

A Brief History of Beautiful Music Radio

©2009 Richard O'Connor

Radio instilled in the American public a taste for quality instrumental music. As the 1920s proceeded broadcasting became more than a quaint novelty and theatre, cinema, symphonic, salon, and chamber orchestras took to the airwaves with increasing frequency, providing an alternative to the more popular dance, concert, and jazz bands of that era. Greater advertising revenues made possible by national and regional affiliation of stations made possible the network employment of musicians who could be organized into ensembles of various sizes and functions as needed to accompany singers and vocal groups, furnish incidental, theme, or dance music, and offer concerts and interludes.

Afternoon tea and supper-time instrumental programs of soothing light classics and subdued pops proved especially congenial, as did similar fare toward the end of the evening. NBC's *Slumber Hour* broadcasts, which mixed chamber music with occasional lullaby-style vocals, were heard almost nightly from 1927 to 1932, sometimes originating from both coasts, and many stations continued to offer their own versions of 'slumber music' thereafter.

More dynamic and interesting orchestral treatments of popular music, pioneered in the late 20s and early 30s by Nathaniel Shilkret, Harry Horlick, and Frank Black, designed to command listener attention and lessen the likelihood of their tuning elsewhere, became a vital component of many prime-time network shows during the latter decade under the batons of Meredith Willson, Victor Young, Andre Kostelanetz, Johnny Green, Raymond Paige, Morton Gould, Leroy Shield, John Scott Trotter, later Gordon Jenkins, Percy Faith, Paul Lavalle, Mark Warnow, David Rose, Alfredo Antonini, Frank DeVol, and other studio arranger-conductors.

Instrumental music of all kinds was additionally needed to fill five, fifteen, thirty, even sixty minute blocks of unsold air time.

Stations lacking a network affiliation or sufficient funds for studio musicians relied on recordings, both commercial 78s and slower-moving long-playing electrical transcriptions. Use of the former, though common, was for many years of questionable legality, and record companies, fearing loss of already modest depression sales, stamped "Not For Broadcast" on disc labels. Transcription services, which provided original or recycled programming of all types by subscription, became a booming business, contracting many of the same arrangers and conductors currently or formerly responsible for network shows to write and record music for lease. Thus outlets could run programs by a specific artist (use of pseudonyms was frequent) or mix and match selections by several to assemble their own. Orchestral popular music on 16-inch transcription discs of often superior fidelity was commonly heard on radio through the mid 1950s (on many stations into the 60s) when better commercial recordings of the same became widely available and popular.

Early Programs

On August 1, 1940 a U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, overturning an earlier ruling on *RCA and Paul Whiteman vs. The WBO Broadcasting Corporation*, upheld the right of radio stations to play records on the air without artist or record company permission, and in December the Supreme Court refused to hear a further appeal. The following year the Federal Communication Commission's *Report On Chain Broadcasting*, upheld and implemented by the same court's 1943 decision in *NBC vs. United States*, loosened network control over affiliates' schedules. Released from all taint of illegality, stations now had the freedom to experiment with a variety of recorded music programming, laying foundations for the popularity of post-war disc-jockey shows and their domination of the medium during the next decade.

The success and example of several early recorded instrumental music shows encouraged area owners and managers to try programs with similar content on their stations.

Music To Read By on New York City's WHN (later WMGM) began in August 1938 as a nightly hour (midnight to 1 A.M.) of classical and light classical recordings. With the addition of a few Andre Kostelanetz and orchestral popular transcription discs early in 1943 the program came to be advertised as "an hour of songs without words". A variation of 'slumber music', the show's selections were orchestral, melodic, and not necessarily subdued, chosen more to inspire than for soporific effect. Well established by the end of the war, *Music To Read By* became the beloved prototype of many late night programs featuring a similar musical mix before, and after, its demise at summer's end in 1949.

In January 1944 Washington D.C.'s WMAL began the similar and similarly long-running *Hour Of Dreams* from 11:15 to midnight. Disc jockey Lee Dayton soon became associated with the show, moving it to WRC early in 1952, where with the addition of another hour of primarily classical programming it became *Music Thru the Night* until February 1957. Three years later Dayton returned *Hour Of Dreams* to WRC AM/FM but, as neighboring WOL AM/FM already had a program of that name, re-titled it *Time For Dreams*.

Back in New York WMCA ran the more popular-music-oriented *Music For Dreaming*, named for a best-selling Paul Weston album, from 1945 to the spring of 1947 when it was called *Midnight Serenade*.

As classical music programs on full-service outlets added orchestral popular treatments some classical music stations themselves were adopting the genre as a lighter change of pace to more serious concert works. When mixed with light classical 'pops' selections and romantic string melodies they made congenial cocktail or dinner fare. Thus in 1943 Brooklyn's WLIB expanded its fifteen minute *Candlelight and Silver* to fill the 5 to 6 P.M. hour, where it continued to delight listeners and please sponsors until late in the decade. WAIT in Chicago had a *Candlelight and Silver* by May 1942 so it may have been transcribed. It certainly was by the end of the war, perhaps an Associated program, for we find it on Muzak's WGYN FM in NYC from 1945. In Chicago it turned up as an afternoon show in 1949 on WEAW FM, In Los Angeles in 1950 as an evening turn on KMPC, and Edwin Armstrong's Alpine NJ FM station KE2XCC (WFMN FM) ran it during its last few years. A television half-hour of the same name was part of WMAL's early lineup in Washington DC. From the 1950s through the mid 70s dozens of stations had an hour of lush dinner music entitled *Candlelight and Silver*, whether purchased or of their own devising.

Between June 1948 and Fall 1952 WQXR AM/FM, New York City's bastion of classical music, followed its midnight news with *Nightcap* on which English discs by Peter Yorke, George Melachrino, Robert Farnon, and similar artists were introduced to American listeners in company with domestic recordings of the same genre.

The same semi classical-orchestral popular light music mix was utilized to tap the commercial potential of Sunday mornings, traditionally the domain of religious programming. *Invitation To Beauty*, which debuted in 1947 over WTMJ in Milwaukee, would enjoy a run of fifty-three years. *Music In the Air*, the 1950 brainchild of disc jockey Chuck Dulane and program director Ernie Tannen at Silver Spring, Maryland's daytimer WGAY, would become that outlet's most popular and highly-sold three hours of music, lasting some twenty years through station ownership and programming changes to be billed "Washington D.C.'s longest-running show".

In 1952 another *Music In the Air* began showcasing the recordings of Andre Kostelanetz, David Rose, Percy Faith, Mantovani, and compatriots nightly 7 to 8 P.M. on American Forces Radio for soldiers and American personnel stationed in Europe.

Radio and film actor Jim Ameche turned disc jockey in 1948 on Chicago's WAIT, beginning a twenty-five year association with this genre that would soon take him to that city's WGN, to Los Angeles on KLAC in 1954, KDAY in '56, KABC in '58, and in the 60s to WHN in New York, among other platforms. *Jim Ameche Time* and *Jim Ameche's Pop Concert* were syndicated programs created for Armed Forces Radio but often heard stateside as well. Possessing one of the great broadcast voices of the era, he always featured - and enthusiastically championed - the popular orchestras of the day.

It remained for Dickens Wright, who had worked for WHN (WMGM) at the end of the *Music To Read By* era as well as at WMCA, to bring the programming to prime time. Hired as station manager in August 1950 by faltering country station WPAT, a Paterson, New Jersey outlet owned by the Passaic News with a signal that reached most of the greater New York City area, he immediately began experimenting evenings with the light classical-popular orchestra mix, aware that a study the previous year had found orchestral music shows better able to hold their own against competition from television during the 8 to 10:30 P.M. hours. Eager to offer a fresh alternative to the drama, variety, popular music, dance band, jazz, classical, and news commentary programs on competing radio stations too, he modified the mix to feature more and more orchestral popular instrumentals, which he felt provided an air of soothing nostalgia. In March of 1951 this coalesced into the nightly *Gaslight Revue*. Over the next two years, when popular orchestras seemed to supplant dance bands as America's music of choice, *Gaslight Revue* expanded to blanket the 7:30 to 10 P.M. hours, later 7:30 to 12. Music was presented continuously, without title or artist identification, in carefully assembled, often themed, 28 minute segments, each preceded, on the hour and half-hour, by two commercials and a news summary. Listeners found themselves wrapped a cozy, luxurious and hypnotic fabric of orchestral artistry, beauty, and warmth. There had never been anything quite like it in radio. By the spring of 1953 *Gaslight* had wooed a sizeable and devoted audience, and a preceding *Gaslight Preview* was added. A request for listener response in the fall of 1954 drew 15,000 letters. The program and its content were now attracting national attention.

The networks responded to the growing enthusiasm for non-dance instrumental genres by programming concert and popular orchestral music nights after their television stations had signed off. Midnight through dawn from the late winter of 1952 into 1958 NBC's Harry Fleetwood hosted what would be known for most of its run as *Music Through the Night*. New releases were played and reviewed, artists and record company personnel interviewed, trends in music discussed and analyzed. Because of its "highbrow" nature (though it did include popular orchestras) most affiliates shunned the program, which originated at the network's flagship WNBC (later WRCA) in New York.

