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L.C. Card No. A51-8965

# *The* RAILROAD HOUR

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## Association of American Railroads

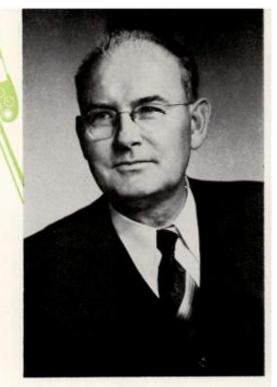
TRANSPORTATION BUILDING, WASHINGTON 6, D. C.

1951

### For Your Entertainment

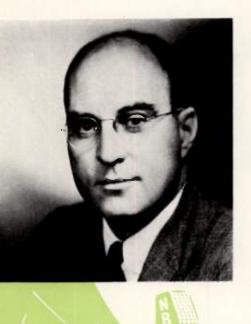
The Railroad Hour, featuring operettas and other musical productions, is presented under the sponsorship of the railroads which provide the American people with their basic transportation service.

This booklet is designed to help radio listeners to become better acquainted with the talented group of singers, musicians, writers and technicians who, working as a team, plan, prepare and produce the weekly programs. It also gives some interesting facts about the railroads.



WILLIAM T. FARICY, President, Association of American Railroads

### Salute to the Railroad Hour



The National Broadcasting Company is proud to present to its nationwide audience a program of such outstanding merit as the Railroad Hour. Numerous letters received from listeners and many samplings of opinion stamp this as one of the most appreciated musical features on the air. The Railroad Hour opens the galaxy of musical productions which makes Monday evening distinctly a Night of Music on the NBC network.

JOSEPH McCONNELL, President, National Broadcasting Company



GORDON MACRAE

### GORDON MACRAE

The career of Gordon MacRae, the young baritone star of the Railroad Hour, is a saga of America, the story of a youth who knew what he wanted and was able to get it because his abilities had the encouragement and guidance of understanding parents and the climate of freedom in which to grow.

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Gordon was born in East Orange, New Jersey. In his childhood he moved with his parents to Buffalo, and later to Syracuse, New York. There the youngster became locally famous for his acting, singing and mimicking talents. He participated wholeheartedly in school dramatics, operettas and musical comedies. The debating society and athletics also claimed his attention, and he won his letter in several sports.

The field that riveted Gordon's interest was acting and singing. While attending Deerfield Academy in Massachusetts, he played leading roles in several productions and helped organize a group of fellow students for personal appearances throughout New England.

In his school days Gordon toured England, France, Germany, Switzerland and Holland. Time and again that experience has proved of value to him in interpreting the assorted European characters he portrays in operettas and musical comedies.

At nineteen, Gordon won a magazine talent contest. The prize was a two weeks' engagement in a show at the New York World's Fair. He then joined the Millpond Players at Roslyn, Long Island. After a brief stay, he got a job as a page boy at the NBC Studios in New York. There, Horace Heidt, the noted orchestra leader, offered him a tryout. Gordon accepted, and toured the country with Heidt's Orchestra. While in Cleveland, Ohio, he married Sheila Stephens, whom he had met when she was star of the Millpond Players.

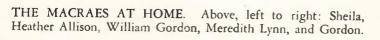
In 1942, Gordon made his stage debut in the Broadway hit "Junior Miss." When the show closed, he joined the aviation cadets, advancing from private to first lieutenant in the air branch.

Returning to civilian life in 1945, Gordon landed a role as the romantic juvenile in "Three to Make Ready." By this time he was much in demand as a singer. In 1947 he was put under contract by Warner Brothers and Capitol Records.

Then in 1948 came the greatest opportunity of all when Gordon was selected for the top role in the show that millions of Americans hear every Monday evening--The Railroad Hour.

Intensely serious about his work, Gordon is yet casual, relaxed and informal. He trusts people implicitly, and people like him instinctively.

