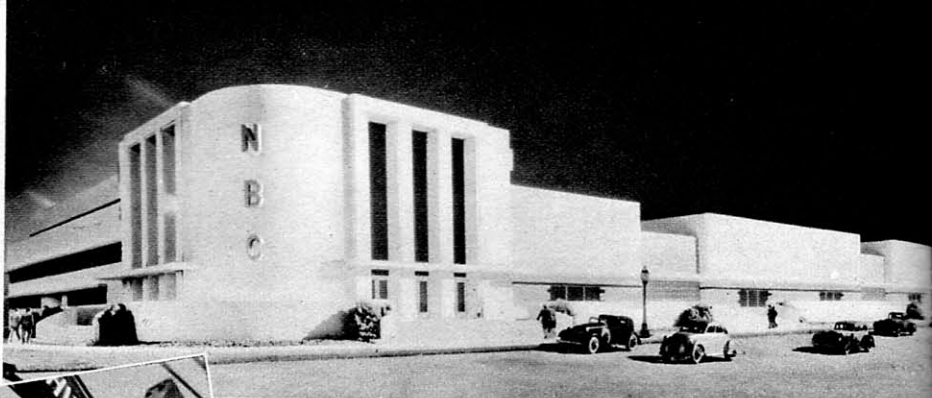


The architect's model of the magnificent NBC Hollywood Radio City. Is this the forerunner of a general trek to California?

Construction work is actually started, and since it is the movie capitol, girls are not missing when the first spade is turned.



by ROSA REILLY

IS RADIO *Moving*

in demand than ever. Personable people will be the first requirement of television. Who wants to look at a singer with a wart on her nose?

To get a fair evaluation of the New York-versus-Hollywood situation, many points must be considered.

Programs began to emanate from Hollywood because sponsors—national advertisers—were eager to harness glamor to the cash-and-carry wagons of trade. They wanted to use the Hollywood cuties and comics to help sell their products, as varied as they were. If the movie stars could make the cash register ring as they did at the box-office, it would be dividend time for both Main Street and Wall Street.

Both CBS and NBC claim to have been the first to broadcast radio programs from Hollywood. The first Columbia presentation on record was when Bing Crosby sang in the California Melodies, assisted by Raymond Paige's orchestra on May 28th, 1930.

National followed shortly afterward—in 1932. Radio at first was only a stepchild on the doorstep of the Brown Derby. In that first year, NBC was on the air for twelve hours only and the personnel was one man. In 1937, their broadcasting time was estimated at more than seven hundred radio hours. The staff, including technicians, sound-effects men, writers, producers, and directors increased to nearly a hundred.

But in Hollywood radio, as in everything else, we meet the ultimate question—

UP until a year or so ago, "coast-to-coast" in radio meant from New York to Los Angeles. Now it's in reverse. The tide has been running the other way, with New York on the receiving instead of the sending end, and with movie stars filling your loudspeakers as well as your screens.

Admittedly, one of the toughest problems facing radio today is the future role of Hollywood in the great broadcasting theme. Will America's A-1 glamor city play the leading part with New York limping along in a supporting capacity? Or will Manhattan continue to dominate the aerial picture?

Radio's present theme song seems to be "California, Here I Come." CBS and NBC

are each producing—as we go to press—fifteen programs which originate in Los Angeles. The Mutual Broadcasting Company, through its affiliation with Don Lee Independent Network, is also sending approximately fifteen commercial and sustaining presentations from Hollywood.

CBS is spending \$1,750,000.00 to erect new studios and transmitting equipment in Hollywood. NBC is meeting this challenge with construction running to a figure of \$2,000,000.00—no sucker sums. If programs emanating from the film capital are not going to maintain their positions in the radio firmament, somebody will be minus considerable money.

Certainly much of the work being put forward by the broadcasting networks in Hollywood today has television in mind. When this visual broadcasting gets on a practicable basis, Hollywood will be more



Columbia, not to be outdone, has not spared expense in providing the ultimate for its Hollywood Studios. They opened April 30.

Cleaning up Columbia Square in preparation for festivities which marked the inauguration of KNX's new Hollywood studios.

to Hollywood?

In spite of higher salaries, wire charges and other obstacles, will radio move entirely West? The answer can't be told now, but here is what is happening there.

does it pay?