Much more successful was *Music Til Dawn*, a joint production of CBS and American Airlines that involved the higher-ups in both companies. Conceived as intelligent background entertainment for professionals and students working or studying late, it was in fact a scripted disc jockey show broadcast simultaneously (with allowance for different time zones) from nine affiliates in cities across the country served by the airline. From there it was relayed to other affiliates or non-affiliate subscribers. Producer Lyman Clardy chose the recordings and oversaw the scripts, engaging in each city a series deep-voiced male announcers to quietly but authoritatively identify artists and titles and intone soft-sell ads. The core of the program, between 1 and 3:30 A.M., consisted of full-length symphonic works, with the outer portions, from 11:30 P.M. to 1 A.M. and 3:30 to 5 A.M., devoted to lighter fare by Mantovani, Percy Faith, Kostelanetz, the Boston Pops, etc. *Music Til Dawn* bowed on April 13, 1953 and its last show was presented on January 4, 1970. In 1965 it received a Peabody Award for excellence in broadcasting, likely a gesture in honor of long-time CBS chief William Paley who had a hand in its devising and stood by it for seventeen years.

ABC's entry, *Music From Studio X*, primarily a popular music venue, was a prime-time attempt to appeal to both hi-fidelity enthusiasts and the audience defined by the success of WPAT's *Gaslight* program. For its July 9, 1956 debut WOR reportedly spent \$18,000 constructing a state-of-the-art broadcast room equipped with specially designed components. It was in fact a more expensive, high-tech version of *Gaslight Revue*. Listeners were informed that every selection heard was from a record in pristine condition being played for the very first time. The 9 P.M. to 1 A.M. Monday through Saturday and 1:30 to 5 Sunday afternoon show did well in its New York City area into the 1960s but was not popular with affiliates.

FM Radio and Background Music

In 1940 FM (frequency modulated) radio was an exciting, promising industry founded upon the technological ability to deliver a mostly static-free radio signal. The war side-tracked its development. Then, in response to pressure by AM radio manufacturers and NBC executives who wanted to commandeer the frequencies for television, the government in 1945 raised the entire FM broadcast band, necessitating re-assignment of all station frequencies and rendering most existing FM receivers obsolete. Proactive hiring demands by musicians unions seemed to guarantee unprofitability. Finally the novelty of television completely eclipsed it. By the end of the decade FM was regarded as a costly disappointment. Owners turned in or attempted to sell their licenses. Those with AM stations simply simulcast on their FM the minimum number of required hours. Many turned to alternative sources of income.

Storecasting allowed stations to offer suitable music and point-of-purchase advertising to retail establishments through agencies that lined up and matched sponsors with target audiences. The Storecast Corporation of America, founded in 1943 by radio ad agency man and producer, lawyer, and songwriter Stanley Joseloff, was the first. Initially specialized advertising was introduced into existing AM broadcasts but experience and study showed that shoppers responded best to elegant instrumental music, which owners of faltering and failing FM outlets were only too happy to provide. WEHS FM and WXRT FM in Chicago, WIBG FM in Philadelphia, and WMMW FM in Meriden CT were among the earliest storecasters, transmitting to specially tuned receivers and speakers mounted in chain grocery stores. WWDC FM Washington DC, KRKD FM in Los Angeles, and Michigan's WJLB FM Detroit and WSAM FM in Saginaw soon followed as a presentation by Storecast Corporation of America at the FM Broadcasters convention in September 1948 stimulated owner interest. By 1950 a number of stations, as well as new agencies - Musicast in Los Angeles, Consumers Aid in the upper midwest, Point-O-Salecast in the northwest, Edward Wheeler's Chicago Storebroadcasting Service, and Store Radio in the mid-Atlantic had entered the field. WEAW FM in Evanston IL, WHBL FM Sheboygan WI, WNAV in Annapolis, WLDM FM in Detroit, Philadelphia's WPEN FM, and New York City's WHOM FM were among those providing the service in the early 50s, and within a few years dozens of outlets had signed on as store music became both an effective sales tool and a symbol of prestige.

Transit radio provided a similar service on streetcars and buses. Encouraged by successful trials with Cincinnati riders over his WKRC FM in 1946 and '47 Hulbert Taft of Taft Broadcasting formed Transit Radio, Inc. to put forward the idea nationally, presenting his findings at the September '48 FM convention as well. Soon public cars in Washington DC were being equipped (to receive WWDC FM), those in St. Louis (for KXOK FM), in Cincinnati (for WCTS FM, formerly WKRC FM), in Houston TX (for KPRC FM), Worcester MA (WGTR FM), Wilkes-Barre PA (WIZZ FM), and Huntington W VA (WPLH FM). The following year saw the service extended to the DC suburbs (over WBUZ FM), the Pittsburgh suburbs (on WKJF FM), to Topeka KS (WIBW FM), Tacoma WA (KTNT FM), Des Moines IA (KCBC FM), Allentown PA (WFMZ FM), Evansville IN (WMLL FM), Baltimore MD (WMAR FM), Duluth MN (WEBC FM), later in Trenton NJ (WTOA FM), Omaha NE (KBON FM), Minneapolis-St. Paul (WMIN FM), Jacksonville FL (WJHP FM), Flint MI (WAJL FM), Kansas City MO (KCMO FM), Lynn (WLYN FM) and Haverhill (WHAV FM), both in Massachusetts. In 1950 about thirty FMs were transit-casting and it seemed to be a success. But some participating stations could not afford to stay on the air, and organized opposition in Washington DC by citizens fearing loss of privacy and commercialization of public space led to a lawsuit and a June 1951 U.S. Court of Appeals decision (later overturned) that prompted others to discontinue the service. Loss of venues and widespread press coverage of the protest and the court cases discouraged advertisers. Facing dwindling revenues and burdened by debt incurred fighting the suit, Transit Radio gave up, abandoned the concept, and turned to brokering sales of stations. By the Fall of 1953 transit broadcasts had been terminated in most cities, continuing in a few as a free service until the equipment could be dismantled.

More enterprising FM license holders offered the same or similar programming, without commercials, as background music to stores, offices, workplaces, and schools by subscription or used their stations to broadcast, as franchisees of background music suppliers such as Muzak, pre-prepared or relayed

programs to clients to replace or supplement telephone line delivery in areas where it was impossible or substandard.

The above services were transmitted on licensed frequencies so could also be heard by anyone possessing an up-to-date FM radio (minus, that is, the specialized advertising which only subscribers received and which was deleted electronically from the normal broadcasts). Thus, through most of the 1950s approximately one-fifth of all households with radios in urban areas, (one-fourth in cities of the upper midwest, less than a fifth to none in many outlying regions) had access to regular orchestral and instrumental programming with a minimum of vocals six, eight, ten, occasionally twelve hours daily six days a week. Stanley Joseloff, touting storecasting, always pointed out that it also provided uninterrupted good music, as a public service, to the home listener. As these formats became more familiar some stations whose income was wholly or mostly derived from such specialized programming eventually cultivated enough of a following among the general public to attract more advertising on their own.

This duality concerned the Federal Communications Commission. In 1953, after some study, the commissioners affirmed a Spring 1951 ruling that background and commercial services were not of interest to the public so did not constitute 'broadcasting' in the strict construction of the term. At the same time they were loathe to undermine their value to FM license holders. A Report and Order was issued in March 1955 stipulating that such services would be allowed as long as they were moved away from the main FM channel to its frequency-modulated subcarrier (through a process discovered and developed by now late FM pioneer Edwin Armstrong) in a bandwidth not available on commercial FM receivers. Stations balked, requested extensions, challenged the ruling, and were generally slow to comply. Implementation involved the purchase of new equipment on their part and on the part of their business clients, learning new and sometimes imperfect engineering techniques, and application to the FCC for a Sub Carrier Authorization. A few continued to storecast on their main channel even into the 1970s but, as a result of the ruling and the industry's eventual compliance, the ability of the general radio public to receive such background programming dwindled from the late 1950s and was almost non-existent by the middle of the next decade when commercial beautiful music stations had become commonplace. Ten years earlier, however, when the latter numbered very few, the former was available on upwards of 60 FM outlets (200 in the early 60s). By and large, early 'beautiful music' stations were storecasters, transit-casters, and other background music suppliers.

KIXL AM/FM Dallas

While most of the stations playing lush popular and semi-classical instrumentals in the late 40s and 50s did so primarily to fulfill agency or client background music contracts, a few developed unique, creative, successful approaches to programming for the general public that would become standard practice in beautiful music radio.

Houston businessman Lee Segall created the popular radio quiz *Dr. I.Q., The Mental Banker* that aired on NBC from 1939 to 1950. It was a fast-paced, traveling multiple microphone audience participation show that listeners found both entertaining and instructive. Many count it as among the best offerings of the

medium's "golden age". Segall was interested in the 'thinking man' - the intelligent, self-actualized professional man - whose needs, he felt, were not being adequately served by existing radio. In 1946, with financial backing from business acquaintances and Hollywood motion picture personalities cultivated while engaged in war work, he formed Variety Broadcasting for the purpose starting a 'thinking man's' station in his native Texas. Dallas was the venue finally selected.