Gordon and Sheila have three fine children-two girls and a boy-Meredith Lynn, Heather Allison and William Gordon, in descending order cf age.







**LUCILLE NORMAN**—The nation was reeling from the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on the day Lucille Norman made her first big bid for fame. News bulletins interrupted her two songs on the Metropolitan Opera auditions radio program. She won the enthusiastic approval of her critical auditors, and today she is established as a favorite with film, concert, recording, television and radio audiences.

Lucille's parents were singers who toured the country with an opera group. She was born in Lincoln, Nebraska.

A guest performance with the Colorado Symphony while she was still a high school student was her first professional appearance. After graduation, she took vocal training at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. Auditions at WLW in Cincinnati won her a position on the staff of the station.

Encouraged by her success at WLW, Lucille entered the regional competitions conducted by the Metropolitan Opera Company, and was asked to the finals in New York. Shortly thereafter, she was signed to an MGM contract and went to Hollywood, where she played feature roles in several films. She is now under contract with Warner Brothers.

Lucille was married to actor Bruce Kellogg in 1945. Now the parents of a four-year-old daughter, they spend much time at their beach cottage, where Lucille finds an outlet for her artistic tastes in decorating.





## Guest Stars

**DOROTHY KIRSTEN**—There's a Cinderella touch to Dorothy Kirsten's career. The talented soprano was a protege of the great "Met" singer. Grace Moore, who heard Miss Kirsten and promptly made arrangements for her to study in Italy. A few months later, with the outbreak of war in Europe, Miss Kirsten returned to America. She made her debut at the New York World's Fair in 1940.

Studying under the best teachers, Miss Kirsten made rapid progress. She sang with the Cincinnati. San Carlo, and Chicago Civic opera companies, and in concert. In 1942, Miss Kirsten made her debut at the Metropolitan. Critics immediately hailed her as "hrilliant." She ranks today as one of the Metropolitan's most distinguished artists.

Born in Montclair, New Jersey, Miss Kirsten comes from a family of musicians and vocal attists. Her grandfather was one of the founders of the American Federation of Musicians. Her mother was an organist and teacher. A great aunt, Katherine Hayes, was a famous operatic singer.

In addition to winning opera and concert laurels, Miss Kirsten has established herself as a recording and radio star of the first magnitude.

NADINE CONNER -- Nadine Conner comes from a musical family. Her mother and father, two sisters and three brothers are proficient musicians. Born in Los Angeles, Nadine made her first appearance as an entertainer at the age of eight. She studied dramatics and piano during her high school days and attended the College of Music at the University of Southern California. After winning a scholarship and studying for two years under noted teachers, she auditioned for a radio station and was signed as a staff vocalist. From then on Nadine's progress was rapid. She made guest appearances with Bing Crosby, Sigmund Romberg, Nelson Eddy and other top favorites. A tour with a Russian group and an

A tour with a Russian group and an engagement in leading roles with the Los Angeles Opera Company were followed by her debut at the Metropolitan Opera in Mozart's "The Magic Flute," in December, 1944. Miss Conner's career since then has been a succession of musical triumplis as a star of opera, concert, recordings and radio.

#### DOROTHY WARENSKJOLD-

Dorothy Warenskjold, born in Piedmont, California, is the granddaughter of Axel Warenskjold, who invented the Atlas Diesel engine and was knighted by the King of Norway.

Graduated from Miss Wallace's School for Girls in Piedmont and from Mills College, where she majored in languages, Miss Warenskjold launched her career in law. But she was chosen for leads in operettas so often that she changed her career to singing.

Her musical training started with piano lessons at the age of three. Then she took up violin. Later she became concert mistress of her school orchestra. She wrote lyrics to fit music and composed music for poems.

Miss Warenskjold's debut with the San Francisco Opera Company in 1948 was hailed as an outstanding news event, due partly to the fact that she had learned her role as Nanetta in "Falstaff" in six days.

