and the trade press.

In selling time, the Bureau believes, nothing succeeds like success stories. A keystone in its promotion efforts, therefore, is the series of industry trade studies (in reality individual case histories and success stories) published under the title, 'Results from Radio.'

The experience of stations who have used the trade studies seems to bear out the Bureau's original belief. Their reaction is worth noting. Officially announced in May, 1939, the full-time operation of the Bureau was delayed by other and more pressing industry problems until Sept. 1. In four months over 300 stations have ordered and are using a total of 2,600 copies of the 'Results from Radio' studies. (Three have been released to date, on department stores, laundries, and an unusual combination of jeweler-optician-furniture-clothing). In addition, these same stations have utilized 1,639 copies of the basic sales presentation, 'Radio Reaches People.'

In planning and producing the 'Results from Radio' series, the Bureau has found that once full information is collected, and documented by exact sales results from an authoritative source, the studies almost write themselves. It is only necessary to be simple, clear, direct and honest. The case history itself is the thing, and much of the Bureau's time is devoted to searching, collecting and organizing it into useful form. No frills, no window dressing, no irrelevant headlines to obscure the main selling point, which is simply that:

'Here, Mr. Local Advertiser, is proof that radio advertising, properly applied, will work for you.'

National manufacturers are always concerned with the demands and opinions of their dealers. Several outstanding surveys, expressing the media preference of dealers in many fields, have already been made by networks and individual stations. The general radio results of these surveys will be made available to NAB members for use in convincing local dealers in other fields. It is hoped these reports will filter back to the home office but, just to make doubly sure, the Bureau itself carries the message of dealer preference for radio, to the trade groups and individual companies who have not yet accepted the medium.

### Only the Time Chiseler Himself Is Fooled

As the original announcement of the Bureau stated, 'one of its important functions will be to examine proposals from publicity-seeking groups to uncover any hidden commercial interest, and to divert as many as possible into commercial users of radio; to stop the free-radio-ride abuse.'

It is not hard to detect a time-chiseler. Only the chiseler himself is usually fooled. Yet stations, and advertisers, need to be made fully aware of the serious threat to radio's economic position, and to its prestige as an advertising medium, which lies in unrestricted acceptance of so-called 'free offers.' This the Bureau has tried to do in three ways:

1. Give wide publicity to the time-chiselers—thus shaming them into ceasing their efforts and making all stations aware of same.

2. Bring home to stations the simple, obvious fact that nine out of 10 free offers represent companies who have money to spend, that do spend it in newspapers and other media, and will spend it in radio when they are made to realize that is the only way they can take advantage of radio's mass circulation.

3. Make advertisers realize they are better off in the long run if they pay for time.

The Bureau encourages individual stations to bring this last fact home to local dealers and distributors, endeavoring to get them to sponsor the 'free-offer.' At the same time, the parent company is also solicited for sponsorship on a national basis, or asked to encourage their local outlets to buy time.

Experience has shown this works in two ways. Over 60 stations sold their local film exhibitors a 15-minute transcription plugging the RKO picture, 'Swiss Family Robinson.' The film producers have slowed down on subsequent giveaways, in

### Not Promising

Salt Lake City, Jan. 1.

KSL has a new Russell Stewart program entitled: 'You Name It, We'll Play It, If We Have It.'

fear the exhibitors will feel they are being put on the spot to buy advertising which is more properly paid for by the home office. Already stations have noted a lessening in time-chiseling attempts, and from sources which have been most prolific in the past. For example, Ed Cargill of WMAZ, states:

'I frankly believe that the amount of this material received is definitely and gradually decreasing. It is my firm belief that the great majority of broadcasters are taking the same attitude we are in turning down this type of promotion that should be delivered on paid time.'

Encouraging, yes, but education is a slow and painful process and the Bureau continues to receive reports

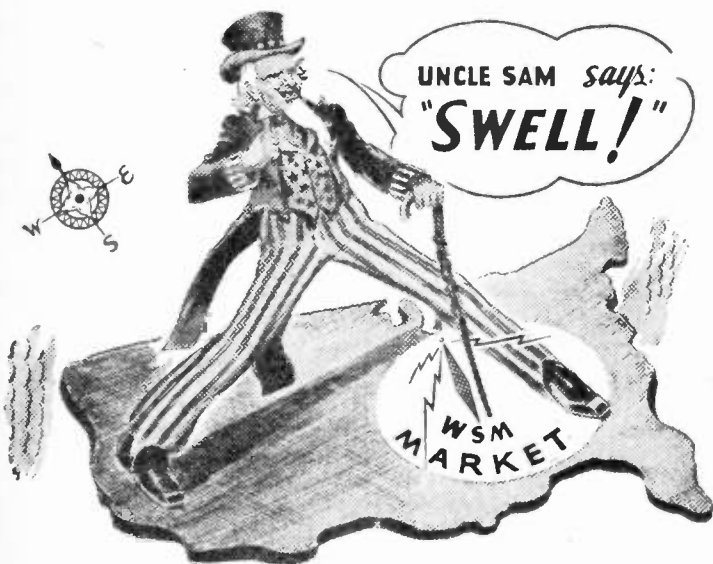
of new time-chiseling attempts almost daily. Many stem from uninformed newcomers, innocently seeking a little free radio publicity—without malice aforethought. A letter from NAB Headquarters, politely warning that such things simply are not done, usually suffices to make them subside.

Others are nothing more than high-powered rackets, often providing excellent program material in script or transcribed form, at considerable expense. The letter to the station runs something like this:

Recognizing the serious program problem faced by many stations, the Blank company is now able to offer you this outstanding series of programs which you may broadcast absolutely free of charge (or even sell to local sponsors) in return for which all we ask is just a 'teeny-weeny' credit line.

In some cases, no credit line is requested, which simply means that the advertising is buried in the script itself under the guise of public interest material.

NO ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN IS COMPLETE WITHOUT WSM



### IF YOU'D LIKE TO BREAK A FEW SALES QUOTAS THIS FALL, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

Domestic Commerce (published by the U. S. Department of Commerce) features these figures for the East South Central States. Change from June, 1938, to June, 1939.

Wholesalers' Sales	Up	9.7%
Accounts Receivable	Up	5.1%
Inventories	Down	6.1%

Add to these the following:

Industrial Employment (8 months)	Up	7.7%
New Car Sales	Up	40%
Electrical Power Consumption	Up	11%
Telephone	Up	7%
Bank Deposits	Up	7%
Retail Sales	Up	8%

With sales INCREASING, employment up and inventories DECREASING the East South Central States, WSM's front yard, are ready to do a rushing business. WSM, the dominant 50,000 Watt Station in this favorable region, can carry your sales message to the people who buy, with a maximum of effectiveness and a minimum of cost. May we show you facts and figures?



National Representatives, EDWARD PETRY & CO., INC.

### HOLIDAY GREETINGS

FROM

**HAROLD BETTS**  
(RADIO'S ROMANTIC BACHELOR)

8th Renewal—My Record as "DOGGY DAN" for

**JOHN MORRELL & CO.**

WMAQ—NBC

CHICAGO

**ARE  
YOUSE  
A  
VIPER (Ky.)  
ADVERTISER?**

Distribution costs being what they are, advertisers don't find a very profitable market in such typical small Kentucky towns as Viper, Greasy Creek, Cub Run, and the like. . . . In fact, the only large section of Kentucky offering really concentrated sales opportunity is the Louisville Trading Area—the home of a million people, who buy more than all the rest of Kentucky combined! . . . To cover this area you need only one radio station—WAVE—a station which offers its listeners the finest home-town entertainment, plus the best on NBC. May we send you the complete story?

**LOUISVILLE'S  
WAVE**

INCORPORATED

1000 WATTS • • • 940 K.C. • • • N.B.C.

NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES: FREE & PETERS, INC.

ARRANGER • COMPOSER • CONDUCTOR  
RADIO • MOTION PICTURES • THEATRES

**KEN SISSON**

Direction: JACK LAVIN, The Park Central, New York

### GREETINGS FROM

**DICK HARDING**

'the man with a 1,000 flying fingers'

NEIL HOUSE, COLUMBUS

MBS, Coast-to-Coast



# PLATTERS HELPED POP MUSIC IN 1939

By ABEL GREEN

It's been a good music year, and continues to look good. There was verve, vigor and personality, both in music styles and in manpower. New firms and new blood revitalized Tin Pan Alley. Despite the war, England gave America (notably via Shapiro-Bernstein, easily the No. 1 firm of the year) its foremost hits, namely, 'Penny Serenade,' 'South of the Border,' 'My Prayer,' 'Beer Barrel Polka,' 'Cinderella Stay in My Arms,' etc.

A sluggish Hollywood produced a lively Broadway. The film music well has run dry for a spell, so the tunesmiths, renewing their interest in legit musicals, brought in 'South American Way,' 'Comes Love,' 'Are You Having Any Fun?' 'Get Out of Town,' 'I Didn't Know What Time It Was,' 'Do I Love You—Do I?' and the like.

Pop song quality improved also. Refugees coming over observed, 'My, what a wonderfully musical nation America is! They even whistle Mozart, Tchaikowsky, Debussy and Chopin in the street.' This mythical observation referred to Raymond Scott's jazzique, 'In an 18th Century Drawing Room' (Mozart theme); 'Our Love' and 'My Reverie' (Debussy via Larry Clinton); 'Moon Love' (Tchaikowsky, via Andre Kostelanetz's arrangement); 'How Strange' (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, via B. A. Prozorovsky's 'Kak Stranno,' from the Russian), et al.

Anno Domini 1939 also produced 'Three Little Fishies in the Itty Bitty Poo,' 'Taint What You Do. It's the Way Thatcha Do It,' 'Well, All Right,' 'I Want the Waiter with Water,' 'Hold Tight,' 'Under the Spreading Chestnut Tree,' 'Booms-a-Daisy' (latter two from England), 'Little Man Who Wasn't There,' and the like.

The year's trade evolutions were many. Fred Waring and his business aide, Johnny O'Connor, who have been campaigning for the 'interpretive' artist's rights on recording machines, got ex-mayor Jimmy Walker to front the National Assn. of Performing Artists in a drive to collect from the coin-machines.

## They Hoofed at the Crossroads To the Very Best Dance Bands

The boom of the phonographs in turn created a host of 'juke joints' at the crossroads and in the sticks, where the kids hoofed to the cream of the nation's dansapators by dropping a nickel-in-the-slot. Even ASCAP couldn't cope with this, realizing that its proprietary rights were limited to the licensing of the copyright for musical reproduction, but with the NAPA (recording artists) claiming a vital right, it is hoped to collect from the 450,000 (very roughly estimated) coin machines scattered all over the country in pubs, taverns, danceries and the like.

Coin-machine thing has been dramatized in the past in sundry manners. This season it forced 'Beer Barrel Polka' into a national craze, being originally a Czechoslovakian piece that was being widely performed around the Buffalo-Detroit sector by the Bohemian and Czech auto workers in their local beerstubs. It was thus called to Shapiro-Bernstein's attention, and it has sold 600,000 sheet copies and as many platters to date.

The coin machines have also created such pop hits as 'The One Rose That's Left in My Heart,' 'Sunrise Serenade,' 'El Rancho Grande,' etc.

But more important in recent months has been the manner in which the disks catapulted certain recording artists into big league popularity. This form of nickel-in-the-slot popularity wore out so many recordings of certain fave bands and artists (Glenn Miller, Artie Shaw, Benny Goodman, Andrews Sisters, Orrin Tucker-Bonnie Baker) that new favorites were born strictly off the wax.

## Leaders Want to Be Publishers And Many Are Finding Out

In turn, this manifestation of the disk vogue gave a number of bandleaders the music publishing bee. They realized they may not rate in ASCAP, via the traditional methods, competing with the old-established veteran firms and catalogs, but they might be able to collect from disk performing rights. Veritable rash of maestro-publishers broke out. Fred Waring, of course, has been staggering along with his Words & Music company for some years now—and losing money—his other maestro-partners, like Whiteman, Lyman, Lombardo, having dropped out. Guy and Carmen Lombardo have been concentrating on Olman Music Corp. Meantime a flock of new entrants are finding out. Benny Goodman's brother, Harry, is handling the old Maurice Abrahams, Inc., catalog, acquired from the latter's widow, Belle Baker. Teddy Powell is in on Harry Tenney, Inc. Nathaniel Shilkret incorporated a firm bearing his name. Tommy Dorsey, after being almost set to pay \$40,000 for a 50% interest in Larry Spier's firm, dickered with another widow, Maybelle Weil, for the Milton Weil catalog (Chicago), she also joining company. Isham Jones, whose Jones, Inc., was long since sold to Max Mayer, the music jobber, bought Gem Music. Freddie Rich, also with a brother as operator, has Melo-Art. Horace Heidt formed Pilgrim Music, and one of the more successful indie catalogs is Circle Music, owned by Mark Warnow, which publishes all of Raymond Scott's stuff. (Scott, nee Harry Warnow, is Mark's brother.) Lincoln Music, in which Larry Clinton was supposed to have a stake, is now headed by Sam Wigler, with backing of Andrew Weinberger, attorney and personal rep for Artie Shaw and Richard Himber, which inspired the trade belief both have interests in Lincoln, although both deny it. Likewise Glen Gray (Casa Loma) denies a trade suspicion he has a piece of Jewel Music, the firm which came to attention with one of the aforementioned disk-made hit songs, 'Sunrise Serenade.' On the matter of lawyers in the band biz, John Gluskin, Dorsey's attorney, is sec-treasurer of Weil.

Of the new firms the most vivid thus far has been the Jack Bregman-Rocco Vocco-Chester Conn combination, which, dating from 'And the Angels Sing,' right through 'Little Sir Echo' and 'Day In, Day Out,' and the still currently successful 'Scatterbrain,' has made its mark.

When Joe Morris sold out the firm bearing his name to

Archie Fletcher, the latter early this year refused a \$75,000 bid from Lou Diamond (Famous Music) to sell out to the Paramount Pictures subsid, but subsequently took a \$30,000 less offer when his (Fletcher's) heart necessitated retirement. Johnny Mercer-Edwin H. (Buddy) Morris have made the Joe Morris catalog the nucleus of their new firm. (No relation between Joe and Buddy Morris), the latter deciding to go into business for himself when resigning as head of the Warner Bros. music publishing subsidiaries, Herman Starr succeeding in charge thereof.) Last week Mercer & Morris added the Millrose Music catalog for \$75,000 and took in George Simon as part of the deal as general manager.

Joe Davis was another sellout to Willie Horowitz, vet professional man, and Abner Silver, songwriter, both becoming publishers with this deal. Davis continues independently under another name.

Other new indie publishers are songwriters Sam Coslow (in Hollywood) and Eugene West (in New Orleans).

Personality highlights of the year saw Kate Smith celebrating her ninth anniversary in the business; Rudy Vallee his 10th; Paul Whiteman his 20th; Jack Mills ditto, and Jack Robbins his quarter-of-a-century. The Smith, Whiteman and Robbins events were signalized publicly with special sections in VARIETY.

Isidore Witmark, who with his brother Jay are the sole surviving members of the original Witmark & Sons (now a WB subsid) authored his breezy memoirs, 'From Ragtime to Swingtime.'

Jimmy Walker, back as an exec of NAPA, wrote 'In Our Little Part of the Town' as a tolerance message for the Night of Stars at the Madison Sq. Garden, this being his second song in 25 years. A quarter of century ago he authored 'Will You Love Me in December as You Did in May?'

Artie Shaw, who figured as the Cinderella Man of the Bounce Bands in 1939, and who is vivid to the music biz because of his swingology, did all right for himself on publicity. Started with his quick rise, then lambasting jitterbugs as morons, then scrambling his band into retirement, and finally his Satevepost blast at the band bookers and music publishers for trade practices. The pubs chose to give it the lifted eyebrow brushoff. Shaw also made himself vivid by swinging 'Begin the Beguine' on a Victor recording that made that dormant yesteryear Cole Porter tune a smash. Shaw's 'Indian Love Call' was in the same idiom, but the resuscitation wasn't as successful.

Benny Goodman, equally vivid as the king of swing, published his autobiography, did a Carnegie Hall concert that was a stampede, appeared in a legit ('Swingin' the Dream') that lasted 13 performances.

John Philip Sousa 3d sought to carry on the illustrious name with a band; Mack Gordon and Harry Revel split, but are due to reunite; another long-established writing team severed when Al Dubin teamed with Jimmy McHugh, and Harry Warren with Mort Dixon; and songsmith Johnny Mercer became a radio personality.

Personality items of a tragic sort saw the death of Joe Young at 50; Chick Webb at 30, just as he was hitting his peak; Mike Morris at 76, and his brother Louis (Cully) Morris in December at 71, both being of the five brothers who formed Joe Morris Music Co.; Joe Green, at 43; Dr. Wilhelm Grosz at 45, and Edgar F. Bitner, former head of Leo Feist, Inc., but latterly an executive of Musical Courier, at 62.

## 34 Legislative Broadides Fired at ASCAP in 1939

ASCAP was beset by legal antagonism on all fronts, no less than 34 anti-ASCAP bills, all charging the same monopoly and restraint of trade allegations, being filed. It's cost ASCAP staggering legal bills. Finally made the board members wonder why the Society hadn't long since gone in for some judicious public relations work. Hating ASCAP had become an emotional matter, not just a business dispute.

In 1938, the final reports early this year showed, ASCAP collected \$6,000,000 from all sources, or \$200,000 above '37. Of this, \$4,100,000 was distributed, 10% put aside for foreign, and the rest retained for administrative, legal and reserve. The legal war chest is important always to ASCAP, due to the constant legal harassment, but meantime the Society members are vexed at the heavy financial outlay it entails. Estimates for 1939 indicate \$6,950,000 to ASCAP, its record high take, of which radio contributed \$4,300,000.

The disks also provided music biz its best take in 12 years with \$750,000 in royalties, plus an additional \$270,000 from transcriptions.

Meantime Broadcast Music, Inc., has come into existence, in name only at present, as a prospective means to combat ASCAP. It was rumored CBS was going into the music publishing business, but it wound up acquiring the American Record Corp. (Yates) as an affiliate akin to NBC's affinity with RCA Victor.

ASCAP is always a battleground for ratings, revised accountings, etc., and this year was no exception. Several progressive firms got a better shake.

Meantime the Songwriters Protective Assn. was doing its own battling and finally won a new uniform contract.

Jack Robbins formed the Big Three Music Corp. to embrace Robbins, Feist and Miller, all three Metro subsid. akin to the Warner Bros. group, which operates under the Music Publishers Holding Corp., but so far Robbins Music alone has flourished. Harry Link was brought in from Berlin's to operate Feist and act as contact with the Metro studio, but not until 'Over the Rainbow' (from 'Wizard of Oz') did that catalog have anything outstanding. Miller Music is still in the red, and ultimately Willie Horowitz left (now co-owner of Joe Davis).

Of the Robbins group, Mitchell Parish set some sort of a record for a songsmith, with perhaps 1,000,000 copies in gross royalties accruing to him as lyricist of 'Stairway to the Stars.'

'The Lamp Is Low,' 'Moonlight Serenade' and 'Deep Purple.' There were sundry pop song manifestations of note. The ballads and the novelties were the extremes. In between, a song like Marks' 'El Rancho Grande,' after being dormant for years, stepped out in a big way. That inspired a rhythmic version of 'Ciribiribin' and latterly ditto with 'Marcheta' and Victor Herbert's 'Indian Summer.' Bing Crosby has figured importantly in lending them impetus through his interpretations on radio and disk.

The 'Oh Johnny Oh' revival is one of those freaks, still current, credited to Bonnie Baker, vocalist with Orrin Tucker. Miller Music tried a revival with 'I Cried for You,' but not as successfully, and sporadically swing version or modernized arrangements of other oldies have cropped up, such as 'Missouri Waltz,' 'Naughty Waltz,' 'Billy,' etc. As result of 'Oh Johnny,' Tucker got a radio and film contract, and all other bandleaders and publishers started dusting off the oldies, hoping for a similar windfall.

For a time, on the heels of 'Little Sir Echo,' there was an attempt at a cycle of kid songs such as 'Little Mischief Maker,' 'Little Skipper,' 'Little Genius' and 'Little Lad,' but more recently the 'cute' songs are having their sway. That takes in 'Oh Johnny,' 'Chatterbox,' 'Scatterbrain,' 'Baby Me,' 'Goody Goodbye,' and the like.

Getting back to Crosby, his songs for the Santly-Joy-Select catalog and his interpretations of the following songs did much to catapult them into hits: 'Man and His Dream,' 'An Apple for the Teacher,' 'Penny Serenade,' 'Man With the Mandolin,' 'Sing a Song of Sunbeams,' 'Wishing,' 'El Rancho Grande,' 'To You Sweetheart, Aloha.' Crosby, Kate Smith and Vallee are still the songpluggers' delight as the ideal interpreters.

The 4 Ink Spots' recording of 'If I Didn't Care' did for them and the song what 'Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen' first did for the Andrews Sisters, both, incidentally, Decca recordings.

On the matter of disks, the country's continued vogue for dansapation boomed the waxworks. Ditto those pop-priced phonograph combinations. Some 650,000 of these were sold in 1939. Upon leaving Victor, Eli Oberstein formed his own U. S. Record Corp. (Varsity and Royale brands). Decca has become a potent factor in the trade, due to Jack Kapp's platter showmanship. Latter embracing unique albums, unusual recordings, and the Hollywood technique applied to a 35c disk product.

A reprise of the year's bestsellers indicates the wide range of tunes. 'Deep Purple,' 'Beer Barrel Polka' (called the 'Barrel Polka' on the radio because of a taboo on the first word), 'South of the Border,' 'Penny Serenade,' 'Cinderella,' 'My Prayer,' 'Rancho Grande,' 'Wishing,' 'Sir Echo,' 'God Bless America' (a quiet seller, and restricted after Kate Smith's first intro), 'Lilacs in the Rain,' '18th Century Drawing Room,' 'Good Morning,' 'Lady's in Love With You,' 'Stairway to Stars,' 'Comes Love,' 'Sunrise Serenade,' 'What's New?' 'Sailboat of Dreams,' 'An Apple for the Teacher,' 'Crazy Moon,' 'New Moon and Old Serenade' are among the outstanders.

The World's Fair inspired no big song hit. There were several abortive attempts, and while Eleanor Holm and Billy Rose's Aquacade were the Big Show's personality and draw, the song, 'Yours for a Song,' from the water spec, was only fairish. Incidentally, this proved that perhaps the 'Blue Danube Waltz,' long a fave thematic for Tin Pan Alley switcheroo, is about washed up. On the other hand, the Mexican folksong, 'La Golondrina,' has done nobly for 'South of the Border.'

World War II similarly has produced no 'Long, Long Trail' or 'Tipperary.' Strict technical neutrality on our part is one factor, so the two 'Siegfried Line' ditties current in England never got started. And as a matter of fact, the Tommies are more partial to 'South of the Border' over there.

An abortive comedy novelty, 'Save Me, Governor Dickinson, I'm on the Road to Ruin,' just about proved the country was in no mood for that sort of frivolity, this despite 'Three Little Fishies,' and the like.

## Many Songs Plugged for The Amusement of Bandleaders

That didn't deter some of the maestros from cutting up whimsically. Jan Savitt's '720 in the Books' refers to an intra-band fave that finally saw daylight, and Benny Goodman waxed facetious with instrumentals carrying such captions as 'Sonata to ASCAP,' 'Opus Local 802,' 'AC-DC Current,' Johnny Messner's 'Messing Around,' Woody Herman's 'Woodchoppers Ball,' 'Neurotic Goldfish,' 'Back to Bach' (Alec Templeton's excellent swinger), 'Fry My Eggs in Butter,' 'A Deb's Diary,' 'Weekend of a Private Secretary,' latter alone attaining any sort of a vogue.

On the subject of pluggers, the Music Publishers Contact Employees are finally making headway against the sundry proselyting evils, as regards plugs, via this new MPCE union. Rocco Vocco and attorney Samuel Jesse Buzzell were prominent in its formation, and while it's anomalous that employer publishers must also be members of a trade union, the business is such that the most successful music executives are also those who solicit plugs. And that goes for the best of 'em. However, already it's manifesting a curtailment of some of the rackets which, even in the days of the NRA, couldn't be controlled. George Mario is prez, Johnny White v.p and Bob Miller sec-treas.

The opening night pressure on the publishers was so terrific that they all turned out with junior conventions not only at premieres, but closings, and in between. Leaders' requests for 'special' nights, turnouts at Sundays and Mondays or when biz wasn't so fancy, drained the patience and the exchequers.

Further on the trade end, from a merchandizing viewpoint, a tieup with a Hearst news distributing channel created some 500 heretofore untapped channels for sheet music (on kiosks, newsstands, etc.), which has further interpreted itself in prosperity for the business.

## WALDORF ON PARK AVE. GIVES JIVE BUM'S RUSH

Waldorf-Astoria hotel, N. Y., is not likely to go in for any more swing bands on location in its Empire Room. Exit of Benny Goodman Monday (1) and his replacement with Everett Hoagland's sweet group Tuesday closed out the swing era, and it will probably remain out. Orrin Tucker, who has risen lately on the strength of his 'Oh, Johnny, Oh' recording, may replace Hoag-

land in the spring. Tucker takes over from Tommy Dorsey at the Palmer House, Chicago, this week.

Though Goodman is at the head of the best outfit he's had under him for a year or more, the business at the Empire was disappointing. His stand there last season was a different story and was the basis for him being brought back. Casa Loma outfit followed Goodman's previous date at the Waldorf.

Phil Kornheiser has become a partner in Harry Tenney, Inc. He takes up his new connection Jan. 2.

## Sweet Dividends

Analysis of the best-sellers evidences that the sweet songs eclipsed the rhythmic numbers in sales turnover.

Year-end radio programs, which consulted VARIETY for advance info on the top songs of the year, all observed that they had to arbitrarily switch things a bit in order to establish a better balance by inclusion of memorable, if not big-selling, rhythm tunes.

## 'Faithful' to Block

Leeds Music Co. has given up the selling rights to the Martin Block tune, 'Faithful to You,' and has returned the number to Block and his two collaborators. It will be published by the Martin Block Music Co.

Title of the tune conflicted with Famous Music's 'Faithful Forever,' from Paramount's 'Gulliver's Travels,' and the Music Publishers Protective Assn., because of the similarity in tags, ordered Leeds to cease distribution of Block's number.

## RALPH HITZ ON MEND FROM SERIOUS COLD

Ralph Hitz, president of the Hotel New York and the National Management Co., was reported at press time as improving from a serious cold condition at the Post Graduate hospital, N. Y.

He has been in the hospital for three weeks taking treatment for a cold which developed into acute inflammation of the liver.



## Bring 'Em Back A'Jive

A Plague in One Act

By Lester Gottlieb

'Because Orrin Tucker has lifted himself to major attention through a revival of 'Oh, Johnny, Oh,' other band leaders are suddenly bent on scanning the old catalogs for tunes that they, too, might record to garner both the royalties and a rep for bringing 'em back. Several of these leaders last week assigned their arrangers to dig around among the hits of 20 to 30 years ago for numbers they could give a modern twist and spot on the other side of their next platter releases.'—From VARIETY, Dec. 20, 1939.

The Scene: Apartment of the noted bandleader Marty Thaw. The Time: 1940. The Characters: Marty Thaw, Mrs. Thaw.

MRS. THAW: Buck up, honey. It's only a fad.

MARTY: Perhaps, but think of my reputation. I've always been a pioneer. Didn't I create 'bubble rhythm'?

MRS. THAW: Oh, well, you're set solid at La Rumpus. Then you can go back to the borscht circuit.

MARTY: Yes, but if I don't act quick I lose my network wire. Why I even lost a fan club yesterday.

MRS. THAW: Are you really sure the oldest tune you got in the books is 'Japanese Sandman'?

MARTY: Worse than that. I played 'Avalon' last night and even a jitterbug sneered 'why don't ya grow up'?

MRS. THAW: How about 'A Bird in a Gilded Cage.' That was written in 1900. I should know. That's when I broke in.

MARTY: Ah, Mark Warnow had that No. 3 on the Hit Parade last month.

MRS. THAW: You should have been nicer to that J. Fred Helf.

MARTY: He wrote 'A Picture No Artist Can Paint,' didn't he?

MRS. THAW: He was good enough to get next-to-closing on 'We, the People,' as the songwriter of the month.

MARTY: Just cause he wrote it in 1890 and got 77 network plugs. What a break. Understand they had to carry him into the studio.

MRS. THAW: But that's what the public wants. The older the better.

MARTY: What a craze. Charlie Foreman took a bow the other night at the Famous Door and the joint went wild.

MRS. THAW: What did he write?

MARTY: 'Gold Will Buy Most Anything but a True Girl's Heart.' Glenn Miller just recorded it last week. And Sammy Kaye just swung and swayed 'Your God Comes First; Your Country Next, and Then Mother, Dear.' Why ain't I older so I can remember all those A.K. tunes.

MRS. THAW: Quiet. Junior is trying to study.

(Junior enters the room, his head buried in a textbook.)

JUNIOR: Daddy, what is a Gregorian chant?

MARTY: A what?

JUNIOR: Teacher says it's one of the oldest forms of music.

MARTY: Give me that book. I'll swing it!

CURTAIN

## Omaha Appeals Decision Nixing Anti-ASCAP Law

Lincoln, Jan. 1.

William J. Hotz, special states attorney on the case, declared last week that he would file an appeal from the decision of a Federal statutory court, which Thursday (25) invalidated a Nebraska law directed against the operation of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers in this state. Hotz said that the questions involved were so important to composers as well as music users that a final adjudication should be obtained from the U. S. supreme court. Also so that such adjudication could be used for a proper basis of legislation in the matter of performing rights payments.

The special statutory court ruling was a sweeping victory for ASCAP, and granted in effect a permanent injunction on a measure which was passed by the Nebraska legislature in 1937. Two months after Gov. R. L. Cochran signed the bill, ASCAP obtained a temporary injunction from the federal court on the plea that it was in violation of the Constitution.

A hearing was conducted a couple of months ago before a three-judge court, Judges Gardner, Donohoe, and Munger on the bench. Opinion was prepared and read by Judge Gardner, and stated:

'We conclude that permanent injunction restraining enforcement of this statute must be granted. Counsel for plaintiffs may prepare findings of fact and conclusions of law with form of decree in accordance with this opinion.'

'Where the connection between the invalid parts is such as to warrant belief that the legislature would not have passed the act without the invalid parts, the whole act must be held inoperative. The provision of the statute which we are here considering is such an essential part of the statute as not to be separable. In view of this conclusion, it is unnecessary to consider the other contentions that have been ably argued and elaborately briefed by counsel for the respective parties.'

Suit was filed against secretary of state, state treasurer, state auditor, attorney-general and numerous county attorneys, for the society by

Louis D. Frolich, who conducted the plaintiff's case. Although it was in the lap of the attorney-general for defense, Deputy John Riddell, representing the office, sat back and allowed the case to be spearheaded by William Hotz, Omaha, and Andrew Bennett, who carried the axe for the broadcasters.

Gene Buck, E. C. Mills, John C. Paine and Mrs. Ethelbert Nevin came out from New York as witnesses, and principals in the defense were two radio station managers, John Gillin, WOW, Omaha, and Don Searle, Central States (KOIL, KFAB, and KFOR).

In 1938, evidence was introduced that Nebraska theatres gave ASCAP \$12,000, Gillin's station \$26,000, and Searle's group \$27,000.

Larry Clinton took part in a television stunt Sunday (31), directing his band via the iconoscope from an outdoor stand in Rockefeller Plaza, Radio City. Band was indoors in the RCA Bldg.

## Skimpy BBC War Wages Brings Back Music Payola To Haunt London Pubs

London, Dec. 20.

Not since the halcyon days of the '20s had the British music biz augured as well as it did with the start of 1939. The B.B.C. had clamped down on payments and special orchestrations to band leaders and others and had even okayed a scheme whereby publishers were to be assured of plugs on their selected tunes on a quota basis without any expense. Although there were war rumblings in Europe the publishing fraternity wasn't worried overmuch. Everybody was getting used to it, and in any case pluggers concentrate on today, meaning today's hit.

Thus began 1939: Sheet music sales rising; performing, and particularly broadcasting fees, increasing; income from the new commercial radio adding jam to the bread and butter.

This, of course, was too good to last. Fate, having shown how rose and fair the world might be, started to cloud up. First of all went the quota scheme, mainly because of the usual jealousies. The big fellows thought they were not getting enough, but the squawks came chiefly from the little ones who considered they should have had more.

The blight really came about the middle of August when insurance against war was quoted at 60% and

### 1939's 20 Best Sellers

'Angels Sing'  
'Beer Barrel Polka'  
'Blue Orchids'  
'Deep in a Dream'  
'Deep Purple'  
'God Bless America'  
'Jeepers Creeps'  
'Little Sir Echo'  
'Man with the Mandolin'  
'Moon Love'  
'My Prayer'  
'Over the Rainbow'  
'Penny Serenade'  
'Scatterbrain'  
'South of the Border'  
'Sunrise Serenade'  
'Three Little Fishes'  
'Umbrella Man'  
'Wishing'  
'You Must Be Beautiful Baby'

### On the Upbeat

Lennie Hayton's group succeeds Georgie Auld at N. Y. Roseland ballroom Jan. 6.

Benny Goodman's outfit does a special short wave broadcast beamed at Scandinavian countries the afternoon of Jan. 15.

Bob Chester follows the Paramount, N. Y., date with a stand at the State, Hartford, Jan. 24.

George Damerel, son of Myrt, of Myrt and Marge, has moved his 10-piece group from the Trocadero, N. Y., to the Sherry-Netherland, N. Y.

Hal Kemp plays the Florida State Fair, Tampa, Jan. 30-Feb. 3.

Spud Murphy pulls out of a long stretch at the Blue Gardens, Armonk, N. Y., Jan. 10.

Saxie Dowell, whose new band is in rehearsal, written a new tune called 'Playmates.' Santly-Joy publishing.

Paul Wimbish, formerly with Paul Whiteman, may take over personal managership of Jackson Teagarden with John Gluskin on the scene but inactive.

Kay Kyser does his first one-nighter in the New York area in some time Jan. 7. Plays the County Center, White Plains, N. Y.

Phil Raskind, trumpeter, joined Gray Gordon. He replaced Glen Roling.

Count Basie goes into the Golden Gate Ballroom, N. Y., for two weeks Jan. 26. Lunceford does three days there Friday (5) to Sunday. Duke Ellington set for two one-nighters Jan. 7 and 21, and Les Hite and Harlan Leonard bands due before

## WHEN'S A MUSICIAN READY TO LEAD HIS OWN BAND?

By Gene Krupa

There are several things that revolve in the mind of a musician which eventually spin into one train of thought to produce the idea—that he should strike out on his own and become a band leader. While in a featured spot with another band there are such items as fan mail, publicity and similar tipoffs that the public is ripe to accept a band under his leadership.

In most instances a plainer indication lies in response to recordings made with a band under one's own name, even though still a member of another orchestra. Quite often these platters are made with the self-same musicians with whom they are working for the original leader.

However, there really can be no accurate gauging of the 'best time' to step out, and, as a result, some take the jump too early; others too late. I was offered financial backing for a band of my own fully a year before the decision to go ahead with such plans.

It's a lot of work and a prolonged headache both in forming a new band and keeping it in operation. The main requisite of a new band, just like any other business, is money. The outlay can be very heavy. There are so many individual and costly phases, such as arrangements, rehearsal halls, rehearsal salaries, uniforms, music stands, the expense of traveling around auditioning and gathering men, and after all that is completed, if the band isn't lucky enough to grab lucrative dates right off, the expenses keep mounting. In my case the tap reached about \$7,000. That's about average, but we were lucky in that there was a demand for the band immediately; hence, there were few added items. Arthur Michaud and his attorney were my backers and handlers and still are.

### Arrangements Come First

Arrangements determine a band's style and are the first things to be thought of. I had 10 selections completed when the manpower reported for first rehearsals and another 40 were made up during six weeks of practicing. The 50 were split into 30 standards, the first to be made up, and 20 pops.

Gathering musicians takes a lot of time. Most new bands are formed with out-of-town men, prospective leaders traveling to listen to them. True, there are embryo outfits made up of local men wherever the band is formed, but in stocking a crew in a metropolitan center such as New York it's difficult to get men with fire and enthusiasm, so necessary to a new group. Taking them from out of town they're usually young, full of ambition and don't expect heavy salaries which easily can be the ruination of a band just starting out. It's logical to assume that a new business getting underway with heavy maintenance expense is in danger of collapsing if returns aren't definitely assured. A new band is similar.

That's why it's so necessary for a musician who expects to have his own band to know when he's ripe for it. As above stated, an accurate knowledge of his individual popularity is essential because it assures some sort of an audience for his group. Hence, he can ask a price for the band from the beginning that is higher than the cost of operation, the overflow going to help wipe out the costs of starting. If that can be done, it's safe to say the band has a chance.

### Danger of 'Scale' Typing

Otherwise, if a new group begins by accepting scale and possibly less while beginning, there is a danger of remaining in that 'scale' class. Which, of course, means that it'll be a long time before the 'starting nut' is erased, and a good chance that it will never be. There are many new bands currently in that category that may stick around until they 'happen' to some extent, but the chances are slim. However, some of the most popular bands now on the list were around several years and were still in the red long after they got into the public eye and high money brackets.

If it had cost me and my backers as much as it has cost other bandleaders to put new bands on the starting line I would have remained as a sideman in other bands.

At the time I stepped out on my own my average yearly take amounted to about \$20,000. And I wouldn't have had all the headaches and sundry troubles that go with being a band leader. If the returns aren't commensurate, it isn't worth it. However, if you've got what the public wants, just like any other line of business, they'll pay for it.

Basie. Andy Kirk departs as one house band, Teddy Wilson remaining.

Tony Pastor, former Artie Shaw sax-singer, Sunday (7) one-nites his new band at Hamilton Park, Waterbury, not far from maestro's home town, Hartford.

## Tooter Appeals Ruling Hotel Wasn't His Boss

Omaha, Jan. 1.

John F. Elmore, Omaha musician, has filed an appeal with the Nebraska supreme court from a district court ruling he was not an employee of the Hill hotel and therefore could not collect unemployment compensation.

Elmore played with Bobbie Bowman's orch at the Hill from June, 1938, to January, 1939, then lost his job. His unemployment compensation claim was allowed by the unemployment compensation division's appeal court. District court said he was employee of Bowman, not hotel.

carry on, a new batch has been added. These are not all war songs, but mostly they have that happy lilt which helps to keep up the nation's spirits. Probably the best is Gracie Fields' 'Wish Me Luck,' 'Run, Rabbit Run,' by Noel Gay (composer of 'Lambeth Walk'); 'The Siegfried Line,' 'South of the Border,' 'There'll Always Be an England,' 'Kiss Me Goodnight Sweetheart,' 'We'll Meet Again,' 'Man With the Mandolin,' 'Wings Over the Navy,' 'Lords of the Air,' 'They Can't Black Out the Moon,' and the latest favorite that is being included in all concert parties entertaining the troops, 'Good-Bye Sally.' Analysis shows 90% of English origin.

Most wars produce one national heroine. In the Crime it was Florence Nightingale, and the last war Nurse Edith Cavell, and this one so far is Gracie Fields who on her way to Capri gave concerts to front line troops. The British Government is determined to give plenty of entertainment to the fighting forces whether at home or abroad.

for most anything, protested, and gradually came an improvement until it was nearly back to normal, but with only one program, take it or leave it, instead of an alternative one. Never very extravagant in its ideas about payment, BBC was cutting to the bone, and one dance band leader after playing a week's engagement had \$20 left upon paying his band.

This in turn led to a racket that is hitting the publishers harder than at any time since radio started. In the fight to get in, the maestro plainly tells the contact man that his brass section now contains a cash register which can give sweet music provided it is properly handled.

The best sellers before the war were:

'South of the Border.'  
'Little Sir Echo.'  
'Boomp-a-Daisy.'  
'One Day When We Were Young.'  
'Angels Never Leave Heaven.'  
'Deep Purple.'  
'Handsome Territorial.'  
'Sing a Song of Sunbeams.'  
'Masquerade Is Over.'  
'I Paid for the Lie.'

A few of these carried over, but in many cases they were not in accord with the new feeling engendered by the war. There was a revival of some of the old 1914-1918 favorites, but although these still



# THE DANCE BAND PARADE

By Bernie Woods

Probably the most important phase of the dance band business in the past year is the bullish activity in the formation of new orchestras. The business has been eyeing the scramble of every outstanding musician—and some who are not, or only just getting the least bit known to the dance public through being featured with an established outfit—to push out and baton a band of his own. Forming of new bands has become such a stock matter, with announcements coming through almost every week last summer, that gags began to circulate that Joe Maestro's chauffeur and the coat-room attendant at the 52nd St. jazzery were forming their own orchestra.

Booking executives and others in the trade observed that 'they must be insane to think so many new bands can survive.' Agency men termed it 'ridiculous,' yet the very ones who derided the situation added names to the growing list. So many additions, among which are many excellent outfits, undoubtedly will boomerang against the very purposes of newly-formed crews. That purpose, naturally, is to grab some of the gravy of the band biz boom.

Every new band that's formed, whether making money or not at the start, tends to bring down prices. Maybe not now, but eventually. It's elementary logic that when the market is drugged the values skid. Sooner or later, if the present pace is maintained, that's just what will happen to the band business. Some may say that bands drop out as others are added, but the number of the latter far exceeds the former, and even old bandleaders, long off the lists, have showed a tendency to return to lap up some of the leavings.

Reasons why the band biz must suffer from so many new combos are simple. The public is continually open to new favorites. Along comes a new band and talk starts, if the band has something to talk about. When it's offered to some spot at little more than scale, owners would be crazy not to take it, as compared to the big name groups. Dance spots (cafes, hotels, nitery, roadhouses, etc.) are only interested in how much is in the till at the end of the week, and the difference between a highpriced crew and a new one, in which some fresh interest has been shown, is compensated for by the difference in price—a very important factor.

## Bait for Band Berths

Too, the new crews of late have been adding bait to get themselves jobs in some spots. They underwrite such expenses as network wires and the musician's union tax for remote pickups. Formerly it was the spot owner who stood that tap. Some of the bands can afford it because the leader doesn't pay it himself. It's usually the band's manager, or an 'angel' who put up the dough to get 'em started, or perhaps even some music publisher as was suspected for a long time. It's simply added to the red side of the ledger as an item necessary to getting underway.

Undoubtedly the rash of band building has produced some embryo outfits capable of shooting up to a plane even with the current top crews. That's the thought of those who have helped form new bands. It doesn't take much reasoning to figure that the more shots taken at an object, the better are the chances of making a hit. Law of averages guarantees that.

## The More Important New Combos

Bands formed in the past year which can be rated important additions are: Harry James, Jack Teagarden, Bob Zurke, Will Bradley (and Ray McKinley), Bobby Byrne, Bob Chester, Lennie Hayton (reorganized), Spud Murphy, Jimmy Mundy, Jack Jenney, Teddy Powell, Johnny McGee, Eddie McDonald and Teddy Wilson. Joe Sullivan formed a small white unit which he subsequently reformed into a mixed group, still at Cafe Society, New York. Bud Freeman and a bunch of stars on various instruments have a small co-operative unit called the Summa Cum Laudes which spent a long period at Nick's in Greenwich Village. Coleman Hawkins, famed colored tenor sax, returned from England to lead a Harlem group which opened at Kelly's Stables, N. Y. Raymond Scott upped his quintet to full size at CBS' New York studios. Tony Pastor left Artie Shaw's bunch to form a band that just started one-nighters in New England on its break-in lap. Shaw's original combo is now being batoned by Georgie Auld, tenor sax. Others still to debut are Johnny Williams, Claude Thornhill, Saxie Dowell, now in the works.

## Bob Chester's Spurt

Probably the most talked about at this stage is Bob Chester's outfit, styled as a cross between Tommy Dorsey and Glenn Miller. He came to attention after a radio shot on the Fitch Bandwagon and a flock of one-night stands at the New Yorker Hotel, N. Y. Barely out of rehearsal he was signed for Bluebird records and a 16-week swing through Hitz Hotels opening at the Van Cleve, Dayton, shifting to the Adolphus, Dallas, then to the Nicollet, Minneapolis. He's set to go into the Paramount, N. Y., soon and almost cut into General Amusement's exclusive hold on Glen Island Casino, choice Westchester, N. Y., roadhouse showcase, for next summer's stand.

Bob Zurke pulled out of Bob Crosby's piano chair in a not too happy parting and drew favorable reaction with a band that's now in the south.

Will Bradley (Wilbur Schwichtenberg), a radio band trombonist, combined with Ray McKinley, who pulled out of the drummer spot with Jimmy Dorsey, to form an outfit that's been working steadily and is now in the south also. This fine crew went the usual practice of building a band around a single instrumentalist one better by using two such men.

Bobby Byrne, young trombonist who never played with any other band than Jimmy Dorsey, pulled up stakes and formed a combo that's currently getting in stride at the Brooklyn Roseland Ballroom.

Songwriter Teddy Powell got bit by the band bug and put together a group that opened at the Famous Door (N. Y.), to a fairly good reception. He's probably the only embryo leader who's not an instrumentalist of note. Band is currently at the Southland Cafe, Boston. Van Alexander is another songsmith turned maestro a season back.

## Jersey Showcasing

Johnny Magee surrounded his trumpet with a group of local Paterson, N. J., musicians, one of the better of the new sweet bands though partly limited due to inability to find the best of men in that Jersey territory. He started at Donohue's, Mountain View, N. J., several months ago and has been held over since.

Lennie Hayton started an outfit last summer, was set to get going on an opening date but had to be rushed to the hospital for an emergency appendectomy. It broke up that group and he later collected another which replaced Artie Shaw on the Old Gold radio commercial for a few weeks. It completed a date last week at Leon & Eddie's, N. Y., and ranks with the best of the new outfits.

Harry James has been plugging along steadily at the head

of a powerful, solid group he formed soon after the first of the year, leaving a trumpet berth with Benny Goodman.

Spud Murphy made two tries and is now at the Blue Gardens, Armonk, N. Y., with the second. His first opened at a Greenwich Village nitery and then dropped out. Second has been improving steadily and his first records were released recently.

Jack Jenney, another radio studio trombonist, gathered a bunch that, at first, weren't up to the standard of his ability, but impresses as improving with time.

Jules Alberti came along with a new idea he calls 'Tap-a-Rhythm' weaving taps of two girls into arrangements as part of the rhythm section.

Jimmy Mundy, former arranger for Benny Goodman and Gene Krupa, among others, got around to forming another bunch of Harlem swingsters that recently opened and closed at the Onyx Club, when that N. Y. spot unshuttered after the summer. He subsequently ran into trouble on New York one-night dates, the union ordering him out because his band wasn't composed of Local 802 men.

Teddy Wilson left Benny Goodman and premed his own group at the Famous Door, N. Y. It got only lukewarm reception but has been improving steadily and now is on a long stand at Harlem's new Golden Gate ballroom.

Jack Teagarden started his new band last winter after leaving Paul Whiteman and has had tough sledding. His band was recently partly reorganized.

Johnny Williams pulled out of the Raymond Scott quintet to build a combo around his drums. It should start picking up dates soon.

Scott enlarged the quintet to full size and was using it for some time on CBS programs, experimenting, making changes, etc., before anybody caught wise. However, it's composed of high-priced CBS house musicians and to take it out for one-nighters, etc., would mean replacing them with less expensive men which probably would go far toward nullifying the solid impression the band makes on the air. Using the current men for records, however.

Claude Thornhill, w.k. arranger who spent the past year or more on the Coast, is currently in New York setting up a book of arrangements of click standards before gathering his men. He's been working on the writings for several months and will soon begin building the man power. He first came to attention as arranger-mentor for the dusky Maxine Sullivan.

