

News of Radio and Its Personalities

HAVE YOU A LITTLE HILL BILLY AT HOME?

Then Keep Him There, for Radio Auditions Show That This Unrecognized Talent Is Best Left Unrecognized

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BY CARROLL NYE

Have you a little hill billy in your home? Is your neighborhood overrun with potential Crosbys, Whitmans and Fromans?

If the answer is in the affirmative, ponder well before you storm the portals of the nearest radio station to get them an audition.

Radio impresarios are admittedly on a never-ending search for new talent; but experience with countless bathroom baritones, church social dramatic readers and drug-store comedians has made them skeptical.

It is so easy to sit before the loud-speaker and say to yourself, "I could do better than that if they'd only give me a chance."

EVEN IN GRANDMA'S DAY

When grandma is in a mellow mood she will admit she always had a secret hankering to go on the stage. She was sure she could give Sarah Bernhardt a run for her money after her friends told her "she done just fine" with that rendition of "Boots" at the graduation exercises.

Sister Alice was told that the movies would grab her up because of the radiant beauty and undeniable talent she displayed in the senior play.

And now we find Uncle George flirting with the idea that his baritone is more resonant than Tibbett's. George discovered his vocal potentialities with a lusty rendition of "The Road to Mandalay" while taking his morning shower.

But facing a microphone and a sprinkling system are two different things. The fundamental difference lies in the total dissimilarity between bathroom and broadcasting studio acoustics.

Grandma's talents never were displayed on the professional stage because theater folk were considered on the brink of perdition. The very idea was iniquitous.

Perhaps sister Alice defied parental objections and set out on a movie career. Modern mothers and fathers still cling to the idea that the theatrical field is crossed with dangerous paths but their admonishments usually fall on deaf ears these days.

TOO YOUNG TO BE TAINTED

Radio presents no such problem. It is too young to be tainted. Its doors are wide open to all types of embryonic entertainers.

Motion-picture companies spend vast sums on screen tests to meet the constant demand for new faces. Radio offers auditions to cope with the demand for new voices.

Screen tests are not available to every Tom, Dick and Harry, but radio auditions are open to all applicants—with reasonable exceptions.

We sought testimonials regarding auditions from officials of three representative Southland stations, KHJ, KFVB and KNX. Our object was to find out whether so many listeners are justified in indicating radio on the ground that it only scratches the surface in its search for talent.

KHJ gives auditions Monday and Friday mornings to all comers—hillbillies, sopranos, baritones, tenors, comedians, dramatic actors, et al. All of these auditions are supervised by the Thomas Lee Artists' Bureau, which functions in much the same manner as the actors' agent of the stage and screen world.

During the auditions the station's "brain trust," headed by Mahlon Merrick, program director, sits in one studio, while the applicants face a microphone in an adjoining studio.

BEAUTY OUT OF LUCK

In this manner the talent is judged solely on its microphonic merit. The seductive wiles of a beautiful blonde are totally lost on the cold-blooded group in the other studio.

Merrick asserted that auditions

often prove to be unfair because the applicant is not at his best. Nervousness and "mike fright" may throw a singer off pitch and cause him to give a performance that offers no indication of his potentialities.

But poise is one of the first requirements. Raymond Paige, musical director of the Don Lee System, is struck, first, by an applicant's professional manner during an audition, withholding judgment on his musicianship until he is convinced the applicant has sufficient poise to be an asset to the staff.

Merrick said that auditions produce few "discoveries." Most of the applicants are devoid of real talent, while others have talents that are unsuitable to radio.

HOW AUDITIONS WORK

KHJ's experience with its male trio, the Rhythm Kings, presents the clearest illustration of the ramifications of auditions.

We were informed that they were "fair" on their audition, but the station officials immediately recognized that they had native ability and a distinctive style in song renditions.

The trio was given a tryout on the Happy Go Lucky Hour and they made a hit. From then on they were groomed for various types of sustaining features and eventually were developed to the point where they arranged their own numbers to suit the sponsors who wanted them on commercial programs.

KNX maintains a filing system that carries data on thousands of entertainers seeking radio engagements—listing the necessary qualifications, experience and desirability.

There are no stated periods of auditions. The station calls in the most logical candidates when an opening appears for a certain type of entertainer. Thomas Freebairn Smith, who joined the station's staff through the audition route, is the one who usually acts as judge.

Approximately 1500 applicants are heard during a year's time and all of them are given a hearing eventually.

A WASTE OF TIME

KFVB operates in much the same manner but covers less ground. Jerry King, manager of the station, declares that he is not in favor of general auditions because they work an injustice on the artist and the percentage of good material among those who answer the call is so low that it is a waste of time.

"Ninety-five per cent of our talent comes to us through the recommendations of our staff artists or through agents who know what we are looking for and are qualified to find it," he said.

The National Broadcasting School is evolving a plan to give auditions to all comers and submit confidential reports on their findings to the Southland stations. It remains to be seen whether the plan is workable.

A reputable station remunerates any artist it accepts through auditions or other means unless the individual expressly states that he wishes to work for nothing.

