



Commercial Manager Pat Baxter in his hotel office. Announcer Dick Harwell seated before the 23 type speech input equipment.

## Voice of KPAB Guides Tourists

Rolling along the Pan-American Highway 100 miles north of the romantic Rio Grande, Mexico-bound tourists are greeted by new and intriguing highway signs inviting them to tune to KPAB for highlights on their southern journey. From then on, for a distance of at least 150 miles, the voice of KPAB acts as personal guide. Information pertaining to customs regulations, money exchange, road and weather conditions, hotel accommodations, places of scenic beauty, historical spots, cafes, entertainment, can be plucked from the ether—free for the tuning.

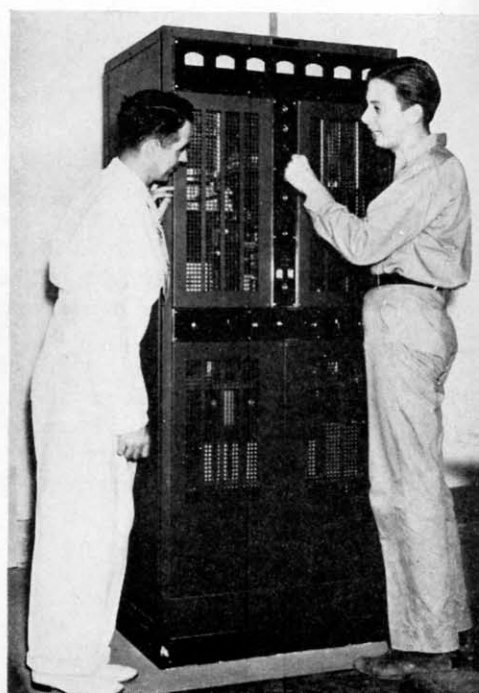
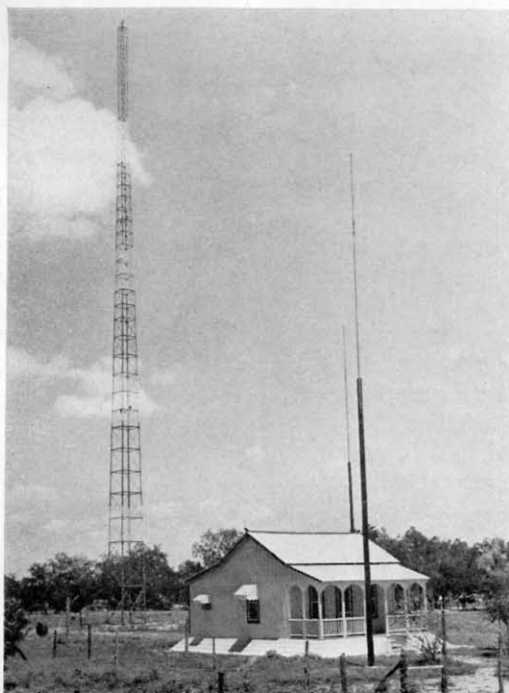
As the tourist winds his way down through Texas and over the border his invisible guide unrolls a verbal panorama of Mexico's historic splendors. Sabinas Hidalgo, with its quaint curio shops—Monterrey, rich in romance and impressive in beauty—Bishops Palace, old as the years—Horse Tail Falls—Huasteca Canyon and Saltillo, famous for its sarapes—Mexico City, 7,500 feet in the clouds and guarded by the spectacular Popocatepetl—time scarred temples

and pyramids of the Aztecs—Huichihuyan—Tama-zunchale and the Sierra Madres are among the "Musts" on sightseeing itineraries.

KPAB, a newcomer in the broadcasting field, has it all down in black and white that the "Tourist" is a financially profitable business to both a community and to a nation such as our sister republic. Ideally located at Laredo, Texas, the very threshold of Mexico, the station is fully prepared to extend its facilities to further this "tourist industry." Besides serving the 300,000 inhabitants who reside within the immediate service area of the transmitter, it is adequately equipped to serve the thousands of Americans who cross the border each year and likewise the influx of Mexican travelers and buyers entering the United States.

In fact a large portion of both sponsored and sustaining programs have been given over to instructing the tourist on all phases of his prospect—  
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Lined up with KPAB's cottage-like transmitter building are the Western Electric 110A amplifier and monitoring equipment (left) and 310B transmitter (right). M. M. Valentine, owner, watches Chief Engineer Fred Hammond as he tests the equipment.