Woody Herman drew heavy attention with a date at the Famous Door, N. Y. It's one of the better of the current bands though not yet a 'name' in the strict sense of the word. Not a new band but also coming into prominence with a change in style and a date at the Famous Door, N. Y., was Charlie Barnet. Buddy Rogers also shifted to a show band that's now in the midwest. Bobby Hackett formed a full-size crew, but later gave it up and joined Horace Heidt's trumpet section. Joe Marsala enlarged then dropped back to his small combo and is now on a long stand at the new Fiesta Dance-teria, on Broadway.

## Headaches of Starting a New Band

Getting a new band rolling entails a flock of headaches. There are many who can't afford to pay for their own wires as listed previously and to get into a spot assuring 'em air time is tough. Too often it's a man-sized job to get one-night or theatre dates. Inasmuch as most leaders are graduates of other bands, bookers try to line up dates in territories through which the leaders played as featured men in the bands from which they sprung. In those spots ballroom operators, etc., can be sold because they get the bands cheap and they take 'em because they remember the men themselves and figure their customers will. In one or two instances bands have been known to follow almost on the heels of outfits of which their leaders were once members.

Prime requisite of launching a new band is getting it on the wax. That's another quarter in which they run into trouble. Few new bands can get current pops to interpret on records. Publishers don't want to trust what they consider a tune of hit calibre to a new band with untried wax audience. The recording companies themselves also favor their more established bands that way. Result is embryo outfits have to cut new arrangements of swingopated standards or originals.

Recently formed bands are not the only ones to have headaches. The older, solidly established crews are having their quota. But in this instance they're self-made. To handle some of the intricate arrangements turned out by arrangers for some of the bigger outfits, in their everlasting quest for something different to distinguish 'em from the rest, demands good men. It has been a practice of established band-leaders to raid the opposition; hire ace men away by any means possible.

## Suicidal Price-Boosting

If one leader wants a trumpeter another has, for instance, it's a natural assumption that in order to get him he has to be paid a higher salary. If that happens several times, the man's salary is upped each time. The practice is drawing a knife across the throats of the big b.o. leaders because sooner or later they find themselves with so topheavy a payroll the band can't gross enough profit if 'bookings aren't right.

Such a situation is said to have contributed to Artie Shaw's retirement from leading a big band, according to those close to him. After opening at the Pennsylvania Hotel, N. Y., the outfit was said to be dropping \$500 weekly since he went off Old Gold. Shaw took the stance that he wasn't getting anywhere financially, that he was better off when the band wasn't the biggest thing in the country and didn't cost so much to operate. There are others currently losing more than that.

## Why Radio Commercials Are Necessary

With such a nut it's imperative that the band in that category be supplied with a radio commercial. And it has to be one that allows the outfit enough freedom to pick up one-nighters and circulate to other parts of the country. Several bands, Jimmy Dorsey for one, recently nixed a radio offer because, to accept, would have confined the band's acceptance of other engagements.

Having a radio commercial makes it possible for a band composed of high salaried men to take a long stand where the payoff barely or doesn't cover the cost of operation. The commercial makes up loss plus profits. Yet they have to accept those stands because of air time, so necessary to keeping themselves alive. Though it's the bandleader who suffers when his high-priced outfit is losing money—not his men or his booking office, they get theirs regardless—he has only himself to blame for helping to up the price of men by indulging in the practice of raiding.

Bugaboo of high salaried players has reared itself in sev-

eral new bands too. Those are outfits usually angeloed by heavy money. They start out with big groups and good men and before they know what it's all about find themselves in a hole from which they'll probably never recover. One such is currently in the red so far it'll take years to climb out, and never will at the present pace.

Too, there are some who claim that the continual shifting of men from one band to another, with accompanying increases in salary, is partly responsible for the rash of new bands. As a man progresses from one group to another he exhausts all possible jobs and won't return to a former affiliate at a lower salary. Just about this time he becomes convinced that the best thing to do is form his own band and further increase earning power.

## Those Lawyer-Managers

Quite a few of the new bands and a flock of old ones have lawyers behind them putting up the dough. In the case of embryo groups they help 'em get started; simply steering the destinies of older ones. It's no secret that the band booking agencies and the trade's personal managers harbor no love for lawyer-managers. Latter can be heard continually asking what a lawyer-manager can do for a band. They explain that a personal manager should know everything, from being acquainted with one-night stands throughout the country; how to handle transportation; oversee bookings, personnel; and a dozen and one other things essential to properly service an outfit, to take such details off the mind of a leader, allowing him all his time to bettering his band.

Booking agencies scream against the lawyers, saying they're continually harassed by them. One one-night booker almost goes out of his mind when they are mentioned in his presence. Says that before such 'managers' entered the biz all that was needed to close a one-night booking was a telephone conversation or a wire, and a letter of confirmation. Today, with a lawyer-manager in attendance, a single date is closed with a 19-page contract with terms requiring a legal mind to wade through and unmy clauses, covering everything, including how the doorman of the joint into which the band is booked should part his hair.

## From the Lawyer's Viewpoint

There is something to be said for both sides. Some leaders feel that having a lawyer as personal representative is better protection; that in a business that grosses a \$100,000,000 a year a legal mind is necessary to handle all the angles such as contracts, taxes, suits, etc., and to have such a person is killing two birds with one stone.

One of the oldest talent lawyer-managers in the business is Hymie Bushel who has been associated with Rudy Vallee for years. John Gluskin handles Jack Teagarden, Jimmie Mundi, Mitchell Ayres, partly handles Gene Krupa, and up to Jan. 1, steered Tommy Dorsey, among others. Andrew Weinberger handles Artie Shaw's interests, and also manages Richard Himber and Jack Jenney. Mike Vallon and Chubby Goldfarb have Woody Herman, Teddy Powell and Johnny McGee. John Berkson handles Larry Clinton and Les Brown.

## Glenn Miller's Upsurge

Band ratings were considerably changed in the past year. Most notable of course is the sharp upsurge of the Glenn Miller outfit. Miller isn't a new band, having been around for some time, but records of numbers like 'Little Brown Jug,' his own arrangement, shot Miller into the best seller platter class and into heavy popularity after a summer long stay at the Glen Island Casino, N. Y., with a flock of weekly network wires.

Click of Miller brought many bands around to employing the same style he uses in sweet numbers. It's obtained by using clarinet lead with four saxes. So many bands used the same arrangement after Miller started his climb that no matter what band a listener turned to on the air or in the spots, the lead clarinet could be heard in many arrangements.

The style is nothing new, according to bandmen. It's been used off and on by different bands and some arrangers claim to have used it years ago. Closest of the new bands to that particular method is Bob Chester. Both are on Bluebird (RCA) records and the comment on Chester's band has led Miller to squawk to RCA Victor. At one point there was a possibility that Chester would switch to another recorder because of it.

Artie Shaw's sudden exit from the business several weeks ago amazed trade and public alike. He'd been threatening to do just that for some time. Shaw had been heavily censored shortly before for an interview in a New York daily anent the kids who support bands such as his. He called jitterbugs 'morons' and other of his opinions weren't exactly in the best of taste. It resulted in his radio sponsor, Old Gold, being deluged with letters of protest, threatening all sorts of things if he remained on the air. Shaw quit the commercial and shortly thereafter quit his band. It's become a cooperative organization under the leadership of tenor sax Georgie Auld. Tony Pastor would have taken over its leadership but a week or so before had turned in his notice to form his own band. When Shaw suddenly stepped out Pastor had already signed a leadership contract with the Charles Shribman office. He's soon to start working one-nighters in New England. Shaw left his entire library to the band he dropped.

During the year the band business lost Chick Webb. The drum ace had been ailing for some time and died suddenly at Johns Hopkins, Baltimore, where he had often gone for general checkups. His death came just after plans had been made for him to step out of his orchestra, due to his poor health, and confine himself to directing its activities from behind a desk, sitting in with the band on record dates only.

Ella Fitzgerald took over leadership of the outfit which was at first billed as 'Ella Fitzgerald with Chick Webb's Orchestra.' The billing was discarded when it was decided that such a tag perhaps inspired depressing psychological reactions due to advertising a band under the leadership of a dead man.

From the executive end the most important happening was the sudden exit of Willard Alexander from Music Corp. of America to hook up with the William Morris agency in a creative capacity, in charge of bands. His first such effort is the Will Bradley outfit.

There were quite a few other changes, chiefly minor, but among the major happenings was formation of the U. S. Record Corp. and its threat to garner some of the bigger bands of the biz. Which forced others to hypo prices in order to keep their artists. Important, too, was the shift of Benny Goodman from Victor to the new 50c Columbia label.



WOES OF A BAND MANAGER

By One of Them

Since the band business has reached such enormous proportions, in comparison to what it was even just a few years ago, more and more is the band personal manager becoming an important figure. The trade, especially the booking offices which are harassed day in and day out by so-called personal managers who don't know their jobs, is becoming increasingly aware of the many maestro handlers brought into the business this past summer by the rash of new bands. They're headaches from any angle.

The personal manager familiar with and competent enough to handle every aspect of his job is necessary for many reasons. There are five band booking agencies in the country which control practically every band of note: Music Corp. of America, General Amus. Corp., William Morris, Consolidated Radio Artists and Fredericks Bros.

MCA is admittedly the largest. They steer the destinies of some 200 or more orchestras. Obviously it's virtually impossible for an agency with so many properties to devote much more time to each individual group than to see to it that they're kept working.

That's where the personal manager comes in. He not only should oversee the bookings and prices laid out for his bands, coordinating the efforts of various departments working on one-nighters, theatres, radio, records, location stands, etc., but should have sufficient knowledge of geography to protect his men from the murderous schedules sometimes set up by these departments; making certain that his men aren't overly fatigued by repeated long jumps too close together on the calendar. Such situations can only result in lowering an outfit's playing standard.

One-Nighters

On the other hand, protection for promoters on a one-night tour shouldn't be forgotten. Which means being sure that a previous day's stand is not too close to a succeeding one, thereby killing the possible draw in each to some extent. Latter angle, too, also protects the band in the event it's playing on a percentage basis.

Another one-night duty is having fairly intimate knowledge concerning the spots a band is to play. Capacities, etc., which give knowledge of how much money it's possible to get for a date. Last but not least is keeping the band on a steady schedule when it's on one-nighters. It keeps the men in the band happy if salaries happen to be regulated by the amount of work done. More bands have been broken up by bad one-nighter tours than probably any one other dissatisfaction. However, in some cases, band members are paid a straight weekly salary no matter how much work is on hand. But even in that case the manager is still responsible to the leader for lack of sustained schedules.

On theatre dates the angles which demand personal manager attention are also many. It entails selecting the right house in competitive towns, such as New York, where the Paramount and Strand both use name bands, and problem of playing nabe stands, which often don't or can't afford to pay standard prices. Dates such as the latter may reflect on subsequent stands at major houses and a flop at the Broadway Paramount, for instance, is dangerous. Too, there's the problem of checking on accompanying acts, selecting turns which best fit with certain types of orchestras. Also lighting, staging and all other minor appearing details that can trip up a band's stage appearance.

Bad Bookings

One of the sharpest angles of booking a band into a hotel or nitery location stand, which has to be avoided, is placing an outfit in a spot which may hurt its prestige. Some bands fit into particular jobs better than others. Booking offices don't always take this into consideration. If they have a chance to book a good percentage payer or break another office's exclusive hold on some stand, the opportunity is jumped at whether or no the band they offer is best suited to a room. Ofttimes it has been the breaking of a crew. Some hotel and nitery stands are natural band builders and others tear them down just as fast. Once an outfit is set for a spot

there must be huddles with the management to determine such things as covert charges and minimums which make the average patron stop and think. Too, there's the same problem of acts here as in theatres. For such locations it's best to avoid, whenever possible, those that have floor entertainment.

Radio

In radio there are two aspects to be considered—sustaining and sponsored. For the latter the smartest thing is not to wait for a booking office, but to keep hammering away at advertising agencies personally. Be continually on the lookout for ideas that may fit the property represented and continue even after a sponsor is snagged. Days of straight sustaining band shows are practically over, which means being on the job at all times seeing that a band is not kicked around on a show which carries other talent. Grabbing such one-shotters as 'Show of the Week,' Fitch Bandwagon, etc., is another requisite.

Sustaining radio creates another problem. Main point is securing choicest listening times, which includes when out-of-town coverage is likely to be greater. Then there's balancing and pacing (tunes), and checking via listening to be sure of proper instrumental balance, and once it's arrived at, see that it's maintained. Getting wires into spots that don't ordinarily carry them, and securing as many as possible, is a major undertaking.

Records

Last but far from least is records. In setting a band with a recording company the most important angle to be considered is the label. Which means selling price and allowing for the opposition on the same records so as not to conflict with a band somewhat along the same style lines. In that category is salary, knowing how much your band is worth to a recorder.

Next in importance are the tunes. That means keeping close to the recording director and various publishers to assure a band's not being left out in the cold on numbers tabbed as future hits. In scheduling recording dates it's a good idea to calendar them for days most convenient to filling out a working week or days in the year, in certain periods, when it's not advisable to have the band working because business is slow anyhow. For instance Good Friday.

In the case of a new band, protecting it from the angle of recordings has to be sharper. With record sales shooting higher all the time they are a source of revenue not to be regarded lightly, and selling a new outfit to a recording company at a flat rate, with no provisions for royalties, is dangerous. There's no telling which way the public's taste will veer and if a crew suddenly 'happens' a flat rate contract leaves it out on a limb. An instance of that is in the history of one of the hottest of the current big bands, though its contract was later rewritten.

Newly formed orchestras also demand more attention in other fields than an established group. In the first place an embryo aggregation should not, in most instances, get air time. It's a personal manager's job to know when it's ripe for it.

Sending such an outfit out on one-nighters is also bad judgment, more often than not. It should be holed up in the best location stand available. A young group is likely to become discouraged if it doesn't draw as heavily on single dates as it thinks it should, inasmuch as most new outfits

have the idea that everybody is breathlessly awaiting its being booked in their locality. This is not the case, however, with new bands formed around a well known instrumentalist. Keeping a new band rolling is important above all else.

Many Lil' Details

Activity in behalf of the working end of either new or established orchestras, with all the attention to details required, does not, however, complete the personal manager's job. An extensive knowledge and acquaintance with a long list of musicians is essential. So many changes are made in swing bands today that, having a list of good men always at fingertip, is demanded. That same situation applies to arrangers, copyists, and all other offshoots of that particular end.

Publicity

Another important angle is publicity. Correct, most favorable press shouting has to be maintained and double emphasis is placed on the 'correct.' Under that heading comes restraining too eager p.a.'s from pulling stunts not in the best of taste which are liable to boomerang. Often the latter want to release the entire background of a bandleader, portions of which frequently may be harmful.

Too, a manager has to be a psychoanalyst. It's necessary to know how and what a bandleader thinks in order to anticipate what he may or will do. And take steps to block him or steer him straight if certain things are not wise. That includes placating ruffled tempers and buoying him up when discouragement sets in. Knowing a bandleader's idiosyncrasies is something a booking office couldn't possibly know, and a continual unhappy state would always be in evidence.

The business end of managing a band is another job that falls to the lot of p.m.'s. The band business is a big business and is treated as such. Checking booking office statements, overseeing reports coming through from road managers when the band is out of town, maintaining tax reserves, handling musicians' payrolls, and other items are just a few of the things that have to be taken care of.

Last but not least a personal manager is a continual buffer between the band leader and all annoyances, taking the brunt of all impacts. In other words, as he's often labeled, be a complete louse.

Penn, Pittsburgh, Goes Statler, Hence There's Conjecture on Bands

Pittsburgh, Jan. 1.

Not known yet whether there will be any change in music setup at William Penn, town's ace hotel, now that management-operation has passed into hands of Statler outfit. Deal for latter's taking over from Pittsburgh Hotels Corp. first of year was closed last week, with new owners announcing that Gerald O'Neill would be retained as general manager.

MCA has had a hold on band situation at William Penn for years, supplying bands exclusively for supper spot, Chatterbox, and most of the time for hostelry's Continental bar. In past, no orchestra but an MCA affiliate has been able to get in, but that may possibly be changed, inasmuch as it's known that some Statler properties have gone outside for talent.

Betty Claire, sister of Dorothy, who sings with Bobby Byrne, takes vocal spot with Jules Alberti crew at Show Bar, Forest Hills, L. I.

15 Best Sheet Music Sellers

(Week ending Dec. 29, 1939)

South of the Border.....	Shapiro
Oh Johnny, Oh .....	Forster
Scatterbrain .....	BVC
My Prayer .....	Shapiro
*Chatterbox ('That's Right—You're Wrong').....	Chappell
Lilacs in the Rain.....	Robbins
†All the Things You Are ('Very Warm for May').....	Chappell
Blue Orchids .....	Famous
*Faithful Forever ('Gulliver's Travels') .....	Famous
†Stop! It's Wonderful ('Mask and Wig Show').....	Spier
Indian Summer .....	Witmark
El Rancho Grande.....	Marks
Beer Barrel Polka.....	Shapiro
Goody Goodbye .....	Olman
*Little Red Fox ('That's Right—You're Wrong').....	Feist
*Filmmusical. †Production.	

TOP PLUGS OF 1939

List of most-plugged songs was just about as long in 1939 as it was in 1938. That is, around 80 tunes got the works on the chains and went to town with a total of at least 180 plugs spaced over a minimum period of 10 weeks.

The tabulation that follows was made by the same methods as the tabulation for 1938. Songs in this list are chosen only if they ran up 15 or more plugs per week for 10 weeks, and during these 10 weeks there had to be at least three weeks when the plugs totaled 25 or more. Any song which got 180 plugs in, say, five weeks and then folded up, was not included, on the grounds that a song which can't last at least two and a half months is no hit. It may be a skyrocket all right, but it fails to show stamina over a long haul. Hence this method of computation, as against a method involving pure addition of plugs.

Song and Publisher	Derivation
All I Remember Is You—Remick.....	Pop
An Apple for the Teacher—Santly.....	Star Maker*
And the Angels Sing—BVC.....	Pop
Are You Havin' Any Fun?—Crawford.....	Scandals**
At Long Last Love—Chappell.....	You Never Know**
Beer Barrel Polka—Shapiro.....	Pop
Begin the Beguine—Harms.....	Jubilee**
Between a Kiss and a Sigh—Santly.....	Pop
Blue Evening—Miller.....	Pop
Blue Orchids—Famous.....	Pop
Cinderella Stay in My Arms—Shapiro.....	Pop
Comes Love—Chappell.....	Yokel Boy**
Could Be—Santly.....	Pop
Day In, Day Out—BVC.....	Pop
Deep Purple—Robbins.....	Pop
Don't Worry 'Bout Me—Mills.....	Cotton Club Revue**
El Rancho Grande—Marks.....	Pop
Especially for You—Shapiro.....	Pop
F. D. R. Jones—Chappell.....	Sing Out the News**
Get Out of Town—Chappell.....	Leave It to Me**
Go Fly a Kite—Famous.....	Star Maker*
Good Morning—Chappell.....	Babes in Arms*
Gotta Get Some Shut-eye—Berlin.....	Pop
Have You Forgotten So Soon—Berlin.....	Pop
Heaven Can Wait—Remick.....	Pop
Hold Tight—Exclusive.....	Pop
Hurry Home—Spier.....	Pop
I Cried for You—Miller.....	Pop
I Didn't Know What Time—Chappell.....	Too Many Girls**
I Get Along Without You—Famous.....	Pop
I Go for That—Famous.....	St. Louis Blues*
I Have Eyes—Famous.....	Paris Honeymoon*
I Must See Annie Tonight—BVC.....	Pop
I Poured My Heart Into a Song—Berlin.....	Second Fiddle*
If I Didn't Care—Chappell.....	Pop
I'm Building a Sailboat of Dreams—Shapiro.....	Pop
In the Middle of a Dream—Spier.....	Pop
Jeebers Creepers—Witmark.....	Going Places*
Lady's in Love With You—Paramount.....	Some Like It Hot*
Lamp Is Low—Robbins.....	Pop
Last Night—Feist.....	Pop
Lilacs in the Rain—Robbins.....	Pop
Little Sir Echo—BVC.....	Pop
Little Skipper—Feist.....	Pop
Man With the Mandolin—Santly.....	Pop
Moon Love—Famous.....	Pop
Moonlight Serenade—Robbins.....	Pop
My Heart Has Wings—Red Star.....	Pop
My Prayer—Skidmore.....	Pop
New Moon and an Old Serenade—Berlin.....	Pop
Oh, You Crazy Moon—Witmark.....	Pop
Our Love—Chappell.....	Pop
Over the Rainbow—Feist.....	Wizard of Oz*
Penny Serenade—Shapiro.....	Pop
Scatterbrain—BVC.....	Pop
Sing Song of Sunbeams—Santly.....	East Side of Heaven*
South American Way—Harms.....	Streets of Paris**
South of the Border—Shapiro.....	Pop
Stairway to the Stars—Robbins.....	Pop
Strange Enchantment—Famous.....	Man About Town*
Sunrise Serenade—Jewel.....	Pop
Thanks for Everything—Robbins.....	Thanks for Everything*
They Say—Witmark.....	Pop
This Can't Be Love—Chappell.....	Boys From Syracuse**
This Is It—Chappell.....	Stars in Your Eyes**
Three Little Fishies—Santly.....	Pop
To You—Paramount.....	Pop
Two Sleepy People—Famous.....	Thanks for the Memory*
Umbrella Man—Harms.....	Pop
We've Come a Long Way Together—Feist.....	Pop
What Have You Got That Gets Me?—Famous.....	Artists and Models Abroad*
What's New—Witmark.....	Pop
White Sails—Feist.....	Pop
Wishing—Crawford.....	Love Affair*
Must Be Beautiful Baby—Remick.....	Hard to Get*
You're a Sweet Little Headache—Paramount.....	Paris Honeymoon*

\*Film. \*\*Legit.

Inside Stuff—Bands

Larry Clinton has given up recording of popular music and in the future will cut only originals, standards and novelties, except for whatever pop stuff he himself writes. Clinton reasons that if record buyers want a pop tune they're not particular about what band records it, and invariably it's bought on a 35c. platter. He's on Victor. But by putting some comparatively exclusive original on wax the public can be exploited via radio and machines into buying.

Clinton has a unique method of making up an arrangement of a pop tune for dance work. He waits until he gets at least five requests for any one number before putting it in his books. Result is that there's quite a few high-standing current pops that can't be found in his library because few have evidenced a desire to hear his band do 'em.

Del Courtney orchestra will begin the use of a sustaining program idea coincident with his opening at the Baker Hotel, Dallas, Jan. 19, which NBC refused to allow him to use on sustainers from his current Ambassador hotel, N. Y., stand. He leaves the latter Jan. 9. In conjunction with the band's 'Candid Camera' style tag, Courtney will ask listeners to submit pictures of any subject which best depict titles of songs. Prizes will be awarded.

Pickups from the Dallas Hotel will be made by the new Transcontinental Broadcasting System.

Decca Record has inscribed 'To You Sweetheart Aloha' seven different ways, which constitutes something of a record for the business. Those who have made the tune under the Decca label are Bing Crosby, Louis Armstrong, Henry King, Ray Kinney, Dick McIntire, Victor Silvester and Ambrose. Victor has versions by Guy Lombardo, Gray Gordon, Abe Lyman and Dick Todd, while Horace Heidt did it for Columbia and Del Courtney for Vocalion.



# Addenda: Dorsey, Kemp, Lyman, Bernie

Last week VARIETY published a rather long list, under various headings, of radio programs and personalities that had, during 1939, been big attention-getters. This was offered as a quick-glance news summary of the year in terms of the radio talent achieving or holding major prominence, activity and popularity.

In the case of the dance orchestra division the VARIETY list has been challenged on the score of incompleteness and a second guess suggests at least four others should have been included in all fairness. These are: Tommy Dorsey, Hal Kemp, Abe Lyman, Ben Bernie.

# The Proverbial Patsy, The Music Publisher

By Jack Robbins

(Head of Robbins, Feist and Miller)

Years ago, when Tin Pan Alley consisted of a group of hole-in-the-wall music firms located in the vicinity of 28th Street and Broadway, the 'song plugger' was born. He was the individual who haunted the stage doors of vaudeville theatres; who would conspire with a movie theatre manager to flash a slide on the screen with the lyrics of his firm's latest song which he would sing from the stage ('Everybody, now, join in the second chorus'); who would visit Madison Square Garden and sing the same tune to the accompaniment of a tinny piano and the whirring of bicycle tires endlessly pushing around the pinewood saucer; who could be found at a barroom frequented by vaudeville folk, where he would order the bartender to 'set 'em up' time and time again as he sang, hummed and generally extolled the virtues of his firm's latest tune.

Many a publisher, operating on the proverbial shoestring, found it expedient, at the beginning, to be his own 'song plugger.' Most of the important executives of Tin Pan Alley today started in that manner.

Today, a paradox without precedent is presented by Tin Pan Alley. Despite the fact that it is highly instrumental in creating a couple of billion dollars worth of amusement industries, it is still in the piker stage and continues to get treatment regularly accorded to the family black sheep.

Visualize, if you can, a Ford or a Chrysler sitting humbly and abjectly in the ante-room of an auto distributor, hoping that within the next hour or two it might suit the distributor's fancy to see him for a brief moment or two. Try to imagine the auto distributor saying brusquely, 'All right, now, leave your blue prints and photos of the new models. I'll let you know some time whether I like them or not.'

We meek souls who make it possible for bands to survive, for singers to have fresh and adequate material, for film companies to produce lavish musicals, for advertising agencies to collect huge commissions and for sponsors to sell their cereals, cigarettes and coffees, have become the paties of the show business. It has been ascertained, fairly correctly, that over 75% of radio shows are based on music and yet, in the planning of an air production, the publisher is given absolutely no consideration. In this enlightened age he still humbly carries his orchestrations under his arm, takes his hat off to the program director and beats his chest for a plug. He will wait patiently—for hours on end—for the orchestra leader or the singer to finish a rehearsal. Then he will be rewarded with a 'Hello there, I'm in an awful hurry. Stop in again soon.' Many a publisher whose product sells food doesn't have any in his cupboard.

## Hasn't Changed with the Years

While there is a completely new generation of artists in show business and while the entire industry underwent a metamorphosis with the advent of radio, the legend of the music publisher, the song plugger and the relationship between those who publish songs and those who use them professionally remains virtually the same. Organization, high finance, deals that involve hundreds of thousands of dollars, catalogs that are more valuable, intrinsically and commercially than the Hope and Jokers diamonds, hasn't enabled us to change our status one bit.

It is an intolerable condition with which we have tried to cope, to practically no avail. We remain the fall guys of show business, and if we so much as let out a slight murmur of protest we endanger our businesses and risk possible exile.

Music business, in this writer's pessimistic opinion, has degenerated into a special material writing agency for songsters and bandmen,

in radio and in films. We select a song and invest our money to promote it and yet, with one gesture of negation, a non compos maestro, or a screechy band vocalist or a movie producer, whose knowledge of music is confined to off-key renditions of 'Sweet Adeline' in the wee hours of the morning, can ruin an investment of from \$10,000 to \$25,000.

Script writers and gag men are paid fabulous fees to keep the radio shows in the high survey brackets. Yet we, who provide the major portion of the more significant shows, remain outcasts, subjected to the autocracies of the agencies and the dictators of the band world.

Artie Shaw wrote an article titled 'Music Is a Business,' which appeared in the Saturday Evening Post almost the same day that Shaw gave up his band. He expounded on the trials and tribulations of a band leader, and how even top ranking and the monetary returns, commensurate with an exalted position in the band world, weren't worth the tortures and hardships that came before.

Shaw wrote about being beleaguered by music publishers who wanted him to 'push' their frequently inferior output. He even attributed his success to the fact that he played old tunes in new dress; that he completely disregarded the current crop of tunes and played 'oldies' so as to escape the pestiferous attentions of the song plugging coterie. He added that music publishers were often a hazard to a young orchestra leader who wanted to rise in his chosen profession. He hinted about 'subsidization'—instances in which a young band leader without the necessary cash to build his band, would approach a music publisher for the money. In that way, the band leader became beholden to the music publisher forever. Not only did he pay back his loan, but he remained in the clutches of the publisher who made his fame and success possible, by having to constantly play his tunes.

To say that we of Tin Pan Alley take issue with Mr. Shaw would be putting it mildly. Our output of songs doesn't vary with the years. The year 1939 will have produced as many hits, and perhaps more, than any of the years preceding. Shaw's theory of playing old tunes in new dress was basically sound. He was helping us by doing so. Inevitably, people—his public—would ask for the newer tunes, too. He had to play them, whether he desired so or not.

## Songs That Made the Artists

We have often been responsible, through the medium of a single tune, for establishing an artist or a group of artists. Bing Crosby was comparatively unknown until Tin Pan Alley gave him a tune titled 'Just One More Chance,' which he recorded and which made him. The Andrews Sisters became prominent on the musical horizon on the strength of one tune. Tunes like 'Begin the Beguine,' 'Indian Love Call' and 'Donkey's Serenade' catapulted Artie Shaw into fame. The Ink Spots, after years of obscurity, became an important attraction because of one tune. I could go on indefinitely naming people and tunes identified with them that made them—and the songs—famous.

Publishers go out of their way to 'play ball' with up-and-coming bands by giving them top tunes to record. Often as not, it will be the tune that will make the leader, instead of the other way around. We have advised, nursed, coddled and given the benefit of years of background and experience in the music world to these young hopefuls. We have pointed out the pitfalls and the pratfalls. Too often, however, I have watched a young leader who approached us hopefully and humbly with hat in hand literally bite the hand that fed him when he achieved the very

things for which he came to us for help. The use of the expression 'play ball' indicates skulduggery and chicanery. Nothing of the sort happens. There are no 'reciprocal agreements.' All we ask for is an even, business-like break and a little of the consideration we showed him when he needed it the most.

We have witnessed leaders 'out-smart' themselves by ignoring the people of Tin Pan Alley who were largely responsible for their success. We have seen big heads mushroom where no head—or no grey matter—existed before. We have learned, through experience, that the best thing to do is to leave them alone when they reach this stage.

Can anything be done about this? I doubt it.

There are orchestra leaders and singers who know of our problems, who treat us with business-like courtesy. There have even been instances when an orchestra leader would advise us regarding punitive measures to be taken when a colleague of his became too obstreperous and too difficult to deal with. People of that sort, who work with you—with all of us, and not a favored few—are vastly in the minority. In practically every instance, they are on the top of the heap and have been there for some time—all because they have, in addition to talent, a knowledge of human relationships.

## Where Filmicals Miss Out

Some examples of the other school of thought and action? Certainly. Just try to tell the producer of a film to use a song with commercial possibilities instead of the monstrosity he heard at last night's fiesta around his swimming pool, and you're as good as a refugee from Hollywood from that point on. You see, his daughter, just down from finishing school, thought the lyric was 'cute,' and so we're licked. If, by some miracle, a song with even vague commercial possibilities is accepted, just a few bars are used, or the camera shoots away from the artist, so that the effect of the number is lost completely, or the song isn't reprised, or a dozen other things occur to completely stifle any chance the song had to reach any degree of significance.

Tell the lads out there that our songs mean added boxoffice for the pix and you are informed, in no uncertain terms, that they are not interested in Tin Pan Alley and that they will always consider songs as merely a by-product.

But there has been much of this before, so much, in fact, that it has become sheer jive. Consider radio, for example. We have to invest thousands upon thousands of dollars and subject ourselves to every form of humility before a sponsor will play a song on his program. We make it, at our expense, and Mr. Toasted Reifer, or what-have-you cashes in on it.

Of course, this is an old story to us in the music business, and we'll probably continue to mutter darkly and mumble to ourselves about what we would like to do about it, and get nowhere.

# British Music Business Good

# Now That the Hysteria's Abated; Sentiment Displacing War Songs

## British Best Sellers

(Pitman Hart List)

'I'm Writing a Letter to Santa Claus.'  
'There'll Always Be an England.'  
'Wish Me Luck.'  
'We'll Meet Again.'  
'I'll Remember.' (U. S.)  
'We're Gonna Hang Out the Washing on the Siegfried Line.'  
'You Can't Black Out the Moon.'  
'Man with the Mandolin.' (U. S.)  
'Kiss Me Goodnight, Sergeant Major.'

# Texas Hoofing Can't Make Up Its Mind—Hilbilly to Waltzes

Ft. Worth, Jan. 1.

Any orchestra leader headed for Texas ballrooms these days must be prepared to play (1) Viennese waltzes (2) the schottische (3) the polka and (4) the varsovienne. To be perfectly safe, he should have 'Gilt Along Sally,' 'Turkey in the Straw,' 'Little Brown Jug' and other Ozark items in his repertoire. The crowd might want to do some old-fashioned square dancing.

These ballroom exercises, borrowed from the parlor days of grandma, are the rage in San Antonio, Houston, Dallas and Ft. Worth. Swankier the ballroom, the more likely you are to find the dancers doing the varsovienne ('Put Your Little Foot').

They are doing the fast, old picture waltz to Strauss music when they can find a band leader to co-operate. They love the schottische. The accomplished debutante is no jitterbug this season. She does the varsovienne and the heel-and-toe polka.

It's a question whether the rage for these old dances started in San Antonio, where folk dancing has long been a hobby with the arty crowd, or in Dallas where Joe Reichman and Henry King stepped down off the bandstand to become dancing teachers in the Hotel Baker's Mural Room and the Adolphus' Century. Anyhow, incoming band leaders say it is a Texas phenomenon.

Claude Lapham composed the score that the band is playing at the Beachcomber, new Broadway niterie. Songs include 'Song of the Beachcombers,' 'Samoan Serenade' and 'Zombie.'

By IRWIN DASH

(American music man, now managing Director of Irwin Dash Music Co., Ltd., of London)

London, Dec. 20.

## Editor, VARIETY:

When the war started, the first weeks things weren't too good. The blackout was something new; people felt a little panicky and business was not too grand, and as the second week started the music business was shot for keeps. Cafes and restaurants got rid of their bands, not knowing what was going to happen, and there was nothing for the song-plugger to do at night. As confidence returned, the bands went back to work, the pluggers went around to see the different leaders, and business became terrific for those who had great songs. It also was very good in the cafes and restaurants.

What really helped the music and gramophone record business was the fact that people had nothing to do at night. They stayed home and had to provide their own entertainment, resulting in a smash music business. Naturally, there was a positive deluge of war songs, but we don't benefit immediately, as the BBC transferred their entertainment departments to several towns 'somewhere in England,' and it was quite a hardship for a while until they got straightened out.

Around 75% of the broadcasting was gramophone records, and they were songs anywhere from three months to a year old. Gradually, however, as live entertainment crept in, our new songs attained a good hold and the public started buying. All firms have sent most of the song pluggers to this town 'somewhere in England' to contact broadcasting artists and producers. My man leaves here Tuesday morning and returns Friday of every week. Cannot give you the name of the town, and if by chance you happen to know it, which I doubt, please do not mention it, as I would not want the censor to think I had betrayed what is supposed to be a confidence. It would be a very serious offense.

## English Songs Benefit

It is only natural that English songs were those which jumped to the fore. It was a better break for the publishers, because there is only one station broadcasting, where we used to have several. Although we only have one British Broadcasting Corp., formerly there might have been three or four stations in different parts of the country broadcasting at the same time, but now everyone hears this one broadcast. And speaking for myself, if you have a hit song you can make it with five or six broadcasts a week.

Our firm is very lucky to have two smashing hits. 'There'll Always Be an England' jumped to the front as one of the biggest things in the country, and you will notice in the list of best sellers herewith that there are few American songs.

Three songs in this list are a shilling: 'Wish Me Luck as You Wave Me Goodbye,' 'F.D.R. Jones,' and 'There'll Always Be an England.' You must remember that if you take 'England' for instance on the Pitman Hart list and double it, two for one, it is as good as 'Writing a Letter to Santa Claus.' This list means copies sold, not as to price. This means an awful lot to a publisher to have a shilling hit as you can readily understand.

The difference between the war and the last is that in 1914 it was three months before England sent any soldiers to France and, in the meanwhile, the publishers were getting busy on songs like 'Tipperary,' 'Keep the Home Fires Burning,' etc. We can say that these songs were made by the Army. In this present war, soldiers left for France immediately and naturally left singing 'Little Sir Echo,' 'South of the Border'—songs that were hits of the moment. These songs were gradually pushed to the background and now, as you will see by the list a new group of songs gradually showed their superiority and are the big sellers today.

As an American, I can only conclude that the English are much to be admired. I have never seen people so calm and collected. They may appear slow in our eyes, but believe me they are a great nation.

# Network Plugs, 8 A.M. to 1 A.M.

Following is a totalization of the combined plugs of current tunes on NBC (WEAF and WJZ), and CBS (WABC) computed for the week from Saturday through Friday (Dec. 23-29). (Only for this week, due to earlier press-time because of this issue). Total represents accumulated performances on the two major networks from 8 a.m. to 1 a.m. Symbol \* denotes film song. † legit, all others are pop.

TITLE	PUBLISHER	GRAND TOTAL
At the Balalaika... *Balalaika	Feist	61
Faithful Forever... Gulliver's Travels	Famous	57
Careless	Berlin	55
All the Things You Are... *Very Warm for May	Chappell	39
Stop! It's Wonderful... *Mask and Wig Show	Spier	33
Scatterbrain	BVC	32
I Didn't Know What Time... *Too Many Girls	Chappell	25
Speaking of Heaven	Miller	25
Oh, Johnny, Oh	Forster	24
In an Old Dutch Garden	Harms	23
It's a Hap-Hap, Happy day... Gulliver's Travels	Famous	23
Lilacs in the Rain	Robbins	22
Indian Summer	Witmark	21
My Prayer	Shapiro	21
South of the Border	Shapiro	19
El Rancho Grande	Marks	18
In the Mood	Shapiro	17
Who Told You I Cared?... *Kid Nightingale	Witmark	17
Can I Help It	Remick	16
Ciri Biri Bin	Paramount	16
Little Red Fox... *That's Right—You're Wrong	Feist	16
This Changing World	Robbins	16
Darn That Dream... *Swingin' the Dream	BVC	15
Does Your Heart Beat for Me?	Mills	15
Goody Goodbye	Olman	14
Holy Smoke	Santly	14
Last Night	Feist	13
Are You Havin' Any Fun?... *Scandals	Crawford	12
Little Street in Singapore	Shapiro	12
After All	Sun	11
Bluebirds in the Moonlight... *Gulliver's Travels	Famous	10
Do I Love You... *Du Barry Was a Lady	Chappell	10
Hello Mr. Kringle	Feist	10
Honestly	Santly	10
To You Sweetheart Aloha	Santly	10
Winter Wonderland	BVC	10



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And We Start Off By Giving You

**"TO YOU SWEETHEART ALOHA"**

The Hawaiian Ballad Hit

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**"HOLY SMOKE (CAN'T YA TAKE A JOKE)"**

An Outstanding Novelty by Johnny Mercer

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Thanks for All Your Cooperation

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Mills, to the orchestra leaders  
and vocalists who are making it  
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★  
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In the Sweet Long Ago  
In the Valley of the Moon  
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THAT'S A PLENTY  
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(The original Fine-Top Smith's)

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*Frankie*  
**CARLE**

COMPOSER OF SUCH 1939 AND '40 HIT SONGS AS  
SUNRISE SERENADE . . . SHADOWS

*Thanks to:*

Band leaders, singers, pro-  
gram directors, music ma-  
chine operators and all  
others who helped my songs  
scale the heights.

And also to my two friends,  
Horace Heidt and Bill Lack-  
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OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

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1450 Broadway

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TO THE ENTIRE  
AMUSEMENT INDUSTRY

By and large, 1939 has been a successful year for the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada.

During the past year our membership has increased steadily; unity of purpose and cooperative action have characterized our every undertaking: varied problems that have been encountered have been solved peacefully and amicably; and most important of all, employment opportunities for our members have increased.

If one is to judge the future by the past, then 1940 is destined to be a big year for all the members of the American Federation of Musicians. The demand for live music is booming everywhere. Our employment horizons are broadening, And our organization stands ever on guard to protect the interest of its members.

To all our members everywhere, to all our friends in show business, we extend our sincerest wishes for a happy 1940. May it be even better than 1939.

Sincerely,

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF MUSICIANS

*J. N. Weber*  
President

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## OBERSTEIN LOSES 1ST ROUND VS. MILLER ORC

American Federation of Musicians has tossed out the case of United States Record Corp. vs. Glenn Miller's orch. Eli Oberstein, as head of U. S. Records, sought to force Miller to record for him under a contract supposed to have been signed between them last February. Federation's Board would give no ruling on the case, leaving Oberstein free to take his charges to a civil court, which he has threatened to do. (According to union rules, no dispute between member parties may be taken to outside judicial action until it's first put before Federation mediators.)

David McKay, counsel for Miller, answered Oberstein's charges, alleging fraud. Case had been filed three months ago, but wasn't acted on until last week. Meanwhile, Oberstein's new company has started rolling.

## Levington Vice Stool

Archie Levington will replace Jesse Stool, resigned as Chicago manager for Mercer & Morris, Inc., Jan. 8.

Levington is currently assistant to Harold Lee, Chicago manager of the Witmark division of the Warner Bros. group.

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# THE NOCTURNAL PARADE

By Abel Green

New York is now the No. 1 stay-up-late capital of the world.

Was a time when the competition from Paris' famed Montmartre and Left Bank, London, Berlin, Vienna and Budapest meant plenty. Not to mention such far-flung never-goesleep spots as Port Said, Singapore, Cairo and Rio de Janeiro; not forgetting many an American metropolis, in or out of season (Chicago, Detroit, New Orleans, 'Frisco, apart from the Saratoga spa and the Florida and California seasonal oases). But during and despite it all, the biggest city in the world attracted, catered to and saw more after-dark life than anywhere else, only it is more so today, in this not so civilized era.

However, with it all, it's not been a good season. During the N. Y. World's Fair, which all in show business referred to as the Whalen Wall, they were gagging about the Fair giving Broadway two weeks to get out of town. Right up until the end of the year the revenue has been spotty.

A generally changing scheme of things, for one thing, has come to pass. No longer do the big-capacity, mass turnover establishments flourish, although the just reopened International Casino, French Casino, nee Casa Manana (Lew Brown), and the Ziegfeld Midnight Frolic (nee Paradise) have essayed lavishness anew.

The dance craze that has gripped America the past three years, accentuated only by newer phenomena such as swing bands and jitterbug antics, has resulted in the shifting order. They'd rather make their own fun, with just a dash of divertissement to break up the dance sets than sit through lavish, long-running productions.

The upbeat of intimate rooms and the prolonged life of such spots as 21 (which is strictly sans entertainment), the Stork, El Morocco, Fefe's Monte Carlo, Martinique, La Conga, Persian Room, Iridium Room, Ruban Bleu, Versailles, Rainbow Room, Nine O'Clock Club, El Chico—to name a diversity of representative New York cafes, embracing all manners and types—speak for itself. Capacities of 200-300 in some establishments are by no means intimate, but the personal equation in the hosting is an element there.

What had happened to the Casa Manana, International, Hollywood and Paradise just about spelled the knell of the big Broadway spots. Billy Rose's final attempt, at the Casa, with 'The Big Show'—and it was that, headed by James Barton and the Howard Bros., plus a flock of other acts, a line of girls, two bands, etc.—washed it up until Brown stepped in. Nicky Blair at the Paradise decided he had to do something radical, or else, hence the Ziegfeld Midnight Frolic with its lavish Seymour Felix revue. The International has sailed troubled financial seas almost from its start two years ago, and the Hollywood is now Ripley's Odditorium, completely out of the picture.

## Hotels' Big Biz

To refute the Broadway pessimism, the Hotel Astor never enjoyed such boom days; and hotels like the Lincoln, Edison and Park Central, in the same sector, and the Pennsylvania and New Yorker, a bit below Times Sq., have been clicking with name bands. The Cotton Club's distinction as the lone colored nitery best explains the whyfore of its economic success.

To get back to the Fair, what was expected to prove a bonanza evolved a dud. The tourists, who didn't come in sufficiently satisfactory numbers in the first place (reflecting the depressed economic conditions nationally) were on shoestring budgets, stayed all day, came back to their hotels and presumably collapsed, dog-tired. Anyway, few were out of nights, while those who essayed it soon became known as the 'two bit trade' among the grumbling waiters.

On the other hand, the fair's nationalistic pavilions, during the early weeks, drew the local spenders who deemed it a lark to dine sumptuously, in a foreign atmosphere, take in the Aquacade or give the midway a general whirl, and call it an evening. That further boomed the local class spots. After a while the novelty wore off and resentment supplanted the carnival spirit when stock was taken of the fact that (1) the French, Belgian, Italian, Brazilian and kindred pavilions were expensive, far out of proportion to the smartest eateries in New York, particularly the French and Italian; (2) that the service was not only poor, but ranged from sheer indifference

to insolence, depending on the mood or extent of the tempo (notably in the French Pavilion); and (3), socialites who make much ado about having the couverts removed as a 'courtesy' in midtown suddenly realized they were actually paying a 75c cover-charge, via the six-bit gate admission to get into the fair grounds.

But by the time the fair's novelty had worn off, the spenders had scrambled for the summer anyway, and the visitors were strictly on slim budgets.

## Many B'way Casualties

Casualties were many. The Hollywood and International went through the wringers twice; and in addition Joe Moss, of both managements, successively filed personally for over \$500,000. Joe Zelli, the Brooklyn Parisian, came home to roost unsuccessfully with an Arabian Nights room (old Yumuri), but no dice. Harry Richman, whose Club Richman in the Volsteadian era was long a landmark, couldn't repeat with the Road to Mandalay, in the grill of Delmonico's, and that folded. The El Rio, former Park Ave. Club (speakeasy vintage), flivvered and tried anew as Mother Kelly's, counterpart of the Miami spot, but that was shortlived, too.

Of other quondam personalities in the cafes, they ran the gamut from Pancho Villa's daughter singing; Alice Marble forsaking the tennis courts for the Waldorf-Astoria and Hollywood boites; Jesse Owens leaving his Olympic laurels behind him to maestro a band, and then essaying a barnstorming tour with a colored ball team; Elsie Janis' comeback, into a nitery, the Versailles, N. Y.; and the like.

Billy Rose added to his \$1,000,000 net profit from the Aquacade at the N. Y. World's fair with his Diamond Horseshoe, which has seen some \$200,000 net profit to date, in less than a year.

Felix Ferry and Gene Cavallero (class Colony restaurateur) spent some \$85,000 to open the Monte Carlo, heretofore a jinx room ever since Harry Kannen built it as the House of Morgan (Helen), and cut sharply into John Perona's El Morocco, proving that cafe society was itching for a switch. That deflated Perona a bit, he designed to mix with the customers, and had to call in Jo Mielziner to redecorate his room. Both are doing OK anew.

Proving that history can repeat itself, La Conga, with a hotcha Latin motif, climbed into the click class fast. The site of the old Conga, on 57th street west, subsequently was reopened as La Martinique by two ballroom dancers, Dario (and Diane) and Ramon (and Renita), and is likewise paying dividends.

## Back to Gaslight Era

Other manifestations were the growth of the nostalgic niteries. Bill Hardy's Gay 90s long had that field to itself, until Billy Rose touched off the yesteryear motif at his Diamond Horseshoe. Then followed the Brown Derby, Joe E. Howard's Gold Room in the Hotel Ambassador, and others. Oldtime silent newsreels and up-to-the-minute Translux news flashes were other added wrinkles in the metropolitan and nationalistic cafe scenes. Barrooms to class hostilities, such as New York's Sherry-Netherland, went in for the old Chaplins with beer and pretzels or vermouth cassis.

The expected comeback of Greenwich Village, during the Fair, came to pass after Whalen folded his spec. The hinterlanders didn't have any curiosity about the Latin Quarter, or Harlem or Broadway. But with cooler weather the Village boomed, keynoted by Cafe Society and its boogie-woogie jazzique; a flock of nondescript joints; class Latin boites like El Chico, El Gaucho and Latino; and a flock of intimate arty spots (notably Max Gordon's Vanguard, from whence sprang The Revuers into the Rainbow Room.)

