

of the people, or the general emotional vibrations of the times, can leave motion pictures out of his calculations.

Besides, not all motion pictures are made in Hollywood. Although it is traitorous for me to say so, I firmly believe that Hollywood will not always be the film capitol of the world. There will be hundreds of smaller motion picture companies throughout the country—this instead of a few large companies out here. Day after day the present Hollywood set-up becomes more impossible, commercially — and daily more independent producers appear.

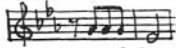
Meanwhile Hollywood is rapidly becoming the radio center of America. There is a migration of the "talent" that radio craves out to the West Coast. At the corner of Sunset Boulevard and Vine Streets one can see a vast radio edifice slowly arising, which is only equalled by the new Columbia Broadcasting Building coming up right alongside of it. Programs originating from the orchestral recording stages of the big studios prove that these recording stages make wonderful radio stations; unfortunately however, they are usually cluttered up with studio business.

## OVER THE AIR

GODDARD LIEBERSON

**H**ABIT is a wonderful thing. In the play *Casey Jones*, Casey's father, an old railroad man, can tell the time without looking at his watch. I, an old radio listener, am no less remarkable; for I can turn switches on and off with an accuracy which would spell terror to all radio speakers, and to a few announcers.

No idle boast this, for I have long been subjected to an enormous amount of musicological effluvium. And the announcers who pronounce the names of Cameron or Kennedy get only as far as Cam or Ken before my hand, like a whip, is on the control button. Unfortunately, my record isn't quite what it might be. Two Sundays ago, Mr. Cameron got as far as "Friends of the Sund—" before I could get to the throttle, but when I did get there, the turning off process was a triumph of sadism.

I don't want you to think that Mr. Cameron is my sole turning-off activity, though I can think of no more pleasurable occupation, but, alas, there are others and their number is legion. They are the men who tell me that  is fate knocking at the door. That Bach had innumerable children. What (in spite of Frank Sullivan) César Franck said to his wife after the first performance of his *Symphony*. Where Saint-Saens traveled in his busy life. And finally, the purveyors of the phrases: "the great German master," "sublime in its . . . etc," "the great Finnish master," "that rare genius for work," etc. You must know of course, that all composers in this country are "brilliant young Americans" and that genius is what Goethe said it was. Maybe your experience with radio music-knowledge has been limited to the amazing fact that Beethoven crossed Napoleon's name from the fly-leaf of the *Eroica*. Or that Brahms wished he could write a waltz like Johann Strauss. But don't tell me you haven't heard how old Mendelssohn was when he wrote the *Midsummer Night's Dream* music!

It might be said that more tolerance should be shown since it is possible that the large radio public may not, in its entirety, be aware of these "interesting little facts." Also, something may be said for the new listeners who join the audience from time to time. The answer is simple: first, the well known facts about music are not necessarily the most important or the only interesting data that is usable; second, reading about music has become a popular diversion (from the looks of drug-store book counters) and all sorts of information are available through the press; third, those who listen to symphonic or serious music concerts are apt to be people who have already read program notes or who have heard the well worn phrases. Certainly Deems Taylor's popularity should prove something. Of all the music speakers, he handles his intermission talks with wit, adventurous factualities, and a great deal of variety, often using an orchestral instrument or a composer's name as a starting point or subject for a spoken essay. But Deems Taylor is by far an exception to the commentator rule. What is needed for a job of that sort is a wide and varied musical background, not just the ability to read the blurbs in the booklets which accompany phonograph albums.

Long ago one of our larger radio chains took a stand on the amount of advertising it would carry per hour. Now it is time, since the Deems Taylors are few, that a stand be taken on talk—sheer talk—in relation to played music.

I do not, however, half resent announcers as compared to speakers, guest or otherwise, who fill in intermission time with propaganda for the sponsor. Under the guise of presenting the great public of the United States with a *free* hour of symphonic music augmented by a *little talk* on current events, big business goes to bat on a large number of peculiarly similar topics, which have nothing to do with music.

*Ainsi soit-il . . .* and maybe this should have been a letter to the *Times!*



The League of Composers has put two programs on the air during the month of February. Heard on these programs was music by Frederick Jacobi, Elie Siegmeister, Philip James, Louis Gruenberg, Robert McBride, Quincy Porter, Theodore Chanler, and Oscar Levant. Marion Bauer and Aaron Copland were commentators. Both programs proved interesting, and despite all the above on commentators, I liked the addition of comment on these programs for the music was, for the most part, entirely new to radio audiences. It seems to me that these radio programs are the most important function of the League, as there is no other consistent presentation of contemporary American music on the air, and it is becoming increasingly important that American music reach large audiences. Because they are broadcast from 3:00 to 3:45 P.M., E.S.T. (over CBS), I am curious to know what kind of an audience they reach. Maybe some data on that point can be presented in this column in the next issue.