Since then, Miss Warenskjold has been a star of the San Francisco Opera Company and has appeared on the concert stage and on leading radio programs.



Guest Stars





**IRRA PETINA**—Irra Petina's father was a general of the Imperial Army and a personal escort to Czar Nicholas II of Russia. When she was a baby, her parents fled to China to escape the revolution. Most of Irra's childhood was spent in Shanghai. In her teens she came to the United States to enter the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

Irra auditioned and signed with the Metropolitan Opera Company while still a student at the Institute. She was an immediate success in her professional debut. Her performances of "Carmen" are highlights of the Metropolitan season. A mezzo-soprano, she is equally at home on the stage of the Met or a Broadway theater.

Miss Petina left the Metropolitan on two occasions to appear in Broadway shows. In 1944, she sang the stellar role in "The Song of Norway." Three years later she starred in "Magdalena." She has made concert tours of Europe, South America and Canada.



MARION BELL — Marion Bell was born in St. Louis, where she became seriously interested in a musical career at the age of eight, after winning a contest as a singer on a local radio station.

When her family moved to California, Miss Bell continued her music lessons. One day her teacher took her for an audition with a vaudeville company. By mistake, the two got in the wrong audition room and discovered later she had performed for the Marx Brothers, who were then casting for their road company production, "A Night at the Opera." They signed her for a role, and she also played in the movie of the same name.

Miss Bell returned to school from the road show and was graduated from Hammond Hall School for Girls, in Hollywood, following which she studied in Italy. With war threatening, she returned home and made her debut at a concert in Santa Barbara. After an engagement with the San Francisco Opera Company, MGM signed her, and she sang opposite James Melton in "Ziegfeld Follies." She has appeared at the Opera Nacional in Mexico City, and has sung leading roles with the St. Louis Municipal Opera Company. EILEEN WILSON ---The lovely voice of Eileen Wilson was famous before the girl herself was known to American music lovers. For hers was the singing voice of Ava Gardner in the motion pictures "One Touch of Venus" and "The Hucksters."

Eileen was born in San Diego, California, the daughter of Lieutenant Commander and Mrs. W. W. Eshelman. She lived in the East as a child, and later the family moved back to San Diego. Eileen attended high school there, became star of the school's annual operetta, and decided to make music her career. After high school she attended the University of California, where she received an A.B. degree in music.

While in college she had solo spots on local radio shows. When she turned professional with her own program over a local Los Angeles station, she adopted the last name of her voice coach, Art Wilson. She soon became featured vocalist for a network radio show.

**Guest Stars** 



**PATRICE MUNSEL**—Patrice Munsel, erstwhile captain of a girls' football team, made her debut at the Metropolitan Opera in the role of Philina in "Mignon" in 1943, at the age of eighteen, and became known as "the baby of the 'Met'."

Miss Munsel is in great demand for concert, stage, recording and radio appearances, as well as opera.

Born in Spokane, Washington, Patrice started her musical career with rhythmic whistling lessons, strictly for her own amusement, at the age of seven. Shortly afterwards, and still for amusement, she took up singing lessons. This led to the discovery that she had a voice worth training.

After two years of study in New York, Patrice obtained an audition at the Metropolitan. She showed up with music for three difficult coloratura arias! The maestro invited her to sing all of them. She scored a decided hit, and four weeks later she was called for her debut. **EVELYN CASE** Evelyn Case, a native of San Antonio, Texas, is an accomplished cellist in addition to possessing a soprano voice of rare beauty. She studied in San Antonio, Chicago and New York, and spent two years with the famed teacher Rosati.

On Broadway, she has appeared in leading roles in "The Red Mill," "The Boys From Syracuse" and "The Time, The Place, The Girl." For several years she was soloist at Radio City Music Hall in New York with Jan Peerce and Robert Weede, both of the Metropolitan Opera Company. She has been guest soloist with the Philadelphia Symphony, the Houston Symphony and the Ford Symphony, and has starred in several operas with nationally-famous civic groups.