## 52nd Street Picks Up

For a spell, 52d Street—America's Montmartre—was jiving for the sheriffs, but through the constantly shifting changes Jack White, Pat Harrington, Frankie Hyers and their zanies made the Club 18 (moved to No. 20) a must-see. Leon & Eddie's celebrated its decade in the black, and has further insured that by shifting into a name band policy that has clicked. Jack & Charlie's 21 is still the class of the street; Tony's and the Famous Door are other highlights.

The jitterbug joints have had hit 'n' miss careers, the Famous Door and Hickory House clicking the most consistently. In the sticks, another manifestation of the jive nitery ap-

peal were the barns and bistros featuring name swing bands—on the platters—and drawing the kids.

Sherman Billingsley's Stork Club rates special distinction for its unique blending of patronage. Its character as a nocturnal institution today is more unique than ever before, with its discriminating congregation of young socialites, the theatre, the arts, literati, press, Hollywood and the like. It got so that Billingsley had to take over Le Mirage, retitle it the Nine O'Clock Club, and advertise it in all the campus papers as a new hangout for the youngsters. That hasn't eased the Stork's traffic much, however.

For the rest the scene is the same; the mode and manners, fads and foibles shifting but slightly with each season. The attitude in general is saner—maybe world events have something to do with it. Americans are taking their nocturnal fun in less hectic potions and proportions; even cafe society realizes how silly it all is.

The bonifaces accordingly are meeting the trade more than half-way by welcoming the steadies and making certain that the desirable regulars are made thoroughly at home. It's all right to take care of the once-in-a-while, but the regular customer is preferred. That's why many a hinterlander, intent on whoopee and a free-spending evening, frequently can't understand the cool receptions accorded him in the more discriminating spots. Charlie Berns of 21 (Jack and Charlie's) best answers that by observing, 'We'd rather have a regular customer with us two or three times a week who spends \$10, than somebody who barges in once in a while and spends \$25 or \$50.'

Back-of-the-scenes catering in night life has been fraught with the same labor pains attendant to many another industry. Mounting labor costs, unionization demands, and even such bizarre instances where some niteries found themselves involved in the AFA-AGVA matter (at the time of the Sophie Tucker situation), resulting in cross-picketing by both unions, with the joint in the middle, are among the little things that insure never a dull moment for a cafe proprietor.

## Duck, Boys, Here Comes Whiskers

Chicago, Jan. 1.

Into many of the niteries of the nation, but particularly those of Chicago, there has walked an unseen, but nevertheless potent, personality. To the inside boys he is known as 'the guy with the whiskers.'

If you ask why the casino is closed, the answer is, 'The guy with the whiskers has been around.' Why did so-and-so suddenly leave town? Answer: 'The guy with the whiskers has been asking questions.'

The nitery boys are nervous. Under every table, hiding behind every door, is that unseen, but ever-present man with the whiskers, and he is a tough man to push around, or even argue with. What he says goes, and that's that.

It used to be around town that when a nite-lifer saw a man suddenly put his hand into his pocket, it was expected that he'd come up with a rod. Now, when a man puts his hand into his pocket the boys expect to see him come up with a federal badge. In either case, the best thing to do is duck.

For the man with the whiskers is causing plenty of changes in the local nitery picture. Uncle Sam, in the guise of literally dozens of federal agents of all departments, is ubiquitous in these nocturnal spots, and he is bringing considerable uneasiness and numerous headaches.

Nite clubs, established and popular for years, are suddenly closed while the owners and managers decide to take a vacation; gambling casinos, which hadn't been molested since their opening, are suddenly folded without any obvious pressure having been put on 'em. Certain patrons who formerly frequented these establishments have suddenly become absentees. Certain products which had certain monopolies in these nite spots suddenly openly invite their competitors to come into the field; in fact, some of these products are suddenly withdrawn and leave the field entirely to the competition.

Everywhere the answer is the same: the guy with the whiskers. The tall, bearded gentleman has worked many changes in the nite

# Hollywood's Night Life Still Mostly At Home

By Arthur Ungar

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Hollywood, during the past six or seven years, has veiled itself to the point that when nitery is mentioned it sort of shies away as though visiting one of those fun-and-glamour joints would be evil in intent and thought. It's just a case of where Hollywood does not believe in hitting the illuminated palaces of food and joy at frequent intervals, and the result is that Hollywood has not for the past three or four years supported any individual or group of swank night spots.

Hollywood could have plenty establishments of the de luxe type. Money is always available here for the establishment and operation of smart spots, but when a Price-Waterhouse is made it fades into deep carmine.

Hollywood smart spots don't continue for any long period. Sheep like, they follow a leader and a new spot, be it swank, possessed of a good band or good food, or possibly with entertainment out of the ordinary, gets a play for a spell but Hollywood tires soon. They're consistent at nothing, even enjoying itself. It tires of a new place fast. If it's been open for five or six months, or not sufficiently 'exclusive' or novel it gets a fast brushoff. Along comes some new establishment, it gets the play and then something happens again.

## Soon the Clamor Dies

Hollywood has always clamored for a smart swank spot, without interlopers and the outside world gazing in, but any such joint would entail a terrific overhead and would have little chance.

Being strictly a 'yes' town, should someone inquire will it support a smart nitery, the answer will always be in the affirmative. But the support would be in the negative.

Two instances during the past year prove that. Felix Young got a bunch of coin together, remodelled the Trocadero, made it the last word in cafe interiors, had Emil Coleman and two other bands for constant music, charged top nitery prices and lingered for about five months. Marcel LaMaze tried fixing up the Club Seville, calling it Marcel's, went after the 'smart' Hollywood trade with good music and name entertainers but not enough patronage to warrant all the trouble.

Both the Troc and Marcel's now are readying for another try, former reopening under the management of John Steinberg and Abe Lyman. Steinberg knows the Hollywood crowd and the cafe biz, too. His past experience in the east gives him all the answers. He is not illudioned by an old Hollywood saying, 'The picture moguls will carry the place without outside trade.'

The Troc's former major domo has taken over Marcel's, with financing by Joe Pasternack and others around town, who have pooled around \$30,000 to fix it up as a smart nitery.

Smart dinner spot in the heart of the Sunset 'strip' which has weathered all the storms is Cafe Lamaze, operated by Slim Gordon. Has capacity for around 120, serves top dinner of town at \$4 in the style

club business in the past few years, and there are indications that these changes have really only just begun—that many more are to follow in the near future.

Nite club operators have had so many badges flashed in their faces in the past few months, they have developed an automatic reflex any time anybody makes a move to stick a hand into his trousers pocket. If he came up with anything but a federal badge the operators would probably faint.

Operators who used to be notoriously careless in their handling of books, knowing only whether they had more money or less money at the end of each week, now have become better than certified public accountants. Fellows who used to count on their fingers, now can figure that 6% or 16% as if it were a two-across parlay. None of 'em wants to tangle up with the man with the whiskers; the guy who is bringing legitimacy to a business which was formerly pretty much south of the border.

And the clip artists are wailing. For them, the man with the fuzz is ruining what used to be a pretty good living.

created by George LaMaze, has good but not costly dansapation and uses variable name solo entertainers. No pretense to operation, no fuss over customers and it has done year in and year out biz while the other spots along the Strip lit up and went dark at frequent intervals.

Then, of course, there is the Hotel Ambassador, in midtown Los Angeles with its Coconut Grove. It gets the dinner parties, also opening night play for new bands and entertainers from the picture crowd, and drop-in biz most any night. Top band policy goes along doing very healthy biz with its patronage from the permanent and visiting populace of the Los Angeles area without turning to Hollywood to carry the burden. Another sans that pretense stuff is the Victor Hugo in Beverly Hills which caught on when the Skinnay Ennis outfit started providing the dance tunes and John Steinberg went after trade with Sunday night vaudeville before selling out his interest to Walter Guizardi, who continues to get a big play. Film crowd uses the place for private dinners for 50 to 100 very frequently.

## Those Bevhills Swankeries

Florentine Room of the Beverly Wilshire has never been much for the picture bunch, though it always has top bands. Located half a block from the Victor Hugo, it depends mostly on the college and so-called society patronage of this city adjoining Hollywood. The Beverly Hills hotel, for years known as an 'old lady's home,' has awakened and is going after night trade and houses the local Saturday night 400, which is a means to get the film mob to become weekend dance habitues. This idea was the promotion of Erman Pessiss, local p.a.

There are several other spots around Bevhills, such as Gay Nineties which gets okay play but doesn't count on the showfolks to pay for electric lights.

In Hollywood proper Monte Proser couple years ago adopted the New York idea and the hot Latin music got some of the younger contingent of pic players and alleged boys-about-town to the establishment, but its had pretty tough sledding from time to time.

The Hollywood spot which gets the heavy play, from everywhere, is Slaspie Maxie's. Maxie Rosenbloom, in between screen chores, found this joint a natural while he trained for those walk-through fistic encounters. He's made enough coin the first two years to enlarge. He gets the late trade from 11-2 a.m. and three weekend nights turns them away. Now and then Maxie puts a 10c covert on a customer he feels is Scotch by nature. From the way he's doing it looks as though Maxie will coin enough in another couple of years to buy the block he's located on, unless the bookies intervene.

Downtown, of course, there is the Biltmore Bowl, which plays mostly to tourists and gets one big film turnout a year when the Academy takes it over for the annual awards dinner. Then half way toward midtown the swank Town House has opened the Zebra room, with a small orchestra and a couple hot canters who are catering mostly to the youngbloods of Pasadena and Los Angeles.

There are several private clubs which have the right to keep members' liquor in lockers for use after the 2 a.m. curfew and they are pretty well packed until dawn many a night. This is Hollywood's road company of the London bottle club idea.

## Grace Hayes Rules the Valley

Out in the Valley on the other side of Hollywood city, or six miles from Hollywood, Grace Hayes has opened her lodge. With her son, Lynd Hayes, and Charlie Foy, they provide the entertainment plus a hot band and the aid of a lot of former vaudevillians. Place on the whole gets more picture patronage than did some of the former swank Hollywood niteries in their palmy days. It's getting a little small now and with the new year she is moving a mile further out to a larger room.

But so far as Hollywood night life is concerned, it is strictly home—dinner parties, with picture shows in the home projection rooms and food and libation afterward. That's how the moneyed bunch mostly enjoy their night life.



# Vaudeville's Abortive 'Comeback'

Vaudeville circa 1939 took one step forward, then two backward and wound up again in its familiar position behind the proverbial eight-ball. Compared with 1938, which was bad enough, the past year was a promising bust.

For some time there had been talk of at least a partially revived vaudeville business—and 1939 looked like the year it would come to pass. That's the way it started out in early fall, but not how it's winding up. There was more playing time in October than there was in December. In essence—a buildup to a letdown.

It was again noticeable that vaude advanced only where film product paved the way. Some indie operators, desperate for some b.o. uplift out of the slough of C and D deals and giveaways, were principally involved in giving vaude in general, and name bands in particular, a whirl. The Brandt circuit in New York, which started with four weeks and is winding up with two, is a notable case in point.

On the other hand, those houses in the position to get major film product, especially for first-run nabe showings, hardly gave stage shows a tumble. Principally included in these, of course, are the major circuit theatres. There was little, if any, effort on the part of the latter to give vaude a fair shake; in some cases the exact reverse. RKO's one-day vaudfilm policy in some of its metropolitan New York nabe spots, with poorly presented and cheap lay-outs, is one of the instances where vaudeville is still being invited to be sluggish.

Which all combined to make 1939 look much like 1938. '37, '36, and down the line to the big skid in the late 20's. It all adds up to the one fact that it's the picture that still counts.

## Some Excitement, However

The past year in vaudeville, however, was an exciting one for other reasons, chiefly the labor unions.

Poor vaudeville, despite its desperately depleted state, was the fuse last summer which nearly set off one of the biggest, and probably the most drastic, strike in all the history of the show business. The stepchild suddenly found itself in the strange position of having all of his more prosperous half-brothers fighting over him against the 'big bad wolf,' the stagehands' union.

That may have been funny to the vaude performer, but it was nearly tragic for every phase of the entertainment world. Just prior to the final settlement, it appeared certain that a strike starting in the legitimate field would spread to motion pictures, opera and even radio, resulting in a 100% blackout of theatrical amusements for the general public.

The strike was averted by a last-minute capitulation on the part of the stagehands, but not before things had been made plenty lively during July and August. It was a well publicized battle, including all the name-calling and recriminations, before the stagehands finally renounced their adoption of the American Federation of Actors, which had been disenfranchised by the Associated Actors and Artistes of America (Four A's).

In the middle of the fight was Ralph Whitehead, executive secretary of the AFA, and Sophie Tucker, president of the same union. It was Whitehead who was accused of mismanaging the union; Miss Tucker stuck by his side during the Four A's investigation and subsequent AFA charter-revocation, going over with him to George E. Browne, president of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, who had

## Major Circuit Bookers

**RKO**  
Bill Howard.  
**PARAMOUNT**  
Harry Kalcheim.  
Harry Levine.  
**LOEW'S**  
J. H. Lubin.  
Sidney Piermont.  
**WARNER BROS.**  
Harry Mayer.

long been looking for an inside track to gain control of the talent unions.

When the film, legit, opera and radio performers learned that Browne had unfolded his paternal wings to take them in, a howl went up that reached its crescendo at the American Federation of Labor's board meeting in Atlantic City. The actors didn't win there and everybody looked forward to the reopening of 'Leave It to Me' on Broadway, in which Sophie Tucker was featured and whom Equity had suspended because of the stagehands matter. It was known that the other performers, including William Gaxton and Victor Moore, would not work with her. It was also known that the stagehands would walk out if Miss Tucker was not in the show. Millions of dollars in screen, legit and opera investments literally held its breath for the night of Sept. 4, with Miss Tucker making a stand against the Four A's that made Custer look like an amateur.

The IATSE tossed the first bomb on Sept. 1, when it threatened strikes in Chicago and Boston unless the vaudfilm theatres there all agreed to AFA closed shops. Jones, Linick & Schaefer quickly signatored in Chicago, but Balaban & Katz referred the IA to the Paramount homeoffice in New York. Keith's, in Boston, did likewise and there were no walkouts, but the situation remained acute until Sunday morning, when Screen Actors Guild officials in Hollywood got together with the IA's Coast chief, Willie Bioff, whose old criminal record had been given a going over by the Four A's during the rumpus, and the actors suddenly found themselves victorious. The full inside on the meeting has never been disclosed, but it is obvious that it was a 100% retreat on the part of the stagehands' union.

News of the capitulation was first announced at a mass meeting of actors at the Astor hotel in N. Y. the same night, Sept. 3. It had been supposed that the get-together was for the purpose of consolidating forces and support for the strike that appeared inevitable on the morrow. Instead, the few thousand present learned that Browne had retreated, leaving Whitehead and Miss Tucker on the battlefield, sadly wounded.

## Other Incidents

There were further minor incidents, such as Whitehead's \$100,000 slander suit against eight Four A's officials and representatives, but in the main the affair quickly quieted down and the vaudeville performer again dropped out of the spotlight, but with a new union, the American Guild of Variety Performers.

AGVA started with Maida Reade, from Equity's council, as its executive secretary at \$6,000 per year salary. Miss Reade, unfamiliar with the varieties, resigned shortly and Mrs. Dorothy Bryant, who formerly headed Chorus Equity, took over the job, with a council split just about evenly between Four A's representatives and working vaudeville actors. On Dec. 29 Mrs. Bryant also resigned, due to illness plus great disappointment over the lack of co-operation from other Four A's affiliates. Jean

## By Joe Schoenfeld

Muir was appointed acting executive secretary in her place.

AGVA has been moving for certain reforms in what remains of the vaudeville and nitery business. First step was the licensing of the agents, and, while around 70 talent reps in N. Y., led by the William Morris office, signed, it soon became apparent that the license had been written by someone who either didn't know much about vaude, or else had little regard for the future of the agents.

Clauses in the license left the way open for serious curbs on the agency business in the future. This prompted some talent reps in N. Y. to form an organization for their own protection and the Artists Representatives Assn. was brought about in early December.

There were denials from AGVA that it proposed placing any hindrances in the paths of the agents, but at the same time the union submitted a 'code of fair practice' to

## Major Circuit Time

(As of Jan. 1, 1940)

**RKO**  
Golden Gate, Frisco, full week.  
Palace, Cleveland, full week.  
Keith's, Boston, half-week.  
Shubert, Cincy, full week.  
**PARAMOUNT**  
Paramount, N. Y., one or more weeks.  
Chicago, Chicago, full week.  
State-Lake, Chicago, full week.  
**LOEW'S**  
State, New York, full week.  
Capitol, Wash., full week.  
**WARNER BROS.**  
Strand, N. Y., one or more weeks.  
Earle, Wash., full week.  
Stanley, Pitt, full week.

Paramount to apply to this circuit's stage show houses. In the main, this code also read like coming from the hand of someone not cognizant of the vaudeville business and the problems of vaudeville performers, but it contained one clause that specifically defined the maximum commissions actors would pay as '10%, regardless of the split.' Considering that performers pay a booking office commission of 5%, the clause means that only 5% would be left for the agents. Later, two AGVA councillors stated that it was not the union's intention to cut agents' commissions, but rather to eliminate the booking office fee.

It's expected that all differences between the agents and AGVA will be straightened out satisfactorily to both sides. The agents association has already clearly indicated to AGVA that it wants to cooperate with the actors' union, but asks for an equitable working agreement.

## Tough on the Agents

The majority of vaude-nitery agents found the going very tough in 1939, too tough for them to also have their commissions cut in half. Something like the latter would force most of them completely out of the little business that's left, besides greatly curtailing the activities of the larger offices that have high overheads.

If cutting commissions, AGVA will fail to take into consideration the vast difference between the problems of a vaudeville agent and the talent reps in pictures, legit and radio. Of primary importance is the fact that the vaude agents sell talent on a week-to-week basis, while in legit, pictures and radio performers are signed to term deals. In pictures, especially, an agent sometimes gets himself a meal-ticket that lasts as long as seven years, but a three-week

## Major Indie Houses

Flatbush, Brooklyn; full week.  
Windsor, Bronx; full week.  
Hipp, Baltimore; full week.  
Fay's, Philadelphia; full week.  
Minnesota, Mpls.; full week.  
Lyric, Indpls.; full week.  
Shea's, Toronto; full week.  
Tower, Kansas City; full week.  
Oriental, Chicago; full week.  
Fay's, Providence; full week.

route nowadays in vaudeville is a career for an actor and only just that much of an income for his agent.

Few agents in the past year made anything approximating a sizable living out of vaudeville. Major part of the playing time was strictly for bands, and four offices—Music Corp. of America, William Morris, General Amusement Corp. and Consolidated Radio Artists—practically control these bookings. The individual agents were chiefly reliant upon some of the film names who essayed personal appearances, and the run-of-the-mill, comparatively low-salaried variety acts. For them it was a tough struggle to keep their heads above water, though the few who were able to crack such nitery business that wasn't controlled by the 'Big 4' found a fairly lucrative field.

## Vaudeville Time

If a vaudeville revival is ever to come, it would have to get the support of the major circuits. This did not come in 1939, nor are the major circuits evidencing any desire to ever give it a hypo.

This leaves it up to the independents, and they made and are making a valiant attempt to re-educate the public in stage shows. Tops among the vaude-minded indies in 1939 is the Brandt circuit in N. Y.

Brandt's started with the Flatbush, Brooklyn; Windsor, Bronx; Audubon, Manhattan, and Carlton, Jamaica—all full-weekers and all playing expensive bandshows. Remaining now, however, are the Flatbush and Windsor, with the Carlton and Audubon both back to straight pictures.

In dropping the vaudfilm policies at the Carlton and Audubon, the Brandts bowed to neighborhood conditions which precluded any chances of these theatres showing a profit with stage shows. The Audubon lasted six weeks, only one of which was profitable. The Carlton's vaude survived a couple of weeks longer, but also showed mostly red ink.

The Audubon is situated in a Washington Heights nabe that was once a great stage show sector, but has since become chiefly populated with refugees and Spaniards, who neither understand nor can afford the necessarily higher admission scale.

The Jamaica theatre's problem was entirely different. This house is situated out in a suburban section, with the result that its daytime business was nothing short of brutal. Night biz was okay, but the matinees held the grosses down to a dangerously low level, and the house reverted to dualling C and D films, most of them indies or oldies.

On the other hand, the Flatbush, with which Brandts first experimented last winter, and the Windsor were immediate clicks and continue to show profits. Both are situated in populous shopping districts, and draw a transient as well as residential trade.

There were a few other major indie attempts to make good with stage shows. One of them is the vaudfilm policy of the 4,000-seater Minnesota in Minneapolis, which sells its shows for a 40c top, and the Orpheum, Memphis, which will play a stage show anywhere from one day to a full week, but on percentage.

Neither of these houses, though, are successful most weeks.

The indie 20th Century, Buffalo, tried stage shows on a few occasions during the fall, didn't get very far, and then started a long string of straight-pic weeks. House, however, announces that it will try again starting Jan. 26. Three other new indies are the Senator, Pittsburgh; Towers, Camden, N. J., and Plaza, Miami Beach, all of which opened Xmas Day (25).

But none of the indie time, new or old, can mean much towards a general vaude comeback when the majors keep their playing time down to an all-time minimum. RKO, for instance, in the last week of December, only had three and a half weeks on its vaude book; the full-weekers, Shubert, Cincinnati, Golden Gate, Frisco, and Palace, Cleveland, and the half-week Keith's, Boston, Paramount, aside from B. & K.'s Chicago and State-Lake in Chicago, only had the Paramount on Broadway. Loew's had two weeks in the State, New York, and Capitol, Washington, while Warners has only three vaudfilm houses left—Strand, N. Y.; Earle, Washington, and Stanley, Pitt.

This makes a total of only 11½ weeks of major circuit playing time, which is the lowest yet. The previous year, major circuit playing time totaled 17 weeks.

In face of its already depleted state, major playing time suffered two severe reverses during the year. One of them was RKO's dropping of stage shows at the Palace, Chicago, the circuit's ace house up until that time; second, Warners differences in December with the musicians' union in Philadelphia, which resulted in stage shows getting the gate at the Earle and a couple of nabes in that town. One indie house in Philly was also affected by the union's demands, the established vaudfilmer Carman going into a straight-picture policy. Fay's, in that city, continues, however.

In contrast to 1938, there was an increase in costly unit production, and those shows of definite b.o. potentiality found a fair measure of playing time. A. B. Marcus was especially active and was able to line up enough dates, most of them on percentage, to show good profits with a couple of large girl shows. Clifford C. Fischer's 'Folies Bergere,' currently playing two-a-night at the Broadway, N. Y., at \$1.65 top, also successfully toured after its run in Hollywood following the revue's appearance at the San Francisco Expo. Dave Apollon is another currently touring with an expensive production-type show, plus his Filipino band. On the other hand, Harry Howard's 'Hollywood Hotel Revue,' following its long run in Australia, couldn't get started again in the U. S. and folded in late fall.

The cheap unit time through the midwest and south, mostly one and two-day dates, also appears to be on the upbeat once again. Harry Sherman's route for \$65 to \$100-a-day shows, also T. D. Kemp, Jr.'s better-paying dates through the south, are now quite extensive. Sherman's units are playing a lot of towns that were first opened up by Major Bowes' amateur shows, while Kemp only recently added a string of nine Sparks Circuit theatres in Florida that haven't played stage shows in years. Both bookers can play a cheap unit for six to eight weeks.

In addition to the time for the low-priced shows, Kemp is also spotting name bands and Western film stars on percentage deals in the Wilby-Kinney theatres. There have been few b.o. flops registered on these deals.

Maybe 1940 will be better. It can't be much worse.

## Saranac Lake

By Happy Benway

Kris Kringle packs a wallop of good cheer: Each and every patient here received from the motherly Mrs. William Morris an individual gift, ditto for holiday gifts from Harold Rodner and Jack Hirsh. Credit also should be handed to Frank Cambria and Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Phillips for their good cheer. At the Will Rogers hospital a little pat on the back should be given to Hazel Coleman, Margaret Newell, Jimmy Meehan, Eddie McDonald, Paul Dean and J. J. Glenn who took time out from their resting periods to see that the rest of the gang were made happy.

It is important that Mrs. Betty Schriner, 29 Church street here, gets

the address of Joe Schriner, formerly Schriner and Gregory, old-time Keith vaudeville act.

A PDQ cure was made by Mrs. Alada Monahan in five months and she got the final o.k. from her medico. She's ex-chorine who's hubby is with New York Daily News.

Bobby Hatz, old-time vaude single, and Eddie Ross of the Four Carlton Boys, report that they're both okay. Via the untiring efforts of A. B. (Tony) Anderson, manager of Schine's Pontiac theatre, around 900 children were handed a Yuletide gift when the theatre was turned over to the kiddies.

A load of thanks from this Colony to Leonard Grotte, manager Loew's Prospect, Flushing, L. I., for his hospitality and kindness to the gang up here.

Write to those who are ill.

## PITT NITERIES SHUT DOORS NEW YR.'S EVE

Pittsburgh, Jan. 1.

It was a quiet New Year's eve here, most of the town's ace spots having decided at last minute to keep closed rather than run risk of running afoul of State Liquor Control board. Although local authorities let it be known that they would look the other way, they told tavern operators they would prefer it if no attempt were made to circumvent law. So majority of boys figured that it wasn't worth the chance, inasmuch as festive eve falls on Sunday only once in seven years anyway.

Furthermore, they were content

with modification of ruling which permits them to keep open for dancing until 2 a.m. on Saturday nights, which means much more to them than one New Year's Eve, and decided against antagonizing Harrisburg authorities. A few of the roadhouses went ahead with their celebrations, incidentally reporting light reservations on all sides, but downtown key spots stayed shut and hotels had only private club parties booked in advance.

## No Wild Life

Detroit, Jan. 1.

Three Pontiac fraternal lodges—Elks, Eagles and Moose—may lose their liquor licenses on charges of permitting gambling on their premises.

## Baker Revue, Sobol Set For State, N. Y., Shows

Loew's State, on Broadway, has booked two big shows for successive weeks starting Jan. 18, the most important feature of which marks the return of Phil Baker to vaude at the head of a condensed version of the 'Strawhat Revue,' which played legit this fall.

In the 'Strawhat' company will be Beverly Roberts, Imogene Coca and Maude Rae and Nan Davis. Their date is the week of Jan. 25.

Week previous, the State will co-headline Louis Sobol, N. Y. Journal-American columnist; Joe E. Lewis and Cobina Wright, Jr.



## THE SKETCH

By Joe Laurie, Jr.

(Another in the series of Mr. Laurie's forthcoming History of Vaudeville.)

The 'Sketch' was the backbone of vaudeville. It shared honors with the great comedy acts and put 'class' in vaudeville.

In the beginning of the old variety days, the 'after-piece' was the sketch of the bill. Later it was followed by blackface and Irish skits that just used a thin plot to introduce a song and dance or the playing of an instrument. Many of us can still remember the skits that used to open with the lady of the act walking to the footlights with a letter in her hand, saying, 'I wonder what I will do? I just received a letter from my partner saying that he is unavoidably detained and cannot make the show tonight.'

Just then a man enters with a trunk saying, 'Say, lady, where do you want this trunk?'

'Put it in the next room. Say, you look like a bright young man; how would you like to be an actor?'

'You mean an actor on the stage?'

'Yes,' sez the lady. 'You will find my partner's clothes in the trunk. They should fit you, and here's your part. Go in that room and change and I will put you on the stage with me.' Then she would sing a song, and after the song he would come out and—yeh, you guessed it; he would replace her partner.

Crude? Maybe, but it served the purpose which was to get away from a specialty in 'one.' In the early days of vaudeville a full-stage act was valuable.

To Mr. J. Austin Fynes, the manager of Keith's Union Sq. (N. Y.), goes the credit for bringing the great stars of the legitimate stage to vaudeville. He paid fabulous salaries (for those days), which lured them to a field that was looked down on by the legits. They couldn't do specialties, so naturally Mr. Fynes had to supply them with a vehicle, usually a dramatic sketch, for which he hired some of the best authors of the day. There is no argument that these stars added 'class' to vaudeville, and also brought a patronage that never before entered a vaudeville theatre; but they came, saw and became steady customers.

### Topnotch Authors

A few of the topnotch authors who contributed sketches for vaudeville were David Belasco, George Ade, Paul Armstrong, Bozeman Bulger, Sir W. S. Gilbert, Arthur Hopkins, George V. Hobart, George M. Cohan, Willard Mack, Dan Frohman, Junie McCree, Ren Shields, Aaron Hoffman, Edwin Burke, George Kelly, Al Lewis, Jack Lait, Edgar Allen Woolf, Roy Atwell, Eddie Clark, Harlan Thompson, Len Hollister, Will H. Cressy, Valerie Bergere, Ryan & Ritchfield, William McCart, Bert Leslie, Tommy Gray, James Madison, Arthur Horowitz, Fred Ardath, Harry Holman, Bert Baker, Andy Rice, Roger Imhoff, J. C. Nugent, Emmet Devereaux, Joe Brown, Paul Gerard Smith, S. Jay Kaufman, Mason & Keeler, Billy K. Wells and John C. Rice. Of these, I believe that Edgar Allen Woolf was the most prolific sketch writer of them all. Cressy & Dayne had a new act almost every season, sometimes two. Ryan & Ritchfield were the first to introduce sequels to their acts. J. C. Nugent was the first sketch artist to open his act 'in one,' all as part of the act. This enabled him to follow a fullstage act and also to give the stagehands time to set a fullstage act to follow him.

At first the sketches played in 'house sets' consisting of a center door fancy or a 'kitchen set' which was a 'center door fancy' turned around. A 'rich man's home' usually contained odd furniture, a few rubber or palm plants and a few pieces of statuary. As the sketches grew better and more plentiful the 'sets' improved; better furniture, maybe a gold chair and settee, a practical door or window, drapes and a light switch. When vaudeville was firmly established many sketch artists carried their own sets, furniture, light effects and even a stage carpenter and electrician.

### First Sketch—in 1873

The first record of a sketch in a variety show was in 1873. The team was John and Maggie Fielding, and in 1877 Charles Rogers and Mattie Vickers did a sketch. Then later on came Tom and Hattie Nawn in 'One Touch of Nature.' But one of the first dramatic sketches, if not the first, was Francesca Redding with her former leading man, Hugh Stanton. The act was called 'A Happy Pair,' and that was in 1890. It was in 1896 that dramatic acts really took hold in vaudeville when Fynes got Charles Johnson and Lillian Burkhardt, Sid-

ney Drew and Gladys Rankin Drew, John Mason and Marion Manola to enter the ranks of vaudeville.

Since then there have been very few stars of the legitimate stage who didn't play at least a week or two in vaudeville, while many of them played season routes every year, and some of them would 'fill in' when their shows would close or flop. Someone once said, 'When a legit loses his voice he goes into vaudeville.' But that wasn't strictly so, because many of them were so successful in that field that they remained there for many years and would only take a 'show' to sort of bolster up their reps. They would mostly play dramatic sketches, as it upheld their dignity and didn't have to combat the terrific opposition of the many great comedy acts.

### Legiters Into Vaudeville

The following is just a partial list of the great legit stars who played sketches in vaudeville:

Margaret Anglin ('The Wager'), Vivian and Genevieve Tobin ('Age of Reason'), Edward Abeles ('Self Defence'), Jean Adair ('Maggie Taylor, Waitress'), Julia Arthur ('Liberty Aflame'), Edgar Atchison Ely ('Billy's Tombstones'), Sam Bernard and Louis Mann ('Friendly Enemies,' condensed from their play), Hobart Bosworth ('Sea Wolf'), Carlyle Blackwell ('8-6-4'), Amelia Bingham ('Big Moments from Great Plays'), Sara Bernhardt and Lou Tellegen (series of sketches), Harry Beresford ('Old N. Y.'), Valerie Bergere ('Judgment'), Digby Bell ('It Happened in Topeka'), Louis Cassavant ('Green Beetle'), Richard Bennett ('The Common Man'), Beverly Bayne ('From 8 to 12'), George Beban ('Sign of the Rose'), William Brady ('Beauty's Only Skin Deep'), Ethel Barrymore ('12 Pound Look'), Blanche Bates ('Half Hour'), Bessie Barriscale ('Picking Peaches,' protean act), Fay Bainter ('High Spots').

E. Frederick Hawley ('The Bandit'), Alice Brady ('Cassie Cook Of The Yellow Sea'), Florence Bindley ('Afternoon At Home'), Adele Blood and Trumpler Saxe ('Picture Of Dorian Gray'—by Oscar Wilde), Lionel Barrymore, McKee Rankin and Doris Rankin ('The White Slave'), Edmund Breese ('Happy New Year'), Francis X. Bushman and Beverly Bayne ('Poor Rich Man'), William H. Crane ('Mayor and Manicure'), Arthur Byron ('Tea For Three'), Mr. and Mrs. Gardener Crane ('Little Sunbeam'), Ethel Clayton ('The Joker'), Ruth Chatterton ('The Conflict'), Mary Carr ('The Strength Of The Weak'), Mrs. Leslie Carter ('Zaza'), Burr McIntosh ('The Ranchman'), Frank McIntyre ('Wednesday at the Ritz'), McIntyre and Heath ('Georgia Minstrels'), Phyllis Nelson Terry (1917 debut in vaudeville), George Nash ('Unexpected').

J. C. Nugent ('The Squarer'), Nazimova ('War Bride'), Elita Proctor Otis ('Mrs. Bunner's Bun'), Nance O'Neill ('Second Ash Tray'), Eugene O'Brien ('Monday'), Charlotte Parry ('Comstock Mystery,'—protean act), Olga Petrova, Marjorie Rambeau ('Bracelets'), John and Emma Ray ('Bandmaster'), Florence Reed ('Jealousy'), Irene Rich ('Loyalty'), Blanche Ring ('Oh Papa'), Theodore Roberts ('The Sheriff of Shasta'), Ryan & Ritchfield ('Mag Haggerty's Reception').

### And Still Others

Nat Goodwin, Louis Simon and Kathryn Osterman ('Persian Garden'), Agnes Scott and Harry Keane ('Drifting'), Zella Sears ('Wardrobe Woman'), Julius Steger ('Tenth Commandment'), Edwin Stevens ('Evening With Dickens'), Velaska Suratt ('Black Crepe and Diamonds'), Edith Taliferro ('Under Same Old Moon'), Conway Tearle ('Hamlet'), Lou Tellegen ('Blind Youth'), William H. Thompson ('Pride Of The Regiment'), Robert Warwick ('Bonds That Separate'), Bryant Washburn ('Just as Advertised'), Harry Watson, Jr. ('Battling Dugan'), Jack Norworth and Emma Adelphi ('The Naggers'), John P. Wade ('Marse Selby's Dinner'), Blanche Walsh ('Thunder God's'), Henry B. Walthall ('The Unknown'), Emily Ann Wellman ('Young Mrs. Stanford'), Henry Woodruff ('Regular Business Man'), Douglas Fairbanks also played this act).

Lois Wilson ('Thru The Looking Glass'), Mrs. Thomas Whiffen ('Foxy Grandma'), Bayonne Whipple and Walter Houston ('Spooks'), William Courtleigh ('Peaches'), Robert Mantell ('Shakespearean rep'), Josephine Cohan ('Friday the 13th'), Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Drew ('Predestina-

## Still Not Sure

Philadelphia, Jan. 1.

The Guardsmen, a vocal octet, were signed by Wilson's Cafe last October for a trial. On Saturday, Charlie Wilson, operator of the spot, inked them for another term, 'on trial.'

It runs until December 31, 1941.

tion'), Minnie Dupree ('The Minister's Wife'), Henri Duvries ('Case Of Arson'), Allan Dinehart ('Meanest Man In The World'), Cohan made a show out of this), Paul Decker ('Ruby Ray'), Arnold Daly ('He Lied To Her Husband'), Jeanne Eagles ('The Benefit'), Wallace Eddinger ('Things Can Be Worse'), Leon Errol ('The Guest'), Mr. and Mrs. Carter DeHaven ('The Masher'), William Farnum ('The Mallets Masterpiece'), William Faversham ('Marriage Has Been Arranged'), Charles Grapewin and Anna Chance ('Awakening Of Mr. Pipp'), Vera Gordon ('Lullaby'), Claude Gillingwater and Edith Lyle ('Wines Of The Rich'), Hugh Herbert ('Son Of Solomon'), Chrystal Herne ('Dora'), Hyams and McIntyre ('The Quakeress'), John B. Hymer ('Devil and Tom Walker'), Robert T. Haines ('Man In The Dark'), Hallen and Fuller ('Corridor Of Time').

Mr. and Mrs. Hale Hamilton ('Dangerous Advice'), Walter Hampden ('Blackmail'), Sessue Hayakawa ('Bandit Prince'), Edmond Hayes ('Original Wise Guy'), Flo Irwin ('Peckhouse Carouse'), Bertha Kalisch ('A Light From St. Agnes'), Frank Keenan ('Man To Man'), Mrs. Lillian Langtry ('The Test'), Helen Lackaye ('Overtones'), Wilton Lackaye ('The Ferretti'), Bert Leslie ('Hogan In Society').

Victor Moore and Emma Littlefield ('Beck To The Woods'), William Gaxton ('Kisses'), Beatrice Morgan ('Moonlight Madness'), Victor Morley ('Regular Army Man'), Helen MacKellar ('Mud Turtle'), Willard Mack and Marjorie Rambeau ('Kick In'), Frank McGlynn ('Abraham Lincoln'), Joe E. Brown, ('Arrest Me'), Eddie Buzzell ('Man Of Affairs').

These are just a few of the stars of the legits who played in vaudeville. There were hundreds of others.

### Props, an Important Guy

The 'property man' was a very important factor to the success of a sketch in the early stages of vaudeville. It was too expensive to carry an actor for a 'bit' part, so 'props' would be used. He would play such parts or 'bits' as a letter carrier, cop, iceman, messenger boy or even a dead body. For this he would receive 50c a show extra. Some of the old time property men became very good actors and some of the funniest bits in the sketches were 'found' or 'ad libbed' by the property man forgetting his lines and putting in new ones. These were retained if they got a laugh.

Roland West, later the producer of pictures, once played and then produced all the sketches for the Loew Circuit. When a 'West act' played a theatre the 'property man' knew just what the 'prop' list would be. They all read something like this: 'Sideboard, decanter (with brown sugar) glasses, telephone, revolver (practical), light switch.' The sketches were of the usual melodramatic kind.

As the sketch became important to vaudeville so the salaries for the sketch climbed. The following is an item from VARIETY of 1910, which will give you some idea.

'Lloyd Bingham has done it. He booked his wife, Amelia Bingham, in two combination moving picture houses in Chicago for \$1,500 a week for four weeks. Here is a starter, when you consider that Miss Bingham, formerly a popular dramatic star, a famous stock actress and a headliner at the higher schedule houses, can go into a moving picture and vaudeville theatre and draw down a larger salary for her own act than usually is paid for a whole bill. To be sure Miss Bingham is a box office attraction but it is natural to wonder how any theatre playing to popular prices can afford, even a flyer, to engage a \$1,500 act. The question naturally arises, where will it stop? And the query is not restricted to one class, but is being asked by managers, agents, players and the general public.'

And that was not for the big picture house of today but for a picture-vaudeville combination house of that day. The same year Nat Goodwin was offered the larger houses (first class) at \$2,500 and \$3,000 a week, which he took. Of course in

1913 Sarah Bernhardt received \$7,000 a week and insisted upon being paid off after each show, \$500 a show. Remember, that was for a sketch. Many sketches reached the four figure mark as they were usually booked as a boxoffice draw.

### Memorable Comedians

The outstanding laughing sketch of vaudeville was Imhoff, Conn & Corinne in 'The Pest House,' Willard Simms in 'The Paper Hanger,' and Murphy & Nicholls in 'From Zaza to Uncle Tom' were close runners-up.

There were many great laughing acts in vaudeville like McIntyre & Heath, Ryan & Ritchfield, Bert Baker, John B. Hymer, Charles Withers and many more.

There were many sketches that incorporated a song and dance like the acts of Hyams & McIntyre in 'The Quakeress,' Chip & Marble in 'Old Edam,' Flanagan & Edwards in 'On and Off,' Arthur and Peggy Havel in 'The Boxing Lesson,' Jane and Kathryn Lee in 'Acting,' Stone and Kaliz, Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Barry, Tom Swift and Mary Kelly, and many others, but the song or dance was secondary to the plot, etc.

When writing about the 'sketch' in vaudeville it wouldn't be complete without mentioning some of the outstanding sketches, headliners and stars in their own right. I only mentioned the legits who came into vaudeville, but the following are names of legits and vaudeville artists who did sketches, many of them coming from the legitimate theatre and many from vaudeville itself, a field that made a great many stars for legit and musical comedy. Do you remember some of them?

Fred Ardath, Franklyn Ardell, Anderson and Graves, Amateur Night In a London Music Hall (with Charlie Chaplin), Raymond Bond, Bernard and Harrington, Bert Baker, Barnes and Crawford, Allan Brooks, Dan Bruce and Margot Duffett, Harry Conley, Eddie Carr, Tudor Cameron and Johnny O'Connor, Dugan and Raymond, Davis and Darnell, William Edmunds, Gordon Eldrid, J. K. Emmett and Mary Ryan, John Davidson, Paul Decker, Ben Deeley, Paul Dickey, Dolan and Lenhar, Maurice Freeman, Maude Fealy, Felix and Barry, Dave Ferguson, Fisher and Green, Chas. Leonard Fletcher, Gerald Griffin, Taylor Granville (the first real big 'production' act in vaudeville), Gibson and Cornelli, Billy House, Howard and North, William Halligan, Haviland and Thornton, Harry Hayden, Mr. and Mrs. Gene Hughes, Stevens and Hollister, Lee Kohlmar, Middleton and Spellmeyer, Homer Miles, Margarette Moffat, Sam Mann, Wilbur Mack, Maude Hall Macy, Homer Mason and Marguerite Keeler, John C. Rice and Sally Cohen, McConell & Simpson, Owen McGivney (protean act), Long and Cotton, Macart and Bradford, Marion Murray, McLaughlin and Evans, Sara Padden, Tom Nawn, Mr. and Mrs. Mark Murphy, Bessie and Harriett Rempel, Elsa Ryan, Hermine Shone, Emmett Devoy, Arthur Devoy, Stone and Kaliz, Claude and Fannie Usher, Claire Vincent, Solly Ward, Porter J. White, Frank Wilcox, Clayton White and Marie Stewart, Fat Thompson and Copeland, George Youmans, Eddie Clark, Bert Leslie, Henry E. Dixey, Clara Morris, Bob Hillard, J. C. Mack and . . . well about 500 more.

And so. The Sketch with the monologist and all the other 'talking acts' of vaudeville have gone to that great Valhalla of Show Business. They just couldn't survive the great capacity theatres where a microphone is absolutely necessary.

Maybe when the great horn of television blows. The Sketch may come back into its own, which is the 'honor spot' on any variety program.

## ZIEGFELD FROLIC CASE GOES TO BAT

Application by Select Operating Corp. (Shuberts), Loew's, Inc. and Billy Burke Ziegfeld for a temporary injunction against Ziegfeld Midnite Frolic Corp. and Nicholas Blair was denied but trial of the action ordered for yesterday (Tuesday). Defendants also were required to post a \$5,000 bond. Blair's Paradise, renamed the Ziegfeld Midnite Frolic, opened Thursday (28) nite with a Seymour Felix revue.

In making his decision the judge declared that despite a strong showing on the part of the plaintiffs, some element of doubt remained.

Suits seeks \$250,000, claiming the illegal use of the name 'Ziegfeld', all theatrical uses of which are claimed to be in the possession of the plaintiffs.

## Mrs. Bryant Quits AGVA Illness One Of the Reasons

Dorothy Bryant, executive-secretary of the American Guild of Variety Artists, has resigned due to acute illness. She was taken to Doctor's hospital, N. Y., last week following a nervous attack resulting from overwork. Jean Muir, who has served as Mrs. Bryant's assistant will be acting executive-secretary until the AGVA board can select a permanent replacement. The board is slated to meet tomorrow (Thursday) to act on Mrs. Bryant's resignation.

Question of a successor is admittedly a tough one to the union. Maida Reade, who preceded Mrs. Bryant in the job, has been ill and is regarded as possible choice anyway. Florence Marston, Screen Actors Guild eastern representative, was considered before Mrs. Bryant was chosen and she has been mentioned. There has also been talk of Kenneth Thomson, SAG executive-secretary, being drafted to fill in temporarily during what is frankly termed a crisis in AGVA's affairs. But he has declined to give up his activities on the Coast. It's likewise believed that Miss Muir would not consent to serve, since she intends continuing her acting-career rather than become a permanent union official.

Although Mrs. Bryant's sudden illness threw the AGVA affairs into a turmoil, she had been threatening to resign for some time. She was not only dissatisfied with what she considered lack of cooperation by officials of the affiliate unions, but also was disappointed at the lack of interest among the membership.

Specifically, the failure of board members to attend meetings of that body was one of her principal grounds for dissatisfaction. It was only after considerable persuasion that she consented to accept the executive-secretaryship and she had been promised the active support of the board. Yet there was not even a quorum of seven (out of a membership of 34) at several of the board meetings, so no action could be taken on vital matters of policy at those sessions.

## MUSICIANS LOSE SUIT VS. PA. LIQUOR BOARD

Philadelphia, Jan. 1

The Dauphin county court in Harrisburg refused to grant an injunction to restrain enforcement of the State Liquor Control Board regulation which bans entertainment in licensed establishments after legal serving hours in communities lacking such ordinances. Injunction was sought by members of the American Federation of Musicians, Pittsburgh local. The musicians contested the constitutionality of the section of the liquor control law giving the board power to regulate amusements in hotels, restaurants and night clubs licensed to sell beer and liquor. The court gave the musicians the right to argue their case in the higher courts.

Deputy Attorney General A. J. Segalbaum, counsel for the board, argued that the musicians were not entitled to injunctive relief, since they themselves did not come under the regulations of the board, which, under the law, only regulates amusements offered by the licensees. Counsel for the musicians argued that musicians had contracts with licensed places which would be impaired by the regulations.

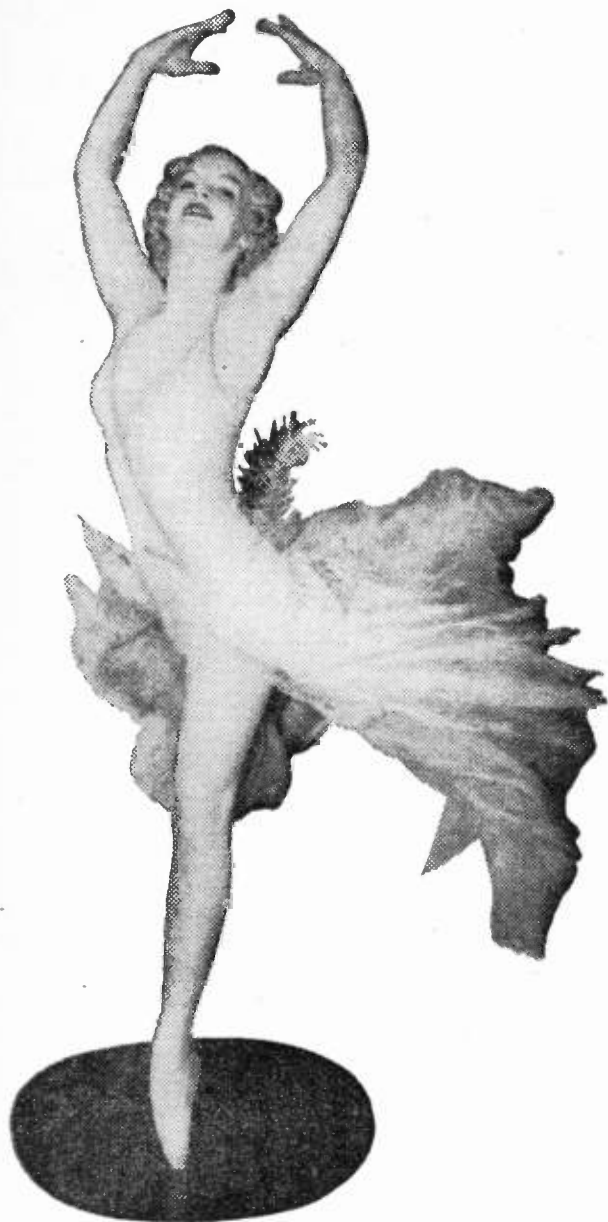
## B&K CHICAGO BOOKING BIG SHOW FOR JAN. 19

Chicago, Jan. 1.