The consensus seems to be that production in Hollywood boosts the overhead to a disproportionate degree. Film stars for the air come high. Also movieland production ideas. There's something in the film atmosphere out there which makes it easy for human beings to spend money faster than they would any place else.

The little matter of salaries keeps rearing its inflated head. Sponsors often pay moving picture stars such enormous sums—anything from \$1500 to \$5000—for a broadcast, that many of the glittering gals and boys find it hard to keep a sense of proportion.

This is particularly true of two grades of talent. First, the little buds, new come to Hollywood, who were thrilled to sign a contract at what to them seemed a pocketful of money. But when they receive such dazzling weekly checks from their radio sponsors, they get the idea that they must be heaven sent to Darryl Zanuck or Jack Warner. So they—or their agents—knock on the doors of Mr. Warner or Mr. Zanuck and ask for a raise.

Second, many of the big stars of Hollywood don't remain unaffected by the cash they receive. They can go on the air for a few moments and get paid a few thousands dollars. So why bother making a lot of films every year? Some of them may determine to exert themselves, pictorially speaking, just enough to keep the wolf out of the jewel box and his whelps out of the swimming pool.

Another annoying problem is the distance between Hollywood and New York. Although Columbia has sent thirty technicians and eight sound-effects men to Los Angeles, there are many problems which have to be worked out across the continent. This is a terrific wear and tear on creative organizations.

The advertising agencies in the east have cradled a lot of radio ideas and programs. They spoke for the sponsor, and as a matter of fact, most of them either had a West Coast office to begin with or started one with emphasis on radio, when the movie tide began rising.

But Hollywood is the habitat of the ten-percenter, the agent—the artist's representative. This legion not only speaks for its clients—it hollers for them.

So the advertising agencies back east, accustomed as they are to agents, find the Hollywood ten-percenter a tough hombre, schooled in hysteria, and with Samson-like convictions as to what his starlet will or will not do on a radio program, and how much she will take for it.

Hollering back in dignified agency manner across 3000 miles has not helped to maintain the delicate balance of power, long a birthright of the eastern seaboard.

Periodically, film companies have cursed radio and embraced her. It's either a passionate love scene or a knock-down, drag-out fight. When radio first came along, the picture trade regarded her as an enemy—a rival form of entertainment. Soon,



however, they adopted the old slogan: "If you can't lick 'em, join 'em."

Paramount acquired a large interest in CBS which was, in fact, housed in the Paramount Building in New York at the time. Paramount, at one period, was a large user of Columbia's radio time. It has since divorced itself from its holdings in CBS.

RKO-Radio Pictures became the producing unit for a far-flung enterprise, combined not only for pictures and vaudeville but also containing all elements of radio and communications. RCA was the parent organization of which RKO-Radio Pictures and National Broadcasting were corporate parts.

The Loew interests, which include Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, have WHN in New York, and Warner Brothers for years have had their own broadcasting studio in Hollywood.

Paramount and RKO have been considerable users of radio time as companies. However, they and other film outfits have obtained many more times that amount of publicity through the medium of their stars and directors appearing on programs paid for by outside commercial organiza-

(Continued on next page)

tions.

The movie producer unquestionably finds the broadcasting of radio programs from Hollywood an annoyance. Suppose he is shooting a minor million dollar epic. The big sound stage is embroidered with equipment and technicians eating up overhead at the rate of a thousand dollars a second; thousands of extras stand ready to rush to the barricades at \$7.50 a head; cameras and lights are trained on the Glamor Queen.

Suddenly the femme looks at her emerald and diamond wrist watch, lets out a yell, and says: "Oh—I'm due at the studio this minute for a radio rehearsal."

She jumps into her limousine and heads for air headquarters. The producer holds the bag—and overhead—until she returns. Naturally the producer knows the time of radio rehearsals. But his shooting schedules are more cumbersome than those of the broadcasting studio.

Regardless of the publicity the star gets from the radio, the average movie producer would like to get on with the making of pictures without picking radio broadcasts out of his hair. To tell the truth the poor film producer has got a bear by the tail. Or as the Chinese say, "He who rides a tiger cannot dismount."

What is the point of view of the big broadcasting chains themselves? What about their million-dollar investments in studios and equipment in Hollywood?

Take CBS, for instance. Are they putting on what corresponds technically to chinchilla and pearls for the Hollywood trade?