Some of the smaller stations are guilty of "bootlegging" talent. They put entertainers "on trial" on a certain program and keep them there without pay until the entertainer gives up or gains recognition from a larger station.

Judging from the testimonials, the stations are on the alert for unrecognized talent. The ground is pretty thoroughly covered.

Recognized artists demand remuneration in accordance with their power to draw a listening audience.

The only search involved in getting them on the air is the search for sufficient capital to meet their salary demands.

KFSG—Angelus Temple, 6:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.
KGER—Lone Beach, 1260 K., 2204 M.—

5:30 a.m.—M. E. Church, Lone Beach radio chapel; 9:30 a.m.—Tasman's Men's Bible Class.
KMPC—First Methodist Episcopal Church, 11 a.m.; Church of Latter Day Saints, 3.
KNX—First Fundamental Church, 11 a.m.; Los Angeles, 1650 K., 285.5 M.—Hollywood Presbyterian Church, 8 p.m.
KPPC—Pasadena Presbyterian Church, 9:30, 11 and 7:30.

7 to 11 a.m.

KECA—Gruen & Hall (C.) 8; Capitol Theater (C.) 8:15; Mandoleers (C.) 9:15; Unitarian Church, 10:30.

KPAC—Country Church of Hollywood, 8:30; KFI—Church quarter-hour, 9; Dr. Caselberry, 9:15; Promenade Concert, 9:30; National Youth Conference (C.) 10:30.

KPOX—Spanish songs, 6; El Despertador, 6:30; Percy & His Father, 8.
KPSG—Angelus Temple, 6:30 and 10:30.
KFVB—Penny Paper Man, 6:15.

KOER—Comic Strip, 7:30; Rev. Barr, 8:30; Tasman's Bible Class, 9:30.

KHJ—Times Comics, 8; Church of the Air, 8:30; Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir (C.) 9; Madison Ensemble (C.) 9:15; Dr. Christian Lange (C.) 9:45; Home Sweet Home Concert, 10.

KMPC—Swedish Tabernacle, 8:30; Morning Watch Quartet, 9; Echoes of the Cathedral, 10.

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KMYR—Children's hour, 8; Stuart Hamilton, 10.

KNX—Shapiro's Glee, 7; Bob Shuler, 9; Dr. King, 9:45; Salon Group, 10.

KPPC (1210 Kc.)—Pasadena Presbyterian Church, 9.

KRRD—Morning concert, 7:45.
KTM—Spanish music, 7; Judge Rutherford, 8:30; Jehovah's Witnesses, 9.

11 a.m. to 12 Noon

KECA—Unitarian Church.

KPAC—Wilshire Christian Church, 11.
KFI—Gene Arnold's Orch. (C.) 11; Trio, 11:45.

KPOX—St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 11.
KFVB—Jean Leonard, piano, 11.

KOER—Rev. C. E. Fuller, 11.
KHJ—Helen Morgan (C.) 11; Geortiana, 11:15.

KMPC—Methodist Episcopal Church, 11.
KMTR—First Fundamental Church, 11.
KNX—Lal Chand Mehra, 11:45.

KPPC—Pasadena Presbyterian Church, 11.

12 Noon to 2 p.m.

KECA—Vocations, 1:15.
KELW—Marian Harrison, 12:30.

KPAC—Screw vote contest, 1.
KFI—Wayne King's Orch. (C.) 12; Jan Garber's Orch. (C.) 12:30; Railroad Stories (C.) 1; Wildroot Institute (C.) 1:15; Hoover Orchestra and Choir (C.) 1:30.

KPOX—Ted Bliss & Music, 12:30.
KGER—Helene Smith, piano, 1.
KHJ—New York Philharmonic Orch. (C.) 12.

KMPC—News, 12:30; Happy Chaplins, 1; Music Garden, 1:30.

KMTR—Wishing Gate, 12:30; Karl Brangenberg, tenor, 1:15; piano, 1:30; Maxwell Choristers, 1:45.

KNX—Louise Johnson, 12:30.
KTM—Essie Loy, 1:30.

2 to 4 p.m.

KECA—John Smallman, 2; Bureau of Simplicity, 2:30; Catholic Hour (C.) 3; Pianos (C.) 3:30.

KFI—Juvenile Orch. 2:30; Myronoff, piano, 3; poetry, 3:45.

KFI—Sunday Players (drama), 2; Grand Hotel (C.) 2:30; U.S.C. Musical, 3; Lal Chand Mehra, 3:30; Engineering Thrills (C.) 3:45.

KPOX—Christian Science program, 2.
KPPC—Mother Spencer, 3.
KGER—Lone Beach Band, 2:30.

KOER—Piano, 2.

KHJ—Salon Moderne (C.) 2; organ, 2:30; Claude Swerton (C.) 2:45; Rabbi Margolin, 3; Prof. Lindler, 3:15; Smiling Ed McConnell (C.) 3:30; H. V. Kaltenborn (C.) 3:45.

KMPC—Newman Club, 2; Uncle John, 2:45; Church of Latter Day Saints, 3.