Set for week of Jan. 19 at the Chicago are Ray Bolger, Guy Robertson, Georges & Jalna, Minnevitich's Ras-cals, while final okay is awaited on Anita Louise date.

Last show of the week has been sold out to the American Can Co. for \$5,000. This is an annual affair, and the only time the Balaban & Katz flagship closes its doors to the general public in order to play a club date.





## \*'Mischa Elman of the Ballet'

"Miss Hoctor's dances, as anyone would expect, are a delight to the eye . . . . In each of her appearances it is exciting to watch and marvel at that technique which must make Miss Hoctor something of a Mischa Elman of the ballet."

HARRY MacARTHUR, Evening Star, Wash.

"Lovely woman in the uppermost brackets, Harriet Hoctor, one of the few great dancers who owe no more to Russia than Isadora Duncan owed. When Miss Hoctor and her ballet danced about practically nothing at all, herself spinning like the toiless lily or repudiating the pull of gravity like the highly motored humming bird, this old belly acher mellowed on the diet that dreams are made of."

ASHTON STEVENS, Chicago American.

"Harriet Hoctor the loveliest of the toe dancers."

LLOYD LEWIS, Chicago Daily News.

"Miss Hoctor, whose middle name is grace, is incomparable."

DOROTHY DEERE, Chicago American.

"Taking best things first, we turn our attention to the faithful Miss Hoctor. She offers two routines, spinning and twirling, and altogether filling the eye with her loveliness."

RICHARD L. COE, Washington Post.

"Harriet Hoctor, following, revitalizes the circus. It's the best new dance act she's uncorked here. Red-veiled bolero number has commanding vividness. Eerie version of 'Poe's 'Raven' with her toes gracefully fluttering like birds' wings against mystic-blue setting, is a striking novelty that is right down the alley of this ballet-crazy town."

PULLEN, Variety.

"America's Pavlova, Harriet Hoctor . . . adds color, grace and beauty to the show. Miss Hoctor has been very fortunate in her choice of numbers for this show in that they blend art with speed and frivolity."

Sunday Times, Chicago.

"Miss Hoctor solos in one of the routines that is the epitome of flowing grace and, in a court dance, does some of the Hoctor twirls and toe spinning that have made her queen of terpsichore."

ANDREW R. KELLEY, Wash. Times.

"Ballerina Harriet Hoctor again charms with her imaginative dancing to Ravel's "Bolero"—and the arrestingly beautiful interpretive number titled 'The Raven.' The ballerina does considerable of this fascinating dance creation without music and, a toast to her artistry, you could have heard that pin drop in the theatre. No applause could have been so thunderous."

The Show, Cleveland News

# HARRIET HOCTOR

\* EXCERPTS FROM REVIEWS DURING 1939

Personal Management: HARRY KRIVIT

COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON

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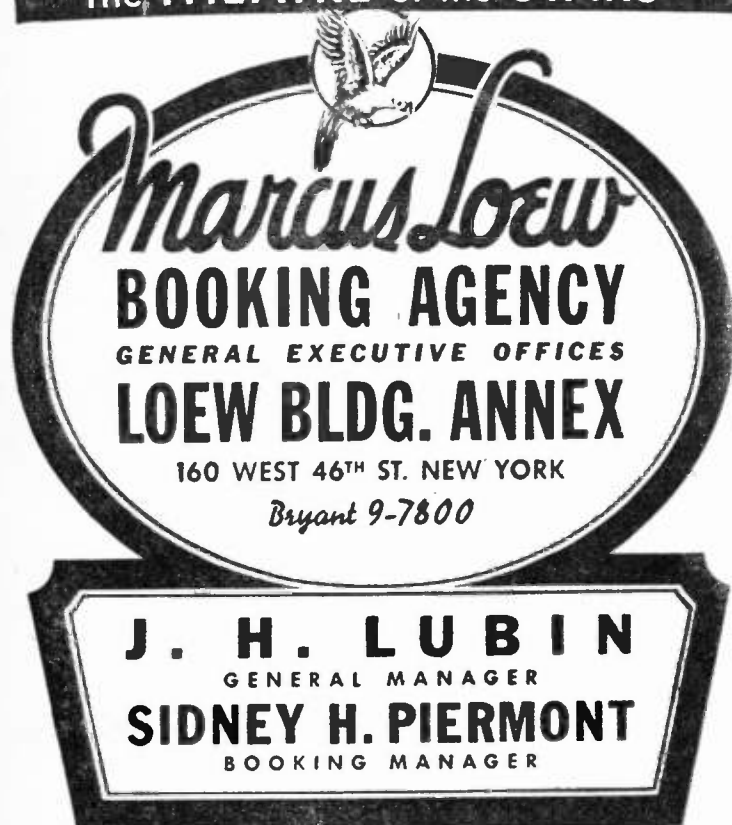
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To  
All

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That's All, Brother!

Season's Greetings

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Season's Greetings to All

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Season's Greetings

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MARY LOU WILLIAMS  
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JUNE RICHMOND and  
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Just Concluded 3 Months  
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I'se A Muggin' Ag'in

## STUFF SMITH

and His Orchestra

With Jonah Jones  
Off Beat Club, Chicago

VARSAITY RECORDS

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SEASON'S GREETINGS

## Belle Baker



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TO *VARIETY*,  
The Splendid Medium  
That Covers Show Business  
Like The Big Top...

RINGLING BROS  
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Greatest Show On Earth



*Season's Greetings*

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With grateful appreciation to VINCENT ASTOR, GASTON LAURYSEN, JULES GLAENZER, WILLIAM RHINELANDER STEWART, RICHARD ROGERS, BEN SELVIN, ELI OBERSTEIN and my many friends for their good wishes and cooperation.

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Ask the actor who has played in this  
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ORIGINAL EASTERN CIRCUIT  
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*Season's Greetings*

*Season's Greetings*

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*Holiday Greetings*

**HERMAN L. CITRON**

RCA Building, Radio City, New York

## PORTRAIT OF A GYP AGENT

By Joe Schoenfeld

Talk about the vaudeville agency business? Why hold the conversation to two words?

Of course it can be left at 'it's lousy!' but if you don't know G. Izzy Muttel, personal representative de luxe, this'll give you a high class lowdown.

G. Izzy Muttel is the third name from the bottom on that door in the Gypaway Building. There are seven names over him, but don't let him con you into believing they're silent partners. When he catches up with them, and they catch up with him, the landlord gets last month's rent, the stenographer gets another promise and the phone company is told to wait.

Muttel has been an agent for 15 years. He used to be a prizefighter with a unique belly-roll specialty as the climax of a backflip. From his work in the ring to a horizontal bar act in vaudeville wasn't much of a transition, and that's how the former Canarsie Killer first wandered into theatricals. The acrobatic act didn't last long and Muttel joined a trampoline turn, which felt like home under another name, only this canvas had more spring to it.

Now Chauncey was pretty ambitious and soon began to think that bouncing from one canvas to another wasn't giving his bankroll any uplift. Just about this time he became acquainted, but not too familiar, with Jake Grabber, an agent who was so much on the take he made Muttel's former fight manager sound like an amateur sneak-thief. Grabber wore a six-karat diamond on his left hand and carried a six-pound blackjack in the other. It wasn't a question of Grabber taking

10% of an actor's salary—it was a question of whether he would give the actor 10%.

Muttel's 'friendship' with Grabber didn't last very long; just long enough for Muttel to pay him 40% of his salary for a few weeks and learn that he didn't need a union card to do the same thing Grabber was doing. So Muttel took another shortcut—from knockdowns in the ring to shakedown in the talent business.

When Muttel first came into the vaudeville agency business the vaudeville business was still good. If the vaudeville business is bad now, it isn't Muttel's fault, but he didn't exactly help it any. You see, Muttel has peculiar notions about people minding their own business. For instance, he always says that the theatre business should look after the theatre business, and that he'd look after collecting his commissions. If he sometimes looked for 30%, that was also his own business.

### Some Extra Wrinkles

Now Muttel isn't exactly a hunk of genius, even if he does hold Phi Beta Kappa keys from several pool halls, but he saw right away that the vaudeville agents weren't hep to all the tricks of their own trade. They were making plenty of hay while the sun was shining, but Muttel figured out that the nights and dark days shouldn't also go to waste. He had his gimmicks thought out in advance, got a printer to give him some stationery on credit, and there he was in business.

One thing Muttel noticed right away was that all of the agents did a general business. They handled everything and anything, from acrobats to ballet dancers. But not Muttel! He decided to specialize—in suckers.

If an actor wasn't a pushover for a buildup and at least 15% commission, Muttel didn't waste much time with him. He also expected actors to show their gratitude on his birthdays and every Christmas. Muttel will also admit that some of the actors didn't stand so good with him after he had the gifts appraised.

Just selling acts and collecting commissions was too routine a business for Muttel. It was so honest, it was boring, so Muttel began to work angles. He never turned so many corners, however, that he couldn't wind up in the middle with takes from both ends.

He started the 'benefit' and 'audition' racket, but made sure never to work the gimmicks more than three or four times on the same actor. Muttel would first arrange to book a floorshow for some club affair. Then he would tell the actors that they were to appear for an audition before a couple of thousand legit and picture producers. The actors got nothing, the club got a show and Muttel didn't even pay his income tax.

He gave the racket some variation by also calling shows benefits. If he failed to tell the actors that it was strictly a benefit for himself, that was living up to Muttel's idea of minding his own business.

### Just a Wrong Gee

Muttel was also quick to notice that actors signed most anything without reading it. Muttel figured that they were either too lazy or couldn't read. He happened to be right both times, but that was no reason why he shouldn't use it to his own advantage.

This was how he hit on the idea of carbon copy signatures on contracts, which were the only things on the duplicates that read alike. The actor's contract would call for one figure, but the carbon copy that Muttel kept had an entirely different amount—and much lower, of course. This gag worked only when Muttel himself was booking some indie shooting gallery, or when Muttel was splitting with some other booker with strictly private ethics,

but it worked often enough to put Muttel in U. S. Steel before the crash.

Muttel himself, or the booker in on the deal, would make the payoff to the acts on closing night. When the actor squawked that he wasn't getting the right amount, Muttel would flash his copy of the contract and claim that the actor had raised the figure on the original. It was then that Muttel would put on his best act. First he'd call the actor a thief and a forger, then he'd threaten to call the police, and finally he'd break down and cry because the actor had shattered his faith in mankind. Muttel was so often broken up he was called 'the crockery of the Gypaway Building.'

There's no telling how far Muttel would have gone if vaudeville hadn't been slipped a mickey finn, which guys like Muttel helped mix, but his business now isn't what it used to be. That poker game he's running in his office is buying him some biscuits, and now and then he works a variation of the 'audition' gag, but these last few years he has been forced to gather one of the finest collections of pawn tickets in existence. So if you should ask him about the agency business, he's also apt to say, 'It's lousy!'

Did you inquire what the G. stands for in G. Izzy Muttel?

On the city records it's Gregory, but some of his best friends will tell you it should be on the police blotter as GYPPO.

## FIFI RIBS DET. BOWERY, UNION INTO SETTLEMENT

Detroit, Jan. 1.

Fifi Dorsay is taking a bow for amiable settlement of what looked like a tough strike at Detroit's biggest nitery, The Bowery. She kidded the boys on the picket line when all the unions swung their strength against the non-union place and kidded Frank Barbaro, the owner, too.

Result was that Miss Dorsay opened as scheduled. A member of three unions, she refused to cross the picket line, but her 'ght mood got a compromise between the unions and the management on an agreement to negotiate.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

**DON  
VOORHEES**

SEASON'S GREETINGS

to our friends everywhere

**JOE SULLIVAN**

AND HIS CAFE SOCIETY ORCHESTRA

Composed of Great Negro and White Instrumentalists

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*Cafe Society*

2 Sheridan Square, New York

**JACK GILFORD**

2nd STARRING YEAR AT CAFE SOCIETY, NEW YORK

"... He made us laugh ..."

DAMON RUNYON

"... He has developed into one of the funniest comedians in town ..."

THE NEW YORKER

"One day Broadway will discover JACK GILFORD and he'll be on his way to the heights for which he seems destined. He's a cinch to click ..."

ABEL GREEN—VARIETY

**HERBIE KAY**



# Holiday Greetings

TED LEWIS



## HOLIDAY GREETINGS

from

**BUDDY ROGERS**

and His Organization

### FEATURING

META STAUDER  
(Ballad Stylist)

JOHNNY MORRIS  
(Ace Singing Drummer Man)

MARJORIE WHITNEY  
(Sweetheart of Rhythm)

JOE SODJA  
(Guitar Soloist)

MICKEY SABOL  
(Romantic Baritone)

SCOTTY BURBANK  
(Novelty Instrumentalist)

## THE FOUR NOTES GLEE CLUB OF 20

MUSIC CORPORATION OF AMERICA

Personal Management  
MICHAUD-PEPPE

### Holiday Greetings

FROM

**DON ZELAYA**

IN

MUSIC AND PHILOSOPHY

Legit. Mgt. East. Rep. West. Rep.  
HARRY BESTRY EDDIE SMITH SAM ROBERTS

*Me, Too!*

**BILLY ROSE**

## NOTICE:

To all nite club owners who think their shows are bad.  
To all Bands who think the Acts make them look sour.  
To all Acts who think it's the Bands that smell them up.

*You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet!!*

We have been told by experts (drunk and sober) that our joint hits the absolute low in so called nocturnal advertisement. Boy, we must really be lousy!

SO WHAT! Here we are celebrating an anniversary, too . . . OUR 16th in this same cellar spot . . . and all our bills are paid . . . suckers actually get the brands they ask for . . . we were not worried about the week before Xmas or the week after New Year's . . . or even New Year's . . . Hell . . . it's just another night as far as we're concerned!

**OASIS CABARET—BALTIMORE**

Owned, Run, Bossed, Dictated and Operated in all directions by Judge Max A. Cohen, (Ret.).

GREETINGS TO MY MANY FRIENDS IN SHOWBUSINESS, JOURNALISM AND SPORTS . . . COME ON DOWN FOR SOME MORE LAUGHS . . . YOU CAN'T BE TOO LOW DOWN TO FEEL SUPERIOR HERE . . . IT'S IN THE AIR (Conditioned by Carrier) . . . FIFI IS STILL HERE !!!



## New Acts

**BARRY WOOD**  
Songs  
6 Mins.  
Senator, Pittsburgh

Radio's 'Hit Parade' baritone fits just as snugly into the stage picture as he does on the air. Voice rates tops, which is no surprise, of course, to CBS Saturday night listeners, and he works easily at the foots, with a nice, pleasant, modest manner that gets across altogether satisfactorily. He's a good-looking lad, and that helps, too.

It's strictly a singing act, and Wood's only intimacies with the audience are a slight plug for his radio program and a few words about the respective 'Hit Parade' ratings of his numbers. Gives them 'Are You Having Any Fun,' 'South of Border' and 'El Rancho Grande,' latter with a four-piece instrumental background by some of the lads from Howdy Baum's orch. They're tunes which lend themselves well to Wood's pipes, and he handles them neatly.

Management had him m.c.'ing at opening show, and he wasn't bad in that department, either, but after getaway house wisely preserved him for his own headline spot. It was a little awkward having him intro-

duced twice, once as the m.c. and then later as the singer. Wood doesn't pretend to be anything but a vocalist, and as such, particularly with a ready-made radio rep, he's okay most anywhere.

**MARY BURTON**  
Singing  
8 Mins.  
French Casino, N. Y.

Mary Burton is a new face only to the New Act files. She's been around the New York niteries for a few years and is an okay song-saleswoman, but not dressing to the best advantage.

A blonde of Mae Westian proportions, she's affecting a low-cut, sleeveless gown here and it highlights too much flabbiness. She should switch to black—and with sleeves. Her voice reminds of Sophie Tucker's.

Sang three songs at this catching, but 'Oh, Johnny' should not have been the first. It's too strong. 'Joseph, Joseph' may be the better opener. 'God's Country' is the finale and a strong applause-getter.

**CULLY RICHARDS (2)**  
Comedy  
French Casino, N. Y.

Cully Richards, who was seen in a Broadway revue some seasons ago, and who has also appeared on the Coast, was given too difficult an assignment here. He's spotted as m.c., with the result that his material has to be stretched and it bounces. He was seen on Broadway recently in the now-departed 'Strawhat Revue.'

Richards appears to be a good showman and at one point manages to get laughs with a double-talking Polish stooge, but in the main he hasn't got the gags to overcome the hurdles of a show's intro-er. And

some of the material he does use doesn't fit, for instance his opening 'Tree' special and reference to a dog's comfort station. Also that prop finger.

As an act, Richards may be an entirely different story. He has all the salesmanship a comic needs, but he hasn't much to sell as an m.c. Scho.

**ROY DAVIS**  
Novelty  
10 Mins.  
French Casino, N. Y.

Roy Davis is virtually entirely new in these parts. He's got a nice little novelty act, but is poorly spotted here for both his own and the show's good. Coming early in the straight vaude layout, Davis slows the show up considerably.

He apes the singing of songs as they come off records through an electric phonograph. First is Jerry Colonna's singing of 'Sonny Boy'; then the Andrews Sisters' delivery of 'Beer Barrel Polka' and finally Cyril Smith's singing of the 'Old Sow Song.' Davis' synchronization of lips and mugging to the records is perfect and amusing.

He appears better suited for niteries than theatres, where the customers seated in the back may not get hep to his routine. Scho.

## UEA PLANNING 'CLOSED SHOP'

Philadelphia, Jan. 1.

A campaign to make Philly a 'closed shop' town for cabaret performers will be launched by the United Entertainers Assn. this week. The UEA, formerly affiliated with the American Federation of Actors, is set to sign every agent to an agreement to book only members of the union. With most of the bookers already pledged in advance to co-operate with the UEA, the closed shop is expected to be a reality within the next couple of weeks.

Formerly the union had attempted to sign up niteries props to a pledge to hire only union performers. Because of the large number of spots, many of them in the outskirts of the city, it became impossible to keep check. With the new system of keeping tabs on actors at 'the source of supply,' this becomes more simplified, according to Thomas E. Kelly, biz agent of the UEA.

There are about 40 licensed bookers in Philly. Most of them are members of the Entertainment Managers Assn., which has been working closely with the UEA to stamp-out chiseling, benefits, etc.

### Chi Bali Bali Folding

Chicago, Jan. 1.

Club Bali Bali, southside spot, is scheduled to shutter for the second and last time late this week. Spot, which has had tough sledding for several years, reopened Sept. 15 after quite a few months' layoff.

It failed to climb into any real profits and stuck it out towards end of the year to garner some of the New Year's Eve gravy.

## •15 YEARS AGO•

(From VARIETY)

In his theatrical column in the Chicago Herald and Examiner, Ashton Stevens referred to VARIETY as the Bible of Broadway.

The influx of British actors on Broadway left London's West End somewhat up a tree. Many managers there were having difficulty casting shows.

Reported practically settled that Gloria Swanson would leave Famous Players-Lasky upon expiration of her contract, and would have her future pix released by Joseph Schenck. Under new agreement Miss Swanson would get guarantee, work or play, of \$365,000 annually.

Rafael Sabatini, who won the \$10,000 prize offered by Adolph Zukor for the story whose filming made the best picture of the year. 'Scaramouche' was it.

While generally expected that the week before Christmas would be slow, with the holiday falling on Thursday, the going was particularly tough throughout the country for the legits.

'Old English,' with George Arliss starring, showed itself to be a fine piece of playwriting by John Galsworthy in its N. Y. opening at the Ritz. It was a Winthrop Ames production previously done in London.

## JOE MOSS MAY TAKE OVER PHILLY ARCADIA

Philadelphia, Jan. 1.

Joe Moss, who recently severed his connections with the International Casino, New York, has been approached by local financial interests to open a spot in Philly, according to well-founded reports. Moss, who ran the Club Madrid here during prohibition, may take over the Arcadia-International, which has been hitting the bumps since its reopening last October by the William Boothby Kugler Co.

Because of the huge rental at the Arcadia, reported at \$1,000 a week, it is difficult to make it pay as a straight eatery. Representatives of the Widener estate, owner of the property, are anxious for a niterie op to take it over. A proposition was made to Jack Lynch, who runs a class spot atop the Hotel Walton, but Lynch turned it down.

The spot has been somewhat of a hoodoo. It was opened in 1935 by Arthur M. Padula after nearly \$250,000 was sunk into it for alterations, decorations, bar, etc. Padula was forced to close it last January, after a long siege of poor biz and union trouble.

Kugler opened it three months ago. Bad business, a high overhead made it tough going. Last month he committed suicide.

## SEATTLE AGCY TEST SUIT

Seattle, Jan. 1.

Trial of a test case against Len Mantell, manager of Bert Levey offices here, was continued until later this month.

## A Bit of Proof "WHITEY" ROBERTS

Always Working  
Year of 1939

- Jan. 1, 8—Majestic T., A'kland, N.Z.
- 9—Opera House, Hamilton, N.Z.
- 10—Majestic T., Hawera, N.Z.
- 11—Auditorium, New Plymouth, N.Z.
- 12—His Majesty T., Wanganui, N.Z.
- 13—Opera House, Palmerston, N.Z.
- 14—29—Opera House, Wellington, N.Z.
- 31, Feb. 12—Majestic T., Christ Church, N.Z.
- Feb. 13—Fuller T., Timaru, N.Z.
- 14—Oamaru T., Oamaru, N.Z.
- 15, 22—His Majesty T., Dunedin, N.Z.
- 23, 26—Fuller T., Invercargill, N.Z.
- Mar. 25, 26—Victory T., San Jose, Cal.
- 29, Apr. 5—Golden Gate T., S. F.
- 8, 9—Capitol T., Turlock, Cal.
- 11—Santa Anna Elks.
- 12—Firemen's Show, Pasadena.
- 13—Mason's, Pasadena.
- 14—18—Strand T., Long Beach.
- 19—Mason's, Beverly Hills.
- 19 to May 24—Palomar, Los Angeles (4 wks.).
- 24—Douglas Aero Show, L. A.
- 25—Odd Fellows, L. A.
- 26 to May 23—Para. T., L. A. (4 wks.) (doubling at Palomar Plus Club Dates).
- May 2—Mason's, Elgin, L. A.
- 4—Mason's, Biltmore H., L. A.
- 5—Firemen's Show, Maywood.
- 14—Victor Hugo Cafe, Beverly Hills.
- 18—Jonathan Club, L. A.
- 24—Hollenbeck Masons, L. A.
- 25—Lyon's Club, Ventura, Cal.
- 26—Oakmount Club, Glendale.
- 26—Huntington Hotel, Pasadena.
- 27—City Club, San Marino.
- 28—Elks, San Fernando.
- 29—Elks, Long Beach.
- 31—Plifter C., Biltmore Bowl, L. A.
- June 1—Marble Machine, Mayfair, L. A.
- 2—Masons, Santa Monica.
- 3—Shrine Auditorium, L. A.
- 4—Elks' Picnic, Anaheim.
- 5—Geo. Hunt, Elgin, L. A.
- 6—L. A. Tennis Club, Hollywood.
- 7—Oak St. Elks, L. A.
- 8—Country Club, Brentwood.
- 9—Firemen's Show, B'fington Pk.
- 10—Battery Sh., Myfair H., L. A.
- 12—Country Club, Wilshire, L. A.
- 15—Masons', Westgate.
- 16—Mariners' C., San Diego.
- 17—Edison Co. Show, Torrence.
- 19—Walters' Show, Long Beach.
- 22—Lyons' Club, Long Beach.
- 23, 24—Fox T., San Bernardino.
- 25—Elec. Show, B'fington C. L. A.
- 28—Elks, San Fernando.
- 29—Masons', Montclair.
- 30—Business Men's S., Riverside.
- July 9-16—Capitol T., Portland, Ore.
- 10-16—(Doubling) Clover Club, Portland.
- 14—Nursery Men's C., Portland.
- 17—Multnomah H., Portland.
- 22—City Club, Boulder, Colo.
- 23, 24, 25—Victory T., Denver.
- 26, 27—Chlef T., Colo. Springs.
- 28, 29—Colo. T., Pueblo, Colo.
- Aug. 5, 6—Stratford T., Chicago.
- 11—(Wk.) Riverside T., Milwaukee.
- 18—(Wk.) Chicago T., Chicago.
- 25 to Sept. 16—So. Bluff C. C., Peru, Ill.
- Sept. 11—Des Moines' Register Club.
- 16—Madsen Ch'se, Kewanee, Ill.
- 17—Arcadia T., St. Charles, Ill.
- 22—(Wk.) Earl T., Washington.
- Oct. 2—Hoffman, Lawrence, Mass.
- 13—Fay's T., Providence.
- 14—Lyons' C., Providence.
- 20, 21—Strand T., M'ch'f'r, N.H.
- 22—Colonial T., Nashua, N. H.
- 23—Copley Plaza H., Boston.
- 24—Somerset House, Boston.
- 25, 29—Gates T., Lowell, Mass.
- 30—Country Club, Lowell.
- Nov. 2—F. V. Ingers, B'f'd H., Bost'n.
- 3, 4, 5—Keith's T., Boston.
- 7, 8, 9—Empire T., Fall R., R.I.
- 10, 11—Paramount T., N. Adams.
- 12—Park T., Woonsocket, R. I.
- 17 to Dec. 18—Latin Qu'rt'r, Bos.
- 22—Tele. Co., Copley Plaza, Bos.
- Dec. 7—Yatch Club, Boston.
- 9—Engineers' Show, Boston.
- 13—Confectioners S., Copley Pl.
- 17—Gaiety T., Boston.
- 18—Antriclee As., Malden, Mass.
- 21—Hobom'k Inn, H'n's'r, Mass.
- 22, 23—Quincy T., Quincy, Mass.
- 24—Gaiety T., Boston.
- 27—Davis Co., Astor H., N.Y.C.
- 31—(Wk.) Family T., Scranton.

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# HAPPY

# NEW YEAR



(Cartoon by Roy Nelson—Chicago Daily News)

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## HOLIDAY GREETINGS

from

# FAUL HALLON



## MUSIC HALL, N. Y.

Del Rios (3), Tip, Tap & Toe, Rosita Rios, M. H. Glee Club, Earl Lippy, William Castle, M. H. Ballet, Rockettes, Erno Rapee Orch., Richard Leibert and Alexander Richardson, M. H. Symph Orch under direction of Erno Rapee: 'Hunchback of Notre Dame' (RKO), reviewed in VARIETY Dec. 20.

The Music Hall has compressed a neat spectacle into 40 minutes currently. Sets, lighting and costumes are eye-fillers in this program, titled 'Manhattan Melody.'

If it is fair to pick minor faults in such extravagance, it might be mentioned that the corniness occasionally extends beyond the title, notably to the opening scene. And the finale completely misses that there just is no blowoff, the drop of the curtain coming unexpectedly, leaving the audience waiting for more.

Beyond that, honors go to Bruno Maine for his sets. Opener is a street scene in front of a department store that any of the top stores could well wish for such a layout. Second one is a magnificent reproduction of Radio City's sky-high Rainbow Room, with the M. H. symph on the stand in the background and tables surrounding the dance area in the center.

Leon Leonidoff production gets under way with the Glee Club in Santa Claus outfits picketing a department store on Dec. 26 in an endeavor to obtain employment the other 51 weeks of the year. They sing special tunes adapted by the M. H.'s staff lyricist, Albert Stillman, from numerous old pops. It's all entertaining, but reminds of the tall grass. Earl Lippy does some fair solo vocalizing.

This is followed by Tip, Tap & Toe, Negro tap trio. Their entrance, usually slowed by the necessity of bringing their oval dancing platform in with them, is neatly and imaginatively camouflaged. One of the trio is on stage all the time as doorman of the department store picketed by the Santa Clauses. The other two push in the platform painted as a big Christmas package in the store tieup. Whole idea is tabbed 'Special Delivery,' and the lads have resplendent new-looking uniforms. Their tapology is up to their strong standard.

Rainbow Room scene gets off with several minutes of just dancing by the mixed members of the house standby groups, in the guise of guests, and the entrance of other 'guests' to the bowing and welcoming of a corps of head waiters. Scene is unusually long for this type of thing. Line of 36 Rockettes comes out for its initial precision routine in the guise of waitresses, achieving neat effects with trays.

Del Rios follow, introduced by William Castle as R.R.'s m.c. They are a unique trio, consisting of two males and a femme, who do lifts and balances. Gal is the center 'strong man' with the third member of the act doing handstands on various parts of her body as she balances on the bottom male.

Finish is a conga by the combined Rockettes and ballet corps. It is pointed up through a warbling intro in the south of the border manner by Rosita Rios while flanked by musicians on native instruments. Gals, in costumes by Marco Montedoro, stretch out across the huge stage and onto the front wings for highly colorful effects attained by turning forward and backward in the two-tone costumes.

For the bow-out, curtain comes down on half the gals, while the other half fades away as the forward elevator section of the stage lowers. A momentary speed-up of the slow conga rhythm prior to the final curtain might give the needed punch at the end. Herb.

## FLATBUSH, B'KLYN

Henny Youngman, Morton Downey, Adrian Rollini Trio, Jack Jenney's Orch. (15) with Meredith Blake and Frank Bond, Six Honeyes.

Management here is leaning entirely on its stage fare to attract patronage this week, with only shorts and newsreel clips for picture fare. Combo of Henny Youngman, Morton Downey, Adrian Rollini trio and Jack Jenney's band is accounting for the lusty draw, with SRO the rule before second stage show went on night (Thursday) caught.

Youngman ties in the loose ends expertly, as m.c., dividing his clowning chores well for greatest returns. Then, too, more prominence is given Jenney's crew than when it appeared early last month at New York's Loew's State.

Jenny announces more naturally than of late and has an infectious grin that enables him to fill better the leadership spot. His tromboning still is spotlighted but he leans more heavily on the musical gymnastics of his organization than before. He has a crew of slick musicians, three trombones really setting off his outfit. Frank Bond and Meredith Blake continue as his singers, petite brunet

going over nicely with 'Stop, It's Wonderful.'

Youngman starts slowly but soon has the audience with him and hanging on each gag. Some of these have been around but he has enough new ones to overcome any tendency to bog down. Initial inning leads into his m.c.ing but he comes back just before Downey's appearance to really wow his auditors with a burlesque version of a rugged baritone. This keeps the folks clamoring for more. Does a bit of fiddling but it's mostly a foil for his tomfoolery. He doesn't have to depend on mugging for his trigger repartee as do some current comedy wits, and wisely, he ducks the temptation, depending entirely on his swift parade of chatter.

Work of the Adrian Rollini three-piece swing combo is familiar both to stage, radio and niteries, particularly in N. Y. Their even balance between sweet and swing enables them to catch on quickly. Took three encores before finally ducking at this show. Honey Family, three men and as many femmes, also scores nicely. Opening with taps, they swing almost at once into an acrobatic tumbling session. Difficult turns register, being done with ease and polish.

Downey contributes a considerable number of songs though some are merely snatches of choruses. For his first appearance before the mike he does 'Having Any Fun,' 'South of Border,' 'My Prayer' and 'Cinderella.' Initial tune, while seated and playing the piano, is 'Christopher Robbin,' sufficiently different to warrant a long string of songs, including 'Irish Eyes are Smiling,' one of his old favorites. He was in fine fettle even if a trifle loud though close proximity to the microphone was a factor there. Wear.

## SENATOR, PITT

Pittsburgh, Dec. 23. Howdy Baum orch (9), Barry Wood, Red Donahue & Uno, 5 Maxellos, Ross & LaPierre, Drew, Farrell & Rhythmettes (3); Blondie Brings Up Baby' (Col).

Harris outfit has felt for some time now there's room in town for a low-scale combination policy house, and it has picked the Senator for a testing ground. Only other vaude around is at WB's deluxe Stanley, where the top is 60c. This spot is peddling it for two bits and 40c, at night, and there should be a chance for the experiment.

When Senator, formerly Loew's Aldine, reopened year ago in November under Harris banner, original intention was to make it a vaudeville house, but a bad getaway sent site back on its heels immediately. Since then, spot's policies have shifted like the wind. It's played singles, duets, twin-bill reissues, holdovers of hit pix at sister Alvin and even an occasional stage show. Management this time, however, is determined to give live entertainment a real ride, with bookings already set for several weeks.

On strength of inaugural bill, prospects for a click are at least promising. It's strictly vaude, but okay, and dressed up to resemble a presentation, with Howdy Baum's orch, a local dance outfit, stretched across the stage to create the illusion of a band unit. First performance had Barry Wood (New Acts), Hit Parade baritone, coming on as m.c. and then having another performer later introduce him for his own specialty. That was rather clumsy, so switch sent male half of team of Ross and LaPierre into the announcer's berth and wisely kept Wood, headlining the layout, out of sight until his singing spot.

Opening act is bill's sole weakness. Drew, Farrell and Rhythmettes, two boys and three gals, are just fair tappers and their style is too dated for the modern tempo. Break their lengthy turn into two sections, early and late in show, best of the numbers being an acrobatic flash couple of the femmes do. Ross and LaPierre are a standard two-act, with male half the backbone. He's a trick vocalist and comes up with some crack imitations of trumpets, steel guitars and the like. Does it with a flourish and gets a share of laughs with some well-spotted gags between impressions. Femme, a buxom, attractive French lass, does a couple of songs in dialect and spills a stream of Gallic thank-yous for the finish to prove the Parisian background.

Red Donahue and the mule he calls Uno have been around for a long time and still doing plenty all right with the old standbys. Donahue has an unbilled partner working with him and between the two of them and the stubborn, kicking jackass, setup's a pushover for practically any audience. Wood fills the next-to-closing spot with his expert songology and for a finish, 5 Maxellos, now two gals and three men instead of exclusively male turn as in the past, bring the curtain down on a laugh note with their acrobatic trickery. They're enlisting recruits from the audience and also picking on other acts to do a collaboration in the interests of adlib fun. Baum's orch, by the way, does very nicely by the show in addition to getting a couple of minutes for a swing session of its own. Cohen.

## ORIENTAL, CHI

Chicago, Dec. 30. Ted Lewis Orch with Francis 'Muggsy' Spanier, Radio Aces (3), Dennis Sisters (3), Charles 'Snowball' Whittier, The Hackers (2), Betty Jane Smith, Marie Hollis; 'Charlie McCarthy, Detective' (U).

Ted Lewis returns with a fast-moving, bang-up show that measures up at the boxoffice and dishes out good entertainment. Still a sock attraction, Lewis keeps the show moving at lively pace. He stays away from his old stuff as much as he can, leaning towards the mood of the day, but his old standbys occasionally pop up during the show. On hand to aid him are Charles 'Snowball' Whittier, the Radio Aces, and the Dennis Sisters, all collaborating with Lewis on those battered hat-on-head, clarinet-in-hand numbers of his.

Show starts out with Lewis self-pam, in which he says he's been getting away with murder for years. Audience eats this up and he then gives 'em Betty Jane Smith, teen-aged looker, who whirls around the stage in a passable dance act. The Dennis Sisters follow her with swing warbling that clicks. Next come the Hackers, comedy ballroom team, who go over.

Francis 'Muggsy' Spanier, swing trumpeter, leaves the band to head his own group in a jive number. Spanier is back in his old spot in the brass section for Lewis' week in Chi.

Radio Aces come on with a clever rhythm number that takes them around the world in music styles. This is followed by a fine swing version of Victor Herbert melodies. Called back, they are joined by the Dennis Sisters and Lewis in a South American number that ends up in Lewis throwing peanuts to the audience from Whittier's peanut cart. Great stuff. Lewis calms things down with a sentimental patter version of a pop, which turns into a review of his past, with a little clarinet thrown in.

Marie Hollis, blonde acrobatic dancer, shows agility and performs some difficult tricks for good results. Holiday biz was terrific opening day (29). Loop.

## STANLEY, PITT

Pittsburgh, Dec. 29. Bob Crosby orch (15), Shea & Raymond, Shirley Lane, Lois Harper, Al Gordon's Racketeers, Bobby Haggart, Ray Bauduc, Jess Stacey; 'Judge Hardy and Son' (MG).

It's just a run-through and a quick romp for the Bob Crosby band here this week. What with the WB deluxe eyeing a record for the holiday season and cramming in six shows daily, ork's on and off before a customer can say Edward G. Robinson and hasn't a chance to show much.

Under the circumstances, Crosby can be forgiven for falling back on the hardy perennials inasmuch as they've always shown the outfit off best and have come to be recognized as trademarks anyway. Doing the same specialties he's put on display here last two annual visits, but no complaints from the pews, at least judging from the reaction.

Couple of hot band numbers; the sock drums-bass duet between Ray Bauduc and Bobby Haggart; a bit of keyboardology by Jess Stacey, crew's new pianist; a brief jam by the all-America foursome, augmented later by four more instrumentalists, and that completes the ork contributions. Crosby, of course, vocalizes briefly, limiting himself to snatches of 'South of Border' and 'Can I Help It' and also introduces a recent femme addition in Shirley Lane. Gal's on early for 'I Didn't Know What Time It Was' and 'Dixieland Band' but not very impressive. Pipes nothing out of ordinary but might have been slight touch of nervousness.

Band unit carries three additional acts, and all of 'em socko, which made it tough for flesh portion to stay within its time limit. Crosby got away with it, however, simply moving right in with next number and chucking the bows. Topping supporting bill is act of Shea & Raymond, who have been around so often they can practically call the Stanley home. Still a show-stopping turn hereabouts despite fact that boys have altered their comic legman only very slightly since they first started coming this way. Next-to-closing spot was inevitable inasmuch as nothing could follow them except Crosby's exit theme.

Al Gordon's Racketeers is a first-rate dog turn but Gordon wastes little too much time getting under way. Idea of trying to get canines into action while they sit by lazily unheeding his commands is all right for first couple of minutes but he prolongs it too much and it gets tiresome. Once pups get going, however, act's surefire; one of best in biz as matter of fact.

Lois Harper works in middle of show, a capital eccentric tapper with suggestion of comedy hoofing that she could wisely develop further. As it is now, that phase is only suggested and never executed. Okay, on the footwork and has the personality to go along with it. Nothing else on the bill except

feature and show, even the trailer getting the brushoff. No overture either, Max Adkins' crew in pit confining itself merely to some ad lib stuff while aisles are being cleared between stage and screen. House jammed at break and another line at b.o. Cohen.

## STATE, N. Y.

Capt. John W. Tiebor's Seals, Jean Carroll & Buddy Howe, Cross & Dunn, Saul Grauman Revue (6), Ruby Zuerling's House Orch; 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington' (Col).

'Mr. Smith' goes to town for two hours and six minutes, so vaudeville's excursion is pretty brief this week. The layout is down to four acts within 45 minutes, but it's not going to drive any customers away. It's variety in name and in fact, entertaining from start to finish.

This being Xmas Week, with plenty of juves ducking the three R's for the midtown attractions, Capt. Tiebor's Seals (3) is a natural opener for the show. Not that it's strictly for kids, but they're pushovers for a novelty of this type. Tiebor has been around for years with this turn and it's one of the few good animal openers left. Its capabilities were well demonstrated opening night, when an adult audience gave a very strong reception to the acrobatic, horn-toting seals.

As the seals go, so do the rest of the acts, both in customer-appreciation, delivery and appeal to the youngsters. Jean Carroll and Buddy Howe, who duce, are also naturals with a dumb-Dora, singing, hoofing turn, the forepart of which is very reminiscent of Burns and Allen years ago. Girl is especially clever with comedy, also in her imitation of Louis Armstrong's horn-toting and finale dancing with her partner. Howe, however, might perk up a bit when playing straight.

Cross and Dunn are easy clicks in the next-to-closing frame. Character-singing team is now doing a bit recalling vaude's former days, impersonating a few of the prominent acts of that era. It gets by on its merits, much less the memories it may arouse. Another strong number is their patriotic special done in character.

Closer is Saul Grauman's Revue with the 'Musical Staircase.' Latter is an intricate electrical, full-sized staircase prop, with the steps rigged up to a bell-xylophone musical effect. Grauman and four femmes play this by dancing up and down the stairs. It's a swell closing flash. Prior to this, three of the five girls in the turn do a unison rhythm buck 'n' wing, followed by a fourth girl's rubber-bone routine. Her contortion work is very good, nicely climaxed by her work on a high pedestal.

With 'Mr. Smith' on the screen—and the usual excellent Xmas Week b.o.—business opening night was slightly colossal. Scho.

## HIPP, BALTO.

Baltimore, Dec. 29. Lew Parker & Co. (5), Fire Maxellos, Tito Guizar, Cass Dailey, Phil Lampkin and house orch (12); 'Hunchback of Notre Dame' (RKO).

Strong layout this lineup of standards and forced to hold strictly to meat because of multiple shows occasioned by strength of film portion, sock from curtain to curtain. With house orch on stage and Lew Parker acting as emcee, doings gets under way with Five Maxellos, now consisting of three men and two femmes, in topnotch risley highlighted by some okay tumbling. Start matters breezily and set good spot for Tito Guizar in the deuce. Mex singer, in character and whacking a guitar legitimately, does arrangement of Mex song, 'South of the Border' and 'Rancho Grande' and begs off mentioning length of feature for lack of encores.

Comedy bit by Parker and Hildegarde Halliday, who gives out with a strenuously realistic version of a dame with a bad head cold, precedes entrance of Cass Dailey. Loose-jointed singer of hectic swingaroo tears herself apart in delivering and punches out a decided impression. Well supported by the house orch which swings out right in the groove under the exhilarating baton of Phil Lampkin, grotesque femme vocalist, does 'Spreading Rhythm' and a very funny parody on a medley of pops. Stubholders yelled for more but beg-off speech continued matters with Parker and his aggregation of stooges out front and on stage, taking possession.

Parker's act hasn't changed much since his rather recent visit here, yet his stuff on show caught went over in bell-ringing fashion. Swift and fresh gagging and a practiced sense of timing his stooges' efforts, keep the customers laughing and earn for his closing song chaser a pleasing response. Attempt at a play is funny business and his deadpan stooge is an excellent foil. Also delivers a parody in punchy style and paces layout in showmanly fashion. Biz terrific. Burn.

## ROXY, N. Y.

Paul Remos and His Toy Boys, The Three Samuels & Harriet Hayes, Chick & Lee, Gae Foster Girls, Paul Ash House Orch; 'Swanee River' (20th), reviewed in VARIETY Dec. 27.

An abbreviated stage show, produced by Fanchon & Marco, accompanied 'Swanee River' (20th) which is expected to provide draught over New Year's. There is little draw from the stage.

Rostrum display is made up of three acts of no great importance, including the Paul Remos midget turn which has played the house before and only three weeks ago was at the nearby State. The other acts are the Three Samuels and Harriet Hayes, dancers, and Chick and Lee. They are just fair. Latter pair, in nonsensicalities, are spotted further down and get over satisfactorily.

Gae Foster line opens and closes the show, while the Remos midgets, suitable booking for the New Year's holiday week, particularly for vacationing youngsters, are in what amounts to the next-to-closing spot. The midgets are doing a tap dance that's cute.

Show is acceptably staged and plays fast, the idea this week being to get as much turnover as possible. Business Friday at the last show good. Char.

## Playhouse, Winnipeg

Winnipeg, Dec. 29. Valentine Vox, 'Buttons' and Ruth Denning; Billy Blake, Cirillo Bros. (3), Les Fleurs (3), Erhardt Bros. (2), Parker & Carr, Al Plunkett; Don Wright's House Orch.

This is Al Plunkett's first display as director of entertainment for this house, and if it's any indication of what's to come, localities are in for a healthy brand of vaude this winter.

Plunkett has built production numbers around band for opening and midway spot that rate bows. Opening has Constance Parker, local gal, singing 'Silent Night' beneath baby spot, with band in blackout, latter following with medley of Christmas tunes. Band behind scrim, with lights gradually reappearing, makes effective presentation. Midspot, Miss Parker, teams with Roy Carr, also local, for 'Bells of St. Mary's,' with singers and band taking bends.

Valentine Vox and 'Buttons,' with Ruth Denning, ventro act, add up nicely. Vox stands out with his voice-throwing, Miss Denning supplying a decorative touch and singing 'Sunrise Serenade' well. Vox has to reach for some of his humor, but he drinks and smokes while working and the customers appear to like that.

Billy Blake has 'em cheering his solo trumpeting. Does imitations, from Henry Busse to Louis Armstrong, blowing solid horn throughout, backed up by Wright's house musikers.

Erhardt Bros. of local WLS, have been here before and still garner big returns for tap and comedy routines. They do everything from hillbilly stuff to imitation of Louis-Galento fight, in slow motion. Another brother combo, the Cirillos, open with rube type of comedy and then undrape to reveal white ties and tails. Basis of their act is hoke, with exception of some solid soft-shoe work. Magic and 'Wizard of Oz' are butts of their comedy to please the crowd.

Acrobatics are provided by Les Fleurs, two boys and a girl, with latter doing all the hard work. Plunkett contributes his usually suave m.c.ing and three songs, 'Wild Wild Women,' 'South of Border' and his brother's new tune, 'We're On Our Way.' Norm.

## ORPHEUM, OMAHA

Omaha, Dec. 29. Lawrence Welk Orch (12), Lorraine & Rognan, Bob Belmont, John Boles, Jane Walton, Bob Pace, Pee-wee Lewis; 'Cat and Canary' (Par).

Current show shows neat booking, with a name, good supporting acts, and swell band with home town angle, all adding up to satisfying entertainment. Welk got his start in this neighborhood, which gives band an extra, but unnecessary, help.

Orch opens layout and remains on stage, throughout. 'Beer Barrel Polka' shows up strongly, especially with Welk on the pushbox. Bob Pace, baritone with orch, shows well with 'Melancholy Baby' and a medley of ranch songs.

Bob Belmont, first act, has dancing marionettes that please. Last is a Sonja Henie doll that ice skates realistically. Orch then swings to 'Blue Danube' in concert style for heavy returns.

Jane Walton, orch's singer, who got start at local radio station, got several encores after rumba number at this show. Pee-wee Lewis' baby act with help of band fits in well. Lorraine and Rognan, mixed comedy act, are top applause-getters, next to the headliner.

John Boles socks across four numbers he sung in various pictures, and the audience ate it up. Numbers are 'Following the Sun Around,' 'Rio Rita,' 'One Alone' and 'Waiting at the Gate for Katie,' with audience chiming in on last one. Monte.