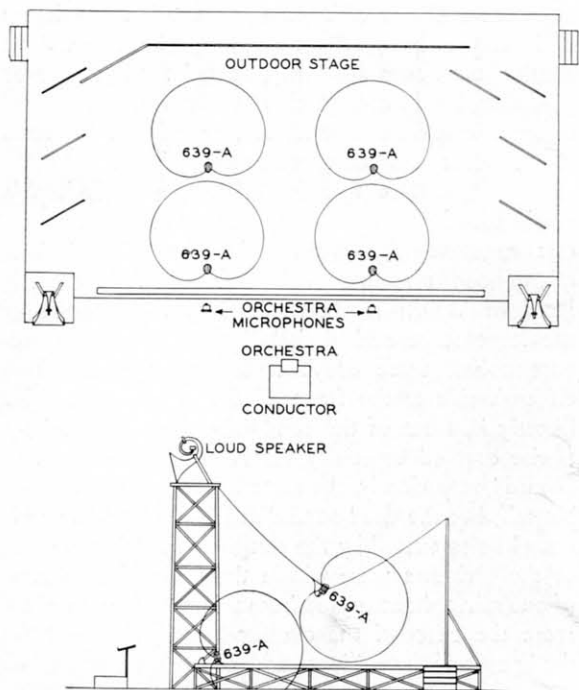


Fig. 17—This unusual placement of four 639A microphones covered the entire stage for an open-air opera. Because of their cardioid directional characteristic, the four microphones blended together in such a way that the opera singers were permitted complete freedom of the stage.

trials in that it illustrates the versatility of the microphone, was in a sound reinforcement system for an opera staged in an open-air theatre. The stage layout and microphone placements are shown in Fig. 17. In this novel arrangement, suggested by Edward Content of WOR, four 639A's were employed, two in the footlights pointing  $30^\circ$  up and two hanging overhead half way back and pointing  $30^\circ$  down. With this arrangement it was found that with fixed levels on the mixer, very little variation in quality or level could be observed when a singer walked across stage or from front to back. Thus the director was informed that he need not instruct the singers to play to the microphone. To the best of our knowledge this was the first time it had been found possible to cover a stage so completely. The true cardioid directional characteristic obviously made this result possible, the performer moving into the pick-up zone of one microphone after another as he walked about the stage. Furthermore the orchestra was in the dead zone of the microphone so that there was normally plenty of leeway to balance the singing with the orchestral pick-up, and feedback conditions were improved by approximately 5 db over that obtainable with other types. Throughout the performance the engineer operating the mixing controls was able to operate the four stage microphones together as if only one, and thus could concentrate on balancing the singing with the orchestra.

The results from the audience viewpoint were startling, some people saying that they did not believe the public address system was operating

when actually reinforcement was practically all they did hear. The freedom permitted the performers aided this illusion greatly besides allowing them to act in their accustomed manner. Again the enthusiasm of artists and engineers alike, were a tribute to the unusual possibilities in this new microphone.

These actual trials here described, as well as many others which space prevents relating, all testify that pick-up control at the microphone, a long cherished dream of sound engineers, has at last been actually accomplished. The key to this control is cardioid directionality for all ranges of the musical scale from the lowest bass to the highest overtone. The secret behind the success of the Western Electric 639A in achieving this cardioid directional performance lies in the choice of the type of pressure and pressure gradient units and the method of electrically equalizing and combining the outputs. These also are responsible for the high output level of the combination, the ability to choose the dynamic, or ribbon units individually, the convenient size, and the sturdiness. In addition to its ability to handle any situation, to provide control at the microphone, the new 639A cardioid simplifies the technique of pick-up because of its indifference to "dead spots" in the room while at the same time its "dead zone" of sensitivity minimizes unwanted reflections.

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tive journey. According to KPAB, information it passes on to the tourist will be more readily accepted as being authentic and in his interest since it has as its source a radio station on the United States side of the Rio Grande, operating by government authority.

Neither time nor money has been spared in placing this Texas station among the best-equipped stations in the country. Western Electric's 310B transmitter, coupled to a Blaw-Knox 154-foot vertical steel radiator insures listeners excellent reception. Associate equipment includes the Western Electric 110A amplifier, 23 type speech input equipment and salt-shaker microphones. The two studios, reception room, offices, audition room and control room are located in the Hamilton Hotel at Laredo.

Due to the fact that the station is using local and transient talent from both the United States and Mexico and since it broadcasts in Spanish as well as in English its programs have particular appeal for listeners on either side of the Rio Grande.

KPAB is owned by the Pan-American Broadcasting Company. The staff, headed by M. M. Valentine, general manager, includes Pat Baxter, commercial manager; Jimmie Willson, program director; Billy McMillin, Commercial Department; Fred Hammond, chief engineer; Glen Neville, operator.