They are. On April 30th, CBS dedicated its new Hollywood KNX building in Columbia Square, on Sunset Boulevard between Gower and El Centro Streets. In addition, a 490-foot transmitter tower and a building to house the new transmitter, have been erected on a thirty-seven acre site at 190th Street and Hawthorne Boulevard, in the El Nido section of Los Angeles.

This thirty-seven acre tract has marshy underground conditions and is surrounded by a low-lying area which makes for good radio transmission.

"The radiator," says J. L. Middlebrookes, liaison engineer for the Columbia network, "is the most efficient yet devised and should increase the KNX signal materially. Under the tower base is buried a wheel-shaped net with the spokes made of 130,000 feet of copper wire, weighing some 3½ tons, similar to the ground conductor beneath the Columbia Square studios eighteen miles northward in Hollywood.

"Near the foot of this giant tower will be the modern building, constructed in three sections. The central portion, shaped as a 56-foot circle with a 29-foot ceiling, will house the RCA Model 50-D, 50,000 watt transmitting apparatus.

"A 40-foot panel, also in modernistic design, fronts the elaborate equipment and offers a panorama of winking signal lights, fluctuating indicators, and giant tubes. A 6-foot, glass-enclosed observation platform which encircles the room will permit visitors to see clearly all the operations of the intricate equipment."

The entrance to the transmitter building will contain two display cases showing cross-sections and working models of all parts of the equipment, from high water-cooled tubes to small automatic switches.

A standby power plant will be installed to guard against the possibility of a power interruption, permitting CBS to maintain service in any critical emergency.

The studio buildings at Columbia Square consist of two main units; one, a five-story building on El Centro Street, which contains seven studios and two audition rooms; also a theatre seating 1050 persons, as well as parking facilities for 500 cars.

The other unit is on Gower Street. It is a two-story building and will contain the offices of the Columbia Concert Corporation and Columbia Artists.

Many novel features have been incorporated in the five story building. For instance a room has been built which will never house anything but emptiness. It is for echoes. The room is termed a *reverberation chamber* and will be used on occasions when a radio play calls for a

speaker to address a crowd in a large auditorium. The voice will be reproduced in the *reverberation chamber* and picked up there again by a microphone as the words echo.

Dr. V. O. Knudsen, professor of acoustical engineering at the University of California, served as acoustical consultant and has designed the walls of the studio.

Also the walls of all studios are floating and not rigidly attached to the floor or ceiling of the building. Jolting of trucks and passing cars will not set up wall vibration to affect the sound of programs being broadcast from the studio.

The window of the monitor room, where the technicians regulate the intensity of sound as they watch the program proceed, is set at a slight angle. Sound reflected from any of these surfaces is thereby deflected from the microphone.

NBC is likewise stepping up its Hollywood broadcasting facilities. On Sunset Boulevard and Vine Street, on the original site of the Famous Players-Lasky film lot, where motion pictures practically were born, NBC is replacing its own studios which were erected two years ago on Melrose Avenue and have now become outdated.

The \$2,000,000.00 classical building (NBC's own figures) will provide for National's immediate Hollywood needs with provision allowed for increased studio and office facilities when, as, and if television arrives. Programs will be broadcast from 8 large individual studios, four of which will seat several hundred persons each.

The executive and administrative offices will be housed in a central office building with a vast lobby three stories high. The technical facilities include the most modern RCA equipment.

As in all CBS stations, the new type automatic volume limiter will be installed in the KNX transmitter and will increase the signal coverage.

There is the technical broadcasting setup in Hollywood.

The final answer to the New York-versus-Hollywood controversy will rest with the listener. If he likes the type of material the film boys and girls are turning out, and if they help to sell toothpaste or cigarettes week-after-week, month-after-month, the financial outlays of CBS, NBC, and Mutual,—to say nothing of the money put out by the sponsors and the creative efforts of the agencies—will be justified.

However, if the listener doesn't buy Hollywood's violets via the loud speaker or corner store, the Beverly Hills brigade will be paying less income tax for a while.

Television will probably pop up just in time to save the Malibu Beach homestead. And when it does, we, the people, will still be kings.

Hollywood is, has been, and will continue to be an important factor in radio entertainment. But don't expect to see ivy growing through the broken roofs of the New York headquarters of NBC, Mutual, and CBS. Nor the present day executives and employees of these networks begging their bread.

Either way you look at it, you can't laugh Hollywood off!

Delayed by the flood, work was resumed on NBC's new Hollywood Radio City.