# Variety Bills

NEXT WEEK (January 5)  
THIS WEEK (December 29)

Numerals in connection with bills below indicate opening day of show, whether full or split week

## Loew

NEW YORK CITY  
State (4)  
Sylvia Manon Co  
Johnny Downs  
Sheila Barrett

Frankie Masters O  
WASHINGTON  
Capitol (5)  
Folies Parisienne

## Paramount

NEW YORK CITY  
Paramount (3)  
Casa Loma Ore  
Merry Maes  
Jimmy Savo  
Marvin Lawler  
CHICAGO  
Chicago (5)  
Louella Parsons Co  
Juggling Jewels

3 Freshmen  
State Lake (5)  
Dead End Kids  
MIAMI  
Orpheum (5)  
Phil Spitalny Ore  
MINNEAPOLIS  
Orpheum (5)  
Tommy Dorsey Ore  
Lorraine & Rognan

## RKO

BOSTON  
Keith (4-7)  
Jerry Cooper  
Revel Dancers  
CINCINNATI  
Shubert (5)  
Moulin Rouge Co  
(29)  
Hellzapopp  
Benny Meroff Ore  
Rex Weber  
Murray & Payne  
K & R Paige  
Wynne 2  
Dolly Bell  
Buddy Green  
(29)  
NTG Rev  
Diamond Bros  
Jackie Heller  
Eddie Jack & Betty  
CLEVELAND  
Palace (5)  
Ambassadors  
Wally Vernon  
Mary Martin  
Lynn, Royce & Van  
(One to fill)

(29)  
Moulin Rouge Co  
DAYTON  
Colonial (5)  
Hellzapopp  
Benny Meroff Ore  
Rex Weber  
Murray & Payne  
K & R Paige  
Wynne 2  
Dolly Bell  
Buddy Green  
(29)  
NTG Rev  
Diamond Bros  
Jackie Heller  
Eddie Jack & Betty  
SYRACUSE  
Strand (5-7)  
Shavo Sherman  
3 Vespers  
Brown & Ames  
Phil Farrell Rev  
(One to fill)

## Warner

NEW YORK CITY  
Strand (5)  
Abe Lyman Ore  
Toy & Wing  
Calgary Bros  
Rose Blane  
PITTSBURGH  
Stanley (5)  
Ted Lewis Ore  
(29)  
Bob Crosby Ore

READING  
Astor (5-7)  
Bob Chester Ore  
WASHINGTON  
Earle (5)  
Gae Foster Gls  
Helen Fay  
Harris & Shore  
Al Bernie  
4 Comets  
(29)  
Martha Raye Rev

## Independent

NEW YORK CITY  
Music Hall (4)  
Tip, Top & Tee  
Earl Lipsey  
Rockets  
Corps de Ballet  
Erno Rapee Symph  
Rox (5)  
Paul Renos Co  
Chicken Lee  
Paul Ash Ore  
Windsor (4)  
Jack Jennings  
Morton Lowrey  
Henry Younghan  
Adrian Rollini 3  
Honey Fam  
BROOKLYN  
Flushing (4)  
Happy Felton Ore  
Tony Martin  
J & J McKenna  
Nancy Healy  
(One to fill)  
BALTIMORE  
Hippodrome (5)  
Lew Parker  
Tito Guizar  
Cass Daley  
5 Maxwells  
State (7-10)  
Jerry & Turk  
Tobin & Harmon  
5 Elgins  
(4-6)  
Paul LaVarre Co  
Stepping Steppers  
(One to fill)  
CAMDEN  
Towers (5)  
Troy & Lynn  
Romano Bros  
3 Arnolds  
Lert Walton  
16 Lonerzan Gls  
ELIZABETH  
Liberty (5-7)  
Johnson Fam

Bobby Henshaw  
4 Dudley Boys  
(2 to fill)  
FALL RIVER  
Empire (31-3)  
Variety Gambols  
Simms & Bailey  
Frank Conville  
Bobby Henshaw  
Revel Dancers  
FREEPORT  
Freeport (3-5)  
Foster & Battle  
Lee Paul  
3 Winter Sis  
HARTFORD  
State (5)  
Martha Raye Rev  
NEWARK  
Adams (5)  
Clyde McCoy Ore  
4 Ink Spots  
PATERSON  
Majestic (5-8)  
Edith & Escorts  
Abbott & Robey  
Eno Tr  
(2 to fill)  
PHILADELPHIA  
Fay's (4)  
Sally Keith  
Marcy Bros & Bea  
Francis & Grey  
H'wood Canines  
3 Randall Sis  
Eddie White  
16 Lonerzan Gls  
PITTSBURGH  
Senator (3)  
Will Osborne Ore  
Fenwick & Cook  
Frank Conville  
Ruthie Barnes  
SPRINGFIELD  
Paramount (5)  
Cap Calloway Ore  
3 Chocallaters  
Sister Tharpe

## Cabaret Bills

### NEW YORK CITY

Barney Gallant's  
Ann Palmer  
Irene Barclay  
Nellie Paley  
Carter & Bowie  
Heachamber  
Matty Malneck Ore  
Matty Cortes  
Bill Bertolotti's  
Don Sylvio Ore  
Angelo's Rhumba Rd  
Lynn & Marianne  
Roberta Welch  
Billy Casadea  
Dorothy Blaine  
Loretta Lane  
Ann White  
Freda Sullivan

Bill's Gay 90's  
Charles King  
Ethel Gilbert  
Billy Lorraine  
Spike Harrison  
Harold Willard  
Gus Wicks  
Harry Donnelly  
Stephen Isles  
Cafe Society  
Joe Sullivan Ore  
Cinderella Club  
Mitchel Davison Ore  
Fran Craven  
Irene Maureth  
Dolly McClain  
Elena  
3 Hawaiians

Peter Pinto  
Club 18  
Jack White  
Pat Harrington  
Jane Reynolds  
Wilma Novak  
Gaye Dixon  
Frankie Myers  
Leila Gaynes  
Beale St Boys  
Vince Curran  
Geo Clifford  
G Andrews Ore

Club Gaucho  
Los Argentinos  
Gabriel & Giralda  
Los Caballeros  
Marie del Carmen  
Luis Ortiz  
Argentina Mia  
Louis Ryou  
Cotton Club  
Louis Armstrong O  
Alan & Anise  
Bobby Evans  
Stump & Stumpy  
Maxine Sullivan  
Avis Andrews  
Princess Vanessa  
Diamond Horseshoe  
Noble Sissle Ore  
Don McGraw Ore  
Fritz Scheff  
Beatrice Kay  
Claire Scott  
Margot Brander  
Frank Libuse  
Tom Patricola  
Clyde Hager  
Mangear Tr  
Lucille Johnson  
Emma Francis  
Lulu Bates  
Willie Solar  
Harry Armstrong  
Elizabeth Murray  
El Chico  
Hugo Martini Ore  
Soledad Miralles  
Dorita & Valero  
La Gitanilla  
Maria Lopez  
Gloria Belmonte  
Famous Door  
Woody Herman Ore  
4 Inkspots  
52nd St. Tony's  
Spivy  
Elsie Houston  
John Sebastian  
Tony Soma  
French Casino  
Nat Brusloff Ore  
Ben Nelson Ore  
Veloz & Yolanda  
Dixie Dunbar  
Mary Burton  
Bert Frohman  
Larry Adler  
Frazee Sis  
Cully Richards  
Park & Clifford  
Bob DuPont  
Flora Vestoff  
Vera Niva  
Yacopi Tr  
Gold Room  
(Ambassador Hotel)  
Ramon Ramos Ore  
Joe Howard  
Ella Shields  
Ruby Norton  
Lea Barbara  
Rita Shaw  
Arthur Behan  
Rudy Madison  
Will Ward  
Marion Roberge  
Mary Oleott  
Ben Yost 8  
Greenwich Village  
Casino  
Geo Renard Ore  
Tom Hardy  
Anne Crosby  
Val Volante  
Eleanor Woods  
Jules de Salvo 4  
Havana-Madrid  
Nano Rodrigo Ore  
Juanito Sanabria Ore  
Rosita Rios  
Sergio Ortiz  
Estela & Papi  
Gene Alvarez  
Pedrito & Chino  
Topia & Maclovio  
Elba Valladares  
Hickory House  
Louis Prima Ore  
Hollywood Restaurant  
Vincent Lang Ore  
James Hall  
Dorothy Manners  
Rita Renaud  
Ramona  
Georgette  
Ramona  
Bothwell Browne G  
Hotel Ambassador  
(Triannon Room)  
Rosalean & Seville  
Del Courtney Ore  
Marissa Flores  
Lawrence White  
Hotel Astor  
Dick Kuhn Ore  
Sande Williams Ore  
H'otel Belmont-Plaza  
Basil Fomeen Ore  
Bob Ripa  
Edna Strong  
Duke McHale  
Rolie-Airs  
Hotel Commodore  
Sammy Kaye Ore  
Hotel Baltimore  
Geo Olsen Ore  
Harrison Sis  
4 Bachelors  
Patsy Parker  
Jean Blair  
Vera Fern  
Ann Durson  
Hotel Rossert  
(Brooklyn)  
Eddie Lane Ore  
Hotel Edison  
Blue Barron Ore  
Hotel Essex House  
Frankie Masters O  
Marian Frances  
Jay Matthews  
Buss Dillon  
Hotel Lexington  
Ray Kinney Ore  
Meymo Hoyt  
Hotel Lincoln  
Jan Savitt Ore

Simeon Karavaeff  
Nadia Mirova  
Nastla Poliakova  
Michel Michon  
Mischa Usdonov  
Volodia Katov Ore  
Show Bar  
(Forest Hills)  
Jules Alberti Ore  
4 Debutantes  
7 Jewels  
Penny Price  
Peggy Craft  
Mildred Tanner  
Chubby Bergen  
Betty Claire  
Stork Club  
Charlie Murray Ore  
Monchito Ore  
Surf Club  
Barry Bros Ore  
Barbara Belmore  
Paul Winnick  
Jack Hilliard  
Dorothy Blaine  
Paul Florenz Gls  
Tony Pastor's  
Mario Merin Ore  
Larry McMahon  
Pat Rossi  
Gail 2  
Hotel McAlpin  
J Messner Ore  
Jeanne D'Arcy  
Hotel New Yorker  
Paul Whiteman Ore  
Joan Edwards  
Clarke Dennis  
Modernaires  
Maurice & Cordoba  
Hotel Pennsylvania  
Will Osborne Ore  
Hotel Park Central  
(Cocoanut Grove)  
Panchito Ore  
Ralph de Villa Ders  
Dinora  
Hotel Pierre  
Richard Himber Ore  
Ethel Levy  
Fred Lowery  
Gail Gail  
Ella Shields  
George Harria  
Hotel Plaza  
Eddy Duchin Ore  
June Robbins  
Medrano & Donna  
Jane Pickens  
Hotel Savoy-Plaza  
Emile Petti Ore  
Dwight Fiske  
Hotel St. Moritz  
Eddie Varos Ore  
Fawn & Jordan  
Gypsy Nina  
Betsy Bradley  
Glen Pope  
3 Idlers  
Hotel St. Regis  
(Iridium Room)  
Chas Baum Ore  
Dorothy Lewis  
B & J Heasley  
Marie de Forest  
Harriette Haddon  
Berniece Stewart  
Lucille La Marr  
Thekla Horn  
Nora Gale  
Hotel Roosevelt  
Guy Lombardo Ore  
Hotel Taft  
Enoch Light Ore  
Peggy Mann  
George Hines  
Smith Howard  
Light Brigade  
Hotel Waldorf-  
Astoria  
(Empire Room)  
Everett Hoagland O  
Giovanni  
(Sert Room)  
Emil Coleman Ore  
Adelaide Moffett  
De Marcos  
International Thea.  
Russ Morgan Ore  
Brooks Steel Ore  
Betty Bruce  
Wiere Bros  
Carol Bruce  
Debonairs  
Walter Cassell  
St. Clair & Day  
Carol Bruce  
Sergio De Karlo  
Kit Kat Club  
Connie McLean Ore  
Pearl Baines  
Flash & Dash  
Velma Middleton  
3 Jones Boys  
Bob Parrish  
Ida James  
Bessie Dudley  
Alma Turner  
La Conga  
Carlos Molina Ore  
Drigo Ore  
Diosa Costello  
Desi Arnaz  
Teresita Osta  
Celina & Alberto  
Artini & Consueo  
La Martinique  
Dick Gasparre Ore  
Pasito Curbelo Ore  
Elvira Rios  
Georgie Tapps  
Larue  
Eddie Davis Ore  
Joseph Smith Ore  
Le Coq Rouge  
Nicki Raymond Ore  
Don Marion Ore  
Tisdale 3  
Ann Francine  
Le Ruban Bleu  
Nan Blakstone  
Casper Reardon  
Graziella Parraga  
Leon & Eddie's  
Lennie Hayton Ore  
Lou Martin Ore  
Eddie Davis  
Donald Burr  
Ruth Sato  
H & H Abbott  
Nite Wits  
Mon Paris  
Larry Stry Ore  
Mary Cohan  
Penthouse  
Paul Taubman  
Eli Spivak  
Faith Little  
Place Elegante  
Ernest Franz  
Arthur Tubert  
Vincent De Costa  
Bill Farrell  
Queen Mary  
Joe Ellis Ore  
Harriet Hutchins  
Lou Williams  
Madalyn White  
Wilson Lang  
Rainbow Grill  
Barry Winton Ore  
Marylyn & Michael  
Rainbow Room  
Eddie LeBaron Ore  
Ben Cutler Ore  
Betty Randall  
Lois January  
Ray & Naldi  
Senator Ford  
Anne Gerard  
Russian Kretchma  
Gypsy Rita  
Tania

Betty Brooks  
Judy Roberts  
Troo  
Bob Freedley Ore  
Mousie Garner  
Prince & Clarke  
Glenda Hope  
Jane Wayne  
Mabel Scott  
Jerri Withee  
Versailles  
Nicholas D'Amico O  
Panchito Ore  
Joe E Lewis  
Lois Elliman  
Jean Mon  
Village Barn  
Tommy Blue Ore  
Whirling Top  
Geo Morris Ore  
Marcella Claire  
Eileen Mercedes  
Barbara Johnson  
Barbara McDonald  
Ziegfeld Restaurant  
Leo Reisman Ore  
Jack Durant  
Eunice Healy  
Nick Long, Sr  
Ruth Clayton

### LOS ANGELES

Beverly Wilshire  
Ray Noble Ore  
Mary Parker  
Billy Daniels  
Biltmore Bowl  
Chuck Foster Ore  
Jimmy Castle  
Sunny O'Dea  
Peggy Taylor Trio  
Fred Scott  
Grey & Kathleen  
3 D's  
Alfredo Rhumba Bd  
Dorothy Brandon  
Cafe Caliente  
Don Enrique Ore  
Panchita  
Don Manuel  
Kirby & de Gage  
Luis Danuelos  
Cafe La Maze  
Hal Chanslor Ore  
Club Ball  
George Yount  
Bruz Fletcher  
Onyx Club  
Love Lane  
Marie Bryant  
Dunley Dickerson  
Snowball & Johnny  
Juanilla Carter  
Jesse Cryor  
Cee Pee Johnson O  
It Cafe  
Joe Moshay Ore  
La Conga  
Lloyd Pantages  
Kay Kaley  
Wally Burke  
Phillip Lopez Ore  
Marcus Daly  
Rhythm Rascals  
Paris Inn  
Patsy Hamilton  
Juanita  
George & Nanette  
Dominie  
Margrite & Martinez  
Ken Henryson  
Eric Massey

EARL CARROLL'S  
HOLLYWOOD RESTAURANT  
NOW  
HUBERT CASTLE  
PLACED BY  
MARK J. LEDDY

Cocoanut Grove  
Horace Heidt Ore  
and Entertainers  
Earl Carroll  
Ken Stevens  
3 Lovely Sis  
3 Nonchalants  
Ed Angulardo Ore  
Niska  
Lambert  
Johnny Woods  
Four Hot Shots  
Lela Moore  
Susan Miller  
Beryl Wallace  
Reginald Craig  
Igor & Tanya  
Archie Bleyer Ore  
Florentine Garden  
Pat Lane  
Dancing Violinist  
Florine G. Folles  
Gifford & Pearl  
Jennings & Murray  
Billy McDonald Ore  
French Casino  
High Hats Trio  
Lillian Randolph  
Lee Sis  
Eddie Wilsons Ore  
Grace Hayes Lodge  
Neville Flesoon  
Grace Hayes  
Fred Keating  
Peter Lind Hayes  
Jeffrey Gill  
Nick Cochran Ore  
Guy Nineties  
Marguerita Padula  
Cait Bros  
Pat & Patsy Moran  
Hawaiian Paradise  
Luana Woods  
Sam Koki Ore  
Henry Monet  
Helen Miller  
Chuck Henry Ore  
Sardi's  
Del Porter and His  
Feather Merchants  
Seven Seas  
Danny Kaanna  
Hawk Shaw  
Mel Peterson  
Lillian Gibson  
Al McIntyre  
E Bush Quartette  
Lorraine de Woods  
Great Revel  
Maxie Rosenbloom  
Sid Tomack & R B  
Jerry Brandow  
Moore & Lewis  
Red Stanley Ore  
Somerset House  
June Sillman  
Charles Healy  
Harry Ringland  
Lou Salles Ore  
Swanne Inn  
Art Tatum  
Charlie Evans  
Topsy's  
3 Ryans  
Gloria Randall  
Ardell & Monet  
Paul & Paulette  
Jan Garber Ore  
Victor Hugo  
Garwood Van Ore  
White Elephant  
Lillian Gibson  
John Hale  
Peppy & Peanut  
Teddy Kline Ore  
Wilshire Bowl  
Phil Harris Ore

### CHICAGO

Ambassador Hotel  
(Pump Room)  
H McCreery Ore  
Don & Audrey LeM  
(The Buttery)  
LeMaire Rhumba O  
Bali Ball  
Irv Dorenfeld  
Trudie Russell  
Karen Kain  
Coed Gls  
Harris Ore  
Bar o' Music  
Joe Lyman  
Leon Chess  
Eddy Danders  
Ray Conlin  
Blamarek Hotel  
(Walrus Room)  
Hadley Gls  
Geraldine Ross  
Joey Reardon  
Howard Brooks  
Art Kassel Ore  
Blackhawk  
Don Pedro Ore  
Joe Sanders Ore  
Adrienne  
Sis & Bud Roberts  
Helen Rogers  
Blackstone Hotel  
(Baltic Room)  
Aristocrats Ore  
Dale Evans  
Brevoort Hotel  
(Crystal Room)  
Annette Kennedy  
Joe Nardulli  
Gertrude Tobin  
Bob Billings  
Broadmont  
Lydia Harris  
Val Williams  
Dot Carlson Gls  
Bordine & Carroll  
Jane Moran  
Herb Rudolphs Ore  
Cave o' Winds  
Bernie Green  
Judy Page  
Juanita  
Vivian Vincent  
Josephine Rino  
Art Weiss Ore  
Celebrity Club  
Peaches  
Dick Ware  
Shirley Chandler  
Marjorie Mansell  
Bert Lawrence Ore  
Dolores Green  
Gail Lawrence  
Blondie Gls  
Chez Paree  
Abe Lyman Ore  
Rose Blane  
Joe E Lewis  
Stapletons  
Tamara  
Paul Haakon  
Evans Gls  
Chinatown Bowery  
Tex Wagner  
Tanya Cortez  
Edna Leonard  
Millie DeMako  
Chuck Wilson  
Virginia Dovel  
Club Alabam  
Rio & Rita  
Sadie Moore  
Bee Haven  
Bernard & Henri  
Bernie Adler  
Effie Burton  
Paullette La Pierre  
Dave Unell Ore  
Dorothy Dale  
Eddie Roth Ore  
Club Minuet  
Inez Gambel  
Betty Hill  
Alvira Morton  
Art Fischers Ore  
Pancho Villa Ore  
Joan & Eddie  
Tom Garvey  
Hi Hat  
Willie Shore  
Gus Van  
Mary Lane  
Kretlow Gls  
Alphonse Berg  
Jimmy Cassidy Ore  
Ivanhoe  
Kit Kat 4  
Al Trace Ore  
Holly Swanson  
Helen Summer  
Kay Becker  
Koo Koo Klub  
Princess Natoma  
Diane Lee  
Beth Miller  
Ace Welburn  
Earl Willis Ore  
Billy Kent  
Sandra Lynn  
Helen Hart  
Monore  
Pam Adair  
Lita  
Jean Cook  
Torchy Fargo  
L'Aiglon  
Mary W Kilpatrick  
Eusebio Concialdi  
Don Quixote Ore  
Ennio Bolognini Ore  
L & L Club  
Eddie Gorman  
Belia Aren  
Gloria Lea  
Manuel Rudy  
Patt Nagar Ore  
Hotel La Salle  
(Blue Front Room)  
Little J Little Ore  
Kathleen Quinn  
Liberty Inn  
Dot Tillman  
Roma  
Valerie  
Mary Davies  
John Howard

Del Estes  
Club Spanish  
Johnny Tucker  
Wesley Davis  
Patsy Snyder  
Dolly Moss  
Leo Franz Ore  
Colony Club  
Sophie Tucker  
Cross & Dunn  
Fernando Canay Or  
Don Orlando Ore  
Colosimos  
Jack Prince  
NTG Revue  
Eve Arden  
Yvette Dore  
Eddie White  
Frank Quattrill Ore  
Flonann Gls  
Club Belles  
Dorise Bradley  
Sam Theard  
Marion Abernathy  
Wesley Long  
Chippie Hill  
6 Jitterbugs  
Rhythm Willie  
Charles Isom  
Partelle Gls  
Red Saunders Ore  
Congress Hotel  
(Glass Hat Rm)  
Johnny Banga Ore  
(Peacock Rm)  
Joe Vera  
(Pompelion Rm)  
Irving Margraff  
Drake Hotel  
(Gold Coast Room)  
Wayne King Ore  
Ruth Day  
Diane Denice  
Florinos  
Edgewater Beach  
Hotel  
(Beach Walk)  
Ray Herbeck Ore  
Paul Gerrits  
Earl & Jo Leach  
Virginia Hayes  
Harriet Smith Gls  
Herb Foote  
El Dumbo  
Mary Marshall  
Raymonds  
Madeline Gardner  
Solly Avers  
Stan Rittoff Ore  
Bob O-Lyn Gls  
Entertainers  
Mollie Malone  
Cecil Manning  
Grace Mack  
Peggy Leonard  
Margie Lee  
Leon Darrell Ore  
885 Club  
Johnny Honnert  
Senators Ore  
Frankie's Casino  
Patsy Lu Rains  
Mary Camp  
Diane Clifton  
Ritchies  
Helen Fox  
Kay Karrol  
Tonya  
Buddy Kirby  
Dick Conrad  
Bob Tinsley Ore  
Gaiety Village  
Jimmy Ames  
Betty Fredericks  
Gloria Reed  
Gay 90's  
Ginger Woods  
Sid Schappas  
De Nova Twins  
Toby Lee  
Jessie Garwood  
Bob Danders Jr Ore  
Gay Paree  
Alicia Barth  
Ethel Brown  
Sylvia Tucker  
Harvey Charles Ore  
Graemere Hotel  
(Glass House Rm)  
Jack Ivett Ore  
Patsy Thomas  
Grand Terrace  
Earl Hines Ore  
Katherine Perry  
Nortons  
Reschombers  
Red & Curley  
Grant Page  
Luelle Wilkins  
Leonard Reed  
Harry's New York  
Ralph Cook  
Betty Storey  
Kay & F Ryck  
Three Talents  
Deone Page  
Helen Veronice  
Mickey Cozzies Ore  
Hoveler Gls  
Hickory Inn  
Pancho Villa Ore  
Joan & Eddie  
Tom Garvey  
Hi Hat  
Willie Shore  
Gus Van  
Mary Lane  
Kretlow Gls  
Alphonse Berg  
Jimmy Cassidy Ore  
Ivanhoe  
Kit Kat 4  
Al Trace Ore  
Holly Swanson  
Helen Summer  
Kay Becker  
Koo Koo Klub  
Princess Natoma  
Diane Lee  
Beth Miller  
Ace Welburn  
Earl Willis Ore  
Billy Kent  
Sandra Lynn  
Helen Hart  
Monore  
Pam Adair  
Lita  
Jean Cook  
Torchy Fargo  
L'Aiglon  
Mary W Kilpatrick  
Eusebio Concialdi  
Don Quixote Ore  
Ennio Bolognini Ore  
L & L Club  
Eddie Gorman  
Belia Aren  
Gloria Lea  
Manuel Rudy  
Patt Nagar Ore  
Hotel La Salle  
(Blue Front Room)  
Little J Little Ore  
Kathleen Quinn  
Liberty Inn  
Dot Tillman  
Roma  
Valerie  
Mary Davies  
John Howard

Georgia LeReau  
Jimmie O'Neil  
Earl Wiley Ore  
Limehouse  
Van Toffs Ore  
Little Club  
Ollie Buglie  
Melba Pasquay  
Lara Spencer  
Al Johnson  
McGraws  
Ned Santrey  
Bob Evans  
Smiley Dooley  
Ellen Klenner  
Andy Freghan  
Chuck Andrews  
Phil Chinard  
Jack Tilson  
McLaughlin's  
Lou Reynolds  
Stan Rittoff Ore  
Millstones  
Frank Dania  
June Harlin  
Jack Roland Ore  
Edna Riley  
Morrison Hotel  
(Boston Oyster  
House)  
Manfred Gotthelf  
June St Claire  
Nameless  
Diane Henry  
Earl Backus Ore  
Eddie Leon  
Laurette De Roer  
Nappo Gardens  
Bobette Gls  
Dorothy Hill  
Pauline Black  
Dot Robinson  
Jane Lavonne  
Annette Arlue  
Faye Rogers  
Ed Sellings Ore  
950 Club  
Rocky Elsworth  
Paul Burkette  
Pat Paige  
Jane Cline  
Evelyn Campbell  
Gloria Glenmore  
Marion Morrow  
George Slattery  
Bob Wrays Ore  
Old Heidelberg  
Old Heidelberg Co  
Murray Octet  
Raoul Kantrow  
Sally Sharrat  
Swiss Hill Billies  
Herbie Ore  
Paddock Club  
Milly Erdman  
Flo Polus  
Aeden & Lane  
Colleen  
Mollie Manner  
Nadja  
George DeCosta  
Lew King  
Les Descamps Ore  
Palmer House  
(Empire Room)  
Tommy Dorsey Ore  
Bob Neller  
L Royce & Vanya  
Nick Long, Jr  
Anita Boyer  
Jack Leonard  
Abbott Dancers  
Phil Dooley Ore  
Pow Wow  
Elnae Rabey  
Steve Stutland Ore  
Sherman Hotel  
(Celtic Cafe)  
Gene Kerwin Ore  
Jatos Sis  
(Dome)  
James Hamilton  
Empire Boys  
Jerry Glidden  
(Panther Room)  
Connie Haines  
Gene Krupa Ore  
Tommy Wilson  
Irene Day  
Roberts & White  
Carl Marx  
Silhouette Club  
Larry Forbes  
Sully Harand  
Ruth Joffe  
Joan Bayler  
June Bontlev  
Louise Powell  
Joey Conrad Ore  
Silver Bar  
Gorda Youne  
Mary O'Rourke  
Marge O'Neil  
Millie Davis  
Billie Howard  
Evelyn Waters  
Doris Faye  
Dot Stone  
Irene Stokes  
Silver Cloud  
Wally Rand  
Betty Saxon  
Hal & Judy Stewart  
Frank Hall  
Eddie Lang  
Paul Rich  
Ray Steiber Ore  
Elinor Daniels  
Hazel Zalus  
Silver Erotics  
Harry Harris  
Roma Noble  
Freida Weiner  
Les Doyle  
Fay Wallace  
Marie Costello  
606 Club  
Billy Carr  
Margaret Faher Gls  
Pat Chandler  
Kay Norre  
Carol Lord  
Alma Serf  
Dagmar  
Marion Rogers  
Virginia Proctor  
Jackson & Nedra  
Carrie Finnelle  
Ann Valentine  
Taylor & Allen  
Boots Barnes  
Joan Woods  
Sal Lake Ore  
Tripoli 3  
So Ho  
Dick Hughes  
Jerry McKenna  
Toni Baron  
Rosetta  
Laura Lee  
Bobette Gls  
Dianne  
Rudy Carr Ore  
Stevens Hotel  
(Continental Room)  
Griff Williams Ore  
Buddy Marino  
Subway  
Sundigh Thomas  
Frank Litus  
Morrisonette Gls  
Al Garbell  
Peppy Otis  
Marion Miller  
Adele Filips  
Mignon

Ann Dahl  
Harry Sulx Ore  
Suzie 'Q'  
Yvonne Nova  
Thelma Marlin  
Texas Lee  
Jerry Gerard  
Red Wilson Ore  
Swingland  
Johnny Long Ore  
George Gould  
Pops & Lurie  
Butterbeans & Sue  
Nick Brooks Gls  
Thompson's 16 Club  
Ray Reynolds  
4 Sharps Ore  
Flo Whitman  
Nyra Lou  
Sharon  
Muriel Joseph  
Rae Collins  
Patsy Du Brae  
Genevieve Val  
Marsh McCurdy  
Three Deuces  
Baby Dodds  
Charles McBride  
Darnell Howard  
Billie Holliday  
Freddie Reed  
Lonnie Johnson  
Tower Inn  
Inez Gonan  
Mary Grant  
Fido Decca  
Leonard 2  
Bob O Let Gls  
3 Hawaiians  
Frank Davis Ore  
Town Club  
Margie Dale  
Frankie Donia  
Eloise Land  
Kathleen Kay

Byron & Willis  
Bob White  
Joe Nitti Ore  
21 Club  
Jackie Allen  
Bob Allen  
Helena  
Tessie Mitchell  
C Carrington Ore  
213 Club  
Angela Lee  
Nancy Dumont  
Post McDowell  
Marilyn Kinkaid  
Villa Moderne  
Parker & Fredericks  
Carlos Molinas Ore  
Tony Cabot Ore  
Lucia Garcia  
Vine Gardens  
Marie McCleary  
Collette & Gale  
Angelo Lippech  
Richard Denzier  
Joe Kish Ore  
Whitehorse Inn  
Al Wagner  
Billy Meyers  
Jimmy Callison  
Winona Gardens  
Ken Leslie  
June Day  
Dixie Lee  
Yar  
Doriss Wittlich Ore  
Janina LaBoda  
Claudia Corall  
Ye Oldie Cellar  
Arlene Owens  
Mary Beth  
Chet Robles Ore  
Don Daniels  
Boss, Bishop  
Lillian Lee

### PHILADELPHIA

Anchorage  
Bradford  
Johnny Graft Ore  
Benno Dieco  
Roberta Roberts  
Anchorage Stock Co  
Nick Fratzetti  
Gumpy Comfort  
Benny the Bum  
3 Clefs  
Evelyn Duchess  
Vanderbilts  
Rose Frassetto Ore  
Rose Gallo  
Ben Perry, mc  
Pegana  
Lane, Edwards & A  
Gary Leon  
Tur Macs  
Barbara Weeks  
Milly-Ray Gls  
Burgundy Rm  
(Hotel Bellevue-  
Stratford)  
Cliff Hall  
Gloria Vanderbilt  
Cadillac Tavern  
6 Cadillac Coquettes  
4 Rascals  
Dot Landy  
H & Adrienne  
Ferranti Trio  
Frank Milton  
Jack Newlon  
Bonnie Stewart  
Billy Hayes Ore  
Cedarwood Cabin  
(Malaga, N. J.)  
Pat Procell  
Nikki Nikolai  
Betty Williams  
Frankie Schluth  
Walt Temple Ore  
Club 15  
Stork & Dorinne  
3 Syncopaters  
Mr. X  
Ethel Bradley  
Evelyn Saunders  
Teresita  
Sylvia Ronosel  
College Inn  
Joe Stevens Ore  
Norton Bros  
Frankie Richardson  
Lou Tomasco, Jr  
Warner & Valerie  
2 Joyettes  
Jean Lamar  
Gail Arden  
Louise Ayres  
Crescent Log Cabin  
(Gloucester Lights,  
N. J.)  
King & DeMarco  
Murrayanna  
Joyettes  
Joe Kraft Ore  
June Eldridge  
Delmonico's  
Barnett & Barclay  
Yvonne  
Jerry Taps  
Frank Hall  
Eddie Lang  
Paul Rich  
Ray Steiber Ore  
Elinor Daniels  
Hazel Zalus  
Silver Erotics  
Harry Harris  
Roma Noble  
Freida Weiner  
Les Doyle  
Fay Wallace  
Marie Costello  
606 Club  
Billy Carr  
Margaret Faher Gls  
Pat Chandler  
Kay Norre  
Carol Lord  
Alma Serf  
Dagmar  
Marion Rogers  
Virginia Proctor  
Jackson & Nedra  
Carrie Finnelle  
Ann Valentine  
Taylor & Allen  
Boots Barnes  
Joan Woods  
Sal Lake Ore  
Tripoli 3  
So Ho  
Dick Hughes  
Jerry McKenna  
Toni Baron  
Rosetta  
Laura Lee  
Bobette Gls  
Dianne  
Rudy Carr Ore  
Stevens Hotel  
(Continental Room)  
Griff Williams Ore  
Buddy Marino  
Subway  
Sundigh Thomas  
Frank Litus  
Morrisonette Gls  
Al Garbell  
Peppy Otis  
Marion Miller  
Adele Filips  
Mignon  
Mille Jestrach  
1523 Locust  
Ethel Terry  
Bubbles Shelby  
Music Hall Gls  
Gloria Jay  
Bernice Berg  
Frances Lenox  
Elnae Black  
Lorene Rhoda  
Dolores Merrill  
Kings of Swing Or  
Peggy McCloud  
Ted & Al Lane  
Hotel Ben Franklin  
Garden Terrace  
Pete Foster  
Lang Thompson Ore  
Rocky Nolan  
Chuck Eton  
Foot Martin  
Gay 90's  
Chie Williams Ore  
Johnson & Brown  
Skippy Williams  
Vernon Guy  
Ethelina  
Gruber's Hof Brau  
Johnny Bauer  
Mann & Videll  
Nadine  
Merna Alha  
Gruber Hof Brau O  
Marie  
Henri's  
Andre & Frances  
Ray O'Day  
Al Blank  
Ernie McGee  
Chas Verne's Ore  
Hildebrand's  
Leslie Sis  
Motto & Therese  
Billy Brill  
Pete Hays  
Lydia White  
Blossom Gls  
Abe Sherr  
Maurice Belmont  
Bobby Lee Ore  
Hildebrand 3  
Hotel Adelphi  
(Hawthorn Roof)  
Al Viera Ore  
Jack Lynch's  
(H Walton Roof)  
Estelle Taylor  
Ray Benson  
Robert Rizzo Ore  
Henry Zeeman  
Bob Russell  
Glamour Gls (11)  
Herb Dubrow  
Sully Lamarr  
Anatol Bres  
Mona Reed  
Edna Simpson  
Neil Fontaine Ore  
Jimmy Blake  
Jum Session  
Billy Kreshmer O  
Jim Thorpe  
Hotel White Way  
(Atrio, N. J.)  
Phil Cope  
L. Vaughn  
Dean & Diane  
Johnny Kraus Ore  
Lutimer Club  
Mary Lee  
Joan MacFarland  
Beverly Fisher  
Tommy Monro  
Barbara Bradley  
Billy Lee  
Joseph Hayes Ore  
Lexington Casino  
Garland Sis  
Charlie Ganes Ore  
Mike Jaffe  
Vicki Cooper  
Rube, Johnny & E  
Clifford & Jackson  
Artie Nelson  
Cashie Costello  
4 Golden Gate Gls  
Lido Venice  
4 Glamour Gls  
Burns & Burnshea  
Rita Rio  
June  
Frank Schluth  
Sunny Mason  
Lido Venetians  
Laura Crane  
Murphy & Yvonne  
Little Rathskeller  
Mabel Brown  
Spencer & Forman  
Lillian Fields  
MacPepper  
Irene Kay  
Peter Sis  
Victor Hugo Ore  
Manoa Inn  
Bob Ridley  
Dunmore & Dee  
Ray Damore  
Frank Cuneo Ore  
Danni Rochelle  
Eddie Salade  
Dor Deere  
Whirlwind Trio



## New Leader Cafe

Eddie Jarvis Oro  
Doris Steiner  
Dorothy Moore  
Rose Gullen  
Peggy LaMarr

## Open Door

Ethel Meader  
Warner & Valerie  
Jimmy Rossi  
4 Golden Gate Gls  
Louise Fitzpatrick  
Don Anton Ore

## Peacock Gardens

Sylvan Herman O  
Ann Reed

## Palmbo's

Cosmos & Lolita  
Graham Gls  
Estelle Sloan  
Johnny Leary  
Conway & Parks  
Mittie Sandie  
Jerry Delmar Ore  
Edna Vernon  
Howard Reynold O  
Lindsey Sis  
Lillian Stewart  
Jeanie Van

## Philadelphia Room

Shayne & Armstr's  
Martha Perry  
Dick Satterfield  
Leo Kuhn Ore  
Katherine Smith  
6 Frolicettes  
Rusty Chapell  
Earl Denny Ore  
Billy Kenny  
Billy Julian

## Purple Derby

Bella Belmont  
Lillian Ford  
Topsy Ann Carroll  
Norton Bros  
Marty Fitzgerald  
Billy Hughes  
Viola Kleiss Ore  
Jean Lamarr  
Margie Mealy  
Betty Mealy

## Rainbow Terrace

(Stratford, Pa.)  
Leo Zollo Ore  
Mildred Rogers  
Ralph Eastwood

## Red Lion Inn

Day Sis  
Al Strett Ore  
Kitty Smith  
Joe Armstrong  
Frank Tumant

## Sanson House

Richard Bach  
Joe Dougherty  
Buddy Nugent  
Bill Donahue

## Rendezvous

(Hotel Senator)  
Spirits of Rhythm  
Harry McKay  
3 Tell Sis

## Spotlight's

Doris Stauffer  
Daphne Stauffer  
Bob Ryan

## CLEVELAND

## Alpine Village

Otto Thurn Ore  
Arno & Arnette  
Martha Lee  
Alpinettes (6)  
Margaret Aemmer  
Herman Pichner

## Avalon

Hy Barron Ore  
Bankoff & Cannon  
Marlyn Brittain  
Kay Irazis (2)  
George Everett Hale  
Thelma Sloan

## Airway Club

Troy Singer Ore  
Judy Black

## Cedar Gardens

Duke Melvin Ore  
Chicita  
Lillian Young  
Harvey & Ethel  
Louis Deppa

## Chateau

Chick Chalken Ore  
Lane, Edwards, Allen  
Harriette Cross

## College Inn

Norman Brill Ore  
Duke Fredericks  
Bill Jacobs  
Roberta Green  
Sammy Burke  
Jackie Wilson  
Ed Mathews  
Esther Jacobs

## Freddie's Cafe

Tony Emma Ore  
Velva Nalley  
Jackie Cornell  
Eddie Barnes  
Pearl Magley Line  
Gourmet Club  
E Robinson Ore  
Bill Lockman

## Hanna Grille

Mona Marli  
Lenny Colyer  
Evelyn Dietz  
Pats Zuma

## Hotel Allerton

Pat Ryan  
Al Lerner

## DETROIT

## Book-Cadillac Hotel

(Book Casino)  
Jack Meyers Ore  
Kandall Williams  
Sammy Jarvis  
Edith Dustman  
Dot Franey  
Leoliettes (4)  
(Motor Bar)  
Eddie Fritz Ore

## Bowery

Phil D'Orsay  
Towns & Lee  
Claude & Corinne  
Boweryettes (12)  
Harvey Stone  
Johnny King  
Chas Carlisle  
Benny Resh Ore

## Blue Lantern

Don Frye  
Garhardt & DeKey  
Glamour Gls (5)  
Shirley Royce  
Temple & Marie  
Lee Walters Ore  
'Curly' Baldwin

## Commodore Club

Ethel Shutta  
Gillette & Richards  
De Martins  
Larry Vincent  
Libby Langford  
Hark Thomas Ore

## Corktown Tavern

Myra Lott  
Renée Hartmen  
Orlando  
Ellen Kay  
Dick Haviland  
Eddie Bratton Ore

## Stork Club

Margie Smith  
Judy Cummings  
Bernard & Rich  
De Mad  
Henry Patrick Ore  
Alan Gale

## Stamp's Cafe

George Scotti  
Bert Lemish Ore  
Buddy Breen  
Jack & Johnny  
Al Moore Gls  
Jerri Vance  
4 Music Hall Gls  
Pops & Louie

## Silver Lake Inn

(Clementon)  
Carlos & Dorio  
Yvette  
Alice Lucey  
M Pamilliam Ore  
Marlyn Maynes  
George Reed

## 20th Century

Cliff Conrad  
16 Yvonnets  
Shannon & Mein  
Billie Elton  
Hal Thompson Ore  
Middie Fellows  
Phil Spitalny Ore

## Venice Grille

Fay Ray  
Shando & Margo  
Tanya Garth  
Geo Marchetti Ore  
Viking Cafe  
Tom Swift  
Billy Keaton  
Shannon & Mein  
Jimmy Naagra Ore  
Grace O'Hara

## Warwick Hotel

Herb Hagen Ore  
Weber's Hof Brau  
(Camden)  
Jules Placco Ore  
Jack Moss  
Elmer Seltzer  
Ise Hart  
Ted & Julia  
Chita  
Rudy Bruder  
Byran & Rains & Y  
Syd Golden  
Pat Sullivan  
Rath's Eldoradians  
Mott & Davis  
Russell & Christine

## Wilson's

Joe Hough, m.c.  
8 Guardsmen  
Marion  
Texas Tommy  
Jordan & Grace  
Clayton Johnson  
Harry Johnson Ore  
Geo Bakay

## Yacht Club

Mimi Stewart  
Joan Coraz  
Carita  
June Rollette  
Harry Born Ore

## Northwood Inn

Lois Cornwall  
Geraldine Ross  
Gus Howard  
Jack Campbell Ore

## Oasis

Ethel & Lewis  
Aileen Marlowe  
Norman Duffey  
Fidi Shell  
Buddy Lester  
Sammy Stern Ore

## Palm Beach

Kendall Kapps  
Adorables (6)  
Monnie Drake  
Amos Jacobs  
Don Pablo Ore

## Palmetto

Les Backer  
Priscilla Langdon  
Rowanna Gray  
Jalna  
The Viscounts  
Madelon Baker  
Reg Thornton Ore

## Powhatan

Lew Fidler Ore  
Yacht Club Boys

## Redford Inn

Don Miller Ore  
Vocalians

## Club Royale

Dean Murphy  
Bonners  
Reree & Root

## MIAMI

## Belmont

Saul Burgess Ore  
Bee Kilmars  
Buddy Walker

## Bill Jordan's

Beth Challis  
Earle Whittemore  
Wanda Dawson  
Madam Alexa  
Marie Stanley  
Maxine York

## Club Ha-Ha

Don Charles Ore  
Pat Clayton  
Johnny Mangum  
Tex Hendrix  
Bobby LaMarr  
Billy Kennedy  
Nicki Gallucci  
Paul Russell  
Norman Lewis  
Teddy Coppy  
Bill Rohmer  
Lynn & Johnson  
Five O'Clock Club  
Walter Feldkamp O  
Jose Tomasio Ore

## La Paloma Club

Frank Tally Ore

## Emogene Weaver

Evelyn Clark  
Don Lucas  
Pat Davis  
Vicki Van Payne  
Toni Lane  
Eve Wilson

## Paddock Club

Leon Prima Ore  
Ann Lester  
Newell & Steger  
Rogers & Morris

## Kiplide Club

Bob Yates  
Leona  
Billy Cook  
Michael Zarin Ore  
Crawford & Caskey  
John Uppman  
Beverly Kirk  
Barry Devine  
Murray Dancers

## Royal Palm

Herman Timberg, J  
Pat Rooney, Jr  
4 Sidneys  
Sally Gay

## MINNEAPOLIS AND ST. PAUL

## Minnesota Terrace

B. Chester Ore (14)  
Edna & J. Torrence  
Dolores O'Neill  
Al Stuart  
Arthur Murray Dan  
Monte Cuthbert

## President

Al Wehte Ore (5)  
Tom Allen  
Sheldon Gray  
Joy Bennett  
Tiny Crawford

## Silver Tray

O Bellman Ore (5)  
Hwd 'Playboys' (4)  
Terrace Cafe  
Art Mooney Ore (12)  
Jean Shailer  
Tony Dion  
Jack Unger  
Randy Sauls  
Garron & Bennett

## St. Paul Hotel

Hwd 'Playboys' (4)  
Terrace Cafe  
Art Mooney Ore (12)  
Jean Shailer  
Tony Dion  
Jack Unger  
Randy Sauls  
Garron & Bennett

## Club Candee

Leon Rayky Ore  
Ivory Jacobs  
Northern Flashes  
Mary Dorn  
Madge Payne  
Marge & Cuan'ham  
Club Irving  
Pier's Ore  
Antoine & DuBarry  
Bonita  
Jerry Dale  
Rita Delano

## Greenwich Village

Anton Cotton Ore  
Phida Loy  
Ivona Hall  
Vera Burnett  
Arlene Guest  
Kay Hansen  
Catherine Brent

## Club Roosevelt

Idlers  
Hotel Wm Penn  
(Chatterbox)  
Johnny Long Ore  
Jack Edmundson  
Helen Young  
Suebe Nielsen  
Trinity & O'Connor  
(Continental Bar)  
Billy Calzona  
Harry Martin  
Johnny Fritz  
Al DiLoria

## New Penn

June Gardner Ore  
Gene Navarre  
Patsy Faye  
Lester & Raye

## Nixon Cafe

Al Maraleo Ore  
Bob Carter  
Beauvelt & Tova  
Gala G  
Manning & Miltz  
Angelo Di Palma

## Nut House

Ted Black  
Gill & Edwards  
Al Mercer  
Harry Neokoff  
Pat McGowan  
Joe Klein

## Old Shay Gardens

Etl Covato Ore  
Kashido Okada  
Nita Raymond  
Betty Nylander  
Dance Darlings  
Bill Douglas  
Dean Savre  
Dick Smith

## Orchard

Jimmy Gamble Ore  
Jay Loring  
Chuck Miller

## Pines

Ray Englert Ore  
Plaza Cafe  
Jimmy Peyton Ore

## Hotel Henry

(Silver Grill)  
Nelson Maple Ore  
Ray Catzons  
Billy Rizzo  
Sam Shoinberger  
(Gay 90's)  
Dorothy Nesbitt

## Club Petite

Piccolo Pete Ore  
Margie Dorie  
Doris Deane  
Flo Parker  
Eddie Morris  
Bernie Lambert  
Ray Stiles

## Cork and Bottle

Jack Davis

## Harlem Casino

Sunset Royal Ore  
Froshine  
Jellia Smith  
Ralph Brown  
Genevieve Glover  
Moke & Poke  
Faye & Jimmy  
Myrtle Wilson  
Red Simmons  
Judy Cadova  
Earle & Frances

## Hotel Henry

(Silver Grill)  
Nelson Maple Ore  
Ray Catzons  
Billy Rizzo  
Sam Shoinberger  
(Gay 90's)  
Dorothy Nesbitt

## Mary Jane Brown

Royalties  
Donna Demetry Ore

## Saks

Barry, Prince & C  
Bee Sarche  
Armand & Lita  
Pol Mars (6)  
George Kavanagh O

## San Diego

4 Gingerettes  
Jerry Statler  
Mildred White  
Eleanor Kote  
Dotti & Lester  
Babe Sylvia  
George Presnell  
Al Alexander Ore

## Statler Hotel

(Terrace Room)  
Xavier Cugat Ore  
Raul & Eva Reyes

## Verne's

Jean Gale  
Del Gray  
Betty Wood  
Sid Schaps  
Vernettes  
Jimmy & Myrtle  
Romona & Hughes  
Lee Garden Ore

## Whittier Hotel

(Gold Cup Room)  
Guy Welch  
Jim Deland  
Harry Jenkins  
Byron Richards

## Ziegfeld Midnight Frolic

(NEW YORK)

Seymour Felix production at renamed Paradise, on Broadway; songs, Vernon Duke, Harold Adamson, Bernard Hanighen, J. Fred Coots; costumes, Billi Livingstone and Brooks; scenery, James Morcom; special arrangements, Wm. Creager.  
Cast: Jack Durant, Nick Long, Jr., Herman Hyde with Sally Burrill, Eunice Healy, Ruth Clayton, Don Richards; 12 showgirls; 12 dancers; Leo Reisman and Mort Dennis orchestras; \$2 minimum, no cover.