Because of the thinking man's commitment to career, family, and community he had little time to entertain the passing parade of popular fads and fancies. His music must be adult, classic, timeless, interesting enough to make good listening but not compelling or overbearing. It must allow, and even encourage, work to go on around it. Segall felt that standard popular melodies in well constructed arrangements for orchestra, dance band, instrumental combo, or delivered by mainstream vocalists, plus light classical selections, were especially suitable. Swing, boogie-woogie, and hillbilly, though very popular, would be excluded as unmelodic, too distracting, and youth-oriented.

Because a word to the wise was sufficient, and the thinking man was apt to be engaged in this or that task but always knew what was going on around him, commercial and other announcements must be few, to the point, and not disrupt the mood of the music.

Because the thinking man enjoyed being a thinking man, brief philosophical one-liners, reflective sayings, epigrams, quizzes, and bits of poetry would be sprinkled throughout the broadcast day.

Because the thinking man was culturally aware and civic-minded, concerts, dramatic presentations, community forums, and events involving local talent would be made available on weekends.

To realize and implement this concept and to achieve a desirable consistency of mood program director Charles Payne established a universal formula, a basic flow, for each fifteen minute segment of weekday music. As he reveals in his 2000 memoir *Feedback: Echoes From My Life In Radio*, "The programming was cycled to pique a listener's interest with the first tune in a segment, and then have their interest mount to a crescendo by the fourth tune, or thirteen minutes into the segment. The last tune was designed to relieve the listener, gently and emotionally, from the involvement with the first three tunes. It was a planned progression, and it usually worked." After a non-irritating, soft-sell commercial, each music segment opened with a "big, lush, sweeping" orchestral number, followed by a melodic vocal "to keep you in touch with the tones of humanity". Then came a soft, smooth selection by an instrumental combo or a piano artist and finally, 'to peak us out again in preparation for another break, to bring you out of the creeping languor that had built up", a spirited light classical, orchestral popular, or Latin dance band piece "to get you alert and breathing hard so we can sell you something." Then on to the commercial messages which concluded the segment.

Carefully organized fifteen minute programs were then common so experienced radio personnel would have had no trouble understanding or handling this arrangement. The organization of the spot load - usually three gathered in 2.12 to 2.25 minutes at the end of a segment - was different, and required discipline from the announcing staff which consisted of men with soothing, rich, and somewhat deep voices who were encouraged to speak in measured, cultured tones. Musical bridges blended the end of

one number into the beginning of another. Music tempos were chosen to reflect different day-parts: brighter for mornings, easier at mid-day, more brisk in the afternoon, and relaxed evenings.

A daily classical music hour, one or two local-interest shows, and special transcribed or live performances on weekends - often involving drama and music students from local Southern Methodist University - rounded out the schedule.

The pitch to the 'thinking man', in reality to the area's professional class, business owners, the educated, the cultured, local leaders and movers, was used on classical music stations at the time but was new to a primarily popular music outlet. They were the 'best people' and possessed or earned the most money. Therefore, it was thought, they had the most money to spend. Advertisers at that time termed this "snob appeal". At KIXL it was effective. The very people Segall had wanted to attract became supporters and advertisers and the station, which signed on June 8, 1947, became an immediate success and something of a community cause. It was new, it was different, smart, adult. It made listeners feel good about themselves. "It's not what KIXL plays that makes the difference, it's what we don't play!" ran an early slogan.

Payne, in later years, always emphasized the importance of mood consistency to that success. "Stations then were full-service - they did everything. An hour of this, a half hour of that, fifteen minutes of something else. They tried to satisfy different tastes in different day-parts. Or they were disc jockeys with tie-ins to record stores and sold records. We were the first single-format, mood-consistent station. This was before Top-40. In the beginning our recordings came mostly from the various transcription services and were not available to the public, so you see we were out to project a certain consistency of mood, a sound that advertisers could count on, not to sell records."

Mood consistency, strategically constructed fifteen minute music clusters with soft-sell commercial spots gathered at the end, a three-to-one ratio of instrumentals to vocals, musical bridges, a strategic daily tempo flow, smooth and cultured deep-voiced male announcers, 'adult' music orientation, and (for a while at least) 'snob appeal'. All would in time become standard practices and procedures in beautiful music radio.

At the time however KIXL's "new radio concept" seems to have attracted little notice outside its community. Then in the mid 50s Payne, by now general manager of KIXL AM/FM and vice president of Variety Broadcasting, made common cause with several of the eastern and western 'good music' venues. When beautiful music began to receive attention in 1956 and '57 as a potentially viable radio alternative, the man who had for a decade been quietly blazing the trail at a small, low-power Texas daytimer left to become an advocate for the format on the road, visiting stations, making public presentations, sitting on programming panels at broadcasters' conventions.

Other Early Outlets

With the partial exception of KIXL, beautiful music stations in the late 1940s and 1950s were not what they became in the 70s and 80s. Programming included a lot of light, semi-classical selections - sometimes up to 65% (a good number of them European works never popular in the U.S) - with

orchestral and other instrumental versions (including dance band) of standard pre-1941 popular songs, and some classical music. There were very few, if any, 'covers' of current hits. Occasional popular vocals by recognizable artists such as Dinah Shore, Alan Dale, Doris Day, Bing Crosby, or lesser-known studio singers backed by small dance band-with-strings combinations, were played, and novelty tunes provided a change of pace. A significant number of the recordings played were leased or purchased electrical transcriptions. Record companies did not generally offer free promotional copies of commercial releases to radio stations before 1954 - they had to buy their own. Nor were orchestral popular titles available before then from the same companies in sufficient quantity and variety to cover a lengthy or extended period of broadcasting without duplication. Many early outlets retained block programming - an hour of classical music, an hour of show tunes arranged for orchestra, an hour of Latin music, of dance music, piano selections, a teen record party, a live vocalist, dinner music, etc., - and even included some non-musical general interest shows for women, farmers, business people, minorities, each with its own sponsor, for several years. Some emphasized 'personality' with varying amounts of disc jockey and announcer chatter and patter. Many had licenses for daytime broadcast only, others played classical or jazz after dark or continued regular programming on their FM outlets at night.

The term "beautiful music" itself did not come into use generically until later in the 1960s, though many stations used it to advertise or describe the music they offered. Wilmington's WJBR FM in 1957 aired "Just Beautiful music", WQMR in Silver Spring MD during the early 60s played "Albums of Beautiful Music", WAIT AM in mid 60s Chicago advertised "the World's Most Beautiful Music", and so on. Outlets referred to themselves variously as 'instrumental', 'MOR', 'adult', 'popular instrumental', 'easy listening', 'album', 'good music', 'fine music', 'quality music'.

WFMF FM

WFMF FM in Chicago was put on the air in 1948 by the Marshall Field Company to provide shoppers with music and announcements, both as a courtesy and a marketing device, in its famous department store. Elegant instrumentals and a few specially-produced non-music features gave way in mid-afternoon to easy-going dance sets on *Mythical Ballroom*, a revival of WAAF's popular pre-war daytime show, and popular orchestras on *Melody Time* at 5 P.M. Evenings consisted of a dinner concert, show music, records by a featured singer, and classical selections. Weekends seem to have been comprised of the same shows but at different times. In 1948 and '49 the station delivered night games of the Chicago White Sox for its AM sister WJJD. This was essentially the programming that was offered to storecast and background music clients from the fall of 1949. As the station gained listeners the hours of operation increased and *Linger Awhile* and *Music To Remember* were added afternoons, and *Moonlight Serenade* and *Music Unlimited* at 9 and 11 P.M.

When WJJD AM was sold to Abe Plough in 1953 the subsidiary Functional Music, Inc. was created by Marshall Field for WFMF which continued to be run by the same personnel, though studios were moved to a new location. By mid-decade it was the city's fifth most-listened to radio venue during the evening hours, quite an achievement at the time for a primarily background music operation.

Civil rights lawyer and class-action advocate Maurice Rosenfield purchased Functional Music in November 1957 and returned it to its original Michigan Avenue address. Rosenfield, at that time attorney for Playboy magazine, later produced motion pictures and stage musicals. When the FCC ordered WFMF to multiplex (to put clients' programming on its FM subcarrier) in conformity to the 1955 ruling, a federal circuit court in October 1959 relieved it of this obligation. Because the station "has acquired a high degree of popularity with the Chicago free listening audience" (earlier that year it had been the first beautiful music FM to be listed in a Hooper ratings book) it had shown that "functional programming "[in other words beautiful instrumentals] " can be, and is, of interest to the general radio audience."

By then it was operating 24/7 and all music, commercials, and other announcements were being pre-recorded on tape for broadcast, the sole exception being an established evening disc jockey turn sponsored by the LaSalle National Bank which would continue for many years. Characteristic of this period was its notable use of silence - often up to ten seconds of it - between selections. Newscasts were prepared by WAIT AM after Rosenfield acquired that station in September of 1962 and converted it to a similar but more listener-friendly format (employing some former WFMF personnel) after KABL AM Oakland and WQMR AM in the Washington DC area. The AM, however, always trailed the FM in ratings. A journal of that year describes WFMF's offerings "standards, show tunes, popular and continental music, David Rose, film scores, Broadway shows, music appreciation, relaxing evening melodies, and classical music later ".

