

Streamlined Studios!



CBS Presents "Poetic Melodies"
In Modern Setting



By VIRGINIA SEEDS

INSPIRED by the Zeppelin Hindenburg, Columbia Broadcasting System's new audience studio is the last word in modern design.

Compared to the WGN theatre across Michigan Boulevard or the seating capacity of some of NBC's studios, CBS Studio Number 10 is not large; but it has a cozy studio atmosphere that makes it very attractive.

The stage is rather small, barely large enough to accommodate Billy Mills' string orchestra; and the theatre seats 285. But perhaps you'd like to take a trip through the studio yourself. We have two tickets for the new chewing gum program, "Poetic Melodies," so come along with me.

Submarine Doors

We get off the bus at the Wrigley Building and go in the North door. Quite a crowd is hurrying toward the end of the hall and we follow them. We come into a reception room at one side of which is a modern circular stairway, at the other an attractive reception girl, and straight ahead are heavy steel doors that look a bit as if they might have come off a submarine.

A clock-work usher with arms akimbo takes our tickets and turns us over to another usher who shows us our seats. Let's look around a minute before the show goes on the air.

The color-scheme of the studio is bright blue, steel gray, and beige, with chromium. The walls are of

Jack Fulton, "romantic tenor" of Poetic Melodies, likes blue shirts and striped neckties. However, he wears formal evening attire when he broadcasts.

Poetic Reader Franklyn MacCormack took arm-swinging exercises to cure himself of stuttering.

blue and gray, and the lights are chromium mushrooms. The comfortable chairs are beige and chromium; and since they aren't collapsible, we don't have the feeling that they might fold up on us any time.

To our left and hanging above us is the control room with oblique glass panels patterned after the Graf Zeppelin. Where the balcony would be in an ordinary theatre is another glass-paneled room, the clients' box.

Watching the Show

The musicians, in tuxedos, are just arriving; then comes Billy Mills, five feet, four inches tall and inclined to be tubby, dressed in a swallow-tail coat. Don Hancock, also in tails, comes on the stage and makes a short talk. At the last minute, Franklyn MacCormack, poetic reader, and Jack Fulton, tenor, walk on.

We look up at the control room and can just see the production man's hand. He holds it up, fore-

finger pointed, for a minute and when he drops it, "Poetic Melodies" is on the air.

Billy Mills leads his orchestra into the theme song, "I Sang A Song Today," MacCormack says a line from a poem, and Jack Fulton sings a line from the theme. Without cessation of the music, the show continues with readings by MacCormack and songs by Jack Fulton.

It's amazing to learn that MacCormack once stuttered hopelessly and cured himself of this impediment by persistent work and arm-swinging. He is now considered one of the finest Tony Wons type readers on the air. He is quite tall and thin, and drapes himself over the microphone as though he might be reading to a young lady shorter than he is.

On the Nose

When his first poem is finished, he takes a hasty glance at the studio clock on the opposite wall, turns triumphantly to the production man and puts his forefinger on his nose. In radio "handies" he is calling attention to the fact that he finished just on time, or "on the nose."

Jack Fulton, the "romantic tenor," looks younger than his 33 years. He has a mellifluous voice, very much like that of Bing Crosby, with whom he once sang in pictures. However Fulton's voice, as MacCormack's, is so soft that the audience in the theatre has a little difficulty in hearing it.

With remarkable restraint, there are no commercial plugs spotted in the 15-minute show until the very end, although in the middle MacCormack does give a tribute to retail merchants, for whom the program is designed.

As "Poetic Melodies" nears the close of its 15-minute period, Mills, MacCormack, Fulton and Hancock all keep an eye cocked on the clock. At 10:13½, the orchestra goes into the theme song again, MacCormack and Fulton give their tag lines, and at exactly 20 seconds before 10:15 the

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LUXURIOUS LOVELIES



WITH Thanksgiving out of the way, you can settle down to completing your Christmas list. Although prosperity is "just around the corner" if not actually here, Christmas is still a good time to give women and girls things they can wear or use. Here's something to remember—even if women have a trunk load of gowns, chemises, slips or panties . . . they still love to have more. There is always a marvelous array to select from, but this seems to be a banner year. Crepe de chînes, luscious satins in thrilling new designs at moderate prices make them leading gift items. Panties of crepe or satin trimmed with beautiful laces are priced as low as \$1, often less. Gowns in tailored or lace trimmed styles may be found at \$1.95 and up. Slips in a variety of styles, \$1.95, often less. Check your list . . . solve many of your problems in this charming way.

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Streamlined Studios

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show is over. Applause is led by Hancock and the audience files out.

Let's ask George Livingstone, a member of CBS' press department, to take us on a tour of the other studios. If the audience studio is Number 10, there must be at least nine others.

And there are! We go up the polished maple stairway and are shown the inside of the control room and the clients' box. The operator, still with his headgear on, looks very much as if he might be piloting a zeppelin through the air instead of a radio program.

Up another flight of stairs, and we enter CBS' new offices. All of them are as modern as tomorrow morning's newspaper, with a gray composition floor, polished wood desks of modern design and chromium and bright leather chairs. In each of the executive offices is a loud speaker equipped with a telephone dial so that any Chicago station and all CBS studios may be dialed in. The dial is numbered just like a dial phone and each studio is keyed.

The rest of the studios are just as modern as Number 10, although of course they are smaller and have no place for an audience. At one end of each studio is a heavy velvet curtain to form a "dead end" and all the lighting is through glass panels in the ceilings. A complicated maze of air-conditioning ducts serves the offices and studios.

As we walk out into the foyer where the elevators are located and remark that it looks like a Hollywood movie set of a studio, we run into Franklyn MacCormack again. This time he is in a tweed sport suit, minus his swallow-tail and minus the white carnation that adorned his button-hole.

What They Say—

"The Album lies open on our library table, and as the different artists come on we turn to their pictures. It makes the broadcast much more enjoyable."

"The cover of the 1937 Album tells an inspiring story with American youth standing side by side looking upward and forward into their dream cloud, ever aspiring to the lofty heights of their air castles."

"After looking at the family group pictures it is easy to see what keeps the machinery of such a big concern as WLS moving so smoothly."

The 1937 WLS Family Album is bringing enthusiastic letters from thousands. It's becoming the talk of the Middle West. Bigger and more beautiful than ever, the Album brings all your WLS friends and many of their families right into your home.

You will want several copies for Christmas presents. We advise ordering immediately for prompt delivery. Price —50c, 65c in Canada. Address your orders to Family Album, WLS, Chicago, Ill.