This is the Paradise's newest idea, after battling the now defunct Hollywood as a mass-capacity, no-minimum, no-cover spot. Same policy obtains more or less in the refurbished room, the ante upped to \$2 and \$2.50.

The decor has been completely switched under Nicholas Blair's direction to simulate the glory that was once Ziegfeld. With Hollywood stager (originally a Broadway revue producer) Seymour Felix at the helm, he has put on a flashy floor show, punctuating the basically strong talent with the town's top lookers. (Blair is reported to have paid up to \$100 a week for the champ paraders, culling them from John Powers and kindred model agencies). The glamour gals will be the best b.o. for the place.

It's a strong dancing show with Nick Long, Jr., and Eunice Healy holding down that department in excellent style. Jack (Mitchell and) Durant, a ringer for Gable on looks, does his comedy takeoffs and not a little hoofing on his own.

Herman Hyde, back with Sally Burrill, is a standard laugh turn with the comedy breakaway props, musical hoke, etc. Ruth Clayton is an effective prima, and not a bad looker besides. Don Richards is a personable juve.

Another major lure is Leo Reisman's crack dancsation, an ideal band booking for a spot that now essays to class that's synonymous with the Ziegfeld tradition. Reisman has been staple at the Waldorf, Central Park Casino and kindred top spots, so it's quite a dash of flash for the Broadway hoofery. Mort Dennis is the relief combo.

Show opens with an elevator effect, suggesting the going-up idea to the rooftop Frolic above the New Amsterdam, long the citadel of Ziegfeld musicals. Fred Trimble, remarkable double for Will Rogers, is discovered after the opening fanfare with some droll interludes. Thence 'Say It With Girls,' led by Ruth Clayton, and, as the title implies, another pulchritudinous parade.

Eunice Healy whams 'em with her solo taps followed by Jack Durant's specialty. The girls again with some elementary ciggie legerdemain, as part of the terps, to 'Whatever You Say' (J. Fred Coots-Adamson interpolation).

Nick Long, Jr.'s specialty to Rachmaninoff's Prelude in C-Sharp Minor is followed by another rhythmic classic, clicking all way.

Novely in-the-audience by-play by boxing cats, a juggler and an animal impersonator, mingling with the customers, plugs the wait while the stage is being cleared. When that's done, at the Paradise (i.e. Ziegfeld Midnight Frolic) an opaque box-like scrim unfurls from the ceiling to engulf the elevated floor. The sweeping-away of the discarded ciggies from the previous number should be done a bit more effectively.

'Lady of the Morning' is the next flash, vocalized by Don Richards, wherein lookers Norma Richter, Mira Stephens, Edith Luce and Viva Sellwood, respectively, portray the morning, sport, matinee and cocktail girl. Comes the Lady of the Evening, equally smartly attired, but when she removes her large handbag (a progressive piece of business) it discloses Ethel Harper, a sepiol looker.

'I Get a Kick Out of Corn' is another interpolated number, this time by Bernard Hanighen to Harold Adamson's lyrics (latter did all the wordage), wherein Durant, Miss Healy, Long and the gals in bucolic getup go through a pseudo-hillbilly routine.

Herman Hyde's specialty next, with 'Deep in the Shadows,' another flash by Richards and Miss Clayton backed by the girls. A stand-out are Long and Miss Healy doing a sequence of Astaire and Rogers routines, even unto the music, and it proved a showstopper.

'Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody' finale. This is Irving Berlin's classic for one of the lush early 1920 'Follies,' and John Steel might quite properly have been spotted here to re-create the number. First intro-

Dewey Moon  
W & J Brown  
Norma Shea  
Mme. Bonaffon  
Riviera  
Billy Miller Ore  
Jay Loring  
Chuck Miller  
H Middleman Ore  
Janet Heller  
Joe & Betty Lee

## Night Club Reviews

duced. This spec is lavish in its presentation and accoutrement, the eight prize lookers coming forward for the big finale after the revolving stage, paneled drapes, etc., get in their production innings.

Blair and the Adler brothers (attorneys), who operate the Frolic, have an excellent chance to click with this switcheroo on their former Paradise policy. It's enough of a glamour touch to make it boxoffice. But along have come the Shuberts, Billie Burke Ziegfeld and Metro, all of whom have sundry proprietary rights in Ziegfeldiana, and are seeking an injunction on the billing. It's now before the courts.

Speaking of yesteryear glory, at the door is Albert Berryman, maitre d'hotel, who has been 40 years on Broadway, starting when he was 15. He's seen it all from the now nostalgically glorified 'lobster palaces' of another day, right through mob joints and into post-repeal. He'd be a cinch bet for one of those colorful biogs. Abel.

## BEACHCOMBER, N. Y.

Matty Malneck orch. Chavez Congarumba, Mapy Cortes.

On the second-floor site of the Winter Garden theatre building, which has housed a galaxy and array of niteries, ranging from class to Harlemaque, comes the newest motif, and a novelty that should click big. It's a frank counterpart of Don's Beachcomber spot in Hollywood, which has inspired the South Sea motif in sundry other directions. But never has there been a carbon copy as close, including the exotic Oriental dishes and array of rum drinks that are known as the 'zombie,' an eight-inch production at \$1.25 a copy, of which neither the Coast nor N. Y. Beachcomber will sell more than two to any customer; or such wacky billings for potables known as 'vicious virgin,' 'missionary's downfall,' 'shark's tooth,' etc.

Monte Proser, ex-publicist and Hollywood nitery entrepreneur, has the spot. He runs everything, with backing by Lee Shubert, Harry Kaufman, Walter Batchelor, et al.

Proser's prime headache is whether he can click in spades; as a restaurant for dinner and a supper club after 10 p. m., when the torrid Chavez congarumba band starts cutting up joined by Matty Malneck's rhythmic crew.

Malneck is doubling from 'Very Warm for May.' There's also Mapy Cortes, torrid Latin entertainer.

Place is maitred by Joe Gardner and a prop Mr. Ching comes out of the kitchen to help the customers select intricate Oriental dishes.

Room has a very good chance to connect as a novelty, both on its unusual cuisine and because of the soothing atmosphere, which is unique in its decor. It's a very restful interior in that respect. Abel.

## FRENCH CASINO, N. Y.

(LEW BROWN'S VARIETIES)

Veloz & Yolanda, Larry Adler, Dixie Dunbar, Bert Frohman, Cully Richards, Roy Davis, Mary Burton, Park & Clifford, Frazee Sisters, Chorus (18), Nat Brusiloff Orch. Ben Nelson's Orch, Monchito's Rhumba band.

Lew Brown has picked up where Billy Rose left off, but hasn't picked up enough. The Earl Carroll theatre, nee the French Casino, nee the Casa Manana (under Rose), is again the F. C., with a reprise of Rose's vaudeville policy, but the opening layout is weak entertainment and hardly the smash needed to put this spot back in the profit class.

Brown is the spot's production director, with Haring & Blumenthal, owners of the property, doing the financing. H. & B. were inclined to raze the structure and erect a taxpayer, but store and office leases prevented this. Until the latter terminate, H. & B. naturally want the theatre-cabaret operating, hence this Brown venture.

Spot is now operating with the lowest minimum (\$1) of any of the deluxe theatre-cabarets and this may be of some help in attracting biz, but it's not likely that the show will hold it up. It's a loosely thrown together vaude layout, with too few entertainment socks and not enough production values to overcome vaudeville's natural handicaps these days. It must also be remembered that Rose, himself, tossed vaude into the discard because of skidding biz and finally folded the Casa Manana when two production-type shows failed to provide the needed b.o. hypo.

Brown is tossing customers nine acts and the chorus (18) and chorus boys (6) from his current 'Yokel Boy' musical, and the word 'tossing' is no misnomer. It's either a case of too little time for preparation (only two weeks), or else careless showmanship, but the routine looks like it was pulled out of a hat—also

the booking. That the show was over-bought is indicated by the fact that five acts were programmed, but did not appear opening night. They are Ginger Manners, Bob Dupont, Owen McGivny, Florida Vestoff and Vera Niva. It's reported they are being paid, though not appearing.

As it is, the show is way over-board on the clock and tiresome because of its lack of pace. Opener is the chorus from 'Yokel Boy' fronted by Dixie Dunbar, who is also doubling from the same show. Chorines wear costumes from the show and do one of the musical's dance routine, a Spanish affair. Line is also back for the finale and chalks up a major demerit by appearing in the very same costumes as in the opener, which aren't too attractive in the first place.

Miss Dunbar is a cute little hoofing trick and works three times in the show, twice with the line of girls and once with the six chorus boys, getting over nicely on each occasion. She's the only solo dancer in the show, which helps set her off, possibly also explaining why Miss Vestoff, hooper, is not being included.

Cully Richards (New Acts), comic, is the show's m.c., a role for which he isn't exactly suited. Also in the New Acts class is Roy Davis, whose novelty is misplaced and is an early slower-upper, and Mary Burton, buxom singer along Mae Westian lines. She's been around in N. Y. niteries for the past few years.

Of the remaining six acts, Larry Adler, the harmonica virtuoso; Bert Frohman, story-songster, and Veloz and Yolanda, topflight ballroom team, are the outsiders, and all are familiar faces. They follow one another in the order named, which bunches the show's clicks rather than spacing 'em throughout the show. Adler's rendition of Ravel's 'Bolero' is perhaps the show's highlight, though the dancing of Veloz and Yolanda, who got rapt attention from the rather noisy premiere audience, was not far behind. Frohman, who is working with a femme accomp, gives his turn a strong finale via tribute to the late George Gershwin, employing a medley of the latter's great hits.

Park and Clifford, who were at Radio City Music Hall only a few weeks ago, are also misplaced, their excellent, but slow, hand-to-hand balancing and acrobatics being spotted in the show's mid-portion. The Frazee Sisters (2) are also familiar faces and their harmonizing is major league stuff, but they come too soon after the singing Miss Burton.

Show is being played by Ben Nelson's orch, while Nat Brusiloff's crew and Monchito's rhumba band are alternating for the dancing. Opening night, Al Goodman, who is leading the orch for 'Yokel Boy,' came over from the Majestic theatre to lead the combined Brusiloff and Nelson orchs through a medley of Lew Brown compositions. It was a good overture, not sustained by the show that followed.

The French Casino story, after the New Year's Eve gravy, will probably be a sad one at the b.o. Scho.

## YACHT CLUB

Pittsburgh, Dec. 28.

Herman Middleman Orch (12), Joe and Betty Lee, Anita Lane, Dale Rhodes, Shirley Heller, Tony Marks Co.

Still another incarnation for a spot that's had more lives than a cat. It's the old Show Boat, which has been up, down and then up and down again so often the last 15 years the historians



## Musicals Repeat Big B. O.; Public Pays For A Laugh

That musical shows will always be part of the legit fare has been demonstrated in the past several seasons. It is an entirely different era than when costly production was thought a prime requirement and a flock of producers seemed to vie with each other as to who could spend the most.

The day of high boxoffice prices is past on Broadway and the almost unlimited expenditures have likewise gone into the limbo. Few musicals now cost more than \$100,000, whereas the revues of other days started with a production red of more than double that figure. Budgets of some of the most successful musicals lately have ranged between \$50,000 and \$70,000.

Younger musical show makers are still well up in the going and some repeat seasonally. It is from this contingent that musical hits must come, for the veterans still extant are out of the running. Material, more than talent and settings, is the main problem, mostly coming from a comparatively limited number of book and score writers who have not succumbed to Hollywood. It is rather a select group, but an expert one—composers, lyricists and book writers like Rodgers and Hart, Cole Porter, Lindsay and Crouse, E. Y. Harburg, Harold Arlen, Hoagy Carmichael, Sammy Fain, Guy Bolton, John Macgowan, Eddie Davis, Jack Yellen, etc. A number are back from the Coast and in that contingent are Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein.

### Repatriated Musicomedians

Then, too, there are repatriated musical comedy figures who have abandoned Hollywood, for the time being at least, and who have developed a managerial bent. Heading that list are Lew Brown and Buddy De Sylva, who respectively, have 'Yokel Boy' and 'DuBarry Was a Lady' on the Broadway boards. They were formerly associated with Ray Henderson as a writing trio, but reappear as individual producers, staging the works of other writers. The De Sylva, Brown and Henderson combo formerly delivered shows for Ziegfeld and George White. The 'Scandals' producer, too, recently came back from the Coast. Henderson is also scheduled to present a musical on Broadway this season.

Familiar revue titles are again appearing on Broadway. The latest 'Scandals' has shown and is now on tour. The Shuberts have the rights to the Ziegfeld 'Follies' and another such edition is listed soon. Due, too, is 'Vanities,' which Earl Carroll is fashioning on the Coast from a combination of his night club floor shows. Time was when Broadway had that trio of girl shows running concurrently and drawing huge grosses.

### Revue Clicking

Although the type of revues which cost a fortune have disappeared, that form of musical survives rather lustily, but designed more for laughing-provoking rather than to present beauty and costume parades. Current examples are 'Hellzapoppin,' 'Streets of Paris' and 'Scandals.' Europe formerly supplied dazzling effects and rich draperies for the competing revues. It is quite different now, as for instance, with 'Hellzapoppin,' the most profitable revue in a decade.

The show was devised by Olsen and Johnson and was 'dolled up' with settings and costumes from at least half a dozen one-time Shubert shows. None connected with the managerial end had any idea of the show's possibilities and the intention was to present it as vaudeville. Equity ruled against that idea and in so doing laid a prize plum in the laps of the Shuberts and O. and J. For months 'Hellz,' despite slaps from the majority of reviewers, topped everything on Broadway, with takings well over \$30,000 weekly. In its second season the revue is faring plenty okay and should run into the spring period, if not longer. Harry Kaufman is the motivating factor in the Shubert-O. and J. setup and he, too, has figured prominently in the Shuberts' versions of the 'Follies.'

Only time any real coin was expended on 'Hellz' was in the new edition which debuted early in December, but without changing the cast, which is composed chiefly of vaudevillians. The guffaw content is as strong as in the first show. Olsen and Johnson decided to

combine with the Shuberts on 'Paris' and the comedy end was strongly emphasized here also with the result that it, too, is on the right side of the ledger. 'Scandals' is strongly on the comedy side and so is the much more costly 'DuBarry.' Patronage of such attractions clearly indicates that the preponderance of theatre-goers want to laugh. This is so anent straight shows, particularly this season when the comedies are by far favored over dramas—the laugh shows providing surcease from the war reports.

### Book Musicals Most Popular

Book musicals, or so-called musical comedies, however, have the distinct call among producers and the public. This does not include operetta especially, for book writers of such shows have found it difficult to inject enough hilarity to satisfy average audiences.

Proving the trend at this time are the hits which top the musicals—'Too Many Girls' and 'DuBarry.' On the road the best musical grosser is 'Leave It to Me,' which drew the highest money on Broadway last season. Even in the hey-day of revues, such book musicals as 'Show Boat' and 'Rose Marie' cleaned up, though both were more nearly of the operetta type. As for intimate book musicals, such attractions seem to be lost sight of, but there is no reason why a new cycle of the kind could not develop.

The Shuberts have been specialists in musicals, being much better in that field to a greater extent than with straight plays, with which they appear to have had small success. Most of their theatres are tenanted with dramatic productions of other managers. When the Winter Garden was as popular as the New Amsterdam, the Shuberts clicked successfully with 'Passing Shows' and other revue labels time after time, but when revues lost favor for a time, the house was leased out to pictures (Warners). Until 'Hellzapoppin' came along the house was variously scheduled to be turned into a theatre cabaret.

### Prolific Shuberts

Shuberts are again the most prolific of musical show producers, even though Lee and J. J. go their separate ways as to the type of presentation. Former is right with 'Hellz' and the resultant 'Paris,' with another revue on tap. J. J. has 'Three After Three' and the musical version

There is far less tramping territory at present than in the past and it is a long chance that the road will ever approximate the playing time that was open a generation ago. Yet money is still to be made, not only in the keys but also in the sticks with the right type of attractions, especially with name leads. This has been proven many times and was emphasized again this season when attractions with stars drew grosses, even at try-outs, that equalled if not topped the takings registered by them with the same shows on Broadway.

As the number of productions dwindled in the past 10 years, the amount of road bookings was constricted. Difficulties in effecting jumps and added costs of touring resulted in some showmen declaring themselves off the road entirely, producing only for New York. In some instances, the refusal of better known players to leave town was insurmountable, but the present willingness of leads to troupe has brought about a partial revival, at least, of booking office activity. Currently there are more shows on the road than for several years.

However, it's a far cry from the 'good old days.' Veteran showmen readily admit that it was on the road that the real coin in show business was made. Hits on Broadway may have earned big enough profits, but out in the sticks young fortunes were gleaned. Conservatively stated that the earnings from touring some hits were 200% more than the original run in the metropolis, meaning that the earnings from out of town doubled the total in New York.

The past season or so saw several run shows duplicated for the road, but not in the same measure as formerly. In the present day three companies on tour are regarded as a high number, whereas main stem hits of other seasons resulted in sending out as many as six road shows. The obvious answer is there are fewer available bookings.

### Auditoriums Help

The development of auditorium bookings has helped major attractions and incredible grosses are re-

corded here and there. Picture interests have been blamed for shutting out stage shows in innumerable stands, but every now and then local managements have expressed willingness to accept road shows as a change of pace, principally in answer to the demands of patrons. It is indicated there will be more stands available from now on, but such bookings cannot be made unless there are more productions.

Perhaps the most prolific single showman for the road was A. H. (Al) Woods. At the peak of his managerial career he had 23 attractions operating at the same time. Some were on Broadway, but most of his shows were on the road. He made so much money that at times he wearied of the theatre and suddenly disappeared. Often his brother, the late Martin Herman, a genius at efficient, compact organization, would not know where Woods was until receiving a cablegram from London. Woods liked to walk to his Eltinge theatre of an evening, saunter down to the Chelsea docks and board a liner with nothing but a toothbrush for baggage. Not infrequently he would be accompanied by a pal, who had the same amount of luggage, yet a week or so later both were seen in Piccadilly sporting top hats. Up until the world war's outbreak, Woods still gloried in those jaunts.

### A. H. Woods' Big Season

The big season in Woods' managerial activity saw his banner over the billing of six companies of 'Within the Law' (presented by the Selwyns, but Woods had a one-third interest and his name was coupled with them on the road). That same season he also had on tour a half dozen companies of 'Madame Sherry' and, when he was on high, the profit on a single week was \$30,000. Many of the road shows were out two or three years.

Among the notable Woods successes that cleaned up on tour were the farce comedies. All were laugh providers, but some were noted for their come-on titles, such as 'Getting Gertie's Garter,' six companies; 'Up in Mable's Room,' five companies; 'The Girl From Rectors,' five companies; 'The Girl in the Taxi,' four companies. His top laugh shows were 'Potash and Perlmutter,' of which there was a series, four companies being sent on the road at a time.

### 'Mary Dugan's' Profit

Woods, who was a symbol of road activities, did not confine himself to

laugh shows, for previously and after such attractions his forte was melodrama. Probably the standout was 'The Trial of Mary Dugan,' which demonstrates how the road turned in more money than Broadway. There were six troupes of 'Mary Dugan,' which set a style in stage murder trials. Show made \$750,000. Of that sum \$250,000 was earned during the run at the National, N. Y., the balance being the road profit. The same Woods, when he was specializing in melodrama, had 19 such attractions on the Stair & Haviland Circuit in a single year. That string of houses offered shows at pop prices, but all those theatres have disappeared, or were turned over to pictures.

There were other managers whose fame was known to the road and who approached Woods' mark in numbers of touring troupes. Included were William A. Brady, who always claimed that the real money earned in show business came from the road. Cohan and Harris were similarly active and all such offices had long retinues of company managers and advance men, now called press agents. Some had their own scenic and production shops.

Klaw & Erlanger, the Shuberts and those mentioned maintained not only shops, but also warehouses. Only recently have showmen abandoned the idea of storing the settings, props and furniture. Warehouses have been dismantled, for, with the decline of the road, it was realized that old production stuff is virtually worthless and the amount realized from selling such material did not bring back the cost of storage. Example of that was had when Flo Ziegfeld's storehouse was emptied. In recent seasons, managers have left the productions on the stage at the last stand, or ordered the settings hauled out and burned.

### 'Abie's' Big Record

What the road that was really meant could not be better demonstrated than by the success of 'Abie's Irish Rose,' which had six companies on tour during most of the time the original show played Broadway. It made run records in almost every stand played, without the benefit of booking office aid. The Anne Nichols office refused to be dictated to by the booking agents, and proved it did not need such service. In many cities and towns, theatres were rented outright and 'Abie' came in remaining long than any show locally presented.

It made little difference what type of house was obtained, so strong a hold on the public did 'Abie' have—darkened burlesque theatres were dusted off and painted up, or picture houses, which were not doing well enough, resounded to the laughter provided by Miss Nichols' comedy classic. 'Abie' made \$5,000,000 and there again, it is known, most of the profit came from the road.

Tent shows meant little to the resident of the keys, but there were instances when they were used when the managerial end was at odds with the dominant booking heads. Sarah Bernhardt appeared under canvas successfully and there again the so-called 'syndicate' (Klaw & Erlanger) was defeated.

### 'Nanette's' Pre-B'way Million

It is claimed that 'No. No. Nanette,' which made the late Harry Frazee independently wealthy (he, too, liked to vacation in Europe), earned \$1,000,000 before it came to Broadway (at the Globe). That musical played Chicago for a solid year prior to New York and five companies were on tour. Manager always claimed that he kept the show out to fix it up and when it finally did come to town there was a new song, 'Tea for Two,' that was credited with stamping it a success in the metropolis.

Even now shows can be successful without the Broadway stamp, as instanced by 'My Dear Children,' which has been running in Chicago for more than half a year. Unusual performance of its star, John Barrymore, however, is doubtless the primary factor in that run and it will probably be true when the play reaches America's show center.

The sticks are also currently highly profitable for 'Tobacco Road.' Drama is just about getting by on Broadway, but two touring companies are sending in excellent profit checks weekly. In some spots the touring companies of 'Road' are grossing four times that of the company in New York.



**KATHARINE CORNELL and GUTHRIE McCLINTIC**  
IN THEIR BEEKMAN PLACE STUDY, NEW YORK CITY



# LEGIT'S COMEBACK

By Jack Pulaski

When some of the better-known managers started fading during the last decade, at least so far as putting on hits was concerned, and Broadway plus the road steadily folded up, the word went around that legit was through. But fortunately the crier-downers were correct only comparatively. Some of the most powerful managements went into bankruptcy, notably the Shuberts, at least half of Broadway's theatres bounced back to the first-mortgage holders—the banks—and still the show went on.

It has been definitely proved that hit-making is not a lost art. Certainly the feat is not as easily performed as before. There is far less production, fewer successful dramatists, fewer showmen, fewer theatre patrons—yet enough to pack 'em in if real diversion is offered.

After the New York World's Fair was assured, managers and actors perked up. The build-up of expectancy was equaled by the let-down of disappointment during the first month of the great expo. At the time Broadway offered high class theatre fare with three of the top-ranking femme stars appearing—Katharine Hepburn ('Philadelphia Story'), Katharine Cornell ('No Time for Comedy') and Tullulah Bankhead ('The Little Foxes'). During last May, when a number of productions were chased to the showers, the shows in which that trio (alluded to as Three Little Maids, because of the 'Mikado' vogue) appeared not only stayed, but played through the summer, two still being current.

The Fair proved Broadway's strongest opposition in its first month, yet during the early fall it certainly helped attendance. The last month of the Fair was widely publicized and there was a rush to town by countless thousands, the expo turnstiles going to new highs. During September Broadway grosses started building to the surprise of showmen, and it was realized that theatres were getting patronage from a percentage of visitors.

Through October business in legit spots continued on the upturn, the arrival of new successes geared the theatre surge. Within a short time four big money presentations reached the boards and several additional good things entered the list. The sustained high grosses of those attractions supply tangible evidence that people will attend theatres if offered the proper lure. At this mid-season mark it is not clear whether the season will top last year in the number of successes, nor the amount of production, but so far the hit score is promising.

## Sunday Shows Killed

Last spring, when show business was so hopeful that the Fair would be a bonanza to Broadway, the matter of Sunday performances again arose. It was conceded that the Sabbath was okay for the Fair and proposals for a seven-day town in New York were at first favorably received. Equity, which had blocked such performances, by putting an impost of double pay—followed by the stagehands—agreed that the idea should be tried. Again Broadway was denied. The stagehands who went to Albany in favor of Sundays, killed Sundays this time. At a conference expected to give the nod for Sundays, even for the duration of the Fair, the stagehands flatly voted no, saying that Equity was trying to dictate to show business.

For months a movement to heal the breach between Hollywood and Broadway, in reference to financing legit production, attracted attention in show business and that effort ended in a fizzle, too. The return of picture money was looked forward to speed up production. Revision of the Dramatists Guild pact were laboriously worked out and when everything was seemingly set, the authors made revisions on their own, and all but one film firm (Warners) declared off backing shows. With the picture people disowning the 'agreement,' Broadway also gave it a brush-off and the hoped-for spurt in production has not developed. Crack producers came in with early clicks this fall and a house shortage was anticipated, especially for musicals but the inevitable flop percentage quickly corrected the situation.

Business started slowing up last April and several musicals with a \$4.40 top promptly cut to \$3.30. That caused a short-lived move to chop straight plays to \$2.20. There was no Easter increase, but during June attendance did perk up materially. In the meantime there were unexpected

casualties. During the first three months of May, 12 shows dropped off the list. Three announced the intention of resuming later but only one actually relighted, then to little purpose ('Leave It to Me' which later went on tour and has been faring excellently).

## WPA's Demise

The collapse of WPA's Federal Theatre project came early in the summer and the disposition of many professionals with the relief stage outfit has not yet been solved. Indications that Washington's legislators were riled over phases of relief were cumulative. Three months after the first of the year, when the project was ordered to cut down, and FTP came under real fire starting in April. It was charged that the project was rife with waste and extravagance, but the real complaint was radicalism. The House voted the relief theatre out of existence. The Senate attempted to save the project but the lower body was adamant and the President signed the death-warrant against his will rather than scrap the whole appropriation bill.

There are new measures to revive the FTP but strictly along professional lines (there were charges of amateurism in FTP). There is also a pending measure for a national theatre which may come up before the new session of congress. WPA theatres stopped abruptly on July 1. Pay was made to some actors up to the end of that month, others being retained until Aug. 31. By the end of September, FTP was washed up.

Too much attention was drawn to FTP and Washington got plenty of information, also mis-information. Government was charged with hindering the commercial theatre when 'Swing Mikado' started and 'Hot Mikado' opposed it when the former came to Broadway. The 'Hot' version went into the red but eventually pulled out with a hearty profit at the Fair.

## Ticket Code

The ticket code, with the League of New York Theatres and Equity teamed to effect a system to control high prices and other ticket evils, was again a bone of contention. To keep Equity from making new rules which could affect producing, a revised set of regulations was adopted during the fall. Several leading agencies signed the new code but at the last minute a flock of brokers objected and at this time are contesting the new rules and the right to enforce them. One outside agency contested the code last spring but the court ruled it out of order. Charged that there was wide gyping, and it was stated that no less than 18 agencies were violating the rules on one way or another.

A controversial issue arose in Equity immediately after the code was agreed on. It is the raising of minimum pay from \$40 to \$50. There is a wide diversity of opinion over the matter. After it was agreed on at one council session, a following huddle reversed the resolution, and it is now before a committee for further consideration. A membership meeting favored the idea, but not enough players were present to indicate a true cross-section of sentiment. The proposed boost would not be effective until next season, if voted in, since the pact which accompanies the code stipulates that no new rules shall be made effective until then.

Theatrical Managers, Agents and Treasurers union boiled within during most of the year up until the annual election. The indicated strife between the various groups became an actuality. After the election the treasurers decided they would do on their own, walking out and becoming affiliated with the stagehands, whose international granted the box-office people a charter. A new agreement between TMAT and the managers was signed anyhow, and later the treasurers entered into a pact with the showmen, too, a pay raise from \$75 to \$80 being granted, and a similar boost being dated for next season. Assistants get the same, over a \$50 rate that was effective last season. Matter of jurisdiction over the treasurers, however, has not been determined, TMAT having protested to the American Federation of Labor, complaint still pending.

## 1938-39 Okay Season

Season of 1938-39 held its own productively over the previous season, 80 new shows being presented, one

more than 1937-38. There were 10 hits and five moderate successes, failures numbering 65. Up to the approach of the Fair's start, business was consistently better. Amount of money paid for picture rights was much higher than the previous season.

John Anderson of the Journal won VARIETY's annual box score with a percentage of .849; Richard Watts, Jr., of the Herald Tribune was second with .824; Robert Coleman, third with .822, and Sidney Whipple, fourth with .812. The percentages were fairly good, but in most instances the critics' correct predictions over their wrong estimates of shows slumped from the previous season.

## 'Hellzapoppin' No. 1 Success

The outstanding success of the year was 'Hellzapoppin,' which is still playing. Most costly production was 'The American Way,' a patriotic spectacle drama which topped the list at the Center for weeks, but succumbed to the Fair. Though it relighted, the show did not earn back the cost of production, but the sale of the picture rights took it out of the red.

There were 10 possibilities picked among plays tried out in the summer show shops. One is 'Life with Father,' easily the best play ever presented in the sticks. It is this season's straight show topper along with 'The Man Who Came to Dinner.'

## Year's Obits

Obits during the year: Robert L. Hague, March 3; he was the husband of Mary Lewis and the angel of the Lambs club. Frank V. Storrs (Strauss), publisher of programs in Broadway theatres, died March 8. George Mooser, formerly connected with Oliver Morosco, died May 4. U. J. (Sport) Hermann, Chicago showman, died July 20. He conducted the Cort there for many years and was associated with the late Harry Frazee in a number of show ventures. Ed (Bull) Giroux, formerly with the Ringling show and long manager of the Morosco, N. Y., died Aug. 30. Fay Templeton, of the musical comedy stage, died Oct. 3.

# B'WAY LEGIT SANS A SLOGAN

Two seasons ago, when there was a flurry of plays about religion or the hereafter, a wisecrack heard frequently in the Broadway grog shops was that the playwrights had discovered God. Last season, when such patriotic pieces as 'Abe Lincoln in Illinois' and 'The American Way' appeared, it was remarked that the dramatists had discovered America.

This season the trend-discoverers have had tougher times. For a while during the early autumn, when business was booming indiscriminately and all shows were making money, the sages brought their comment up to date by saying that the playwrights had discovered the box-office. But the boom faded, plays once more opened and closed in short order, and the wisecrack no longer applied.

Actually, if the season has been notable for anything it's the fact that there's been no perceptible trend in the type of plays presented. There have been pretty much the usual assortment of dramas, comedies, musical comedies and revues on a wide variety of subjects. During that lush boxoffice period last fall there was an extraordinarily high percentage of hits, but recent weeks have brought a surge of flops, and the normal season average has about returned.

There have been the usual crop of works by established dramatists, some successful and others failures. And there have been the customary lineup of plays by lesser known or unknown authors, also with the normal average of success.

Although it is still too early for the annual guessing sweepstakes to predict what plays will win the Pulitzer and Critics Circle prizes, there are already several shows that might have a chance, such as 'Key Largo,' 'Life with Father,' 'The Man Who Came to Dinner' and 'The Time of Your Life.' No eligible work has yet appeared that might win the Sidney Howard memorial prize for the best first play of the season.

# ZIEGFELD GIRLIANA

By Bernard Sobel

(Florenz Ziegfeld's Last Publicity Director)

Though life is filled these days with war, crisis and doubt, champions of the theatre strive valiantly to carry on. And in this perseverance, hope of the future flourishes, together with courage and inspiration. Certainly, this is true of the glorified Ziegfeld girl tradition. In spite of the present emergency, the beauties of the Follies series continue in their endeavor to embellish the stage, screen, social and civic life while striving, simultaneously, to aid their sisters in distress.

Since those early days when Ziegfeld glorified the chorister until she became as dazzling as his stars, the Ziegfeld girl has always distinguished herself. From her ranks, the new art of the motion picture drew its first talent, the early stars including Olive Thomas, Marion Davies, Martha Mansfield and Billie Dove. Some of these have passed away and Miss Davies, the last to remain prominent, is gradually fading out of the cinema.

New girls, however, have come along, to take their place and to contribute to the more difficult demands of the talkers. Of these Paulette Goddard is the most promising. She started her career as a dancer in the Follies and was a member of the company which appeared at Palm Beach. Not long after that she appeared in the enviable role as lead, opposite Charlie Chaplin, in 'Modern Times.' Recently she scored a hit in Metro's, 'The Women,' her success being followed by a feature role in 'The Cat and the Canary' and important contracts rich in artistic possibilities.

Other Ziegfeld girls who have appeared importantly in the films have been Mildred Lunnay, Claudia Dell and Suzanne Fleming, the latter now Mrs. Harpo Marx.

## Stars

Among the Ziegfeld girls who were stars of the original productions can be counted some of the most distinguished theatrical celebrities of the present-day stage and screen. Fannie Brice's comedy still delights millions and soon a film is to be produced covering her life history. Also, as 'Baby Snooks,' she is a radio favorite. Sophie Tucker is one of the stars of 'Leave It to Me.' Ina Claire is one of the foremost comedienne of the American stage and Vivienne Segal a musical comedy and radio star.

Famous, too, are Norma Terris, Harriet Hootor and Gladys Glad, wife of Mark Hellinger, motion picture producer, columnist and author. The achievements of other Ziegfeld girls have been highly varied. Dorothy Wegman is the author of a novel about Follies life entitled 'Glorified.' She is the wife of playwright Samson Raphaelson.

Mary Alice Rice went from the musical stage to the legitimate and appeared in a prominent part in 'Pride and Prejudice.'

In the producing field, Peggy Fears astonished Broadway by presenting the patrician musical, worthy of Ziegfeld, 'Music in the Air' by Kern and Hammerstein. Miss Fears has also appeared as a screen and night club artist.

Dorothy Dickerson was a prima donna with the Berlin Grand Opera Co. and appeared recently with the Chicago Opera Co. at the Hippodrome.

Mary Lewis was one of the stars of the Metropolitan Opera.

Helen Morgan became, after her sensational success in 'Show Boat,' the star of 'Sweet Adeline' and one of the outstanding musical and nightclub favorites of the era.

Betty MacDonald wrote a book called 'The Ziegfeld Girl,' and has done a number of feature pieces.

Caryl Bergman, understudy to Marilyn Miller, appeared as the lead in a revival of 'Sally.'

## Other Activities

Marie Lambert is now a supervisor of music in New York high schools. Rosie (Keno and) Green, original Ziegfeld beauty, is the mother of the talented young stage star, Mitzi Green.

Gypsy Rose Lee is a stage and screen star.

Louise Andrews is the wife of humorist Arthur ('Bugs') Baer.

Lorelle McCarver is the wife of William Randolph Hearst, Jr.

Marie Stevens is Mrs. Billy Collier, Jr.

Gertrude Vanderbilt is a member of the staff of R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co.

Margo Nugent, now Mrs. Harvey d'Albert, does interior decorating and writes 'cruise' directories which

give location of shops, prices, etc., at various ports of call.

Diana Lanzetta each year stages a complete show for a Democratic club. She was formerly president of the National Democratic Women's Club.

Madeline Dunbar, now Mrs. Victor Lehman, sings on the radio and does wonderful sketches of people or objects.

Leota Lane is an opera singer. Berenice Ackerman is a portrait painter with a N. Y. studio at 200 West 57th. She sings also on radio programs.

Barbara Joyner is now Mrs. George K. Parsons; he's a stock broker. She is president of the local Mu Phi Epsilon Sorority and one of the heads of the New York Texans, a society similar to the Texas Society of New York.

## Eatery, Hoofery, Really

Irene and Cora Stephens are proprietors of The Whirling Top, East 52d street restaurant. Another Follies girl, Marie Marceline, works for them.

Anita Rice (Mrs. Herman Yorks) conducts her own dancing school at Long Beach, N. Y.

Mildred Darling, now Mrs. Benjamin Berg, sells real estate in Yonkers, N. Y.

Vivian Vernon, now Mrs. James R. Cherry, Jr., advertising and promotion work for a Madison Avenue dress shop.

Lina Basquette has appeared in pictures and as a vaudeville headliner.

Anastasia Riley married Mr. Ziegfeld's nephew, T. B. Buell.

Jacqueline Logan was a picture star and now writes scenarios and produces plays.

Virginia Bruce is a Metro star.

Claire Dodd also a picture star. Blanche Satchell recently married a Washington notable.

Claire Luce has gained distinction as an international legit star; most recently she won high critical praise for her work in 'Mice and Men.'

Frieda Mierse recently divorced Ed Wynn.

Georgia Ellis has a swank Park Avenue hat shop.

Marcelle Edwards married J. Carlisle, socially prominent. Joy Lynne is the wife of agent Sam Lyons.

June Knight has been a musical comedy and motion picture star here and in London.

Dorothy Dell was killed in an accident, soon after she became a cinema star.

Pauline Mason married Skeets Gallagher.

Barbara Pepper is a motion picture principal.

The Ziegfeld girl has been celebrated in 'Show Girl' by J. P. McEvoy; in my own book, 'Indiscreet Girl'; and in the Metro picture, 'The Great Ziegfeld,' by William Anthony McGuire. A new picture called 'The Ziegfeld Girl' is due soon. The name, 'Ziegfeld Follies' has been retained, by arrangement with Miss Billie Burke for the current Shubert revue. Nicky Blair, who married the Ziegfeld girl, Joan Burgess, has revived the name, 'Midnight Frolic,' for his new night club.

Almost five years ago was organized the Ziegfeld Club, Inc., a social and philanthropic organization in tribute to the memory of the great showman. The club gives annual balls and benefits and has already announced its plans for this year's function at the Waldorf-Astoria.

On the various programs of these balls, the stars have included J. Harold Murray, Norma Terris, Ann Pennington, Sophie Tucker, Mary Lewis, Ada May, Jack Norworth, Bert Wheeler and Jack Pearl. The present officers of the Ziegfeld Club are Gladys Feldman Braham, pres.; Neva Lynne, Diana Lanzetta, Anita Rice Yorks, v.p.'s; Beryl Halley Falkenhainer, sec.; Kathryn Dix, treas.; Helen Gates, recording sec.

# JACOBS PICKING CAST FOR COAST 'DINNER'

Los Angeles, Jan. 1.

Morris Jacobs starts picking the cast this week for the Coast production of 'The Man Who Came to Dinner,' slated to open at the Biltmore here Feb. 12 after a break-in at Santa Barbara three days before.

Booking calls for three weeks in L. A., six weeks in San Francisco and a tour of the West Coast.



## Five Indie Brokers In Boston Sue Shuberts, Charging Ticket Monopoly

Boston, Jan. 1.

Five indie ticket brokers have filed a bill in equity against the Shubert Holding Co. and others in Superior Court here. It is expected to bring to a head a gripe of several months' standing in the ticket-selling fraternity since the Shuberts took over Herrick's agency.

Frank B. Foster (Tyson's), Thomas M. Murphy (United Ticket Agency), Ben E. Cashin (Parker House agency), Mary Roman (Hotel Touraine agency), and Chester Seibert (Ritz-Carlton) are charging the Shubert 'combine' with 'creating a monopoly' in the business of ticket resales, 'restraining the supply and price,' and 'restraining free rivalry of the plaintiffs.' It is also charged that the general public is prejudiced because they do not have free access to (good) tickets at the boxoffices and that the policy of Herrick's is in violation of the laws of the General Court of Massachusetts.

Laws alluded to stipulate that no more than 50c premium shall be charged in the resale of a theatre ticket in this state; latter law also refers to monopoly and restraint of trade within the Commonwealth.

Herrick agency has been getting first choice of seats at Shubert houses (usually first 12 to 15 rows in the orchestra on hit shows); has been getting 75c. premium on the re-sale; has been getting 25c. premium on tickets going to other agencies, with the stipulation that the indie agencies also charge 75c.

Defendants in the action include Boston Plymouth Corp. (Plymouth theatre), Wilbur Theatre, Inc. (Majestic theatre), Select Theatres Corp. (Shuberts), and Herrick's, Inc. It is charged that all the defendants are controlled by Select Theatres Corp., that they are dominated by Select and have been acting in concert to control the resale of theatre tickets and thus create a monopoly. The Shuberts control 90 per cent of all legitimate theatres in Boston, the suit further alleges.

Nathan Fink is attorney for the plaintiffs and a preliminary hearing is scheduled for Wednesday (3) in the Equity Motions Session before Judge Greenhalge.

## ABBOTT ASKS REWRITE OF 'THE UNCONQUERED'

George Abbott has assigned author Ayn Rand to completely rewrite 'The Unconquered', which he opened and closed in Baltimore last week. Indications are that he will take another shot at producing the show in the spring if the Finnish-Soviet war and other world events still make it topical. It will be recast. Abbott ordered all but one set put in the storehouse. The one left in Baltimore is for the last scene, which will be written out.

Howard Freeman, who was injured in a 15-foot fall from his dressing room just before the first curtain went up last week, was returned from the Maryland General Hospital in Balto to N. Y. Saturday (30). Paralysis which he suffered after the fall was found to be only temporary and the fears that he fractured his spine or pelvis proved groundless.

## Chi Ams to Do 'Children's Hour,' Once Banned There

Chicago, Jan. 1.

'Children's Hour,' the Lillian Hellman play which Mayor Kelly prohibited from showing here some years ago in the professional theatre, will show here under amateur auspices by the Actors Co. of Chicago.

Minne Galatzer, founder of the group, will direct the show, which will open Jan. 12, suspend, and play three more nights starting Jan. 19.

## ATS' Chi Bookings

Chicago, Jan. 1.

Thoda Cocroft, American Theatre Society rep here, returned to town last week after eastern confabs to set remainder of subscription plays for the season.

Coming are 'Little Foxes', which is figured to be the first in on the new year, followed by 'Time of Your Life' and a possibility of 'Philadelphia story'.

## Grombach Wants to Star Helen Gahagan, Douglas

Jean V. Grombach is dickering with Melvyn Douglas and Helen Gahagan to co-star in his and Ethel Park Richardson's 'Bishop's Wife', a dramatization of the novel by Robert Nathan. He hopes to do it in the spring. They discussed it during the recent visit of Douglas and Miss Gahagan (Mrs. Douglas) in New York, but nothing is set.

Grombach, a radio producer and transcription maker, last season was associated with the production of the J. B. Priestley play, 'Time and the Conways'. Miss Richardson is a radio writer.

## PORTERFIELD'S PLAN

Va. State Theatre—Meantime Buying Va. Hams to Pay Royalties

Lynchburg, Jan. 1.

Swapping Virginia ham for Broadway art may become another southern custom if a plan simmering with Bob Porterfield jells. The bartering barnstormer, who makes his customers check their vegetables at the boxoffice instead of tossing them at the stage, is trying to interest the commonwealth in backing a state theatre. He wants to make it a permanent organization, with two troupes in strategic cities. His argument is that it would be another tourist attraction.

Virginia has enough historical shrines, he says, but it doesn't give the tourist enough 'after-dark' entertainment. He favors state backing, but not state subsidization. Gave out his views while shopping this week for another supply of Virginia hams with which to pay royalties on the current season's plays.

He sent a ham as royalty to George Bernard Shaw, a vegetarian.

## Future Plays

'Hidden Bands,' a satiric comedy by Harry Thompson, is slated as a possible February entry. Shirley Hector will produce and Eberhardt Krumschmidt directs.

## Paging A Swami

Producers of a show, which has been a big hit in a mid-western key spots for months, wired their agent as follows, before production was about to pull out for a few road weeks prior to descending on New York: 'Try to arrange for capacity biz in all intervening keys. We will be satisfied with nothing less.'

## 'HENRY' HAVING MONEY TROUBLE

Following the fast flop of 'Swingin' The Dream' at the Center N. Y., it has developed that other colored cast shows are running into difficulties. Danger signal was sounded by the management of 'John Henry' in Boston last week and there was doubt that the attraction will play out the second week. 'Henry', which is widely publicized on Broadway as coming to the 44th Street next week, has Paul Robeson in the lead. It was produced by Sam Byrd, actor-manager, who could not be with the show, being in the cast of 'The Man Who Killed Lincoln', which opened out of town last week.

It appears that the troubles of 'Henry' were augmented by a booking mistake which spotted 'Mamba's Daughters', colored cast drama, in Boston at the same time. Business for both was away under expectations. Equity was asked to permit 'Henry' to lay off this week because takings were off. Byrd's representative feeling that the first week in New York would be strong, what with several party sell-outs and the premiere. Permission was denied. Equity saying that if the show did not play, the players must be paid in full. There would be no salary liability if 'Henry' closes, but an eight-week interval is required by Equity before relighting. Reported the financial trouble was finally adjusted.

A mixed cast show, 'Caribbean Cruise', has been rehearsing in New York for more than the usual period and players are now supposed to be on full pay. 'Cruise' was announced for the Bayes theatre early last month and is now mentioned to open at Daly's 63rd Street sometime this week.

## FIRST NIGHT FANFARE

By Hobe Morrison

Maybe it's the Hollywood influence. But whatever the reason, Broadway first-nights seem to be growing, if not phonier, at least much gaudier. Still, they continue to call them 'openings,' rather than 'premieres,' as in the film colony.

But ultimately they'll probably follow Hollywood tradition and erect grandstands in 52nd street and 45th street opposite the Guild theatre or the Music Box, so the yokels can watch the celebrities arrive. About that time it'll be worth one's social or professional standing to stay away, and they'll doubtless have microphones in the lobby for converging big-wigs, including notable actors, playwrights and producers—possibly even the Harrison Williamses, the Jules Brulatours and Mrs. Katzenberg—to say a few words to the radio audience. In a word, it'll be colossal.

Strange thing about the growing tendency toward fuss and feathers at first-nights—nobody directly concerned (except possibly the producer of that specific show, who considers it good prestige to have a 'dressy opening') really likes it, and in many instances the to-do is a distinct inconvenience and source of annoyance. There's certainly little doubt that the uproar sometimes seriously mars the effectiveness of the opening night performance.

However, Broadway first-nights have definitely become 'news' to the society and feature editors, so there are nearly always at least a few photographers on hand, plus special writers to describe for the news services the gowns worn by the visiting Hollywood star and Mrs. Whatsis, of Park avenue. That accentuates the growing trend of the 'first-night crowd' to be seen in the finest duds. It also swells the already-growing swarm of autograph hounds that descend on every opening, to rush at arriving taxicabs, crowd around the theatre entrances to impede playgoers and generally become a nuisance.

In some cases the obvious eagerness of 'celebrities' to get into the papers, or maybe just to draw attention, is rather pathetic. At the opening of 'Foreigners,' for instance, when the theatre was almost mobbed inside and out by photographers who rushed about, elbowing ordinary playgoers and popping flashlight bulbs up and down the aisles, one frequently-publicized couple were plainly ignored by the newspaper and news service cameramen. But as they entered the theatre a photographer who had manifestly been waiting there for just that purpose, came forward and snapped their picture. He then disappeared without bothering to photograph anyone else. Apparently the husband had arranged it to please his wife, who's a sucker for publicity. Of course the picture never appeared in any of the papers.

All this built-up excitement tends to increase one of the most objectionable phases of 'first-nightism.' That is the growing habit of the 'first-night crowd' to come late. Although opening night dinner parties are blamed for much of the tardiness (and the comparative alcoholic content of the late-comers) the trouble is probably much deeper than that. There's apparently some relation between the must-be-seen-in-the-right-places mentality and the social correctness of arriving late. So at the more fashionable openings people are gradually coming later and later, while the joyful greetings across the darkened auditorium are more and more usual ('common' is certainly not the right word). Some managements try to discourage first-night tardiness by refusing to seat late-comers during scenes, but that doesn't work satisfactorily because those waiting in the rear of the theatre become noisy.