As the decade progressed and more and more listeners resorted to beautiful music the background music business became less important to the station's well-being. In 1966 Rosenfield sold "FM 100", as it advertised itself, to Howard Grafman of Century Broadcasting who moved it again and hired ambitious, thorough sales people to bolster profits. During the FM 70s it became a giant money-maker, perhaps the highest-grossing beautiful music station in the country, while continuing to place high (sometimes Chicago's #2) in the ratings, though well-challenged by competitor WLAK FM. Call letters were changed in 1974 to reflect its nickname and its burgeoning FM-100 Plan music syndication business. As WLOO FM it would reign as a beautiful music legend until a 1988 format change.

Amid much local fanfare the Trenton Times' WTOA FM in Trenton, New Jersey signed on early in 1949, equipped with a state-of-the-art studio and a considerable number of instrumental transcriptions from Associated, Lang-Worth, and British Decca's London Library which proved valuable when the station began transit-casting on city buses a year later. Apparently finding this format congenial, general manager Jerome McCarthy continued to emphasize instrumental music on WTOA after the transit-cast ended in 1954, as did later program director Phil Stout through the mid 60s, even after the station's late 1964 sale to Herbert Hobler's Nassau Broadcasting Company. WTOA FM carried other 'good music' features as well, among them a jazz program and live broadcasts by a small symphony orchestra.

WLDM FM, Detroit Michigan, began as an unaffiliated classical outlet in February of 1949. Although a few Andre Kostelanetz, Morton Gould, and Percy Faith recordings were played as light music it was not until the station took up storecasting in 1951 that they and other popular orchestras were heard regularly along with light classical and some classical music as "albums in high-fidelity". Evenings were

devoted to concert works. An audience of non-client listeners developed slowly, but when owner Lincoln Broadcasting Company moved the storecast to its subcarrier late in 1957 and rededicated the main channel solely to classical recordings they raised enough of an outcry that a substantial amount of daytime popular music was eventually restored. In the late 50s and early 60s the station enjoyed prestige as the area's premier purveyor of 'good music', adding Broadway show selections from original cast albums, folk music, and 'hi-fi' recordings, later spoken word and dramatic presentations. WLDM increased power in 1961 and started broadcasting in stereo. Three years later most of the classical shows were dropped in favor of beautiful music, a move that led to high ratings and greatly increased revenue for the remainder of the decade and through much of the 70s. Call letters were changed to WCZY FM before or after the April 1978 sale to Combined Communications Corporation who were responsible for the 1980 switch to adult contemporary programming.

WOMC FM in nearby Royal Oak is said to have adopted an all-instrumental - both classical and popular - music policy when its calls were changed from WEXL FM in the fall of 1951. Listeners recall a basically beautiful music format in place by 1959 and there is no evidence of storecasting. Stereo broadcasting started late in 1961. Through the next decade the station seems to have largely been supported by its AM sister WEXL though programmed, for the most part, separately. Metromedia Inc. purchased WOMC FM from the Sparks family in November 1972, engaging Fairfield Broadcasting to develop for it a more bright and up-tempo sound, including vocals, after their WQLR FM in Kalamazoo. The result garnered high ratings in the Detroit market for a few years. Then it moved to a soft adult contemporary format with oldies.

WHOO FM, Orlando, Florida began storecasting in 1952 during the ownership of Toledo labor lawyer Edward Lamb. Six years later, under subsequent owner Garvis Kincaid's Bluegrass Broadcasting Corporation, general manager John Rutledge discontinued this and purchased a Musaire background music franchise (probably not the same company as the Ohio-based Musair) for their subcarrier frequency which was simulcast on the main FM channel. By the early 60s the latter had become the primary source of income so in 1962 the background music clients were sold to local WDBO (who ran a Muzak service on their subcarrier) and the station started broadcasting in stereo - first or second in the state to do so. Impressively automated, for the rest of the decade it reigned as perhaps the most popular radio outlet in Central Florida, offering beautiful music days and evenings and classical at night. The format continued to do well in the 70s, aided by a power boost around 1975, but later lost listeners both to attrition and to more contemporary-sounding operations. WHOO FM switched to country music in 1984.

Newark New Jersey's WVNJ AM, formerly a music store outlet, was re-launched in November 1953 with a "Great Albums of Music" format. Friendly disc jockeys introduced and played a wide variety of standard songs in lush orchestral versions along with middle-of-the-road vocals, light classical selections, and musical comedy numbers drawn from Broadway cast albums. Weekends included classical and opera recordings. Proprietors were the Scudder family who had founded and still owned the Newark News. While the influence of WPAT's evening *Gaslight Revue* is often cited as the reason for this new musical emphasis, other NJ stations such as WOND AM in Pleasantville and WMLV AM Millville were programming two or three blocks of 'beautiful music' during the day before this as had the recently sold

Scudder station WNJR AM (which used the same building) since 1948. When WPAT went full-time to beautiful music early in 1955 WVNJ did compete, in time adopting the mostly-music concept of fifteen minute segments with clustered commercials at the end. By the early 1960s they were alternating cuts from sets of three albums to fill the segments, moving to new set when one had been exhausted. An FM simulcast was added in June 1961 with evenings devoted to concert music (jazz from 1980). Though ratings were well below those of WPAT the music policy persisted until both facilities were sold in 1978, and the new owners continued it five more years on the FM, eventually employing a Bonneville program.

There is reason to believe that WWRL FM, a "high-fidelity" good music station in the Woodside area of New York City, emphasized orchestral instrumentals during its daytime broadcasts from the time of its December 1953 sign-on, so must be considered a pioneer of the format. In the Fall of 1957 owner William Reumann changed the station's call letters from those of its long-established AM sister to WRFM FM. By the end of the decade beautiful music, "light music", as they termed it, made up almost 100% of its weekday programming with some pop and continental vocals, and part of its evening fare as well in the company of classical, opera, jazz, and news interview features. In 1963 Reumann disposed of the AM and the following year began multiplex stereo broadcasts on WRFM. A listener recalls that at that time the programs were *Wake Up With Music* 5:30 to 9 A.M., short, bright, and bouncy primarily instrumental, including some dance band, but fewer full orchestra, cuts; *Music Preferred* 9 to noon, featuring popular string orchestras and light classical selections, *Continental Visa* noon to 1, mostly European tunes, *Mid-day Musicale* or *Stereo Showcase* 1 to 4 P.M., orchestral popular and light classical (from which announcer Paul Wendell's parting "Count your blessings, not your bruises" became popular), *The Cocktail Hour* 5 to 6 P.M., light combo and melodic solo jazz with orchestra. Evenings there were classical features, sometimes *DeKoven Presents*, dedicated to enthusiastic and sometimes piecemeal presentations of "baroccoco" music, *New Dimensions In Stereo* 10 to 11 P.M., featuring new classical releases, then a news summary followed by *Casper Citron Presents*, news analysis and interviews. Around 1966 and '67 famous jazz presenter Mort Fega had a *Jazz Nocturne* overnight.

On May 11, 1966 International Educational Broadcasting (later Bonneville International), a subsidiary of The Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) in Utah, purchased the station, moving studios downtown to the 485 Madison Avenue address recently vacated by CBS. At the beginning of February 1967 WRFM FM, which had been purely a local facility, became a powerful regional entity when it began transmitting from the FM tower on the Empire State Building. The following year the classical and most good music features were dropped in favor of full-time beautiful music. New station manager Marlin Taylor, formerly of WDVR FM, installed a custom format in the Spring of 1969 that quickly gained popularity, raising WRFM's profile even more. "The difference is the music", proved an effective advertising slogan. Within two years it was one of New York City's most highly-rated radio outlets. Meanwhile Taylor had been sending the program tapes to other Bonneville International stations to help improve ratings, then had begun marketing them and consulting as WRFM Program Services, renamed Bonneville Program Services in 1971, and, three years later, Bonneville Broadcast Consultants, which would dominate beautiful music radio syndication in the 1980s.

Taylor's ambition at WRFM was to challenge and out-perform established area beautiful music favorite WPAT AM/FM in the ratings. This he was able to do, though not often and not consistently. With a tighter, more commercial format and especially personable announcers the success of the newcomer drove the latter to adopt syndicated programming later in the decade. But while the syndication business grew and prospered during the 80s the station began to falter and finally went adult contemporary in April of 1986.

In Allentown, Pennsylvania WFMZ, a stand-alone FM, commenced operations on 7/30/1947 with mostly classical music and an evening jazz show. Popular instrumental selections were added when it transist-casted in 1949 and '50. Later that year it joined the QXR network, receiving evening and Sunday classical programming from WQXR FM in New York City. Except for a long hiatus in the mid 50s, this arrangement would last into the 60s. Daytime music was classical and light classical. In 1954 program director Lloyd Hawk added noon and late afternoon (and, later, morning) orchestral popular segments to positive listener response. When the subsequent proprietors (which included its general manager) ran out of funds the owners of Philadelphia's classical WFLN FM/AM came to the rescue. In 1965 they sold to Maranatha Broadcasting Corporation which alternated beautiful music and religious programming. Some ten years later most of the religious shows were dropped when Maranatha acquired a television station, and a few vocals were added to the beautiful instrumentals. The number of vocals increased from about 1986 to 1991 when WFMZ FM formally became a soft adult contemporary station.

