

TOSCANINI TO CONDUCT TEN NBC CONCERTS

NEW YORK, March 4—David Sarnoff, president of RCA and chairman of the Board of NBC, revealed at a press conference on Feb. 24 details about the series of radio concerts to be directed by Arturo Toscanini over coast to coast National Broadcasting Company networks.

The series will consist of ten weekly broadcasts for which Mr. Toscanini will receive \$4,000 net per concert, Mr. Sarnoff said. The broadcasts will commence after the Maestro arrives in the United States in December, 1937. He is under contract to NBC for the duration of the ten week period, and will not be available as a conductor of any other organization during that period.

Mr. Toscanini will conduct the NBC Symphony Orchestra which will be increased in number for these concerts. Choice of programme material for this sustaining series will be entirely in the hands of the Maestro who has expressed his intention to offer "the very best music" during these radio concerts. The day and hour of the broadcasts and other details have not yet been determined.

Mr. Sarnoff announced that the concerts would be presented at Radio City in NBC's Studio 8-H. This studio accommodates an audience of approximately 1,500 persons. Admission will be free and by invitation.

Mr. Sarnoff stated that Maestro Toscanini's acceptance of the invitation to return to the United States for the purpose of conducting these radio concerts was determined largely by his belief that through the medium of radio broadcasting he will be able to reach countless millions of listeners throughout the nation who would otherwise be unable to hear and enjoy such music.

VERY GOOD, EDDY

Up until air-time last Sunday night, there was some doubt that Nelson Eddy, who had been off the air because of illness for two weeks, would be able to return as host of the CBS "Open House" programme. But at eight, Eddy came to the microphone, greeted his listeners and sang his entire programme flawlessly.

Behind the microphone, in the control room, a man in evening dress watched Eddy work. He was a young baritone, Ray Middleton. All day Saturday, he had rehearsed the same programme that Eddy was singing. He was that movie-familiar, but that radio unknown—the "stand-in."

On Tuesday, when Eddy left the Chicago hospital to convalesce at his aunt's home in Philadelphia, the "Open House" producers insisted that he rest another week. The baritone protested that he was in fine fettle, but compromised when a "stand-in" for the rehearsal was suggested. Middleton agreed to take over the job of preliminary rehearsals with the Pasternack orchestra Saturday so that when Eddy arrived in New York Sunday afternoon, his programme was already timed, routine and set for the air. The "stand-in" idea had been so successful that the broadcast went on the air just as it had been rehearsed on Saturday.

After the show, Jean Hight, CBS production man for the show, greeted Eddy as an old friend. The baritone asked: "Do you remember when you paid me exactly \$15 a programme for singing on a Philadelphia station?" "Nelson," was the reply, "you mean \$10."

Pay It With Music

A mortgage which has hovered over Grace Church, in Glendora, California, for more than 20 years was paid off last week. This would not be a radio item except for the fact that the rector of the church is the Reverend Henry Scott Rubel who, under the pseudonym of Hal Raynor, pens Joe Penner's silly radio ditties.

With his income derived from the Penner programme the Rev. Rubel was able to pay off this mortgage in less than a year and a half. In the congregation, which has doubled since songwriter Raynor—or the Rev. Rubel, if you prefer—ascended the pulpit are as genial a group of parishioners as ever filled a collection plate.

A round double-chinned man, Raynor wears his surplice and clerical robes with dignity. No one would guess from his manner that his wife is a former Polities girl—that he can jingle out gay tunes on a piano. He is a minister of the Episcopal Church—a bit jovial in his service of the Lord—but conducting his services in traditional solemnity.

As faithfully as they attend church each Sunday morning, the parishioners of Grace Church gather around their respective radios each Sunday evening to listen to Joe Penner's CBS broadcast and the newest song written by their talented clergyman—the 200-pound jovial Reverend Henry Scott Rubel.

LULLABY LADY CAN PINCH HIT AS A MUSICIAN

CHICAGO, March 4—Opal Craven, Lullaby Lady on the Carnation Contented programme, could throw a surprise into the studio audience any day by stepping from the ensemble and substituting for any of the musicians in string or brass section.

Miss Craven acquired her ability as an instrumentalist as a member of the Craven family orchestra which included herself, three sisters and their father, during 16 years on Chautauqua and lyceum circuits. This enterprise was started when Opal was only seven years old. In later years there were few instruments in the orchestra which she did not master. She has kept up on all of them but now specializes in voice.

The Contented programme, with Vivian Della Chiesa as soprano soloist, orchestra directed by Frank Black, the Carnation quartet and Doring Sisters vocal trio is heard each Monday over the NBC-Red network at 10 p.m., EST, under the sponsorship of the Carnation Company.