## Even the Press

If photographers, autograph hounds and white ties are becoming more numerous at first nights, so are newspapermen. Although there are fewer dailies in New York than there were some years ago, the first-night press list has grown considerably. Reason is that nearly all the papers have at least one columnist and are likely to have a few feature writers and assorted editors who want to cover the openings. Few of them will accept second-night tickets, although the second-night list has also grown enormously in recent seasons through the addition of numerous magazine representatives.

But of all the toney manifestations of modern first-nights, possibly the most outstanding is the activity of the 'bravo' boys. Dating from the

(Continued on page 162)



Holiday Greetings from  
**ALFRED LUNT and LYNN FONTANNE**  
AND COMPANY

Now on tour in "THE TAMING OF THE SHREW"

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## BERT FEIBLEMAN, VET B'WAY MGR., DEAD

Bert L. Feibleman, 64, who died at the Polyclinic hospital, N. Y., Thursday (28), was unobtrusive, but very well known formerly on Broadway. Although he was company manager for a number of hit productions, he was principally a legit house manager. During the partnership of George M. Cohan and Sam H. Harris, Feibleman was an important though not well defined member of the organization, regarded as Harris' personal representative. After the firm split, however, he became more closely aligned with Cohan.

They frequently went abroad together, Feibleman always making the arrangements for such trips. He made it a point to spend the summers in Paris and found time to cruise around the world. After Cohan and Harris separated, Feibleman became manager of the Belasco, N. Y. Previously he handled the Astor. He was past exalted ruler of the Elks, Indianapolis lodge, one of the oldest members of the Lambs club and belonged to the Jewish and Catholic Actors Guilds.

## 'Salute' to B'way

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

Ralph Spence has completed rewrite of the 'Salute to Spring,' musical comedy given tryout at St. Louis Municipal theatre year ago, and it will be produced on Broadway by Dwight Deere Wiman.

Alfred Schiller collaborated with Spence. Lyrics are by Earl Crooker and Frederick Lowe, with latter doing the music.



# THE SPECS, FOREVER?

By Jack Pulaski

If there were no hits there would be no ticket situation. It is obvious, therefore, that if there were no successes there would be no gyping, also no show business.

That, of course, is opposed to the essential production idea such as it is. There has rarely been a season that some plan to eliminate ticket brokers has not arisen, but if and when they are wiped out there may be no more Broadway.

The whole argument about high prices of tickets seems to boil down to the axiom that the play's the thing. A free theatre, one sponsored federally or municipally, might be a solution, but that is a guess. So long as 10 times the number of people than there are seats demand to see a hit on the same night, the old law of supply and demand forges to the fore.

People with the money to spend and the yen to attend hits, those who make up their minds they must get tickets for a sock show on the day of performance, are those who make it possible for speculators to operate. Latter hold back tickets until the last minute, gambling that they are right and generally they are, because neither time nor weather are factors to those patrons who 'must see the show tonight.'

Various systems and codes have been devised to correct the evils of the ticket situation, if not to educate patrons to plan theatre-going in advance. It would seem that the majority wish to see the shows when and if they have the opportunity. Ticket control regulations may be theoretically sound in principle, but seem to be based on the idea that people must attend the theatre just as they must dine. That is where the codes are at fault, for stage entertainment is a luxury in the last analysis.

## One Wrong Theory

Some proponents of ticket control have expressed the naive thought that people who demand good tickets for the hits at the last moment, should be ignored, which is diagnosed as being just as fallacious as the supposition that people must go to the theatre. They actually argue that ignoring that definitely positive element in patronage would be helpful, say that first come first served would be better. This may apply to vaudeville theatre clientele, but it's a stretch of the imagination so far as the legitimate theatre is concerned.

Certainly there are ticket evils, there always have been and probably always will be. Managers say that the ticket brokers prey upon their property, an argument open to argument. The agency men declare they are essential to proper distribution, have developed organizations to that end, supplying a service without charge to the manager. To some extent showmen concede this contention, but their envy of reputed profits of agencies has always existed.

There was a time that the managers were declared in. Then the Government came along and pulled out the book. So when the showmen found out they owed the collector 50% of the gravy, most of them lost interest taking what formerly was the prerogative of the boxoffice.

Gratuities from the agencies to the treasurers, known as 'ice,' has been greatly reduced, in fact is supposed to have been dropped. Boxoffice pay has been upped twice in the past two seasons and, according to the basic agreement with the managers, treasurers agree to accept no 'ice.' Theatre ticket sellers are not so hot for the practice, anyhow, since the federal tax men insist that half of such coin is payable to the Government.

## New Alibi

Formerly the ticket brokers, when charged with gyping, blamed it on the 'buys' which caused them to be stuck with unsold tickets, also routine expenses, which included coin paid to showmen if not the boxoffice. With the code ruling out both those practices, the agencies have a new alibi, saying they cannot earn enough profit at selling at 75c premiums (50c in the balcony), because they cannot get enough tickets or 'merchandise,' as they prefer to call the pasteboards, to equal the overhead.

## Too Many Agencies

The answer may be that there are too many ticket agencies. Those who framed the code are aware that that

is a probable fact. Certainly the leading brokers know it to be fact. The little fellows constantly take bites at the allotments to the leading brokers by currying favor with the management or boxoffice, with the indicated result that the big brokers complain they cannot secure anywhere near as many tickets as they can dispose of.

The code, as presently revised by the managers and Equity, has enforcement features which may chase a flock of gyps out of the business and that type of gentry will not be missed. It may work. Those who framed the code say that if it is 75% effective it will be satisfactory. Safeguards against digging tickets from boxoffices are theoretically sound and, if such regulations prove effective, the source of supply depended on by unaccredited agencies, who too frequently practice over-charging, would be virtually wiped out.

Sale of tickets by agencies, however, is often highly complex and tickets have seeped into the wrong hands despite preventative rules. System used during the NRA did not work, nor did those before and afterwards. Last season, when the code went in, the ticket situation was only partially cleared up. Present revised regulations are much more stringent. Rules call for reports of daily transactions from the boxoffices and brokers, it being expected that every ticket can be traced until it reaches the hands of the patron.

When over-charging is detected and the violators punished more than heretofore, a solution to ticket evils may have been found. There are those who do not believe that the system will work except sporadically, but that is speculative until proven otherwise. Some brokers say that if last season's code had holes punched into it, the same will go now. They also aver that it is impractical, if not impossible, to follow the rules as laid down.

## Equity's Position Puzzling

Equity's position in the ticket situation puzzled some observers, who figured that the actors organization's functions should be confined to actors. Equity leaders have a different slant on the matter. They say they are interested in keeping members working as long as possible, and believe that by doing away with ticket evils a portion of theatre-goers will be weaned back to attending, which would mean longer engagements. They are interested, too, in holding down ticket prices, arguing that more people could afford to see shows thereby. Helping the possible lengthening of engagements is believed to be a rightful function of Equity, especially since the stage has been greatly constricted in the past 10 years and a high percentage of members are out of jobs.

The managers invited Equity to come in on the ticket code on the theory that it would lend moral support to the control. Also, the showmen wanted assurance that rules for actors would not be changed over a period of time. Equity answered that if ticket control was had, it would agree not to change policy—changes had been annoying the managers for several seasons. Equity's present participation in the code is definite, since it has two out of the four members on the new enforcement board.

## Other Sources of Agency Revenue

It is assumed that most agencies depend on the legit theatre, but there are likewise such ticket sources as sporting events, grand opera and other amusements. The code is strictly limited to regular stage shows and does not cover the other fields. This is a major defect, since the brokers can charge as much as the market affords for other attractions. So long as they pay 10% on the whole amounts they receive to the Government, it is okay.

An attempt was made to include all places of admission by city ordinance, which would have limited premiums to 75c. Measure was strongly supported by Equity and managers who want ticket control, on the ground that it would back up the code. New York's Mayor La Guardia, however, vetoed the bill, saying it would probably be knocked out by the courts as price fixing and therefore illegal on precedent. Possible that the city's councilmen will enact the measure over his veto, but the bill as introduced has no penalty provisions and would hardly be effective.

## Suckers For A Song

Broadway's champion musical comedy fans are believed to be 'Mr. and Mrs. Sunshine,' who attend one of the tune hits every Saturday night and occasionally during the week. They go back to see shows they like time after time, always paying for their tickets and invariably sitting in the first two rows on the aisle. 'Mr. and Mrs. Sunshine,' was given them years ago by some forgotten player who came to recognize them from the stage and they're known by the casts of all the Broadway musicals.

Edward Seward, to use his real name, is an attorney and began his long-distance theatre-going about 15 years ago. 'Mrs. Sunshine' sometimes goes to straight plays, but 'Mr. Sunshine' prefers tuners, which he explains are 'more relaxing.' He attended 'Leave It to Me' 23 or 24 times during its run at the Imperial and has seen 'Too Many Girls' about seven times since it opened at the same house 10 weeks ago. He's been to 'Streets of Paris,' at the Broadhurst, 'several' times, saw the 'Scandals,' at the Alvin, six or eight times, but 'hasn't started yet' on 'DuBarry Was a Lady,' at the 46th Street.

# Deadline Set for Indie Bookers To Sign Ticket Code, and They Threaten Suit Vs. League, Equity

When the board of the League of New York Theatres met to consider the refusal of the independent Associated Theatre Ticket Agencies to accept the revised code, its action in ordering no further allotments of tickets to the disaffected group was anticipated. ATTA brokers were given until Tuesday (2) to sign, but they will not be affected until their present stock of two weeks' tickets are disposed of.

According to Gustav A. Gerber, counsel for ATTA, if no adjustment of the complaints against the revised code restrictions are entertained by the managers and Equity, suit will be filed against them. Despite the fact that a similar proceeding (Acme agency case) was dismissed last season, it is believed that the situation now is quite changed, for the indie brokers would go into court with clean hands, which was not true of Acme, that agency having been fined for federal admissions tax violations.

It is the intention of ATTA to apply for a restraining order, also to

sue for the return of approximately \$7,000, which is the balance in the hands of the League from the ticket levy last season. They may also ask for a similar sum which the League expended for enforcement and other expenditures. Such action would be predicated on the contention that the managerial group had no right to demand and collect 3½c per ticket sold by the agencies.

## Equity Involved

Equity will be coupled in whatever legal actions are taken, but the actors' association will not be financially involved, according to the provisions of the code and the basic pact between it and the managers. Stipulated that counsel fees and other costs in case of court proceedings, which may involve Equity because of the code, are to be paid by the League. Such money would not necessarily come out of the enforcement fund, which is one complaint of the brokers—that they are paying the costs of possible prosecution.

When the ATTA was formally informed by James F. Reilly, of the League, that such brokers had been designed as unaccredited, Gerber replied to the effect that there was stigma attached to such a term, also that 'your pronouncement of outlawry upon them' would indicate that the old code is null and void. Attorney also warned that 'no overt act will be perpetrated on or before Jan. 2...will make it impossible for you to retrace your steps from the path to that conflict which you appear to be set on precipitating.' League was again asked for a conference with the brokers with the idea of changing the code, which request had been previously denied.

To correct the idea that the indie brokers would seek excess prices for tickets during the holiday period in light of their being outside the code, ATTA announced last Thursday that its broker members would ask but 50c surcharge on all lower floor tickets. That rate is supposed to apply to tickets purchased directly in the agencies, it being claimed that this price is okay, since no extra expense is involved. Patrons with charge accounts, or who have tickets delivered, will pay 75c premium per ticket, which is the code maximum. It was insisted that the 50c thing was no gag, but there were plenty of doubters.

## Gordon vs. Code

As an individual, Max Gordon appeared before Equity's council last week and declared he is not in sympathy with the code, although a member of the league. He stated that his silent partner, Marcus Heiman, president of the managerial body, is well aware of his views. Gordon averred that under the code the brokers have 'no responsibility,' since they secure what tickets they want and dump all those unsold back into the boxoffice.

Asserting that under the code rules he is being forced out of show business, he asked that an exception be made for his show, 'Very Warm for May' (Alvin, N. Y.). Gordon maintained that if buys were permitted, 'May' would be an assured success, but now there is no incentive for brokers to push the sale of tickets for any shows.

Gordon was told that the code had been adopted and nothing could be done about his suggestions at this time, although he argued it was for the benefit of Equity members that 'May' be given every opportunity to play out a lengthy engagement. Gordon had an alternative idea, which, with buys not permitted, suggested that all tickets be retained in the boxoffices. That managers of hits would agree to that plan was scouted, but with all tickets on direct sale, it is generally believed that it would be a field day for diggers sent out by gyp agencies.

## Philly's Former Op House Becomes Sports Arena

Philadelphia, Jan. 1. The Metropolitan Opera House, built in 1906 by Oscar Hammerstein to compete with the Academy of Music in opera, is now running prize-fights and pro basketball games. In recent years it has been used variously as a film house, revival auditorium, indoor circus, etc. The Met is owned by the LuLu Temple, of the Mystic Shrine.

# LEGIT STOCK'S DEBACLE

By Nat Kahn

Back in 1927 an annul that threatened the progress of the motion picture industry suddenly got a shot in the arm. The hypo was the talking film and the immediate cause of the industry's skyrocketing was Warners' 'The Jazz Singer,' starring Al Jolson. It was the first full length picture with part dialog.

Unknown at that time, however, was the effect that the talkers were later to have on other branches of show business. 'Singer' set the stage for the first all-talker a year later, Warners' 'Lights of New York.'

And therein lies the yarn of how a once integral part of theatredom, legitimate stock, was forced to throw up the gauntlet in the wake of a partial paralysis that gripped all legit for a time.

Those first days of talking pix held ominous meaning for legit. Broadway survived, although it took a terrific kick in the pants. But in the stix it was a different question. The stock manager wasn't as well fortified to fight the new type of film as was the Main Stem.

It was pretty much of a standard proposition in those days for the legit stock manager. His theatre, situated in, say Jamaica or Rochester, seated upwards of 1,000, and he'd run Broadway hits at popular prices. Usually, the top scale didn't exceed \$1.25 and it wasn't uncommon for the fellow on the street to bring his entire family once a week. It was all pretty intimate—the same audiences, the same players and, all in all, a profitable arrangement both sides of the boxoffice.

## Once 200 Stock Companies

Today, the oldtime stock manager must sit back and reflect of the sudden demise of a field that at its height, in 1927, had approximately 200 stock companies operating in the U. S. Presently, there are only five Equity stock groups, one in Canada.

There are a number of other reasons given for the public apathy, including the depression, but actually the Wall Street crash was not the motivating factor behind the decline. It was just the finishing touch to what was already started by the rapid rise of the talking picture.

Subsequent items in the drop were theatre giveaways, more extensive plans for touring Broadway productions, etc.

One factor that's held to be against a revival is the alleged policy of some picture circuits to keep some of their theatres closed rather than rent them to stock outfits. Fear of competition to their theatres operating near by is held to be behind this.

Such vets of the stock theatres as William H. Wright, who had at one time operated nine theatres in the midwest, suffered with the toboggan. Lester Al Smith and George C. Roberson had operated half a dozen each in the same sector. Henry Duffy, who had among his theatres the Alcazar and the President in San Francisco, had six houses on the

Coast in 1927. One of the stock pioneers was Sylvester Z. Poli, who operated nine houses, nearly all in New England, at this height in the '27 days.

## Profitable in Keys

All the key cities found it profitable and a number of smaller ones did, too. New York City proper was a notable exception to a stock try because of the proximity to Broadway. However, Brooklyn, just across the bridge from Main Street, attempted competition with, at one time, four theatres. Chicago also had four simultaneously, while Detroit had five. Even Huntington, W. Va., comparatively a whistle stop, had two.

Summer theatre impresarios, many of them operating in converted barns and on a shoestring, have to a great extent taken over the former legitimate stock theatres. However, in the past few years the evils of shoestring strawhat operating have greatly diminished, last year showing 71 Equity-controlled barnyard theatres. In the lush days of '27 there were only about a dozen strawhats.

## Current Operations

Presently, Guy Palmerton is operating one of the more successful regular-season stocks, in Salem, Mass., at the Empire; John Holden has been holding forth several years at the Dominion, Winnipeg, while during the summer he has a troupe at the Bala, Ontario.

Then there is the veteran O. D. Woodward, operating the Belasco, Los Angeles. Latter for years has been a successful stock operator on the Coast. Ella Kramer, an oldtime stock manager and actress, last month started a group in Little Rock, Ark. Myron Fagan, who a year ago had a profitable season at the Pabst, Milwaukee, with eight weeks of stock, plans to take over the Chicago Civic theatre this month. The latter house was run last season for stock to spotty results under a different management. Until recently, Allen G. Holmes conducted stock at the Copley, Boston, giving it up after several mediocre weeks.

There's some talk that for the first time in years the stocks are going to have somewhat of a chance for a revival this year. There are increasing inquiries from groups and players laid off with the dissolution of the Federal Theatre Project.

Then there's that swank new theatre being especially constructed in Miami Beach for stock with a \$2 top, an outgrowth of the idea that the war will be responsible this winter for a greater influx to Florida than at any time in years. Nancy Cushman and Gant Gaither are the operators of the theatre, which is called the Miami Beach Palyhouse.

To all this, the oldtime manager muses pessimistically, draws a long one on his mellow briar and reflects somewhat nostalgically of the days when 'Kosher Kitty Kelly' could pack his theatre. Today he's giving 'em a couple of B pix and a set of dishes.



# EQUITY DIVIDED ON SALARY QUESTION

Proposal that Equity boost the minimum pay for legit actors to \$50 from the present \$40 figure is developing into one of the moot issues before the association. It is certain that no hasty action will be taken, for the shades of different opinions within the membership are growing sharper. Council will not decide the question. It will either be made the reason for a special membership meeting, or be placed before all Equityites by referendum.

Fact that at the recent quarterly meeting the proposal was okayed has been somewhat discounted, because of comparatively light attendance, and it is assumed that the sentiment expressed may not be that of a majority of all the members. Stated that those who favored the raise at the meeting were mostly players who are getting the present \$40 minimum. Such proponents carefully avoided reference to the bulk of Equityites who get higher pay.

Understood that an accurate breakdown of salaries should show that the majority of players receive between \$75 and \$200 weekly when engaged. All such people would be affected if the minimum goes to \$50, it is argued by those opposed to the boost. Players getting higher pay are rated as 'demand' players, those who are sought by producers as contrasted to members eking out a livelihood at the lowest pay.

Some Equity leaders continue to oppose the idea, saying it is economically unsound and would not be for the benefit of the rank and file membership. Last week the minimum question was again reconsidered. Committee which has been considering the move was considerably augmented and is expected to make an exhaustive report, after examining the salary data revealed by the copies of contracts on file at the association.

Pointed out there is no hurry to arrive at a conclusion over the proposed boost, since the increase could not be effective until next season, because of the pact with the managers not to change rules this season. However, a fresh angle has arisen because the ticket code has been contested by a flock of ticket brokers who contemplate going into court to enjoin its operation. In the event the code dispute ousts the ticket control system, it would probably invalidate the agreement between the managers and Equity, which would open the way for changes of rules by Equity.

# LONDON OKAYS 'ENGLAND' BOW

London, Jan. 1. 'Somewhere in England,' a composite of farce, musical and revue, opened as a twice-nightly show at the Lyric Tuesday night (26) to a receptive audience. With Will Hay in the lead, show indicates a good staying chance.

Douglas Furber, Claude Hulbert and Hay had a part in the writing, with Hulbert also in the show along with Marie Lohr, who has the leading femme role. Clifford Whitley is making the presentation.

# New Philly Mayor May Revive Legit Censor B'd

Philadelphia, Jan. 1. Mayor Robert E. Lamberton, who took office today (Monday), is reported getting ready to revive the Board of Theatre Control which was disbanded after the death of Mayor S. Davis Wilson. Mayor Lamberton, a strict churchman, was described by his friends as feeling that a municipal body should be allowed to pass on all plays and musicals before they are allowed to be shown here. The board's commission was cancelled by Acting Mayor George Connell after Wilson's death on the grounds that their services were no longer needed.

# Mohawk Festival Sets 6th Season Starting July 8

Schenectady, N. Y., Jan. 1. Mohawk Drama Festival, perhaps the only strawhat which maintains a skeleton staff and carries on promotional work the year 'round, will stage its sixth season from July 8 to Aug. 31. Jose Ruben will return as stage director (last summer was his first on the Union College campus); Sheldon Cheney will come back for his third year on the institute of the theatre faculty; Carl Glick will serve as chairman, and Kenn Randall as registrar of the institute; Irene and Phyllis Marmein will be on hand, as usual, to direct the choreography, and Andre Charise (now dancing in 'Very Warm for May') will boss men's dancing and fencing.

A new publicity stunt of Beauvais Fox and Milton Enzer, festival press agents, is publication and nationwide distribution of a monthly six-page news letter. First issue follows the festival pattern in emphasizing Charles Coburn's picture activities and associations as well as those of other guests.

# Tooters' Union Head Bans CIO Mention In Chi

Chicago, Jan. 1. There's considerable undertone comment around the legit offices here following the edict from Chicago Federation of Musicians' chief, James C. Petrillo, that George White's 'Scandals' current at the Erlanger, wouldn't be permitted to use the name of John L. Lewis and the CIO in one of the blackouts.

Petrillo also sent word to the Shubert office that should 'Hellzapoppin' come to town, the newsreel comedy shot of Lewis would have to be eliminated. If not, the musicians would not be allowed to play the show.

Petrillo has taken these measures in his battle against the CIO, a battle in which Petrillo has already won several skirmishes, especially one involving radio announcers. To circumvent any organizing of the spielers by CIO a couple of years ago, Petrillo took the announcers into the musicians' local. Couple of weeks ago, however, he turned the announcers' group over to the American Federation of Radio Artists.

Censorship from Petrillo on the stage is a new twist. Mayor Edward Kelly has banned two shows so far: stopping the run of 'Tobacco Road' and refusing to okay a script of 'The Children's Hour.'

# 'Lincoln' Cast Squawks

St. Louis, Jan. 1. Members of the cast of 'Abe Lincoln in Illinois,' headed by Raymond Massey, who wound up week's stand Saturday (30) at American Theatre, last week here sent a strong beef to Equity in New York against bar imposed by James C. Petrillo, prez of Chicago musicians union, anent reference to John L. Lewis or the CIO in Chicago stage production.

Beef stated that 47 members of cast 'wish to express their astonishment and resentment at the outrageous action taken by Petrillo. We consider such action inimical to the prestige and freedom of the theatre and urge strong measures to defeat this attempt to interfere with the prerogatives of authors and producers. We hold no brief for the persons or interests concerned, but consider it a principle vital to the theatre is here involved.'

'Lincoln' is skedded to open a three-week run in Chicago, Jan. 8.

# New Scripts

Norman Matson has completed 'Midnight,' an adaptation of Josephine Young Case's novel. 'At Midnight' on the 31st of March.' Pat Duggan is handling it. Miss Case is the daughter of Owen D. Young and Matson is the brother of Harold Matson, of the Matson & Duggan advertising agency.

Robert Griffith and Walter Wagner are dramatizing Alfred Eichler's novel, 'Gentle Giant.' They're respective stage manager and assistant for 'See My Lawyer,' Adelphi, N. Y., and both play small parts in the show.



LOIS JANUARY  
SEASON'S GREETINGS  
Now appearing in 'Yokel Boy' at the Majestic Theatre, New York and nightly at the Rainbow Room, Radio City, New York.  
Management  
WILLIAM GERNANNT

# Current Road Shows (Week of Jan. 1)

'Abe Lincoln in Illinois' (Raymond Massey) — Memorial Auditorium, Louisville (1-2); Taft Auditorium, Cincinnati (3-6).

Colbourne-Jones (repertory)—Empress, Vancouver (1-2); Grand, Calgary (4-6).

'Easy Virtue' (Constance Bennett)—English, Indianapolis (1-3); Davidson, Milwaukee (4-6).

Eva Le Gallienne (repertory)—Capitol, Medford, Ore. (2); McDonald, Eugene, Ore. (3); Mayfair, Portland, Ore. (4-6).

'Hot Mikado' (Bill Robinson)—Hanna, Cleveland.

'I Married an Angel' (Dennis King)—Biltmore, Los Angeles.

'John Henry' (Paul Robeson)—Colonial, Boston.

'Kiss the Boys Goodbye'—Erlanger, Buffalo.

'Leave It to Me' (Victor Moore, William Gaxton, Sophie Tucker)—American, St. Louis.

'Male Animal'—Maryland, Baltimore.

'Mamba's Daughters' (Ethel Waters)—Shubert, Boston.

'Man Who Came to Dinner' (Clifton Webb)—Harris, Chicago.

'Man Who Killed Lincoln'—Cass, Detroit.

'My Dear Children' (John Barrymore)—Selwyn, Chicago.

'No Time for Comedy' (Katharine Cornell)—Curran, San Francisco.

'Outward Bound' (Laurette Taylor, Florence Reed)—Ford's, Baltimore.

Ruth Draper—His Majesty's, Montreal (4-6).

'Scandals' (Willie and Eugene Howard)—Erlanger, Chicago.

'She Couldn't Say No'—(Charlotte Greenwood)—El Capitan, Hollywood.

'Springtime for Henry' (Edward Everett Horton)—Grand Opera House, Chicago.

'Taming of the Shrew' (Alfred Lunt, Lynn Fontanne)—City Auditorium, Beaumont, Texas (1); Municipal Auditorium, New Orleans (2-3); Auditorium, Shreveport (4); City Auditorium, Memphis (6).

'Three After Three' (Simone Simon, Mary Brian, Mitzi Green)—Forrest, Philadelphia.

'Tobacco Road' (Slim Timblin)—Plymouth, Boston.

'Tobacco Road' (John Barton)—Hartman, Columbus.

'Tonight We Dance' (Ruth Chatterton)—Wilbur, Boston.

'Vagabond King'—Playhouse, Hollywood.

'Vanities'—Geary, San Francisco.

'White Plume'—Nixon, Pittsburgh.

# 'Xmas' Ends

Following the unfavorable premieres of all three Broadway entrants last week, reports expressed doubt they would survive the weekend. One, 'Christmas Eve,' was withdrawn Saturday (30) after playing six performances at the Miller. Management of another recent arrival was indecisive about playing this week.

# CHRISTMAS EVE

Opened Dec. 27, '39. While some reviewers detected a trace of earnestness in Dr. Gustav Eckstein's psychological study of a Polish-Irish family, all were resolute in declaring it nothing more than claptrap and bad taste. Brown (Post) said 'pointless, silly script.' Anderson (Journal) wrote 'as trashy a piece of dramatic hokum as the season has witnessed.'

# KINDRED

Drama in two acts (four scenes) and prolog by Paul Vincent Carroll; staged and designed by Robert Edmond Jones; presented by Edward Choate and Arthur Shields at Maxine Elliott's, N. Y., Dec. 26, '39; \$3.30 top (\$4.40 opening).  
Aline MacMahon.....Aline MacMahon  
Dermot O'Regan.....Wallace Ford  
Primrose Carr.....Wauna Paul  
Roderick O'Regan.....Charles Kennedy  
Jerome O'Regan.....Hale Sorceress  
Robert Fenet.....Barry Fitzgerald  
J. K. Keefe.....Thomas Findlay  
Michael Fenet.....Harry Young  
Agnes Kent.....Haila Stoddard  
Aileen O'Connor.....Aileen O'Connor  
Dermot O'Regan (son).....Arthur Shields  
Ed. Hamilton.....Byron Russell

Paul Vincent Carroll, the former Irish schoolmaster whose 'Shadow and Substance' won the first New York Drama Critics Circle prize for the best foreign play two seasons ago and whose 'The White Steed' repeated last season, is again writing of the spiritual in 'Kindred,' his newest work. Once more he lifts the emotions with poetic prose eloquence, but this time his meaning is obscure and his drama illusive. 'Kindred' is therefore less moving and less likely to succeed than either of its predecessors.

There's a similarity in pattern in all of Carroll's plays. They're all laid in rural Ireland, all based on the conflict between the spiritual and the material and all animated by moments of compassionate, exalted writing. In 'Kindred,' however, the author is only indirectly concerned with religion. Here he's attacking with searing scorn the petty, blind greed of the materialists, the merchants, bankers, lawyers and, more particularly the politicians.

There's a brotherhood of the artistic, he says, and it is these creative people—the artists, musicians, writers—who must some day take control from the grubby hands of the materialists and direct the world. They are the kindred of the spirit, these artistic people... the kindred and all the things that struggle out of the shadow into the light. But it's a long time off, he concludes, and in the meantime, God is sleeping.

Although he was writing about more or less intangible themes in 'Shadow' and 'Steed,' Carroll succeeded in compressing them into sufficiently taut dramas, and even when their meaning was difficult to follow, they had an inexplicable exaltation. But 'Kindred' keeps straggling out of dramatic form. Its sequence of thought and its line of conflict are vague, drawing sympathy for the wrong characters, and, except for isolated uplifting moments, it remains curiously inert and confusing.

There is more to the writing than appears on the surface, however, for the drama is superbly played—and there can be no performance without a believable part to build it on. That is particularly apparent in the case of Aline MacMahon, who has returned from Hollywood to play a Woman Eternal sort of role with deep sincerity and enormously persuasive restraint. Arthur Shields gives conviction to the many-shaded part of the fanatical, strolling violinist-hero, while Barry Fitzgerald catches brilliantly the blend of comedy and pathos in the storekeeper.

Of the lesser parts, Wallace Ford partly succeeds in resolving the imperfectly conceived part of the bitter-tragic artist in the prolog. Harry Young adds stature and plausibility to the self-doubting young politician. Thomas Findlay is properly pompous as a smug lawyer, while Aileen O'Connor clicks in a part which even a comedienne of half her skill could play. Haila Stoddard's performance is transparent, with Wauna Paul an amusing slattern.

Robert Edmond Jones has designed two settings that add atmosphere, and his direction shows perception. However, 'Kindred' seems a doubtful prospect, though it may have a limited class draw. It's unsuited as picture material. Hobe.

# CHRISTMAS EVE

Drama in three acts by Gustav Eckstein; presented and staged by Guthrie McClintic; costumes: Katharine Locke, Beth Merrill, Kent Smith, James Rennie, Mildred Natwick; setting: Jo Melziner; at the Henry Miller, N. Y., opening Dec. 29, '39; \$3.30 top.  
Hanka.....Beth Merrill  
Lumet.....Sidney Lumet  
Peter For.....Kent Smith  
Julia.....Katharine Locke  
Mother McGlory.....Mildred Natwick  
Joe McGlory.....James Rennie  
Ignace.....Michael Macready  
Tim.....Vincent Donahue  
Two Italian Boys.....John Dione  
.....Peter Palmieri  
Doctor Harris.....Robert Ross  
A Delivery Boy.....Peter Scott  
Father Flynn.....Anthony Blair  
Lumpy.....Himself

For the first time childbirth is presented on the stage. It must have been that feature which intrigued Guthrie McClintic into accepting the script of a medico, Gustav Eckstein, physiology prof at the U. of Cincinnati. If the producer-director thought that feature would be enticing to playgoers, he guessed wrong.

The clinical display fortunately does not include all the details, but it has enough to enervate the audience, including the groans of the mother. Since it all takes place on

# Plays on Broadway

stage, the presence of bystanders, including the husband, is not so strange, perhaps.

The play is enacted within the squalid flat of Joe and Hanka McGlory in the foreign section of a big city. She is Polish-born; he's an Irish artist with a yen for booze. They have four other children—one, Julia, a grown daughter, others being boys, including a little shaver, Ignace, named after Paderewski.

There is a psychopathic atmosphere about most of the characters marked by frequent squabbles among them and without special reason. Julia doesn't know what she wants to do, being frigid to the pleading of Peter, an upstanding youth who wants her to marry him and go to Alaska. It is only after she helps the doctor when the baby comes that Julia loses her fear of motherhood and partially melts. That Peter didn't take the air, realizing what a home life he'd have with such a consort indicates that he's a bit whacky, too.

Joe has a lot to say in the household, Hanka being a patient woman of the peasant type. What story there is, other than the 'big scene,' deals with drab people, amidst drab surroundings, no matter what their good nature may be now and then. There is much ado when the Christmas presents are unwrapped, but hardly any novelty there. No matter what McClintic effected in directional efforts, he did not yank the play from mediocrity. There is a swaying stage, evidently to get more width at certain times, the single set moving back and forth two or three feet (some onlookers 'suspecting' they had not recovered from the post-holiday jitters).

Casting is very good. Beth Merrill comes back to the stage after a lapse of 12 years, playing Hanka with an authoritative dialect, and she's a pleasant, believable expectant mother. James Rennie blusters as the father, who's generally half stewed, turning in his best performance in some seasons. Katherine Locke, fresh from the 'Hamlet' Ophelia role, is the curious Julia. It's a good characterization, but may have been better with more study.

Mildred Natwick, as the Irish grandmother, is okay; Robert Ross is well liked as the doctor; Kent Smith, as Peter, is also good, along with Sidney Lumet and little Michael Macready as two of the smaller McGlories.

(Withdrawn Saturday after playing six performances; printed for the record).

# Kingsley Gets 'World' From WB After Metro Pays \$100,000 For Play

Sidney Kingsley, who last week sold his 'The World We Make' to Metro for \$100,000, this week took over the production from Warner Bros., which bankrolled it. Despite the M-G buy, Kingsley will have complete authority on all business policy pertaining to the play, and will be responsible for possible losses, while WB will share in any profits. Show continues indef at the Guild theatre, N. Y.

Understood Warners' investment was about \$25,000, but the company will get a profit on the deal regardless of possible future sharing, since the company's share of the picture price is 30%. Therefore any coin from the legit run will be gravy. Reason for the special sharing arrangement on the picture rights is that the play was adapted from Milten Brand's best-seller, 'The Outward Room.' Under the terms of the special contract, Kingsley retains 35% of the film coin and the remaining 35% goes to Brand.

Metro's purchase of the screen rights to the show came after spirited bidding by Warners. Kingsley had set an asking price of \$165,000 for the show and Warners replied with a bid of \$40,000. About that time it was reported throughout the trade that Warners owned the rights, so Kingsley personally phoned the story editors of the other picture companies to explain that 'World' was in the open market.

Warners subsequently raised its offer to \$80,000, plus the promise to turn over complete ownership of the legit production to Kingsley. However, the company refused to put the latter promise in writing, so the Metro offer of \$100,000 cash was accepted. There were subsequent reports that the show would be closed, but these proved to be without foundation. It has been just about breaking even, with grosses running in the neighborhood of \$8,000 a week, but Kingsley looked for a spurt during the holidays.



## UNCONQUERED' KO'D IN BALTIMORE, \$4,200

Baltimore, Jan. 1. Full week here for legit, with the indie Maryland housing Herman Humlin's latest, 'The Male Animal,' by James Thurber and Elliott Nugent, with latter also in the cast, and Ford's offering, as the third of a promised six-week subscription season under the auspices of the American Theatre Society-Theatre Guild, 'Outward Bound.' Slated to follow in the most generous schedule of recent seasons: 'Kiss the Boys Goodbye,' Jan. 8; Helen Hayes in 'Ladies and Gentlemen,' Jan. 15, and the Lunts in 'The Taming of the Shrew,' Jan. 22. All at Ford's.

'The Unconquered,' by Ayn Rand, with Eugenie Leontovich, Dean Jagger and Onslow Stevens heading the cast, presented at the Maryland last week by George Abbott, ran into difficulties from the start and stumbled through with an equally uneventful reaction at the b.o.

**Estimate for Last Week**  
'The Unconquered,' Maryland (1,32; \$2.22). Expensively mounted, in multiple sets, but not up to scratch and off in business at \$4,200. Closing here.

## May' Scale Cut May See Other Tuners Dittoing

Ticket scale for Max Gordon's 'Very Warm For May,' Alvin, N. Y., was revised downward, top, starting Monday (1) being \$3.30. Show started with a top of \$4.40. Musical opened to an adverse press, but the manager was not discouraged, pointing out that his 'Roberta' and 'The Cat and the Fiddle' also did not please the critics, though both fared well on Broadway and played a season on the road. Same applied to 'The Great Waltz,' which earned back most of its production red, then went on tour and showed a nice profit.

Propensity of producers to charge \$4.40 top is believed to be a fallacious policy. Draw of musicals with such a scale is known to sharply decline after a certain period, but dropping the price is supposed to have an adverse affect on patronage. Understood, however, that one or two other musicals with a \$4.40 top may follow Gordon's move, now that the middle point of the season has passed.

Gross for 'May' bounded upwards last week. After dropping to \$7,700 the week before Christmas, it was credited with approximating \$18,000 last week, which spanned Christmas to New Year's. Shortly after the show opened, Gordon entered into a sharing agreement with the cast, which has since played for small salaries plus percentages.

## Cornell-Lederer OK \$13,600 in Seattle

Seattle, Jan. 1. Katharine Cornell and Francis Lederer were at the Metropolitan for three nights and two matinees in 'No Time for Comedy' last week, winding up with a satisfactory take. A mat added to the original date was necessary, and it was capacity all the way, except first night (Christmas).

**Estimate for Last Week**  
'No Time for Comedy,' Metropolitan (1,500; \$2.88). Got capacity nearly all performances; \$13,600 great.

## 'Leave' 20G in Cincy

Cincinnati, Jan. 1. 'Leave It to Me,' which closed a week's engagement Saturday night (30) at the 2,500-seat Taft auditorium, pulled less than \$20,000 on eight performances at \$3.30 top. Result was far below expectations.

Taft gets 'Abe Lincoln in Illinois' last part of this week at \$3.30 top for four night performances and two matinees. Its advance sale is heavy and points to Cincy's biggest legit take so far this season.

## 'Chin Up' Fair 6G

Montreal, Jan. 1. 'Chin Up,' musical which played six nights and two mats starting Monday (25) grossed fair \$6,000 at \$2 top. Started slow, but perked up later.

**Estimate for Last Week**  
'Chin Up,' His Majesty's. (CT) (1,600; 50c-\$2 plus tax). Fair post-Xmas trade at \$6,000.

## Maney's Still Boss

James Thurber, co-author with Elliott Nugent of 'The Male Animal,' which opens next week at the Cort, N. Y., has done a number of drawings to be placed in the dailies to publicize the show. The other night he was telling an acquaintance that he doesn't particularly mind doing it, even for nothing.

'But what burns me,' he explained, 'is that for years I've wanted to write a play and have Dick Maney working for me. Now I have the play and Maney's the press agent. But here I am working for him—and for nothing, at that.'

## 'Mamba' \$10,000 Leads Slow Hub; 'Dance,' Road 7G

Boston, Jan. 1.

Dull biz all around last week with four shows, 'Mamba's Daughters,' 'Tonight We Dance,' 'Tobacco Road' and 'John Henry.'

**Estimates for Last Week**  
'Mamba's Daughters,' Shubert (1st wk) (1,590; \$2.75). Not up to expectations, but best in town. Garnered around \$10,000.

'Tonight We Dance,' Wilbur (1st wk) (1,227; \$2.75). Drew tepid press and mediocre patronage. Around \$7,000. One more stanza.

'Tobacco Road,' Plymouth (6th wk) (1,480; \$1.65). Holding up okay, but slated to bow out Saturday (6). Around \$7,000.

'John Henry,' Colonial (1st wk) (1,643; \$3.30). Unenthusiastic press greeted this one, and drastic revisions being made during tryout here. Will be changed to two-act production, instead of three, when reaching Broadway. Garnered pale \$6,500. One more stanza.

## EQUITY WOULD STOP ACTOR TIDAL WAVES

Although Equity's agency committee has come to no conclusion on revising the commission percentages to casters, who have been seeking an increase to 10%, it is working on other phases of the situation which are regarded as more important to the average actor. Principal problem is to work out a way whereby producers' offices are not swamped with applicants, which is a frequent occurrence.

Jam of actors appears to come because half a dozen agents send people to producers whether they have been instructed to do so or not. Equity doubts, however, that it has the right to formulate casting rules for managers to follow, or to limit the number of agents he may do business with. Producers sometimes retain one agent to select the cast, but invariably the final selections are made difficult when a horde of people from other offices turn up.

One production office that has been overrun with applicants is that of the Playwrights' Co. When casting for 'Two On an Island' started around 1,000 letters from applicants were received. A sign in that office was ordered by Elmer Rice, reading that he obviously could not interview that many people. Show calls for around 50 players, unusually large.

A number of producers make it a rule to look over all applicants when casting their plays and rarely assign the casting to any one agent. Equity, however, have constantly complained over the crush of applicants when casting is going on and want some regulatory measures adopted.

## LeGallienne Neat 10G In 2-Play Rep in Frisco

San Francisco, Jan. 1. Eva LeGallienne drew about \$10,000, fair biz, in one week at the Curran here last week in which she appeared in 'Hedda Gabler' and 'The Master Builder.' Featured with her was Earle Larimore. Christmas rush, b.o. film fare, and Earl Carroll's 'Vanities' next door at the Geary combined to hold down the take.

She was followed, beginning today (Monday) by Katharine Cornell in 'No Time for Comedy,' with Francis Lederer.

'Vanities,' which opened slow Christmas night, has built rapidly due to kind notices and enthusiastic word-of-mouth. Run ends Saturday (6).

## B'way Leaders Plenty High; 'Dinner' Paces Straight Plays, 26G; 'Hellz', 'Girls' 33G Exceeds DuBarry \$30,000

Broadway's leaders registered big grosses during the holiday week, some figures being new highs. In contrast was the disappointing crop of new presentations that came in during the past two weeks. Not one favorable notice was accorded these entrants. Reaction is that those attractions which are established have much better chances to survive the winter.

Among the straight plays, 'The Man Who Came to Dinner' turned in the biggest cleanup, getting \$26,000 with two extra showings (10 performances). Runners up were 'Life With Father,' which held to eight times but topped \$20,000; 'Key Largo,' close to \$20,000; 'Skylark,' which got \$19,000, also in eight shows, and the long-staying 'Philadelphia Story,' rated around \$18,000 for the same number of performances. Full-length 'Hamlet' was also credited with \$18,000 while 'Margin for Error' did well with around \$16,500, having one extra matinee.

Three musicals drew capacity most performances with standees some times. 'Too Many Girls' and the revised 'Hellzapoppin' were about tied at \$33,000, latter show doing a real comeback from the level of the previous week. Both shows played nine times, displacing 'DuBarry Was a Lady' as leader, for the time being at least. Latter was credited with better than \$30,000 in its usual eight times. 'Streets of Paris' came back strongly, too, while 'Very Warm for May' leaped way up from the low of the pre-Christmas gross.

'Christmas Eve,' at the Miller, 'Kindred,' Elliott, and 'When We Are Married' proved last week's premiere disappointments. Usually, the earlier part of the season ushers in too many in-betweeners but this season started to high anticipation with several clicks in a row. Seems that flop crop has been transposed from September and October to the late fall and holiday period. 'Eve' stopped Saturday (30) and several others were in doubt at press time.

No new shows this week. Next week, 'The Male Animal' is due into the Cort ('Farm of Three Echoes' probably moving from there to the Golden) and 'John Henry' is slated into the 44th Street. 'Hamlet' winds up a five-week return date in the latter spot Saturday (6).

**Estimates for Last Week**  
'Billy Draws a Horse,' Playhouse (1st week) (C-865; \$3.30). Keen disappointment; although three matinees were given last week, gross negligible.

'Christmas Eve,' Miller. Drew

## 'ANGEL' OFF IN L. A. AT \$12,000

Los Angeles, Jan. 1.

'I Married An Angel,' now in second-final week at the Biltmore, went heavily in the red on initial six days, garnering around \$12,000, whereas company nut runs around \$16,000. Extra performance was added New Year's Eve (Sunday) for seven-day final week.

'She Couldn't Say No' (Charlotte Greenwood) continues at El Capitan, Hollywood, and 'The Vagabond King' stays for a spell at the Hollywood Playhouse.

**Estimates for Last Week**  
'I Married an Angel,' Biltmore (1,656; \$3.30) (1st week). Combination of Dennis King and Vivienne Segal failed to arouse expected interest locally and first week ended with dismal \$12,000.

'She Couldn't Say No,' El Capitan, Hollywood (1,560; \$2.50). (2d week). Holiday week trade helped for around \$9,000, very good.

'The Vagabond King,' Playhouse, Hollywood (1,130; \$1.65) (2d week). Federal Music Project presentation heading for profit with second stanza adding around \$4,000, good.

## 'Kiss Boys' Satisfying \$9,500 in Det. Repeat

Detroit, Jan. 1.

Dipping into the town for the second time in a year, 'Kiss the Boys Goodbye,' got a repetition last week of its earlier good biz.

'The Man Who Killed Lincoln' came in last night (Sunday) with price for holiday vaulted to \$3.85 top but settling to regular run at \$2.75.

**Estimate for Last Week**  
'Kiss Boys Goodbye' (Cass) (1,500; \$1.65). A highly satisfactory \$9,500 in view of earlier visit.

uniformly bad press and was taken off Saturday after six performances.

'DuBarry Was a Lady,' 46th Street (4th week) (M-1,347; \$4.40). New musical click again topped \$30,000.

'Farm of Three Echoes,' Cort (5th week) (CD-1,064; \$3.30). Expected to move to Golden after this week; grosses modest; estimated around \$7,000; house gets 'The Male Animal' next week.

'Hellzapoppin,' Winter Garden (67th week) (R-1,519; \$3.30). Again as big as anything on list; standees most performances; around \$33,000; should stay well into second year; nine performances.

'Key Largo,' Barrymore (5th week) (D-1,096; \$3.30). One of few successes among winter arrivals; attendance excellent in holiday going, gross approached \$20,000.

'Kindred,' Elliott (1st week) (D-931; \$3.30). One of three plays which opened last week and got thumbs down from critics; little coin after debut.

'Ladies and Gentlemen,' Beck (11th week) (C-1,214; \$3.30). Picked up; draw of st- (Helen Hayes) a factor in moderately good engagement; \$17,000 estimated.

'Life With Father,' Empire (8th week) (C-1,082; \$3.30). Getting limit in standees; around \$20,000; no extra matinee last week, but there was a tilt on Saturday night (30) because of New Year's.

'Man Who Came to Dinner,' Music Box (11th week) (C-1,012; \$3.30). Gave 10 performances last week; which, with increase Saturday night, sent smash comedy to its new high; over \$26,000.

'Margin for Error,' Plymouth (9th week) (D-1,075; \$3.30). Came back strongly, and with one extra performance the gross approximated \$16,500.

'Mornings at Seven,' Longacre (5th week) (C-1,016; \$3.30). Has been drawing moderately well and is expected to make the grade; holiday helped and expected gross over \$10,000, best figure to date.

'See My Lawyer,' Adelphi (14th week) (C-1,434; \$1.10). Around \$9,000 last week; while low scale regularly applies a \$3.30 top went for the holiday eve.

'Skylark,' Morosco (11th week) (C-939; \$3.30). Played eight performances, three being matinees, with plenty of standees; stays in big money with estimated \$19,000.

'Streets of Paris,' Broadhurst (28th week) (R-1,142; \$4.40). More than made up lost pace last week and approximated \$18,000; tentatively booked for road in four weeks.

'The Little Foxes,' National (46th week) (D-1,162; \$3.30). Dramatic holdover consistent money-maker; up last week with field, rated better than \$12,000.

'The Philadelphia Story,' Shubert (39th week) (C-1,402; \$3.30). Former straight-show leader got its share of holiday trade and approximated \$20,000.

'The World We Make,' Guild (6th week) (D-956; \$3.30). Parties have helped so far; last week takings approached \$8,000, which provided some profit.

'Time of Your Life,' Booth (10th week) (D-712; \$3.30). Fairly well supported; as with several other attractions, Christmas (Monday) showing was skipped and extra matinee inserted; rated over \$11,000.