In most locales a storecasting or background music FM pioneered the orchestral-instrumental format and was followed a few to several years later by a beautiful music AM or FM. During the 1960s additional area stations, increasingly FM, often adopted the format and competed. As the decade wore on and the 70s dawned they were usually supplanted by, or converted to, more streamlined and up-to-date, better-sounding, automated FM outlets. KQFM FM in Portland, Oregon is an example of one of those pioneers that was destined to remain, in spite of efforts to build a regular audience of home listeners, primarily a storecaster and background music provider. Quentin Cox, general manager of KGW FM, purchased it in the fall of 1954 and began broadcasting as KQFM FM from a new studio on December 1st. His format - instrumentals 9 A.M. to 6 P.M. Mondays to Saturdays - seems designed for this use, and after the first of the year he began lining up customers. Needing an infusion of cash, in March 1962 Cox sold station and client accounts to Point-O-Salescast, Inc. which now moved its storecast operation to KQFM, retaining him as manager. Both entities went to David Myers seven years later who used the station's subcarrier for his Muzak franchise and kept beautiful instrumentals on the main FM channel. With other Myers companies they became part of The Audio Group in 1975, after which the Muzak was dropped in favor of an original Cox background format and the instrumentals continued until the beginning of 1978.

WPAT AM/FM

Meanwhile Dickens Wright had been assembling backers for his purchase of WPAT AM in Paterson NJ which was effected late in February 1955. Now the *Gaslight Revue* and *Gaslight Preview* formula was

extended to the entire broadcast day amid much publicity. While the former retained its twenty-eight minute clusters of uninterrupted music the rest of the day was cast in thirteen minute segments. A curious radio industry watched and waited. The first year's returns were up but disappointing. There were union conflicts over workforce downsizing. Staff members who bridled at the more-music, minimum-of-talk guidelines quit or were let go. But in 1956 the station earned \$180,00 and the following year grossed \$1.2 million, earning over \$250,000 - six times what it had made in 1950-51. Wright now found himself much in demand as a consultant. Trade organizations, at the request of member stations, began to sponsor educational seminars to discuss, analyze, and encourage the "new radio phenomenon". Panel discussions were held at broadcasters' conventions. The message was that orchestral instrumentals (beautiful music), if properly programmed, could sell. An well-sounding and absorbing all-recorded music format emphasizing mood and timeless quality rather than novelty, variety, and disc-jockey entertainment did not require a large staff or expensive on-air talent. A station that was able to deliver a substantial base of loyal and appreciative several-hours-a-day listeners hardly needed salespeople. With an eager waiting list of advertisers it could ask \$100 for a one-minute evening spot, \$80 during the day. In 1958 WPAT earned \$350,000.

Gaslight Revue remained its most important venue. With the support of beautiful music programming throughout the day music director David Gordon, who had been music librarian at New York's WOR, reshaped the flagship program to embrace a much wider combination of musical genres - original Broadway cast album selections, motion picture soundtracks, instrumental combos, jazz, folk music, even concert works. It was Gordon who created the popular and much-imitated WPAT musical 'montages', skillfully uniting portions of different renditions of a single popular number to flow together. A monthly program guide listing titles and recordings played was offered from 1957 to 1968. By its second year it had 30,000 subscribers. There were few shows in radio that were as fascinating, or that took as many chances yet remained attractive. After entertaining and bewitching two generations of listeners, in the 1970s, with beautiful music radio at the zenith of its popularity, *Gaslight Revue* was allowed to quietly slip away.

Wright sold WPAT AM/FM to Capital Cities in 1961 for \$5,000,000. With some of the proceeds he acquired San Francisco's KRE AM and armed with a load of WPAT tapes renamed it KPAT and set out to conquer California. He did not do well. Back in Paterson Ralph Sanabria's programming kept WPAT New York's beautiful music outlet of choice through much of the 60s and 70s. Despite a well-mounted challenge in the 70s and early 80s by Bonneville Broadcasting's WRFM FM (which occasionally scored higher ratings), a later sale to Park Communications that resulted in copies of the station's program tapes being distributed to other Park-owned facilities, and the eventual adoption of syndicated programming, WPAT remained the area's sentimental favorite until its demise in 1992.

And as the first very successful beautiful music station WPAT became the model for many others between 1956 and 1964 in form, style, and content. Dozens instituted the fifteen minute music segments and the more-music-less-talk policy, copied the quiet advertisements, had programs named *Carousel*, *Limelight*, *Gaslight*, and so on. Yet the original remained very much a product of its place and time. All the external elements were easily copied, but the almost child-like enthusiasm for music and

technology that lay at the heart of its sophistication could not be had at any price or through any amount of study and effort.

A Positive Climate For Orchestral Music

Between 1950 and 1955 the complexion of American popular music changed. 33 and 1/3 rpm long-playing records and 45s supplanted 78 rpm albums and singles. As television came to dominate home entertainment live network radio programs produced by national advertisers and electrical transcriptions gave way to locally-sponsored disc-jockey shows. Older people and high-fidelity enthusiasts relished symphonic and light classical recordings. War veterans with young families responded to country songs, novelty numbers, and Broadway cast albums. Young adults now dug modern jazz. Teenagers learned folk songs and, putting aside the big bands, started dancing to rhythm and blues and rock 'n roll. Everybody seemed to love popular orchestras.

The top ten record success of Mantovani's *Charmaine* late in 1951 ushered in a period of renewed interest in, and unprecedented enthusiasm for, popular orchestral music. Recordings by Hugo Winterhalter, Percy Faith, Les Baxter, David Rose, Frank Chacksfield, Leroy Anderson, Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops Orchestra, Paul Weston, Monty Kelly, Victor Young, Tutti Camarata, Richard Hayman, Acquaviva, Leroy Holmes, David Carroll, and others, as well as Mantovani, began to sell in such quantity that they too became chart hits, boosting LP sales and guaranteeing daily radio play that assured a hearing for subsequent releases. Individual programs such as those mentioned earlier featured them, classical outlets played them as light music, top 40 stations because they were hits, while background music services and early beautiful music venues devoured them wholesale. Disc jockeys and program directors delighted in choosing catchy or evocative orchestral numbers for theme music and advertising beds. Rural stations and religious broadcasters catering to conservative communities found them most suitable. In the fall of 1952 recordings by Jackie Gleason and George Melachrino became the first wave of the "mood music" craze. Orchestral discs that relaxed, soothed, inspired, refreshed, enhanced meal times, improved love lives, and generally helped us "know the real joy of good living" became big business. Few households would be without them. While a dance band, popular singer, jazz combo, rhythm and blues, ethnic, or concert record might draw partisanship and argument or cause discomfort and division at a party, a nice orchestral treatment of a standard song proved the perfect mixer.

Popular enthusiasm for "the orchestral sound" would fade slightly from 1957, come back strong at the beginning of the 1960s then gradually lessen, except for a 1967-69 resurgence, into the 70s, and enjoy a mild rebirth during the disco era. Beautiful music radio, while not dependent on it, drew strength and impetus from it. The widespread public acceptance of popular music for orchestra supported and nourished the radio format, rendered it familiar and friendly.

KPOL AM/FM

KPOL AM in Los Angeles signed on in September 1952 as a full-service station with a wide variety of programs but in its third year owner Hugh Murchison initiated a transition to a primarily instrumental middle-of-the-road format which was complete early in 1956. With the exception of a live vocalist in the morning and *Time For Norma* (probably general interest women's issues), *Melody In High Fidelity, Music*

Shop, American Masterpieces, Cloud Nine, Music Cavalcade, Piano Parade, Pop Concert, Newscast, Musical Comedy, Music A La Carte, String Shift, and Night Music all consisted of disc jockey-presented recorded music. Around 1960 a fifteen-minute segment more-music policy was instituted throughout the broadcast day and the schedule simplified to four-hour turns - *Morning Magic, Cloud Nine, Commuters' Carousel, Music A La Carte, String Shift*. Since jockeys constructed their own music segments each show had a unique personality. One might feature numbers suggesting a particular locale, another make a statement with song titles, a third illuminate a specific theme, a fourth paint a musical picture, and so on. Though orchestral and other instrumental music reigned supreme, more vocals were programmed than on most outlets of this genre. KPOL also benefitted from a strong news department, the envy of other stations in the area. An FM simulcast, begun in August 1957, was dropped in favor of a 50% automated FM after the FCC's 1964 non-duplication order.

Capital Cities Communications purchased both stations at the height of their popularity (the AM was the #1 rated Los Angeles station) in 1966, moved the studios to a new location and eventually converted to full automation. KPOL continued to do well for a few years but, its uniqueness gone, became only a dated contender among many more modern operations in the now lively Los Angeles beautiful music market. The FM was switched to soft rock in 1977 and the AM, with new call letters, gave up its traditional format in 1979.