KMYR—Oscar Jones, tenor, 2.
KNX—Exposition Park program, 2.
KTM—Greek program, 2; Spanish Catholic Hour, 3.

4 to 6 p.m.

KELW—Federal Revue, 5.
KPAC—Congress Hall Band, 4; Christian Science program, 5; Mon. Revue, 5:30.

KFB—Vincent Lopez (C.) 4; Baker's broadcast (C.) 4:30; Eddie Cantor, 5.

KPOX—Cathedral Church, 4:30; Paul Kain's Orch., 5; Jack Mauric's Orch., 5:30.

KPPC—Kay Kayser's Orch., 4:30; Paul Kain's Orch., 5.

KGER—Dr. Michrison, 5.

KELW—Newman Adventurers, 4; Brigade Orch. (C.) 4:15; Willard Babson (C.) 4:30; Quartet, 4:45; Evelyns in Paris (C.) 5; Columbia Brass (C.) 5:30.

KMPC—Maudr Hushes, 4:30.
KMTR—Detective Stories, 4:45; Lucky Stars, 5.

KNX—English, 4:15; Rev. Bob Shuler, 4:30; talk by Ethel Hubler, 5; Dr. John Mathews, 5:30.

KRRD—Music Revue, 4.

6 to 7 a.m.

KECA—Helen Lewis, piano, 6; organ, 6:15.
KPAC—Harriet Sunday, 6; studio program, 6:15.

KFI—Manhattan Merry-Go-Round (C.) 6; American Album (C.) 6:30.

KPOX—Piano, 6; School Kids, 6:30; his-
tory, 6:45.
KFVB—News, 6; Jack Joy's Orch., 6:15.
KGER—News, 6.

KHJ—Bath Club Revue (C.) 6.
KMTR—News, 6; Santaria's Orch., 6:15; Rabbi Kohn, 6:30; Musicals, 6:45.

KNX—Dr. Theodore Curtis Abel, 6:30.

7 to 8 p.m.

KPAC—"Ransoon" (play), 7:15; Seth Parker (C.), 7:45.

KFI—Jack Benny (C.) 7; R.C.A. program (C.) 7:30; Makers of History, 7:45.

KPOX—Kay Kayser's Orch., 7; "American Queens," 7:30.

KPSG—Angelus Temple, 7:30.
KFVB—Kay Kayser's Orch., 7; Strine Ensemble, 7:30.

KGER—Frances Foster, 7.
KHJ—"Your Child" (C.) 7; Merry-makers, 7:30.

KMTR—Rough Riders, 7; Mr. Bull and 8 Ball, 7:30.

KNX—Julie Keller, 7; Jay Rubinfeld, 7:15.
KPPC—Pasadena Presbyterian Church, 7.

8 to 9 p.m.

KECA—Pierce Brothers Quartet, 8:15.
KPAC—Wilshire Presbyterian Church, 8.
KFI—Walter Winchell (C.) 8:15; Death Valley Days (C.) 8:30.

KPOX—First Church of Christ, Scientist, 8.
KFVB—Sunday Night High Jinks, 8.
KGER—Orson, 8.

KOER—Civic Hour, 8.
KHJ—Nierra Chorus, 8:30.
KMTR—Bibi Magic, 8; Gypsy Serenaders, 8:30.

KNX—First Presbyterian Church, 8.
KPPC—Pasadena Presbyterian Church, 8.
KTM—Judge Rutherford, 8; Piano Duo, 8:15; Greek program, 8:30.

9 to 10 a.m.

KECA—University of California (C.) 9:30.
KPAC—Better Music Revue, 9; organ, 9:45.
KFI—Ghost Stories (C.) 9; Readers' Guide, 9:15; Mirth Parade, 9:30.

KPOX—News, 9:15; Embassy Orch., 9:30.
KFVB—"French Coronets," 9; Tapestry of Life, 9:30; Embassy Orch., 9:45.
KGER—Concert, 9.
KHJ—New Star Revue, 9; Ace Brigade's Orch. (C.) 9:30.

KMPC—Milo Jamieson, 9:30.
KMTR—Beverly Hill Billies, 9.
KNX—News, 9; Judge Rutherford, 9:15; Calmon Lubovicki, 9:30.
KTM—Charles Lirifra 9:15; concert, 9:30.

After 10 p.m.

KECA—Bride of Dramaland (C.) 10:15.
KPAC—Les Hitz's Orch., 10:30.
KFI—News, 10; Richfield, 10:15.
KPOX—Symphony, 10; Mauric's Orch., 11.
KFVB—News, 10; Chauncey Haines's Orch., 10:10; Paul Kain's Orch., 11; George Redman's Orch., 11:30.

KOER—News, 10; Cinderella, 10:05.
KFI—Jerry Phillips Orch., 10:30.
KHJ—Times world-wide news, 10; Edge-water Beach Orch. (C.) 10:10; Gus Arnheim, 11; organ, 11:30.

KMPC—Symphony Hours, 10; Paul Kain's Orch., 11.
KMTR—News, 10:15; Montmartre Orch., 11:15.
KNX—Orson, 10; Salvation Army, 10:15; poetry, 10:30.