# Is Radio Threatening the Phonograph and Theatre?

## By H. GERNSBACK

WE take the following editorial from a musical trade journal, *The Music Trades*, on the date of March 4th.

"The radio concerts that nave suddenly become popular have set many people to thinking, prophets to predicting, and, as usual, pessimists to foreboding disaster.

"One night last week one of these pessimists was holding forth to a group of acquaintances in which he prognosticated the early eclipse of the phonograph because of the advent of the radio.

"'Who,' he demanded, 'will care to turn on a phonograph, which is limted to the records in the cabinet, when a whole world is beckoning? Why should anyone listen to a record of the "Sextette" from "Lucia," for example, even though Galli-Curci be included, when they can be rigged up with the Metropolitan Opera House and hear the entire opera? No, this is the end of the phonograph—the beginning of the end. With the receiving horn of the radio in his library a man is *en rapport* with the cosmos. When he can hear the living voice, why should he turn to a dead record?'

"Thus the prophet of pessimism.

"We believe most earnestly that the musical industries must take into account this astonishing new device. The fact that Mr. Kreisler, for example, is no longer limited to the sitting capacity of an auditorium, but is enabled by this new miracle of science to transmit the thrilling tones of his instrument to a vast unnumbered audience, not alone in this country but even across the heaving seas, must be reckoned with as a new thing in music which will inevitably play its part in the future.

"That it will never displace, or even interfere with the phonograph, we do not consider even remotely probable, although one hears the expression frequently nowadays, and presently, in the radio magazines which are springing up, we may find it reiterated by its enthusiasts.

"The peculiar virtue of the sound reproducing instrument is that it fixes permanently, ready for instant use, something that we love. On the radio, though we may hear Kreisler playing the "Devil's Trill" Sonata of Tartini or the Wieniawski Concerto, we are subject to the caprice of the artist's choice of program. But on the phonograph we have the selection of the pieces we desire. If we wish Kreisler to play his "Caprice Viennois" we need but place the record on the turntable and his bow is at our bidding. If we want an encore he has no power to refuse. If we want his "Old Refrain," or the "Grieg Nocturne," or whatever he plays that we want, we need only to take the record from our cabinet and our wish is gratified.

"No radio can supplant such a satisfactory, obliging and complaisant companion. Whatever the development of the radio may be in the home life of the nation—and certainly its possibilities seem to be Aladdin-like—we may be sure that the place of the phonograph is secure.—C. F. O."

This quasi apology, indeed, makes interesting reading and simply goes to show what Radio is doing to the phonograph. It is known notoriously throughout the phonograph trade that Radio has been making great inroads upon the phonograph business, and while we do not mean to maintain that Radio will drive the phonograph out of the field, still when you ask people why they are not using phonographs or buying phonographs, the reply invariably is that they are using the Radio at the present time.

Of course, radio is a new thing, and just now on the ascending scale. Its novelty has as yet not worn off, but even the phonograph people, if they are honest with themselves, will not deny that radio is their great competitor. It costs money to buy phonograph records once you have the machine. It costs nothing to have all the music in the world which you desire, once you have a radio outfit. But there is no reason in the world why the two should not get along harmoniously even as conditions are now.

You will no doubt find, during the next two years, that every phonograph store will be selling radio appliances. In many cities throughout the east they are already doing this, having been driven to it by lack of business. The leading phonograph trade journal now has a radio section. The logical upshot of it all will be met when the phonograph interests instead of opposing radio open their arms and welcome it. One of the largest phonograph manufacturers already has seen the light after having seen the "handwriting upon the wall." *Beginning this fall, he will equip all his phonographs with radio.*

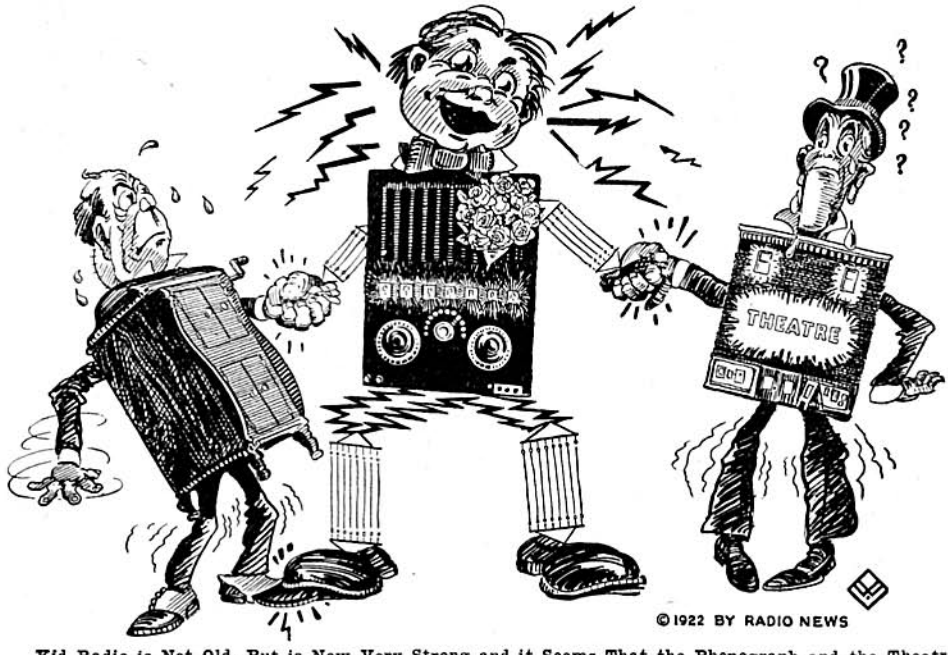
A representative from another large phonograph company came in to see the writer the latter part of March and wanted to know where he could buy 10,000 small crystal sets that were, as he put it, "absolutely fool-proof" and which outfits were to be placed in the company's phonographs. He wanted delivery in two weeks!!