More Early Outlets

Cleveland's first regular beautiful music entry was WDOK FM which signed on 10/4/1954 simulcasting its AM sister. Included were experimental stereo broadcasts. In 1956 popular WDOK AM disc jockey Wayne Mack, one of the station's founders, devised for the FM the "Music Unlimited" format, "The only unduplicated high-fidelity uninterrupted music service in Ohio". Suggested, no doubt, by the mostly instrumental new storecasting and background music FM stations, Music Unlimited offered higher quality free popular orchestral, sweet dance band, and light classical programming suitable for business use or for home enjoyment with evening dinner music, show, and concert selections. As with most AM/FM combinations at the time AM advertisers got FM time at little or no extra charge. When a subsequent owner re-branded the AM as top 40 WIXY in December 1965 its most popular shows were moved to WDOK FM, giving it a more middle-of-the-road orientation for a few years. Wayne Mack was retained as program director and on-air personality until his retirement in 1980. The combination of beautiful music and standard pop disc jockey turns proved especially attractive to adult listeners, and "Stereo Cleveland: Beautiful Music for the land of the Western Reserve" remained popular through the 70s and into the 80s when ratings began to falter. New ownership brought a new music policy - WDOK FM went adult contemporary in December 1987.

Planned Music, Inc., a Glendale, CA company, acquired KFI FM in Los Angeles and began a storecasting operation as KBMS FM in December of 1956. A growing non-client audience in the mid '60s attracted the attention of Howard Grafman who bought it in 1967 for his Century Broadcasting. At the suggestion of representative QMI Gordon Potter and Dave Shayer of WDVR FM were hired to bring that station's successful Philadelphia sound to California. Adopting KWST FM ("K-West") as more appropriate call

letters, the station struggled for several years to compete with a number of beautiful music outlets in the area before switching to rock at the beginning of 1975.

William O'Neil, former vice president of Transit Radio, had run his father's WJW in Akron, Ohio. Toward the end of 1956 he purchased Florida station WWPB and converted it to WSKP AM, "Your Theatre of Beautiful Music", in Miami. Modeled after WPAT in New Jersey (O'Neil even hired Dickens Wright as consultant), WSKP adopted an all-instrumental, mostly lush popular and light classical orchestral, format. Its operations were automated perhaps as early as 1958. Listeners recall that its sound was "distinctive" yet "lacked personality". WSKP made money but proved a disappointment to its owner who sold to Ed Winton of WQMR/WGAY in May 1966. As the AM of Winton's WOCN beautiful music duopoly it succeeded in charming listeners until its acquisition by Spanish language broadcasters ten years later.

Philadelphia, locus of early storecasting experiments and attendant advertising agency studies, could hear orchestral popular standards and light classics via a non-storecasting FM across the river when WJBR began operations in North Wilmington, Delaware early in 1957. The pride of John B. Reynolds, father and son, had a decidedly 'good music' emphasis in its early years, featuring symphonic and other concert works evenings and at certain times during the day. So technologically sound and up-to-date were its facilities that FM stereo proponents used them to test models of contending systems. By 1962 the station was broadcasting 24/7 in stereo and increasing the proportion of beautiful instrumentals. Eventually overshadowed by more successful area competitors WJBR nonetheless maintained a loyal base of listeners for many years. In 1985, several years after the death of his father, John Reynolds, Jr. sold.

From February 5, 1957 KJIM AM in Fort Worth, Texas (formerly KCNC) emulated its established Dallas neighbor KIXL. After a few disappointing years it caught on with the public and did well through the 60s but eventually foundered after new owners began diluting the format with big bands and additional MOR vocals from 1970. Its next sale, five years later, brought a country music policy.

Canada's first beautiful music station, on the air in February 1957, was CHFI FM in Toronto. Primarily a background music operation, it supplied instrumentals to business subscribers, deleting the commercials, in fifteen minute segments. To the general public it was "Canada's Hi-Fidelity" station with "good music and less commercials". Sufficient return not forthcoming, in October of 1960 owner Edward Piogott sold to Edward Rogers Jr. of what would become Rogers Communications, who concentrated on cultivating the general audience and allowed the background service to lapse. MOR vocals were added to the mix of orchestral standards and light classics. Interest and contrast were provided by allowing announcers to gently stamp programs with their personality. Some developed followings among listeners. *Candlelight and Wine*, the evening program from 1962 to 1987 featuring Don Parish, became the most popular and the one most imitated by other stations. This led to the issue of LPs containing featured selections. Familiar classical pieces were offered nights and weekends with turns catering to more specific musical interests. On Sunday afternoons Broadway show albums were played in their entirety on *Front Row Centre* with the announcer advancing the plot between cuts. Multiplex stereo broadcasting (the first in Canada) began in October of 1961. A duplicating AM station was added the

following August which would become CFTR in June 1971 and drop the simulcast in favor of top 40 programming early in 1972.

Reminiscing began in the early 70s as a late evening show spotlighting orchestral versions of nostalgic hits. Eventually original artist recordings were added and listeners responded by sending old 78 RPMs for inclusion. The success of the venture unsettled management which began to despair of an aging listener base. From 1979 there was a gradual but purposeful shift toward adult contemporary programming which would prove even more successful for CHFI than beautiful music.

WFMS FM. From March, 1957. I have been able to recover very little information about Martin R. Williams' FM Service in Indianapolis except that it broadcast primarily beautiful instrumental music until its 1976 sale. Williams was active in the National Association of FM Broadcasters.

Under the ownership of William S. Cherry Jr. and Cherry Broadcasting of Rhode Island WDBO AM/FM in Orlando, Florida is reported to have tried a 60% to 40% instrumental/vocal music policy for a couple of years. This would have occurred sometime between May 1957 and Cherry's death in September of 1961. WDBO was full-service MOR station with an FM simulcast and a Muzak business on the FM subcarrier.

WCLM FM in Chicago featured beautiful instrumentals, classical, and light classical music from May 1957. Owners Carol (later Carol Beamish) and William Drenthe eventually carried news broadcasts on their subcarrier. When horse race results contained in the newscasts were thought to be aiding local organized crime bookmaking operations the FCC, in the summer of 1964, revoked their license.

Listeners recall WHTG AM in Eatontown, NJ as serving a mixture of beautiful music, standard pop vocals, and big bands, restricting the latter to a special evening program as time went on. The station was to a large extent a family affair. Harold and Theo Gade signed it on November 1, 1957 and some years later daughter Faye was general manager, selling it in 2000 after the death of her father. There was a WHTG FM from October 1961 that mostly duplicated the AM. Both retained their initial music policy to 1983.

With the 1957-59 downturn in the national economy, the erosion of traditional full-service broadcasting, the increasing domination of markets by repetitive and often simplistic top 40 programming, and the puzzling youth fascination with rock 'n roll, station owners and license holders were willing to listen to talk of an alternative format. Few however were sufficiently interested, confident, or incautious enough to take action. By my reckoning only ten to a dozen stations in 1958 or 1959 adopted what we would consider beautiful music programming. I include the more significant and some of the previously unrecognized.

From January 1958 until 1965 a re-launched WMVB AM in Millville, New Jersey played beautiful music from albums. It was largely a vehicle for owner Fred Wood, an Arthur Godfrey-type who had previously anchored WIP's *Dawn Patrol* in Philadelphia and been general manager of WWBZ AM in Vineland, NJ. There were no 'programs' as such, just music - sometimes only six selections per hour, personality (when Wood was present), and a lot of commercials. An FM simulcast the AM from 1962 until both stations were sold early in 1969, when Wood reportedly went into cable television. In 1976 he founded WWOC

FM in Avalon which carried a more straightforward beautiful instrumentals format into the 90s. After Wood's tenure WMVB AM and FM slowly evolved into an adult contemporary outlet.

Sherwood Gordon, owner of Cincinnati's WSAI, ran a WPAT-styled format at KBUZ AM, Mesa, Arizona (though he moved the studio to Phoenix) from February of 1958 into 1964, adding an FM duplication two years later. "Drive with care and KBUZ everywhere" was a slogan. Subsequent owners continued the beautiful music and the simulcast through 1976.

Frank Kovas would own several Chicago area stations. His first was WKFM FM which signed on in April 1958. Programs such as *Morning Serenade*, *Musical Bon-Bons*, *Pleasant Listening*, *Rendezvous With Rhythm*, *Dinner Musicale*, and *Stereo Showcase* combined popular instrumental and light classical music through the early evening with pop vocals and solo instrumentals featured later. Each show had a separate musical theme, mood, and tempo tailored to accompany its particular day-part. Morning and afternoon drive-times were upbeat, later mornings were light and effervescent, afternoons languid, etc. WKFM FM was the second Chicago outlet to broadcast in multiplex stereo and the first to go stereo 24/7. A listener characterizes the station's sound as "highbrow", while another qualifies "as highbrow as it could be without being classical". Kovas reportedly made money in the 1960s but, faced with stiff competition from outlets running syndicated programming in the 70s, sold to RKO General in March of 1973.

KMCS FM started as an over-the-air Seattle storecaster in May 1958. Following a 1966 call letter change to KBBX FM the business music was consigned to the subcarrier and listenership picked up after a more dynamic orchestral instrumental mix was devised for the main channel. As KEZX FM from 1972 this was replaced by a syndicated package from Ed Peters in San Diego until the 1975 sale to Roy Park who reportedly acquired the station mainly for its business contracts. Under Park Communications an in-house beautiful music format continued into the 1980s when adult contemporary programming was gradually introduced.

WQMS FM, the WPAT-inspired Hamilton, Ohio venture of John McNally and his family, was on the air with beautiful music ("Your quality music station") from May in 1958 until August 1970 when it was replaced by a contemporary Christian format under Trinity Broadcasting Corporation.