'Tobacco Road,' Forrest (316th week) (C-1,195; \$1.65). Among shows which played Sunday night (New Year's eve) with boosted scale; rated over \$6,000 last week.

'Too Many Girls,' Imperial (10th week) (M-1,450; \$4.40). Musical standout played nine performances, with takings estimated better than \$33,000; too with 'Hellz'.

'When We Are Married,' Lyceum (1st week) (C-1,005; \$2.75). Among last week's entrants rated as mediocre; little business after opening night.

'Yokel Boy,' Majestic (25th week) (R-1,715; \$3.30). Also gave a Sunday night performance; came back somewhat last week with estimated \$16,000.

'Very Warm for May,' Alvin (7th week) (M-1,357; \$3.30). Ticket top now reduced from \$4.40, which would have helped earlier in engagement; better in holiday going; over \$16,000 estimated.

Added

'Hamlet,' 44th Street. Best gross for full-length version, around \$18,000; 5th and final week; company jumps to Coast.

'Pins and Needles,' Windsor (109th week) (R-873; \$1.65). An extra matinee helped to best figure since last year; also Saturday night tilt; \$10,000, plenty for intimate revue.

'Steel,' Provincetown Playhouse. College players playing on hit and miss schedule.

'Folies Bergere,' Broadway. Vaudeville revue at \$1.65 top. Two performances nightly and three matinees.

## PITT PLAYS SANTA TO 'HOT MIKADO', \$23,000

Pittsburgh, Jan. 1. Bill Robinson's 'Hot Mikado' was a Xmas week natural at the Nixon and pushed easily into smash class. Only second musical of season though this town's invariably gone for the tune shows, particularly at holiday time. The Savoyard live drew raves from the reviewers and rolled along at pretty close to capacity all week long. Mats, in fact, drew standees.

Nixon has 'Vagabond Hero' current, but opened to extremely light advance sale. There's big mail order already for John Barrymore's 'My Dear Children,' which comes in Monday (8) on heels of long Chicago run, and lot of interest, too, in 'Three After Three,' which follows 'Children.'

**Estimate for Last Week**  
'Hot Mikado,' Nixon (2,100; \$2.75). Clocks around \$23,000, great.

## Legit-Starved St. Louis Shells Out 23G for 'Abe'

St. Louis, Jan. 1. Legitless for three weeks, natives turned out big for 'Abe Lincoln in Illinois' last week despite heavy snowfall. Raymond Massey copped gobs of newspaper space, supplemented by 100% raves by crit.

Management moved up opening of 'Leave It to Me,' with Sophie Tucker, William Gaxton and Victor Moore, to Sunday (31) to grab off New Year's Eve trade. Price for this performance hiked to \$4.40, tops for current season.

**Estimate for Last Week**  
'Abe Lincoln in Illinois,' American (1,707; \$3.30). Eight performances copped \$23,000, best take of current season here.

## John Barton-'Road' Fair \$8,000 in Indpls.

Indianapolis, Jan. 1. Constance Bennett, in 'Easy Virtue,' is presently at the English theatre this week, doing three night performances and matinee, starting tonight (Monday).

**Estimate for Last Week**  
'Tobacco Road,' English (1,500; \$1.65). Six night performances and two matinees brought out patrons for annual 'farewell engagement' of the nicotine drama, but weather was against it, blizzard holding down total to \$8,000, which, however, was profitable. This is the John Barton company, the other touring 'Road' troupe having Slim Timblin as lead.



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GREETINGS

FROM

**BERT LYTELL**

PLAYING DR. JENNINGS IN

CLAIRE BOOTH'S

**"MARGIN FOR ERROR"**

*Season's Greetings*

Dennis F.

O'Brien

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Edward C.

Rafferty



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with MILTON BERLE

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ADELPHI Theatre, New York

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Music by  
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RODGERS

Lyrics by  
LORENZ  
HART

Book by  
GEORGE  
MARION, Jr.

with Marcy Wescott, Hal LeRoy, Mary  
Jane Walsh, Richard Kollmar, Diosa  
Costello, Desi Arnaz, Eddie Bracken

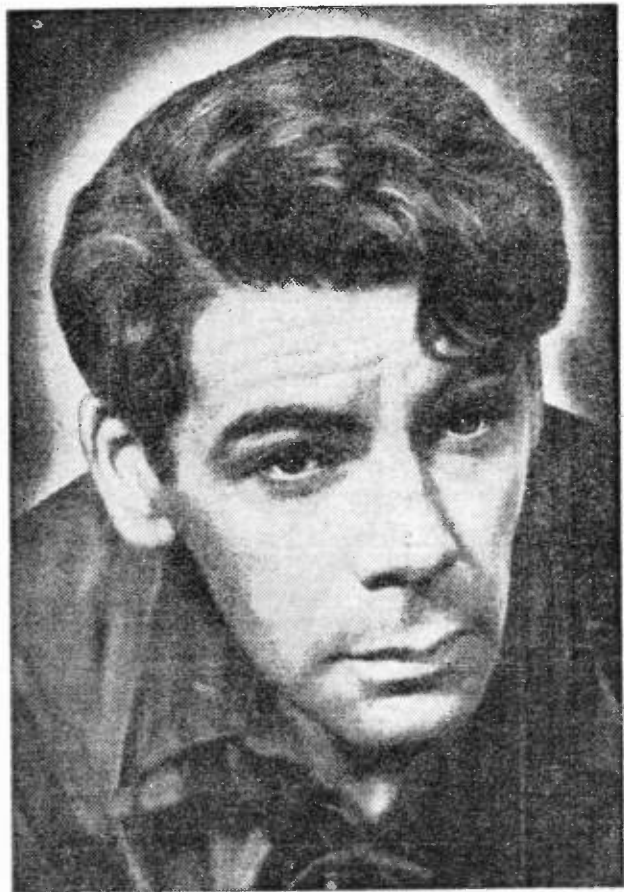
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PHILIP BARRY'S Comedy  
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With

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REGINALD MASON VIOLA ROACHE

Directed by HASSARD SHORT  
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Lyrics by  
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Direction:—DOROTHY VERNON

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"Dull moments are not to be found in 'New Pins and Needles'."

Whipple—World Telegram

"Fun."

Burns Mantle—Daily News

"A merry evening."

Waldorf—Post

"Liveliest musical show in town."

Pollack—Brooklyn Eagle

"Evoked robust applause."

Coleman—Mirror

"Harold J. Rome scores again and Joseph Schrank's playlets are rich in humor and satire."

Kelcy Allen—Women's Wear

"The new show is better put together, better paced and better performed."

Time Magazine

"The most adult revue in town."

Robert Benchley—New Yorker

"Bright and spontaneous."

Claxton—Cue

"No better entertainment buy on B'way."

Variety

"As swell a show as anyone could want to see."

Billboard

"Spirited, enthusiastic."

Christian Science Monitor

"Enjoyable experience."

Rice—Morning Telegraph

"Improves with age."

Price—Brooklyn Citizen

"A great show."

Hollywood Reporter

"Lilting lyrics, brilliant sketches."

Bronx Home News

"A good show."

Dudley—WHN

"Crammed full of refreshing joy."

Starr—WMCA

"Ebullient spirit not preserved . . . If not tempted to rest on its laurels, Labor Stage knows how to put on a good show."

Gould—N. Y. Times

"Producers have felt the need to spice the show with a dash of red-baiting . . . yet the fun gets under the skin."

New Masses

"Sour note is struck in 'Five Angels of Peace' when Stalin appears in the lineup with Chamberlain, Mussolini, a militarist Japanese and Hitler . . . 'New Pins and Needles' totters."

Daily Worker

"No better entertainment buy on B'way."

Variety

"Bright and spontaneous."

Claxton—Cue

"The most adult revue in town."

Robert Benchley—New Yorker

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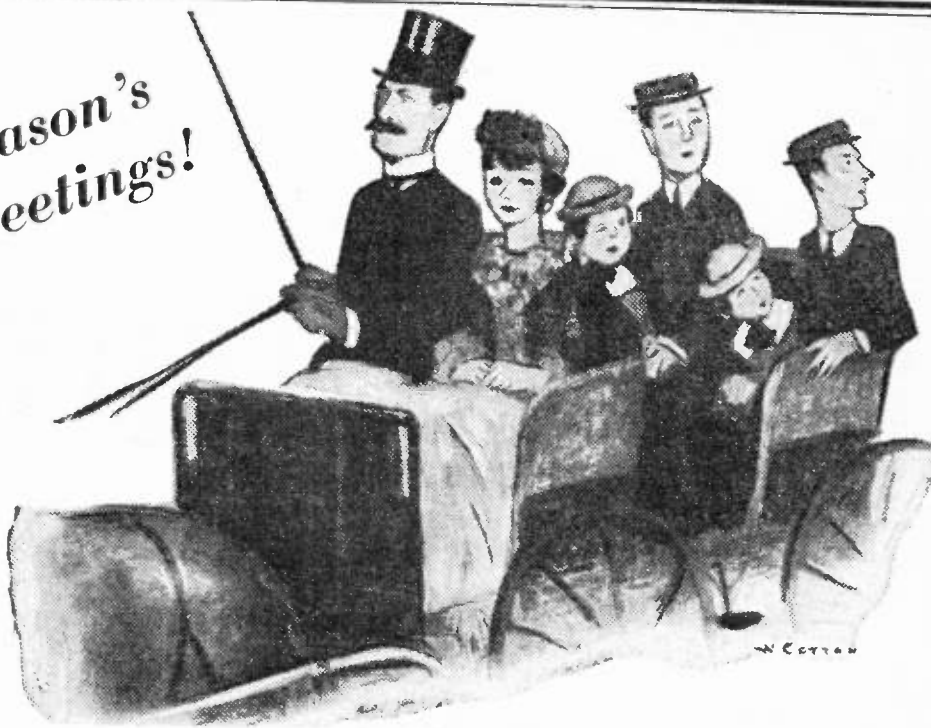
Richard Lockridge—N. Y. Sun

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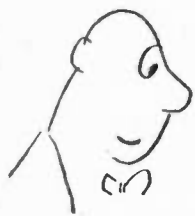
## "THE LITTLE FOXES"

LILLIAN HELLMAN'S *Dramatic Triumph*  
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PATRICIA COLLINGE • FRANK CONROY

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***In February, 1940, after a year's  
run at the National Theatre in New  
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on a two-season, nation-wide tour.***



## "THE MALE ANIMAL"

A New Comedy

By JAMES THURBER and ELLIOTT NUGENT

Opening Cort Theatre, New York, January 9



### Musicals Big

Continued from page 116

of all operettas, when it was a bankruptcy item.

Dwight Deere Wiman occasionally produces straight shows, but his most profitable efforts have been with musicals. When the other showmen stayed away from summer production, he came along with such hits as 'On Your Toes' and 'I Married an Angel' (now on tour) and had the summertime to himself. He is due to repeat during the season. Another consistent hit musical producer is Vinton Freedley, whose 'Leave It to Me' is on tour along with 'Angel' and 'Scandals,' plus a couple of less important tune affairs. 'Me' was a victim of the slump during the latter part of its Broadway run that accompanied the World's Fair and there was much doubt that it would be welcomed on the road. Its grosses, however, are the highest of the musicals on tour.

#### Abbott Enters Field

George Abbott has entered the musical field successfully. Last season he made his debut with 'The Boys From Syracuse,' which was a hit on Broadway, but has not been sent out this season. His second try is 'Too Many Girls,' which is a distinctly better money draw. Abbott has specialized on straight laugh shows, but is now counted on to regularly contribute to the musical field. He has the backing of Warners.

Freedley rarely ventures outside the musical field. He was formerly teamed with Alex A. Aarons and they fashioned some of the most popular musicals, becoming ensconced at the Alvin until Broadway dipped too much and the partnership broke up. Aarons went to Hollywood for an extended stay, but is back and now readying a musical ('Shooting High') teamed with Georgie Hale.

Max Gordon has scored some top successes with musicals, usually of the musical comedy or operetta form. Several such presentations have not won the critics' nod, but landed well in the money, including 'Roberta' and 'The Cat and the Fiddle.' His current 'Very Warm for May' was similarly treated, but he insists it will make the grade. Gordon's most ambitious musical was 'The Great Waltz,' which also was not warmly greeted by reviewers either, yet earned back most of the production red during a run at the Center and, like the others, made excellent money on the road.

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Wishes His Touring Company in  
Clare Boothe's

"KISS THE BOYS GOODBYE"

A Happy New Year



Also the Same to the Companies of

Paul Horgan's

"DEATH, MR. PRESIDENT"



and Margery Sharp's

"THE NUTMEG TREE"

Which Antoinette Perry Will Direct  
for Him in 1940

## Holiday Greetings

# BERT LAHR

"DU BARRY WAS A LADY"

46th Street Theatre  
New York City

Season's Greetings

## ALMIRA SESSIONS

CHARACT. COMEDienne  
Lew Brown's "YOKEL BOY" Majestic, New York



## Broadway

B. S. Moss favored Atlantic City for New Year's.

Universal held a big shindig at the Astor Friday (29).

Al Sindlinger, March of Time's pub chief, bedded by flu.

S. Jay Kaufman is behind a new publishing undertaking.

Max Gordon went to Florida, but is due back late this week.

Walter Reade to California to attend opening of Santa Anita racing New Year's day.

Jim Dunne of the Rivoli bedded with a bad cold picked up during Christmas holiday.

Mrs. Jack McInerney, wife of the publicity-ad director of the Paramount, out of bed after a long illness.

Stuart Stewart, now associated with Rosalie Stewart, his sister, in the agenting field on the Coast, due east shortly.

T. H. Blodgett elected to Altec Service Corp., directorate, taking the place left vacant by the death of B. L. Allen.

H. B. MacKenzie, Western Electric manager in Argentina, back to U.S. for prolonged vacation. Sails back for Buenos Aires Feb. 15.

Al Spink is agenting the Coast company of 'The Man Who Came to Dinner,' John Montague being p.a. for the Chicago company.

Robert L. Graham, Paramount manager in Panama, arrived Thursday (28) for homeoffice huddles. Likely he'll be assigned another foreign post.

Cliff Ried, associate producer for RKO, in for a couple weeks' stay catching the legions. He just finished work on 'Saint's Double Trouble'.

James O. Stack, one-time director and v.p. of the Ritz-Carlton, former g.m. of the St. Regis, elected director and prez of the Ritz, succeeding the late Albert Keller.

Henry Holms of the RKO home office auditing department has been appointed cashier of the company to succeed David Thompson who died two weeks ago.

Joe Hummel, Warner Bros. foreign manager, expected back in New York some time this month from South America, where he has been for about six weeks.

Talk that 'Streets of Paris' may go on the road shortly, with Smith and Dale replacing Abbott and Costello, who are bound to New York by radio commitments.

Willard Keefe leaving p.a. post with 'Farm and Three Echoes' to go out ahead of 'Ladies and Gentlemen. Jean Dalrymple may take his spot with the Ethel Barrymore play.

Al Jolson leaves this week for Florida, returning in a couple weeks to start rehearsals for new Vinton Freedley-Lee Shubert musical in which he'll appear around Easter.

Vincent G. Hart, formerly a member of the Hays office production code division, has been admitted to practice before the Federal Communications Commission in Washington.

Elliston Vinson, assistant to Harry Leiber, RKO's studio publicity chief in Hollywood, in town for home office confabs and the year-end holiday. Returning to the Coast this week.

Kathryn Walsh engaged to Paul O'Brien. She's sister and manager of Mary Jane Walsh; he's son of Dennis F. O'Brien, of O'Brien, Driscoll & Raftery, and is associated with the firm.

Jack Norworth, stage vet, celebrates his 61st birthday Friday (5). Radio salute set with some of his old hit tunes including 'Harvest Moon,' 'Take Me Out to the Ball Game' and 'Good Evening, Caroline.'

## London

Ralph Coram an officer in the flying corps.

Sean O'Casey has written a new play, 'The Star Turns Red.'

'The Bare Idea' set for the Comedy, with Ellen Pollock in lead.

Best seller A. G. Macdonell finishing new play, 'Caledonian Market.'

Teddy Joyce goes into Bradbury-Praet's bottle club, Kit-Cat, for fun.

Louis Dreyfus vetoed revival of 'Lilac Time,' planned by Lee Ephraim.

George Black sent over party of artists to entertain the troops in France.

Beatrix Lehmann contemplating Broadway offer to play lead in 'They Walk Alone.'

David Niven doing a hideaway, and even executives of United Artists can't find him.

Teddy Carr, joint managing director of United Artists (London) in hospital for minor operation.

Sigmund Freud left \$115,000 despite the popular idea that the Nazis had confiscated all his property.

Jack Buchanan turned down vaudeville dates to play for the troops in France during Christmas.

Alhambra theatre, Belfast, destroyed by fire. Originally a music hall, it had been a picture house for the past nine years.

Curzon cinema, which has specialized in foreign films, has had a receiver appointed. House closed at outbreak of war, after five years.

Roy Limbert bought West End rights of 'Dead Heat,' by Sir Robert Vansittart, deal set by Eric Glass.

Play first done at Malvern Festival. Barry O'Brien, who is touring Mac Catto's 'They Walk Alone,' made offer for touring rights of author's other play, 'Punch Without Judy,' current at the New. Stanley May is also dickering.

Warner Bros. (London) has signed Sid Fields, revue comic touring sticks under William Henshell management, to star in picture. Contract calls for one pic with several options.

After having acquired seven Paramount houses, Oscar Deutsch now dickering for three more. These are Paramount, Tottenham Court Road, and one in Glasgow and Birmingham.

Penelope Dudley-Ward, society gal who turned film actress, wed to Tony Pellissier, son of Fay Compton and H. G. Pellissier (who founded the first Follies show). Bridegroom is in the Royal Engineers.

Jack de Leon transferring his modern dress 'Julius Caesar' production from Embassy to His Majesty's. At the former he also will stage, in association with the Daniel Mayer Co., a musical romance, 'Georgian Springtime,' based on the life of Richard Bransley Sheridan, by Beatrice Snell, music arranged by Howard Carr.

## Australia

By Eric Gorrick

Will Mahoney entertaining local troops.

Exhibs in general staying away from giveaways.

Only war pic to cop any major coin of late is Par's 'Beau Geste.'

Switzerland Ice Show routed to New Zealand for Williamson-Tait.

Charles Chauvel going ahead with '40,000 Horsemen' for Universal distrib.

Night clubs generally continue to pull good biz in Sydney and Melbourne.

'Wizard of Oz' (M-G) hitting a nice pace with kiddie biz over Xmas vacation term.

Dave Martin will probably stage a couple of U. S. musicals at the Minerva, Sydney, this month.

Continental pix spotted here include 'Maternite,' 'La Bandera' and 'I Give My Life.' Biz so-so.

Regarded as certain that Stanley Crick, former 20th-Fox chief, will be Sydney's Lord Mayor next year.

Actors' Federation against Williamson-Tait spotting amateurs in revival of 'Arcadians' in Melbourne.

In first three months of operation the Minerva, Sydney, earned a profit of \$1,200. Martin has a working arrangement with Williamson-Tait for legit shows.

Barbara Blane, U. S. dancer, recently on Tivoli loop, won a \$1,000 verdict in Sydney from Bob Geraghty, manager for Will Mahoney, on breach of contract.

Syd Gresham, Aussie rep for Associated Talking pictures, to wed Lola Kelly, New Zealand radio star.

## Baltimore

By Howard A. Burman

Leon Back to the Coast for a brief visit to his in-laws.

Morris Mechanic leading the local show contingent to Florida.

Hope Barroll off to the Eastern Shore for duck shooting.

Fred Stieff in charge of the annual Escoffier dinner menu.

Ed Perotka taking command of annual Variety Club shindig.

Eddie Sherwood mulling stint as foreign news commentator for one of local stations.

Leonard 'Chum' McLaughlin in a whirl with two shows, John Hines and a cold on his hands.

Bernie Seaman and Ted Routson given a testimonial blowout and taking considerable ribbing for the pleasure.

Lee Michael promoting local dept. store for extra heavy plug via New Year's display windows for his weekly 'Where to Go.'

'Judge' Max (Oasis) Cohen hosting pals from show biz, newspapers, sports and politics in the celebrated backroom of his nitery New Year's Eve.

## Detroit

Val Setz, juggler, back in again for Saks show.

Frank Gillen and his songs in for Hund's Inn date.

Jackie Coogan joined Fifi D'Orsay in New Year's Eve bill at the Bowers.

Sam Jack Kaufman, longstander at Fox here, handling the music at Hotel Whittier.

Merle Jacobs, formerly of the Cleveland office, heads the new MCA office here.

George Kelly and Charlie Adler, of the split Yacht Club Boys, here for Powatan's holiday show.

Dick Tewesley is singing with maestro Paul Burton in Cleveland under the name of Dick Roland.

## Hollywood

Bob Palmer nursing flu.

Nat Carr recuperating from heart attack.

Pat O'Brien bedded with bronchitis.

Joan Crawford planning Manhattan vacation.

Jack Kouvelis in from Australia on tour of U. S.

James Hone in town for huddles with indie theatre owners.

Mickey Rooney readying for Honolulu vacation.

Clark Gable recuperating at home after siege of laryngitis.

Joel McCrea's sore throat halted shooting of 'The Primrose Path' at RKO.

Harrison Carroll limping on a sprained ankle.

Edward Schellhorn back to work after six-week battle with eye infection.

## Pittsburgh

By Hal Cohen

Gene Kelly, of 'Time of Your Life,' holiday week-ended with his family here.

The Saal Gottliebs, of the Metro office, are vacationing in Atlantic City.

Phil Levant's two-week stretch at Bill Green's extended for an additional two.

Johnny Long's mother up from Charlotte, N. C., for a brief visit with the maestro.

The Harry Fieldses (she's half of dance team of Liberto and Owens) are expecting an heir.

Nitza and Ravel had to cut short Nixon Cafe run on account of her father's death in New York.

Steve Rodnack, Jr., son of the Oakmont exhib. coming along all right after an appendectomy.

Post-Gazette columnist Charlie Danver and Marie McDermott had the knot tied Friday (29).

Dave Rose flew in from the Coast to spend the holidays with the missus, Martha Raye.

Ted Blake spent his first New Year's at home in 16 years. He's always been on the road at that time.

Al Ritz gifted Piccolo Pete's band with an extension of their Club Petite contract. Outfit's been there 15 weeks now.

Lyricist-sketch writer Alex Kahn in for short stay from east with news that he's peddled some skits to Leonard Sillman for 'New Faces.'

## St. Louis

By Sam X. Hurst

'Any Moment Now,' Princeton U's Triangle Club musical, attracted SRO biz at opera house in Municipal Auditorium. A dozen natives are members of company.

Sophie Tucker, Ted Shapiro, Joe Richman and orch and Capella & Beatrice were attractions for New Year's Eve party at Club Chase.

First local showing of 'Gulliver's Travels' was to 100 kiddies in Shriner's Hospital. Fanchon & Marco arranged showing.

Charles Munch, French maestro, missed American debut as guest conductor with local symph because of delay in reaching America from France. Vladimir Golschmann, regular leader, who was skedded for a short vacation, carried on.

Tommy Dorsey's band, Bill Robinson, Bonnie Baker, Lillian Roth and other vaude acts have been booked for annual American Retailers' Assn. to be held in opera house of Municipal Auditorium Jan. 30-Feb. 5.

L. Earl Stephenson is prez of the Missouri Theatre Corp., recently organized at St. Joseph, Mo.

## Siegel Hies East

Hollywood, Jan. 1.

M. J. Siegel, Republic studio head, has gone to New York on his semi-annual jaunt for production conferences with Herbert Yates. He'll also look over the Broadway shows for new talent.

Yates accompanies him back to the Coast around Jan. 15.

## PEPITONE RE-ELECTED

New Orleans, Jan. 1.

Jake Pepitone was re-elected president of the Musicians' Protective Union, Local 174, of the AF of M at the annual election here Friday (29). Other officers named were Dave Weinstein, vice-president; Robert Aguilera, Sr., recording secretary; R. L. Chabao, financial secretary, and W. B. Miller, sergeant-at-arms.

Board of directors was elected as follows: Jake Dedroit, Leo Broeckhoven, Charles Hartman, Ettore Fontana, Albert Kirst, Jr., Jean Paquay, R. J. Papalia and A. J. Papalia. Delegates named to the AFM convention are Pepitone, Dedroit and Hartmann.

## Literati

### Milton's New Daily

George Fort Milton, Chattanooga, Tenn., newspaper publisher whose paper, the Chattanooga News, was allegedly sold from beneath him and scrapped, is set to publish a new daily in that city. In association with a number of former employees of the News, Milton has formed the Chattanooga Newspaper Corp. to bring out a new afternoon paper to be known as the Evening Tribune.

Allied with Milton in the project are Alfred D. Mynders, who was associate editor of the News; Harry P. Clark, Jr., managing editor, and R. E. Nicholson, director of circulation.

At the time the Chattanooga News suspended publication on Dec. 16, Milton charged the act was engineered by a number of stockholders in behalf of a rival publisher.

### Sigma Delta Chi Contest

The best tall stories told or heard about newspapermen and their work will fetch prizes from Sigma Delta Chi, honorary journalism fraternity, with Lowell Thomas, Irvin S. Cobb and Arthur Robb to serve as judges. First prize will be \$25 and an inscribed gold key; second prize, \$15 and an inscribed silver key; third, \$10, and \$1 each for the next 10 best.

What may be considered a hitch to the competitish is that the submitted tales must contain no libel or obscenity.

### Pubs' Trade Paper

Editors and publishers of school and college publications, club and house organs, community newspapers, fraternal mags and the like, are to have a trade paper devoted to their interests as a result of the decision of the new owners of the National Printer Journalist to alter that periodical's policy.

Lightner Publishing Co. of Chicago, which recently acquired the National Printer Journalist from the Williamson Publishing Co., is changing the name of the pub to the National Amateur Journalist. National Printer Journalist was established in 1872.

### LITERATI OBITS

Jefferson D. Burke, 47, former night city editor of the N. Y. Daily News, died Dec. 27 at Kings Park, N. Y. A son of the late John T. Burke, one-time night editor of the old N. Y. Herald, Burke began his newspaper career in Paris, working for his father in the French capital's office of the Herald. He was on the staff of the N. Y. Times before going to the News.

Luis Philip Senarens, 76, dime-novel writer who turned out 1,500 books, died Dec. 26 in Brooklyn. Known as the 'American Jules Verne,' Senarens wrote under 27 pseudonyms. Among the most famous of his fictional creations was Frank Reade, whose exploits thrilled juve readers a half-century ago.

Newton C. Parke, 51, newspaperman and former war correspondent, died Thursday (28) in a ninth-story plunge from a Washington, D. C., hotel. A war correspondent for International News Service, he also served the United Press and such newspapers as the Baltimore Sun, N. Y. Herald Tribune and Washington Post.

Mrs. Charlotte Annie Kimberley, 62, known as 'The Queen of Melodrama,' died Dec. 27 in London. She authored more than 40 novels, the best known of which were 'Little Gray Home in the West' and 'Sisters in Sin.'

George M. Sleeper, 58, owner and publisher of the Mount Holly (N. J.) Herald, died Dec. 26 in that city. He acquired the paper 20 years ago, after working in its mechanical department.

Clark H. Stover, 45, author of several books and a former director of WPA writer projects in several mid-west states, was found fatally injured Dec. 25 on a Chicago street.

### CHATTER

Albert Spalding, the violinist, is at work on his autobiography.

Henry Frederick Kern, Jr., the scribbler, has a bride, the former Janet Mackenzie.

George C. Handy, publisher of the Ypsilanti (Mich.) Daily Press, on a cruise to Chile with wife and daughter.

James Donahue, of Kelly-Nason, on a South American cruise. He handles Grace Line publicity through K-N.

Jack L. Hart is gathering data for a bio of William Cowper Brann,

who published the famed Brann's Iconoclast.

William G. Whittemore has quit as assistant v.p. of the American News Co. after more than 58 years with the company.

'The American Thesaurus of Slang,' containing around 100,000 expressions, is to be published by Crowell in the spring.

William LaVarre sailed for South America with his wife and daughter to gather material and take pix for a book on Venezuela.

Walter V. Purle will forego scribbling for a while and will make his home in the Virgin Islands in an effort to recover his health.

New Look carries picture story on Dorothy Dix, who has been passing out advice to femmes through her newspaper column for 43 years. She's now in 274 papers.

William Du Bois, of the N. Y. Times, who's had a number of plays produced, makes his bow as a novelist with a whodunit, 'The Case of the Deadly Diary,' to appear this week.

His former colleagues on the N.Y. World-Telegram at Christmas saluted Murdock MacLeod, recently retired at 70, after 31 years of copyreading. Composing the presentation committee were Douglas Gilbert, 'Speed' Denlinger and Frederick Woltman.

## Burlesque Review

### CASINO, PITT.

Pittsburgh, Dec. 28.

'Bring On the Girls,' with Mike Sachs, Marlane, Mlle. Evette, Senorita Montez, I. B. Hamp, Beryl Cuffe, Alice Kennedy, Bertie Beck, Jack O'Malley, Billy Crooks, Wayne Barris, Line (16).

One of these days burleycue's going to awaken to the fact that its customers are pushovers for clean comedy. It's always been a theory among the peel-wheel clowns that if burlesk is the medium, then the color must be blue. Mike Sachs, who's the featured comedian in 'Bring On the Girls,' should know different by now and the sooner his colleagues in the biz recognize the same fact, the better their chances of surviving, or even moving up.

Sachs' first two sketches, as sewery as anything that's come along all season, virtually died. Maybe a few scattered laughs here and there, but that was all. Then next-to-closing he came out for a comic bit at the piano, brought on his partner, buxom Alice Kennedy, and together they went into a two-act that was strictly vaude, and not bad vaude at that. It turned out to be the biggest thing in the show and practically stopped the show. There wasn't a dirty line in the script.

What the wheel wits don't seem to realize is that the boys from the profesh who have moved up were essentially clean comics, like Bobby Clark, Phil Silvers, Abbott and Costello, Joey Faye and Peanuts Bohn. Perhaps a bit on the double entendre side, but never anything out-and-out from the lavatory as the current trend seems to be. [Wait till you see 'DuBarry was a Lady'—Ed.]

Aside from Sachs' single specialty, some first-rate acrobatic dancing by an attractive, fresh-looking ingenue named Beryl Cuffe, and a bit of okay hoofing from a youngster who may be either Billy Crooks, Wayne Barris or Jack O'Malley—he's never identified—'Bring On the Girls' is a pretty dreary unit. Whoever the hoover is, however, lad can scissor the accordion specialty or eliminate it altogether. He's not so hot on the squeeze-box and it merely reduces the reaction to the other department in which he excels.

Strippers are a liability. Marlane, who's featured, is a looker all right, a big, sex-appealing blonde, but she's on and off so quickly, leaving a completely negative impression, that nobody's quite sure she was present at all. Gal billed as Senorita Montez at least makes a pretense of knowing what's expected of a peeler, but the remaining member of the peeling threesome, Mlle. Evette, is also a blank. Another thing burlesk should learn is to cut the old hoke about 'foreign importations.' Casino p.a. uses up a lot of white paper hailing the Gallic background of Evette and the Latin beginnings of Montez, only to have them step out in sketches and speak in accents ranging from Brooklyn to Tenth avenue. If they're supposed to be furriners, least they can do is keep their mouths shut.

Other comic is I. B. Hamp, whose humor is entirely physical and dull most of the way, while the chorus is typical of most burlesque lines. Gals' spirits may be willing, but their legs are weak, and those would-be precision routines have all of the snap of a regiment that's been on the march for several nights. Cohen.



# WHAT THEY THINK

Vive Les Films Francaise  
Chicago.

Editor, VARIETY:

The 'Film Showmanship' article in your Nov. 15 issue was decidedly to the point. I wish every exhibitor in the United States could read it. Six years ago we opened our little World Playhouse on Michigan Boulevard, Chicago. It was tough going until we finally decided to try out a French picture, 'Poil de Carotte' ('The Red-Head'). It was a revelation to me as it also was to our patrons and the critics. Direction, photography, acting and story all were perfection. Amateur photographers commented on the photography, columnists commented favorably on the acting, and it scored a moral if not a financial success.

This convinced us that French pictures could be shown profitably if properly exploited. By this I do not mean that we showed only French product—there were not enough French pictures at that time to secure a suitable film every six months. However, we persevered and sandwiched them in whenever we found a good one. Today there appear to be plenty of French pictures, but, alas the distributors have gone wild and grabbed off good, bad and indifferent French films, and an exhibitor must be careful in his selections.

The French make very fine pictures. Acting, direction, story and sets are the last word, usually. It is merely a matter of educating the public. For the benefit of my fellow-exhibitors let me say that our biggest successes have been with French films featuring players known to the American public. Charles Boyer, with Michele Morgan in 'Orange' scored a big success with us a did 'Mayerling' with Boyer and Danielle Darrieux. Numerous other very fine French pictures did not click, as they should because of lack of names. Harry Baur in any French picture should go well in any regular house. So should any French picture with Chevalier starred. Chevalier is very popular over here still.

'Club de Femmes,' with Darrieux, played four weeks for us; 'Mayerling,' six weeks, and the film 'Cloistered' stayed six weeks to good business.

'Carnival in Flanders' was good for five weeks with us.

Our experience shows us that a French film must either have names, a historical background or a celebrity (such as Sacha Guitry, whose 'Story of a Cheat' simply took Chicago by storm) in order to succeed. It is all up to the exhibitor, I should imagine. In any event it is worth a try.

My suggestion to fellow-exhibitors is to try out one or two of these outstanding French films. Sandwich one in with a double-feature occasionally—advertise it as a distinct novelty—even advertise it as a 'little risque' in the case of such films as 'Club de Femmes,' 'Carnival in Flanders,' 'Story of a Cheat,' etc. These films will please patrons, if they are given an opportunity to see them. And they will give exhibitors something they have been seeking—a novelty that beats all the giveaways for bringing in patrons.

For my part I predict that when those French boys start giving us pictures in which 'young love' plays an important part every exhibitor will be sandwiching them in between some of the present-day American films.

Dan Roche,  
World Playhouse, Chicago.

A Plug for Honesty  
New York.

Editor, VARIETY:

We'd like to take this means of dispelling oft-heard rumors that song publishers are regular practitioners in tune larceny.

It so happens that we two hail from the small town of East Liverpool, O. Aspiring to be songwriters, we naturally came to New York to try to place some of our songs. We knew no one and trusted to luck and whatever talent we possess to put us across.

Recently our first song, 'I Cried Like a Baby,' was published. On Dec. 4 Fred Waring introduced the tune via NBC on his commercial. At present two of our other songs are currently before the publishers.

Our experiences with publishers have been anything but underhanded. And so we are writing you what we heard was not what we learned.

Estere Ruben,  
Doris Lodge.

## Nitery Reviews

Continued from page 115

bow but did their bit for Heller were Martha Raye, Barry Wood, Billy Conn, Rae Samuels, Marty Forkins, Dave Rose (Miss Raye's husband), Don Zelaya, Mimi Chevalier and Jack Williams, so the afterpiece topped the evening. Heller m.c.d. the guest section after distributing the usual credits and doing a sock 10-minute songalog on his own.

Floor show on its own is good enough, but hard to get a line on at inaugural because of insufficient rehearsal time and failure of one of the acts. Tony Marks, magician, to show up until following day. Class of entertainment are Joe and Betty Lee, young, good-looking ballroom team with plenty of grace and freshness. Unlike the usual Latin types for this sort of thing, they're typically American-looking kids and have plenty on the ball. Dale Rhoades m.c.s the layout satisfactorily, scoring on his own with impressions of celebs, particularly Hugh Herbert, Frank Morgan and Joe Penner, while Anita Lane kicks in with some sock acrobatic dance tricks and control stuff.

Herman Middleman's Yacht Club orch is still among the local tops for both dancipation and floor work, and vocals are handled pleasantly by Shirley Heller, another member of the family, who also does a stint in the floor show proper. Spot also expects to insert a line of six or eight-girls permanently some time next week.

Cohen.

## Hawaiian Room, N. O.

(HOTEL ROOSEVELT)

New Orleans, Dec. 29.

Ozzie Nelson Orch, Rose Ann Stevens, Jimmy Curry, Norma Gallo, Robert Allen, Earl and Josephine Leach, Trixie.

This swank spot, with good shows as a rule, maintains the standard with Ozzie Nelson's versatile crew. Doing jive and sweet tunes with equal ease, outfit was strictly in the groove on opening night (22) with the exception of a few lapses into the Hawaiian vein, in keeping with the room's motif.

Rose Ann Stevens, vocalist, and Jimmy Curry, a singer who burlesques practically everything in the album, both click strongly, too.

Nelson's music is directed mostly

at the jive generation whereas Miss Stevens' singing is consistently more sweet than swing. She really goes to town, however, on 'Oh, Johnny' and 'Jumping Jive,' adequately mixed in between 'Over the Rainbow' and a clever duet with Nelson on 'Two Sleepy People.' Curry's tunes notably include 'Night and Day' and 'Honey,' among others.

Norma Gallo, an acrobatic control dancer, does a number of nifty routines. Robert Allen, holdover, still clicks with his piping. Gets plenty palm-pounding with 'That's Why Darkies Were Born.'

Earl and Josephine Leach please with their waltz and fantasy numbers, but get only fair response to their hula. Pair make attractive appearance, gal being a neat-looking redhead. Trixie, chubby blonde looker with infectious smile, works hard with her juggling, being called back for several encores.

Nelson m.c.s nicely and his band provides excellent background for the acts in addition to playing well for hoofing.

Liuzza.

## TULANE ROOM, N. O.

(JUNG HOTEL)

New Orleans, Dec. 29.

Bill Bradley Orch, Carlotta Dale, Talia, Lawrence and Betty Cook, Delphine.

Good show at this spot, which continues to play to nice biz. Bill Bradley's band has nearly everything on the brass at times. Bradley himself does nicely by a trombone and Ray McKinley, co-leader of the orch., goes to town on drums. The best feature of organization, however, is some boogie woogie piano work by Freddie Slack, with some backing from Delmar Kaplan on the bullfiddle.

Carlotta Dale, the band's vocalist, is easy on the eyes and has soft, rich voice which shows up particularly well in songs of type of 'South of the Border,' her principal contribution opening night. Balance of show is adequate, best

being a comely lass named Talia, who tosses her hips in a Gypsy dance and flowers at ringside tables to get nice returns.

Pair of blonde youngsters, Lawrence and Betty Cook, contribute several tap routines which win fair response. Delphine, an eye-fut with nifty chassis, leads a comic dummy named Popeye through a number of dance routines and capers which draw plenty of laughs.

Liuzza.

## It's Official, Frisco Fair Encores In '40

San Francisco, Jan. 1.

Culminating a fight that has been waged ever since the fair closed on Treasure Island last October, it was finally decided this week, once and for all, that there will be another Golden Gate International Exposition in 1940. That will be its name, in spite of pressure to have it changed to The San Francisco World's Fair, and the opening date has been set at May 25. It will close September 29.

George Creel, U. S. Commissioner to the 1939 fair, is leaving Saturday (6) for Washington to ask President Roosevelt to approve Federal participation to the tune of \$500,000.

Five members have been added to the committee in charge, bringing total to 15. As yet it has taken no action on question of naming top executives. In the administrative setup it looks as though there will be more old faces than new, but some of the new ones may be among the higher-ups. Leland Cutler has indicated an unwillingness to continue as president.

Just as last year's opening was preceded by several days of fiesta, beard-growing and costume-wearing by Frisco's fun-loving citizenry, so too will the '40 fair, which is scheduled to place more emphasis on the fun side, be preambled by a week of celebrating.

If credit were to be handed out to any one individual for the reopening, it would most certainly go to George D. Smith, manager of the Mark Hopkins hotel, who battled tirelessly and against seemingly insurmountable odds in the form of apathy and conservation on the part of those who hold the moneybags.

## Amazons Show at N. Y.

### Fair Causes \$23,854 Suit

Order of N. Y. supreme court Justice Samuel Hofstadter allowing an examination before trial of Frederick Ehrman, revealed an action by Wood & Hagan, Inc., against Ehrman, John Krinsky, Jerrol Krinsky, Adelaide Frisch, Paul E. Manheim, John Paiss, John Hertz, John Fell and Marco Hellman for \$23,854 based on breach of contract.

The defendants are all stockholders in Amazon Productions, Inc., which in April employed the plaintiff to erect a building at the N. Y. World's Fair at a cost of \$55,000. The plaintiff claims to have spent \$59,029 on the building, and received only \$35,173.

The corporation, which exhibited an Amazon show, is insolvent, the complaint declares, and the officers are being held to account for the balance.

## Pamela Henry-May in U.S. To Marry Chas. Nicolai

Show biz in London's West End is 'almost normal,' according to Pamela Henry-May, British actress, who arrived in New York last week. Almost all legit houses closed during the first blackouts have reopened, she said. Life goes on in the cinema, too.

The English actress is here to marry Charles Nicolai, non-professional, and continue on Broadway. She was in 'Victoria Regina' here last season.

## BIRTHS

Mr. and Mrs. George Luckey, son, in Boston, Dec. 19. Father is chief engineer at WORL, Boston.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Wilcoxon, daughter, in Hollywood, Dec. 28. Father is a screen actor; mother is Joan Woodbury of the films.

# OBITUARIES

## GUS YORKE

Augustus (Gus) Yorke, 79, member of the old vaude team of Yorke and Adams, died Dec. 27 in Hollywood. He was the father of Gabe Yorke, screen publicist. In addition to vaudeville, he appeared in drama and musical comedy over a period of half a century in this country and England. His last stage appearance was in London six years ago.

Widow and a daughter also survive.

## BILLY O'CONNOR

Billy O'Connor, 26, member of the O'Connor vaudeville family, died last week in Danville, Ill., of scarlet fever. O'Connor, who reportedly contracted the malady from one of his children, had to leave the act in Chicago, where the three other members of the family, Jack, Donald, film player, and Patsy, close to night.

Widow and two children survive.

## GYPSY NINA

Gypsy Nina, 39, singer and accordionist, whose real name was Helen Swan, died of a brain hemorrhage Dec. 26 at her mother's home in Hammond, Ind.

She had been active in vaudeville and night clubs for more than 10 years, and had broadcast from time to time.

## ANNA HAMMERSTEIN

Anna Hammerstein, 71, widow of Willie Hammerstein, manager for years of Hammerstein's Victoria theatre, N. Y., died in New York Dec. 23. In 1910, her sister, Agnes, Hammerstein's first wife died, and she married him a year later.

Surviving is a nephew, Oscar Hammerstein.

## JAMES C. HEILIG

James C. Heilig, 73, died Dec. 15 in Portland, Ore. He was a brother

of Calvin Heilig, Pacific Coast showman, and himself treasurer of the Heilig Theatre Co., making his headquarters at the Mayfair theatre, Portland.

Widow and two sons survive.

## HENRY A. BELLOWS

Henry A. Bellows, 54, former CBS v.p. and member of the Federal Radio Commission, died in Minneapolis Dec. 29. He is survived by his widow, son and daughter.

Further details in radio section.

## BERT L. FEIBLEMAN

Bert L. Feibleman, 64, died in New York Dec. 28. He was long connected with Cohan-Harris and David Belasco.

Further details in legit section.

## WILLIAM C. RUSHMER

William C. Rushmer, 71, outdoor amusement operator, died Dec. 25 in Los Angeles. He was a member of Showman's League of New York.

James M. Offield, 60, half-brother of Jack Oakie, pic star, was found dead, Dec. 27, apparently of a paralytic stroke, in his home in St. Louis. Surviving are his widow, a sister and Oakie, whose real name is Louis D. Offield.

Simon Rasch, 74, father of Eddie Rasch, vaude and night club singer, died Dec. 28 in Montefiore hospital, the Bronx. Surviving also are another son and three daughters.

Mrs. Virginia Dail, wife of John Dail, Paramount studio artist, died Dec. 23 in Hollywood after an automobile accident.

Ruth Ware Schkolnik, wife of Ilya Schkolnik, concertmaster of the Detroit symphony orchestra, died in Detroit Dec. 23 after a long illness.

## First Night Fanfare

Continued from page 118

early days of the theatre (it was apparently great stuff in Shakespeare's time), this practice has long been common in London and on the continent. It's also been quite the thing at operas, ballet and concerts. How it spread to Broadway isn't entirely clear—it's always been more or less in existence. But in recent seasons it has become so common as to approach the absurd. Any successful first performance is always greeted with a burst of bravos. And in some cases even the sorriest flops get a few hopeful yelps of the magic word. It's significant, however, that the shouts nearly always come from the back of the house. Maybe the 'bravo' boys aren't clagues, but it's curious how they're rarely down front.

Curtain speeches, once an inevitable part of a first-night, have virtually ceased to be heard. A few actors (generally those who have continued the practice from the old days—Fred Stone is an example) still step forward with a few remarks after several curtain calls. But curtain speeches are the exception rather than the rule nowadays. Such stars as Helen Hayes, Katharine Cornell, Alfred Lunt and Maurice Evans never make speeches, except on rare occasions for some special cause. Once upon a time there was always a call for 'author, author,' with the dramatist quickly popping from the wings to acknowledge the applause. The practice still exists in London, but is seen less and less in the U. S.

## Those Wires

The practice of sending opening night wires to those connected with the show is widespread and, if possible, growing more prevalent. Players such as Helen Hayes, Katharine Cornell, Tallulah Bankhead, Gertrude Lawrence and Beatrice Lillie receive several hundred telegrams, besides scores of flowers and presents, opening nights. Lesser-known people who have been in the theatre for several seasons may get as many as 200 wires. Even bit players and beginners rarely get less than a dozen. The same is also true, though to a less degree with authors, directors, producers and others associated with the production.

Of course most of the senders attempt to say something witty in the wires, preferably something particularly pertinent to the recipient. Puns on the titles are usual, although a certain sophisticated school of thought considers that kind of thing hackneyed. There are always a few messages of affectionate insult, such as the wire Joe Heidt, Theatre Guild press agent, sent to Howard Lindsay the opening night of 'Life with Father,' which Lindsay had adapted with Russel Crouse (at one time Heidt's boss). It read, 'I hope the run is as long as Crouse's nose.' Somewhat cryptic, as in the case of the one sent by Clare Boothe to Robert E. Sherwood the opening night of 'Abe Lincoln in Illinois.' It said simply, 'This will be a night in the theatre.'

Charles Harris, company manager for George Abbott, always sends himself a wire for Abbott shows. 'Best luck for the opening,' it always reads, and is invariably signed simply, 'Charlie.'

## MARRIAGES

Ruth Johnson, secretary to Howard Federer, general manager, Nebraska Theatres, Inc., to Hub Boswell, former Nebraska football player, July 8, in Lincoln, announced Dec. 24.

Bob Bellamy, KFAB-KFOR singer, to Maxine Peterson, non-pro, Dec. 22, in Lincoln, Neb.

Estelle Fox to Dr. Barney Kleiger, in New York, Dec. 24. Bride's with Mills Music.

Charles Cutler, in Waterbury, Conn., Dec. 24. Bride is actress at WBRY, Waterbury; he's announcer at WNLC, Waterbury.

Olive Dupice to Bill Welsh, in Denver, Dec. 23. He's manager of the news, sports and special events department at KFEL, Denver.

## AGMA Names Nine

### To Governing Board

American Guild of Musical Artists last week held its annual membership meeting at the Plaza hotel, New York, and elected nine members to the board of governors. They are: Arthur Anderson, Amy Ellerman, Arthur Mahoney, Ruth Breton, Eva Gauthier, Elizabeth Hoepfel, Julius Huehn, Frederick Jagel and Armand Tokatyan. They will serve three years.

Rest of the meeting was more or less routine, with reports of officers and committees and discussion of organization policies. Lawrence Tibbett, president, and other officers were elected at last year's meeting and still have two years to serve.



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