Miss Case is a favorite visiting artist on major radio shows, and with movie audiences, being well-known for her Warner Brothers musical short features. During World War II, she spent ten months in Europe entertaining troops with a U.S.O. unit.





# **Guest Stars**

KENNY BAKER - Kenny Baker, one of the most popular entertainers in the show business, is a native of Monrovia, California. His first public appearance as a singer was in the choir of a church at Long Beach, California, where he attended school. His first radio program was a fifteen-minute sustaining series on a Long Beach station. The "big break" came when Baker won

The "big break" came when Baker won a contest in competition with 1.500 entrants. The prize was a two weeks' engagement with a famous band. While collecting his prize, a movie director signed him to a contract and he auditioned for and got a job singing with the Jack Benny radio show. Since then he has starred in his own shows and has been in great demand as a guest singer. He estimates that he has participated in several thousand programs.

Baker has a keen sense of humor and a quick wit. He dabbles at cooking, and, as a hobby, collects mementoes of his shows. His advice to beginners with talent is: stick to it; devote every possible moment to practicing; be honest and sincere in approach, and, above all, be an individual. Carmen Dragon, who both arranges and directs the music on the Railroad Hour show, is one of radio's most talented and versatile musical directors.

Conductor of the Orchestra

Born in Antioch, California, Carmen inherited his love of music from parents whose household hummed with musical practicings, Carmen and his two brothers contributing their share of the noise. The family held weekly musical sessions, with each member alternating on as many as three instruments. Through these family ensembles, Carmen developed a specific talent on the trombone and bass, and he later played both instruments in symphony orchestras.

During high school days, he played piano, trumpet, trombone, string bass and tuba.

Carmen's musical education took no specific direction until he entered San Jose State College where he received advanced training in orchestration, composition, counterpoint and other highly technical subjects. He finally settled on conductorship as his particular musical field and made his first professional appearances with a band that toured West Coast colleges playing for dances and proms.

In San Francisco he achieved an extraordinary distinction for his 22 years when he became staff arranger for Meredith Wilson, who then headed the NBC San Francisco orchestra.

When Wilson went to Hollywood in 1937, Carmen became his chief arranger. When Wilson entered the Army, Carmen took over his baton. His talents as an arranger and his professional skill as an orchestra leader were in constant demand in motion pictures and radio. His score for "Cover Girl" won an Academy award in 1944. Dragon is not only a professional musician, he is also a composer in his spare time.

As musical director and arranger of the Railroad Hour, Dragon is called upon to adapt some of the world's finest musical literature to the requirements of a half-hour radio program each week. He must not only adapt the music, preserving its mood, but must fit the adaptation to the requirements of the script. How well he has succeeded in doing this is attested by the growing popularity of the Railroad Hour.



## CHORAL DIRECTOR

The chorus, led by Norman Luboff, together with the orchestra, provides the essential background of mood and atmosphere for the Railroad Hour. It embellishes the personalities of the main actors, emphasizes action and connects the threads of the narrative into a complete story.

Norman Luboff's training as a vocalist began in grade school in Chicago, and continued through his undergraduate days at the University of Chicago, where he became a protege of the famed choral conductor, Noble Cain. Encouraged by his fine baritone voice, Luboff envisioned a career as a singer.

Upon his graduation from the University in 1940, however, he took up teaching music theory at Chicago Central College and became interested in composition and directing.

After three years in the Army Signal Corps during World War II, Luboff located in New York, where he became choral director of two top radio shows.

The mixed group he directs in support of Gordon Mac-Rae and guest stars each Monday evening includes some of the top names in the field of choral work—Gene Lahnam, baritone, a noted director in his own right; Bill Lee, bass, famed also as a trombonist; Gil Mershon, first tenor, widely known as a soloist; second tenor Bob Wacker, who has a national reputation for his singing commercials.