On July 12, 1958 WMZK in Detroit, FM sister of John Lord Booth's WJLB AM, became perhaps the first U.S. station to automate an instrumental format. This continued for several years (some say longer). By the 70s WMZK FM was known as "the station of nations" because of its wide variety of 'ethnic' programming.

WHIO FM

WHIO in Dayton, Ohio, the flagship of Cox Radio, was the first major station to successfully adopt beautiful music on its FM. Sometime between the end of 1957 and the beginning of 1959 WHIO FM introduced block-programmed good music featuring a lot of orchestral popular recordings. In 1960 this was replaced its "Enjoy Music" format - continuous popular orchestras, instrumental combos, and light classical music with brief and tasteful commercial announcements on the hour and half-hour, a concert

music feature in the early evening, symphonic broadcasts and a stereo recording showcase on Sundays. Aimed at an affluent, educated, and cultured demographic it almost immediately hit its target and within two or three years was among the highest rated stations in the Cincinnati-Dayton area. Beautiful music WHIO FM continued to draw high ratings for another twenty years or so but in the 1980s, as its audience aged, did less well and was in 1989 was replaced with country-oriented WHKO.

And More

WMUZ FM was a small Detroit outlet that offered beautiful instrumentals from November 1958 to April of 1962 when it was acquired by the estate of religious broadcaster Percy Crawford.

Electronics expert Lester Vihon put Chicago's WFMQ FM on the air in December 1958. MOR instrumentals by Percy Faith, Andre Kostelanetz, David Rose, Gordon Jenkins, and others were spotlighted during the day along with light classical and some more serious pieces. Evenings were devoted to various 'good music' features - interviews, Broadway show selections, concert music, jazz. In March of 1965 Gordon McLendon purchased the station to simulcast his all-news WNUS AM in stereo. As WNUS FM it returned to beautiful music in 1969 and, with the AM, maintained this format until (and some sources claim for a half-decade after as WGCI FM) its sale to Globetrotter Communications some five years later.

For over forty years, from early 1959, Newton's KJRG FM (KOEZ FM from '74 or '75) was a beacon of beautiful music to Harvey County, Kansas. Sister of religious KJRG AM, it broadcast in stereo from the mid 60s and eventually enjoyed consistently high ratings.

KBIQ FM began on Catalina Island off the Southern California coast on February 15, 1959. Upon moving to Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles in 1963 it adopted the call letters of its AM partner KBIG. Owned by the John Poole Broadcasting Company and possessing a strong signal, it simulcast its AM in the early morning and for the rest of the day programmed beautiful instrumentals, switching to MOR pop vocals in the evening. It may have held storecasting contracts. In 1969 Poole gave up broadcasting for wine-making and sold WBIG FM to the Bonneville International Corporation under whose aegis it became the most notable and successful of California's many beautiful music outlets. Marlin Taylor of Bonneville's WRFM Program Services personally installed a custom format in July of 1971. Six years later station personnel resurrected the phrase "easy listening" to advertise that programming, hoping to attract a younger audience, a move which eventually led to widespread use of the term both within the industry and among the public. A soft adult contemporary format replaced beautiful music in 1987.

KABL AM

As organizer of the 1950 to 1952 Liberty Network (founded upon his ability to deliver almost simultaneous play-by-play recreations, with appropriate sound effects for color and excitement, of baseball and football games from wire service reports) and, more recently, as wildly successful adopter and popularizer of the top 40 format at stations in the midwest and south, Dallas-based Gordon McLendon had earned a national reputation as a fierce radio competitor. When he purchased Oakland's KROW AM in 1959 owners and employees of similarly-formatted Bay area outlets prepared for the

worst. Their fear turned to surprise, relief, and finally delight on May 11 when the station was re-launched as beautiful music KABL, "In the Air, Everywhere! On your San Francisco dial", borrowing, of course, WPAT's slogan (many stations did). Noting that the vicinity already had several competing top 40 outlets McLendon 'borrowed', with Dallas colleague Lee Segall's blessing, the latter's KIXL AM/FM programming concept, even hiring its creator Charles Payne as consultant and, for a while, program director, updating it by including more contemporary recordings and utilizing variants of the promotional gimmicks, advertising campaigns, and "mood intros" - spoken, quasi-poetical introductions on the hour to set the tone and put the listener in the proper frame of mind for the following music - developed and successfully employed at his top 40 venues.

Finding that his target audience of educated and professional people were proud of the area and its heritage he saw to it that bits of local color and history were utilized in announcements, IDs, and mood intros. Thus the KABL call letters to invoke San Francisco's cable cars and the sound of a cable-car bell to identify the station. Use of local color to promote listener identification would in time become a feature of most beautiful music operations.

The station was strictly formatted in the manner of McLendon's top 40 outlets. Announcers had to be brief, formal, and to the point. With the exception of news readers, they were not allowed to identify themselves. This added an air of mystery to the broadcasts, but listeners understood that it was all part of an act and enjoyed it. As the station became more automated in the 70s this rule was lifted to develop more audience rapport and Bill Moen, on the air since 1960, became a popular presence.

Payne describes the format of KABL in its early years as "ambient, moody, San Francisco-in-the-fog". Listeners recall that it was sophisticated, charming, elegant, but possessed a gay, whimsical air. Light classical music was retained but use of heavier classics was restricted and segregated to certain hours of day. Program titles indicate an awareness not only of KIXL but of Paterson, New Jersey's WPAT. There was a *Serenade In the Morning* and a *Serenade In the Afternoon* with a *Midday Masterpieces* in between, and a *Limelight*.

McLendon's promotional contests, already legendary, were adapted to appeal to a more cultured audience. One entrant won a performance by the San Francisco Symphony - on her front lawn. Another contest awarded as first prize a week's vacation in Death Valley. The runner-up received two weeks' vacation in Death Valley.

With the local top 40 audience divided among competing stations, KABL within a year went to #1, the first beautiful music outlet to do so. This, along with McLendon's reputation, focused industry attention and lent it great prestige, surpassing that previously accorded WPAT. It became the new model for beautiful music radio success.

Because the hilly terrain of the Bay area tended to impede FM signals, KABL AM remained very popular through the 1970s, well into the era of big-market FM outlets, and maintained a beautiful music format until 1997. Shortly after the calls were given up in 2004 a new KABL featuring long time station announcer Bill Moen began streaming on the internet, a venture that lasted but a few years.

WQMR AM/WGAY FM

The WQMR/WGAY combination would come to occupy a similar position on the east coast. Vice president and station manager Ed Winton had worked for Gordon McLendon in Dallas from 1954 before being hired by country music promoter Connie B. Gay for KITE AM in San Antonio and moved in June 1959 to his just-acquired WGAY in Wheaton, Maryland. Starting with rock 'n roll programming Gay and Winton conspired to introduce a beautiful music format directly modeled on McLendon's at KABL. The change came in the Fall when WGAY AM became WQMR, "Washington's Quality Music Radio", with the "Concert Hall" sound (which actually referred to the more spacious feeling achieved by the use of artificial reverberation), while the FM retained the WGAY calls, a closet country music operation until April 1961 when it began simulcasting WQMR. The AM had a daytime-only license but the FM continued broadcasting to midnight. By 1962-63 the AM was turning a tidy profit.

Aimed at the wealthy and growing Montgomery County suburbs of Washington D.C., the stations emphasized the locale by featuring *Voice of Government Reports*, daily summaries of happenings on Capitol Hill, and a cultivated and informed cosmopolitan style. Winton became especially adept at the art of creating colorful 'mood intros' to head each hour - "Between the bustle of the day and quiet of evening there's a special place, a haven just for you where cares melt away and hope is renewed - WQMR, Washington's Quality Music Radio"; "The lights of the city twinkle below - as we gaze on the panorama of our town; it's the time of day for gaslight, as Washington's Quality Music Radio presents *Gaslight*": "The music 'twixt classical and jazz, from Mantovani to Crosby, the Concert Hall sound of quality, WQMR" - which were widely imitated in the industry through much of the 1960s. The mood intros, the use of a rousing overture or up-tempo orchestral selection to start the hour, the thirteen-minute music segments with brief harp interludes between selections, the clustered soft-sell commercials, the cultured and authoritative male announcers, the clever promotions ("How To Make Love To Your Wife" (buy her a radio and tune it to WQMR), "Escape! to Beautiful Music", and "Luxury Listening - 24 Hours a Day" are still remembered with affection), the calendar of entertainment and cultural events, the local color highlights, etc. were all informed by KABL (and, largely, KIXL) practices.

There were distinctions, often related to the uniquely different locales. WQMR/WGAY, perhaps in keeping with its Beltway location, seems to have projected a more earnest and businesslike tone than its Oakland inspiration (KABL announcers were more formal, but it was a slightly tongue-in-cheek formality). Winton's music segments, while not as tightly controlled, were more inspired, musically superior, and perhaps more logically constructed. Instrumental solos with orchestra were more frequently aired and, later in the 60s, orchestral covers of country music hits often emphasized. WQMR also tended to cultivate listener good will by organizing bus trips to New York shows, concerts, and similar events.