What Does a Maestro Think About, Anyway?

If you wonder what a maestro like Andre Kostelanetz thinks about, with complete responsibility for an orchestra of 45, plus a vocal chorus to direct, take a look at the labors of the least known member of a musical aggregation—the drummer.

The drummer is least known to the layman because everybody seems to think that all he has to do is keep on beating those drumsticks. To musicians, however, the drum furnishes not only a basic rhythmic pattern necessary to almost every orchestration, but makes a definite contribution as a solo instrument.

Herbert L. Quigley, Andre Kostelanetz' drummer, calls attention to the fact that one of Richard Wagner's little known manuscripts contains a long passage in which every fourth measure is a drum roll.

The following compilation may give some idea of the scope of Quigley's activities. He must play: the tympani (kettle drums, one 25 inches and one 28 inches across), the xylophone, the vibraphone, orchestra chimes (or golckenspiel), a keyed harmonica, a snare drum, wood blocks, Chinese temple blocks, maracas (gourds filled with buckshot or dried beans), marimba, tambourine, two brass cymbals, castanets, triangle (made of steel, gives a high bell-like tone of great delicacy), the Oriental gong, and the African or Indian tom-tom. In his spare time, Mr. Quigley has to account for trick effects which range from the click of an actual mouse-trap to the illusion of instruments known only in the days of Biblical antiquity, made of shells and animal horns.

Ordinarily, laymen do not realize the number of works in which composers have paid tribute to the drum as a solo instrument. "Dance on a Dime," from John W. Green's "Night Club Suite," played on Kostelanetz' broadcast Wednesday, March 3, contained a drum solo written especially for Mr. Quigley.

One of the world's most popular classical works, the "Danse Macabre" of Saint-Saens, contains a prolonged drum passage, which is actually solo, thought to the layman it may only appear as a rhythmic background. Kostelanetz' drummer points out.

"In some rare symphonic works there are as many as 16 kettle drums," he adds, "allowing four massive chords of four notes each." Among his most valued possessions, Quigley gives high place to a Zildjian brass, hand-spun cymbal marked F (for finest quality) which came from Turkey before the World War. To a drummer, the name Zildjian on a cymbal is the equivalent of Stradivarius on a violin. For centuries this family has been producing instruments by a secret process of metal-molding still unknown to the rest of the world.

Ultra-modern among the drummer's collection is the vibraphone, attached to an electric motor, which gives to the mellow tones struck from the metal-alloy keys the vibrato—or trembling vibration—usually associated with violins and other string instruments.

So much for an elementary glimpse of what only one member of the Kostelanetz orchestra thinks about. Multiply such bewildering duties by 45 and add the complexities of a high calibre vocal arrangement, and you have an inkling, at any rate, of some portion of what Maestro Kostelanetz has to think about!

Will all the boys and girls who still want to be a maestro please raise their right hands?

Cold Comfort

Jack Oakie views with alarm the report that the U. S. government has bought 1,500,000 handkerchiefs for the use of the Army. Jack insists "You can't tell what may happen when that many soldiers come to blows."

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Benny Heads East With New Contract

HOLLYWOOD, March 4—Jack Benny has signed a three-year contract with his present sponsor which will keep him on the air until the summer of 1940.

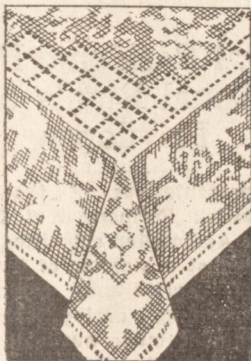
According to an agreement reached between the comedian and General Foods, the makers of Jell-O, Benny will be heard exclusively during the next three years under the auspices of the "six delicious flavors."

Mary Livingstone, wise-cracking heckler and poetess, has also been signed on the three-year basis.

The Benny programmes will continue to be heard Sundays over the NBC-Red network at 7 p.m., EST.

On March 7 Benny will shift the scene of his microphone activities from Hollywood to New York for a series of three Sunday broadcasts.

The Benny troupe, with the exception of Mary Livingstone, who is already in the East, will arrive in New



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York a day or two ahead of the March 7 programme. In addition to his cast, Jack will be accompanied by his writers, Eddie Beloin and Bill Morrow, and Harry Baldwin, his man-of-al-work. Harry is the fellow who has been trying to wish Jack a "Happy New Year" every Sunday night since the beginning of the year. The gang will occupy an entire pullman car. Pebble-voiced Andy Devine is also expected to make the cross-country trip to Gotham. If he does, it will mark the first time he has ever been east of Detroit.

For More Radio

See Page 2

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