This is precisely what we are coming to. The machines of the future will serve the double purpose of record-music and radio. This will give the public a new incentive to buy phonographs, which incentive seems to be lacking at the present time. The more the two can be cemented together, the better it will be not only for radio,—which does not need any assistance today—but certainly for the phonograph.

### RADIO AND THE THEATRE

It is not only the phonograph business that is having nerves every time the word radio is mentioned, but the theatrical business is running the phonograph a close second, foolish as it seems.

From a recent issue of the *Billboard*, we have plucked the following choice morsels which we give to our readers for what they are worth.

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**Kid Radio is Not Old, But is Now Very Strong and it Seems That the Phonograph and the Theatre Are Somewhat Afraid of Him. Are Their Fears Justified?**

### WANT PAY FOR RADIO CONCERTS

**Actors' Equity Association Adopts Resolution Advising Members to Seek Compensation**

Following the publication in *The Billboard* two weeks ago of a warning to the effect that the free concerts sent broadcast by the radiophone companies were injuring show business, the Actors' Equity Association last week went on record as opposed to its members giving ethereal performances without proper compensation. A resolution to this effect, adopted by the council of the Actors' Equity, read:

RESOLVED: That the attention of our members be drawn to the fact that the radiophone is a profitable commercial enterprise, which also in a way enters into competition with the theatre, and that, therefore our members be advised to seek proper compensation for any services they may be invited to give to the radiophone companies.

In explaining the Equity stand in regard to what they term the "radiograft", Mr. Paul Dullzell, assistant executive secretary, says:

"The General Electric Company and the Westinghouse people have been getting in on a lot of good stuff for nothing. Also the general electrical appliance houses. The radio concerts are a money making scheme and the artists who make them possible should be compensated.

"Heretofore the understanding has been that the advertising afforded the actor and the singer is of great advantage to them. For instance, they are told impressively that an audience of 400,000 has its ears clamped to the receiving apparatus all over the land and sea.

"I can see where the vaudeville managers already have just complaint. If this thing grows—and it bids fair to assume enormous proportions—there will soon be no incentive to go to the theatres. When audiences can hear everything in their own homes they won't have to go out to be entertained. What they will miss in stage settings and the personality of the actor will be made up by the novelty of the radiophone itself.

"We considered this a matter of such importance that at the meeting of the council last week it was resolved to suggest to our members that they seek compensation for ethereal performances."

E. F. Albee, head of the Keith Circuit, in an interview with a daily paper this week was quoted as saying that appearances for the radiophone by Keith artists was a violation of contract.

### THE RADIOGRAFT

The Radiograf is a wonderful invention and is enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of people. A good many prominent actors and actresses have

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melted paraffine.

Next, insert the core pieces, first from one end and then the other, to make a closed core for the transformer. Use enough pieces to firmly wedge them in the interior of the coil.

Now, bend two pieces of brass, like Fig. 2, and clamp to the core to hold it and to support the transformer. Drill for 6/32 screws. These pieces may be $\frac{1}{16}$" or $\frac{1}{8}$" thick, and the screws which clamp them on may also clamp on a piece of bakelite, on which binding posts are mounted for connection with the terminals of the coil.

I have completed one transformer, all but mounting, and have left a secondary which will make another transformer. As my Ford coil cost me $1, the two transformers will cost $1.50. This transformer is giving satisfactory service and compared favorably when used alongside a transformer made by a well-known manufacturer, which I borrowed from a friend.

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been invited to speak into it and have done so without charge. But now we learn that it is entering into competition with the theatre, since citizens prefer to sit at home and be entertained for nothing rather than go out into the night and spend their good money for theatre tickets. In order to draw the attention of our members to this matter the Council has passed the following:

"Resolved, that the attention of our members be drawn to the fact that the Radiograph is a profitable commercial enterprise which also in a way enters into competition with the theatre and that therefore our members be advised to seek proper compensation for any services they may be invited to give to the Radiograph Company."

The Radiograph Co."—FRANK GILLMORE, Executive Secy.

(*By the way—what is a Radiograph?—Editor.*)

Of course, anyone who thinks about the matter calmly must appreciate the fact that if anything, radio certainly gives the theatre, the actors, and the singers, the best possible advertising that they could ever think of having. Think of an audience of 300,000 people listening to a singer! What better advertising could there be. And some of these 300,000 people when they get to town, as they invariably do, will wish to see or hear that singer in person. The radio audience is not always a radio audience; it frequently becomes a theatre audience as well. To think that a radio man is shut in all year around is ludicrous.

Even the most ardent radio fan after listening in for five or six days in the week will wish to go to a show on the seventh day. One of these days the theatrical interests will wake up to the fact that in radio they have the greatest possible and the very cheapest advertising medium they ever dreamt of in their wildest dreams. We predict that within a year the waiting list of our broadcasting stations will be so great that it will take months for our great singers and actors to be accommodated.

## Why Panels?

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ficulty than the isolated instrument type."

I have tried out at least 15 different circuits with my outfit, besides numerous short distance Radiophone and C.W. circuits. I have also tried boosting the voice with two V.T.'s in an ordinary telephone line. Not many owners of elaborately mounted sets can make a similar statement and consequently their knowledge of the