

Slipping Ratings Cause Concern

Godfrey Shake-Up Necessary

By JOHN LESTER

NEW YORK. — The once great Godfrey ratings are still the main topic of conversation in the broadcasting industry here, as you might expect. Rumors and official statements seem to be coming from all directions and these are adding more fuel to the furor.

As if that weren't enough, practically everyone has an opinion to offer and few of the officers are qualified in any way, making matters that much worse.

Most of the reporters and columnists covering the story are blaming Godfrey for having already interpreted the ratings as just another of the stars' tantrums, which, they say, have gone far enough. Blaming Godfrey, in fact, seems very much in fashion at the moment. Normally such blamings could be written off as merely another of the vagaries of show business, but this time's darling is frequently to

tomorrow's dupe, or worse. In Arthur's case, however, something more is involved. The talented redhead is a double-edged sword. As a realist who has tangled with many members of the press during his long career in radio and TV and, lately, he has been most outspoken on the subject of his low opinion of many newspapers and newsmen.

EVEN SCORE
Nobody, not even a Godfrey, can get away with that sort of thing forever. Also, a lot of the young reporters he has been firing are in the past have finally grown to importance in their field and are now in a position to even the score. Many are taking full advantage of a chance for which they've waited a long time.

So Godfrey is paying for past mistakes in judgment and rudeness, for, as nearly as I can learn, he is innocent this time. At least, I can't find any evidence that his firings of The Martins, Marion Marlowe, and the rest was the result of a tantrum or anything like it. The "nurs" members of his "gang" seem to me to have been dismissed calmly and deliberately after considerable discussion. And I'm convinced that the CBS front office was as much responsible as Godfrey.

Actually, these so-called firings

were in the nature of a shake-up of the entire Godfrey schedule, which has been coming for months. Many of us on the East Coast were of the opinion that the reason for the shake-up is not only simple but, I think, necessary. All of Godfrey's ratings have dropped this season and his Wednesday night "Friends" hour has been particularly hard hit by "Disneyland" on ABC-TV.

REORGANIZE
There's only one thing to do when ratings drop too big a bite, and that is reorganize and try another approach, which is exactly what CBS and its No. 1 star have in mind. Nobody can or should blame them for that. Such reorganization is standard practice and Godfrey, who has been in the business for 60 years at present and drastic measures have to be taken when this sort of money is at stake.

It's impossible to say and I've seen all sorts of conflicting figures as to how much Godfrey has slipped in the ratings in the past eight months. I have heard CBS brass—some of whom now openly voice their contempt for the star—insist that he has taken a dive in public interest and acceptance. I'm inclined to doubt this. I'm sure he has slipped somewhat, of course, but I equally sure it isn't very much, except on Wednesday nights.

I base my opinion, at least partially, on the great demand for tickets to his shows, which he has been slipping seriously would try to get tickets to one of his shows some time—any show, any time. DOES NOT PRESS.

The public simply does not press to see a fading star or a has-been. Naturally, there are many asides to the firings. Trouble of various kinds has been brewing—and frequently boiling over—in the Godfrey "family" for the past 18 months or more. Arthur's chronic short temper has been aggravated by his long illness, with the result that there have been occasional dismissals leading up to the big one most of which the star handled very badly.

As far as I can learn, no one fired by Godfrey recently or at any time has any kick coming, except on Wednesday nights, in which the firing was done. It's true that Lili Arl's people are relatively underpaid but there are compensating factors involved. Godfrey has his people nearly all of his people young, untalented and, in some cases, actually made something out of nothing.

Meanwhile, speculation as to what will happen next continues to swirl hotter and hotter. But nobody can really predict what will happen, not even Godfrey himself, because the confusion is so great. My personal feeling is very much a very sick and a very hurt man, but his fierce pride and his fierce pride will drive him to continue until he wins again or is carried out.

SA Group Will Meet

The Annual Young Peoples Council of the Salvation Army will be held here April 23-24 under the leadership of Commissioner and Mrs. William Gray of Atlanta, Ga.

Col. and Mrs. G. A. Stephan, division commander for the Carolinas, will assist in conducting the meeting.

More than 700 young people are expected to attend the sessions to be held at Harding High School auditorium.

Commissioner and Mrs. Gray are territorial commanders of the Salvation Army for the Southern States.

MR. GRAY

way at Edinburgh, but with additional tenderness, this, the better reading, was more relaxed.

The program opened with Beethoven's Sonata in A major, opus 12, No. 2, an early work which does not bear, poking for later prodigies. Its opening allegro builds too much on a two-note motif to catch our allegiance, and the remainder of the work impresses us as Beethoven of lesser ambivalence. Mr. Menuhin put it back before us with a gentle elegance, including in a few slides that might well have been omitted. When you've a Menuhin technique, goodness knows, you needn't make effects with slides.

The rest of the program—well, there was a concerto by Paganini, for which limbo would be a merciful consignment, and light stuff of varying importance by Fauré, Ravel and Sarasate. Mr. Menuhin made lambent and languorous atmosphere with the Ravel "Habanera." The audience called him back for encores, and he obliged with Debussy's "The Girl with the Flaxen Hair" and two Kreisler favorites. We couldn't help thinking, comparing violinists Paganini and Kreisler as men from their compositions if indeed one can do this, that Kreisler is the man we'd like to know. From living with Menuhin played him, we imagine he feels the same way Roy Bogas was the accompanist.

MR. MONTAGUE

Final arrangements have been made for the spring music festival being held in Mecklenburg County schools, according to Sam Durrance, supervisor of music.

The music festival will be held on Friday at West Mecklenburg High School, with the festival to follow on Saturday at the Mecklenburg Junior High School. The festival will be held on Friday at West Mecklenburg High School, with the festival to follow on Saturday at the Mecklenburg Junior High School.

After lunch the three junior high glee clubs and the senior high glee club will return to the auditorium to rehearse for the massed festival concert to be presented at 6 o'clock Friday morning and continue during the school day. Vocal solos, ensembles, and piano solos will follow the glee club performances.

After lunch the three junior high glee clubs and the senior high glee club will return to the auditorium to rehearse for the massed festival concert to be presented at 6 o'clock Friday morning and continue during the school day. Vocal solos, ensembles, and piano solos will follow the glee club performances.

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BOYD BRIDGE TO BE CLOSED FOR REPAIRS

Buster Boyd Bridge will be closed Monday morning for 60 days or more while workmen install a new floor and rework the steel structure.

Traffic will be routed on U. S. 21 South into South Carolina by way of the Rock Hill, S. C., bridge crossing the Catawba.

The bridge, located about 17 miles south of Charlotte, was damaged several years ago when a truck hit a railing, and a general renovation program is now planned at an estimated cost of \$35,000 to the highway division's bridge department.

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