In the feminine contingent of the Railroad Hour chorus are several who have established themselves in the highest range of choral singers.

In preparation for the Railroad Hour each Monday evening, Luboff first meets with orchestra leader Carmen Dragon to go over the arrangements. Luboff scores the individual lead sheets for each chorister and works out the introductions and fadeouts. Then the chorus meets as a unit for a busy session just before full cast rehearsals. Each member contributes suggestions, and Luboff, if possible, incorporates them into the script. By the time the program is ready to go on the air, the director claims he can forget about effects and technicalities and join his hearty baritone into the blend of voices which sets the mood and atmosphere for the show. JEAN HOLLOWAY—Jean Holloway is a young woman of many talents. Singer, actress, musician and writer, she adapts to radio requirements many of the original works of the famous composers whose musical masterpieces are heard on the Railroad Hour. Miss Holloway's creativeness, skill and writing technique enable her to compress two-and-a-half-hour stage shows into half-hour radio productions.

Jean began taking music lessons at the age of seven. Before she had reached her teens, she was showing promise in dramatics. She loved play acting; she wanted to be an actress. While attending San Jose State College in California, she began to write dramatic skits with good parts in them for herself. When she visited New York she took along a few scripts she had written. One was shown to Kate Smith, and Miss Holloway was surprised when the famous singer accepted it and asked for others. This led to her first contract as full-time writer. Then but nineteen years of age, Jean sidetracked her ambitions for a stage career and soon became one of the top scriptwriters.



## SCRIPT WRITERS

LAWRENCE AND LEE—Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee are masters of the art of adapting stage musicials to the format of radio programs. Their skill as adapters and their ability to create original works have carried the two Ohioans to the top rank in the intensely competitive field of radio and television writing.

Jerome Lawrence was born in Cleveland. He was graduated from Ohio State University, and is a member of Phi Beta Kappa. For a while he was editor of a small town daily newspaper. Moving to California, Lawrence worked at an independent radio station until he was employed by one of the large networks.

Robert E. Lee was born in Elyria, Ohio, and was graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University.



A career in advertising was his goal, so he applied for and got a job as a directorproducer with one of the major agencies in New York City.

In military service during World War II, the two pooled their talents in writing and directing programs for the entertainment of service men. Since leaving military service they have continued to work together as a team.



#### "Ladies and gentlemen—the Railroad Hour!"

the Announcer

When the "show train" is announced from the NBC studio in Hollywood each Monday evening, the program of music is preceded by the voice of **Marvin Miller**, speaking for the sponsors. Friendly, enthusiastic, dignified, announcer Miller greets millions of listeners and welcomes them to the sparkling entertainment provided on the Railroad Hour.

Miller's training for his career as a radio announcer began in his high school days in St. Louis, his home town, where he won several oratorical contests. As a freshman at Washington University, he added acting to his other talents. He decided that radio offered a natural outlet for his energies. He quickly won an audition at a local station and got a job. He wrote the dialogue for and played the parts of two Englishmen, two Frenchmen, two Americans, an Italian and a straight man for a five-days-a-week show. This superman stint led to a small dramatic role and eventually a staff announcing job at the largest St. Louis station.

With a job he liked, Miller enrolled again at Washington University, and in 1934 received his bachelor's degree. He then concentrated on music study and became one of the nation's foremost announcers in that field. Meanwhile, he had attained fame as a news broadcaster.

Having exhausted the possibilities in St. Louis, Miller moved to Chicago, where he soon became a leading announcer and actor. Just before moving to Hollywood in 1944 he was appearing on an average of 45 broadcasts a week and was dubbed, by *Variety*, "Chicago's one-man radio industry."

Currently busy with a heavy schedule of radio and picture assignments, Miller yet finds time to write poetry, read many books, and collect classical recordings running into the thousands. He is presently at work on a book of verse of his own composition.