A mid 60s weekday schedule lists *Morning Overture* 6 to 10 A.M. (going, moving), *Gaslight Previews* 10-11 (medium down, mellow), *Carousel* 11 A.M.- 3 P.M., *Limelight* 3:30-7 (heavy on show tunes), *Gaslight* 7-8:30 P.M. (VERY mellow), *Stage Door* 8:30-9 (mixed selections, including overtures, from Broadway shows), *Encore* 9-10 (of the earlier *Gaslight Previews*), *Candlelight and Wine* 10 to Midnight. Between 6

P.M. and Midnight five or six slightly lengthier light classics were usually programmed. Sundays at 1 P.M., after *Music In the Air* (a popular and highly-sold turn that pre-dated the Concert Hall era and the only show without the quarter-hour formatting), *Matinee At One* presented a Broadway show album in its entirety with announcer narration of the plot between numbers. All programs had identifying musical theme numbers.

WQMR/WGAY gained further distinction in the industry by introducing artists and titles that went on to become national hits - clarinetist Acker Bilk's (with the Leon Young String Chorale) *Stranger On the Shore* early in 1962, *Maria Elena* by Los Indios Tabajaras a year and a half later, and, in 1966, the Gunter Kallmann Chorus recording of *Wish Me A Rainbow*.

After a move to new newly-equipped studios in Silver Spring was completed in 1966 the FM began 24-hour stereo operations. The previous year Ed Winton had departed for Florida and was replaced by Bob Chandler who would remain with the station for twenty-six years. Although perhaps less talented than Winton, Chandler showed greater devotion, providing leadership skills that would keep WQMR/WGAY competitive through the 1980s. In 1966 he introduced back-titling of artists and numbers and experimented with a 100% instrumental music policy. Two years later, in keeping with current trends, he did away with individual programs, program titles, theme numbers, and most interludes, subsuming all under the more uniform "Washington's Sound of Music" identification. Original cast Broadway show album excerpts and light classical selections were dropped in 1970. Greater Media purchased the stations from Connie Gay in the spring of 1971 and the following year restored WGAY calls to the AM. Music segments were transferred to tape but programmed like records. From then on instrumental covers of current hits increasingly dominated the playlists as WGAY FM became the focus of operations and the AM was sold in the mid 80s. The new ownership proved fortuitous. From 1978 well through the next decade Greater Media demonstrated its commitment, not only to WGAY but to beautiful music radio in general, by commissioning and recording, at great expense, new material to keep the format fresh, both on its own and, with other syndicators and stations, as part of the International Beautiful Music Association. Unlike most similarly-formatted outlets, WGAY never automated. Through the 70s and 80s the station remained the radio choice of adult listeners and continued to garner high ratings.

In 1991, after a period of transition, WGAY FM, though still popular, formally switched to adult contemporary programming and beautiful music was heard no more in the Washington D.C. area.

and

The Milwaukee Journal's WTMJ FM returned to the air as an automated station with orchestral instrumentals, pop vocals, and 'good music' features on June 1, 1959. As time went on the latter dwindled to a couple of hours of evening classical music and in 1974 the entire format was abandoned.

New England's first 'foreground' outlet was WEZE AM in Boston. In the Fall of 1959 Music director Louis Goldberg's Wonderful World of Music replaced a generalist motley of pop music, rock 'n roll, personality, and chat shows. It was a middle-of-the-road album format with good music leanings

designed to appeal to grown-ups, quite a fresh approach at the time and even startling as it did not include current hit records. Although the emphasis was on orchestral and other instrumental music - orchestral pop, musical show overtures and potpourris, some familiar light classics and melodic jazz - solo and group vocals of various kinds were not lacking. All were presented in a very relaxed, "easy" manner. The station lived up to its calls. Friendly and informative announcer chatter was encouraged to create a bond with listeners but was kept brief and tasteful, and unobtrusive. "They were nice men who kept you company while you worked" recalls a woman who listened as a young housewife in the early 1960s, " because the music was good it made you feel good about yourself. The radio stations that came after just put you to sleep." As an NBC affiliate WEZE regularly broadcast some network programming as well, including *Monitor* in whole or in part weekends. Members of the staff had organized and purchased the station from Air Trails Broadcasting early in 1961.

Studios were at the Statler Hotel (later re-named the Park Plaza) Office Building near Boston Public Garden where Park Square passers-by could watch blue blazered and boutonierred announcers through the street-level broadcast booth window. WEZE had quite a following by 1965 when they issued a promotional LP of light orchestral compositions in popular style by program director Bob Way. A slightly later promotion advertises "Uninterrupted Adult Album Music". As a young music student I was an occasional listener and was impressed with the excellence of the musical selections.

Unfortunately, the advent of WJIB FM in September 1967 spelled the beginning of the end. With a typical AM spot load, a news department, and more costly on-air talent, WEZE could not compete with the more up-to-date, better-sounding, streamlined, and cleanly-formatted newcomer, and reportedly devoted more time to news analysis and talk shows. By 1973 a solid gold oldies/contemporary middle-of-the-road hits policy had been adopted but had no greater success, and *The Wonderful World of Music* returned, somewhat modified, in 1975. 1977 brought new owners who would soon introduce contemporary Christian programming.

The George Voron Company of Philadelphia made electronic test equipment and installed and serviced communications and background music systems, supplying programming for the latter. They built some of the components used in their 1959 construction of WQAL FM in Wyndmoor, PA. George's brother Abe was installed as station manager and young Dave Custis, working without pay, assembled a record library and fashioned programming for its November 11 debut. "It was really fun," reports Custis, " I could play whatever I wanted," sometimes even records from his own collection. His format was "very loose", "a mixture of instrumental music and syrupy popular music of that era" apparently aimed at adults but not entirely excluding hit recordings. With very little publicity the station attracted an audience which within two years exceeded that of other Philadelphia area FMs. Stereo operations began in 1962. Abe Voron became a major force in the burgeoning National Association of FM Broadcasters.

While WQAL established a loyal listener base and did quite well, from 1963 it would be outperformed and overshadowed by its more articulate, tightly-formatted, and aggressive beautiful music neighbor WDVR FM. United Artists Broadcasting acquired the facility in September 1970 for 1.1 million dollars, moved studios from the transmitter site to Bala-Cynwyd, installed competitive SRP (Stereo Radio Productions, later Schulke Radio Productions) programming, and soon adopted call letters WWSH. For

several years profits were substantial. Phil Stout, vice president of SRP, has recognized it as "the perfect Schulke station" in tribute to the excellence of its technical facilities, operations and maintenance personnel, and sales staff. By the end of the decade however, although ratings remained high, time became increasingly difficult to sell. Advertisers desired a younger demographic. Cox Broadcasting, who had purchased WWSH FM in 1977, became increasingly desperate, and on September 6, 1982 let the announcing staff go and switched to hot adult contemporary music.

CHQM AM, "Canada's Highest Quality Music", in Vancouver, British Columbia signed on December 10, 1959 with a KABL-modeled format but one leaning more towards 'good music'. The following August 10 an FM was added which broadcast in stereo from November 4, 1961, mostly duplicating the AM. 24/7 operations began September 1, 1963 on the AM and, in stereo, on the FM in 1965 after a power increase. "Beautiful Music For a Beautiful City" then became the advertising slogan for both stations.

While programming remained fairly uniform through most of the day - popular orchestras, light classics, selections from Broadway cast albums, standard vocals, light jazz - shows were designed to emphasize different facets of the format. 6-9 A.M. *Q For Music* (wake-up), 9-12 *Q On the Aisle* (included comedy selections and celebrity interviews), Noon-4 P.M. *Limelight* (theater and film music), 4-6 *Carousel* (relaxing music with a contemporary flavor), 6:30-9 *Candlelight & Wine* (soaring strings), 11 P.M.-1 A.M. *Gaslight* (intimate ballads and small group jazz), 1-6 A.M. *Q's Company* (general). *Starlight Concert*, from 9 to 11 P.M., was entirely devoted to serious and light classics. Weekend AM programming included jazz, folk music, classical, pops concert, Broadway, and comedy features, with drama, poetry, spoken word, opera, a New York Philharmonic concert and special stereo albums on the FM. News, news analysis, and a stock market report rounded off the programming. At some point earlier on Canadian singer Robert Goulet was featured in a series of shows, probably on tape).

From about 1962 they had a background music service, "Q Music", supposedly the first commercial use of an FM subcarrier in Canada. A program guide was available to subscribers through much of the decade. "Q", as they were known (owner Vancouver Broadcasting Associates would become Q Broadcasting in 1969), also issued LPs of highlights from some of the programs. Transfer of music segments to tape began in mid-decade. By 1970 they were the city's second most listened to station, and modified their segments to contain only three musical numbers, the first and last by the same artist, followed by an announcer extro, commercial, station ID, commercial, then announcer intro for the next segment. The exception was A.M. drive when there were no "segments" - single numbers alternated with announcements and commercials. A 70s ad characterizes the station's music as "bright and beautiful during the day, moody and mellow after 6".

Principal owners Bill Bellman and Jack Stark built a very successful radio operation but eventually quarreled and fought each other for dominance, with the latter prevailing in 1979. CHUM Limited, on buying the stations in 1990, divested itself of the AM, which promptly went lite adult contemporary. 1992 saw standard adult contemporary succeeding beautiful music on CHQM FM.

Under the ownership of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Sinatra Portland, Oregon's daytimer KXL AM moved from top 40 to a "good music" format of "lush string instrumentals" late in 1959 or early the next year. Billed

as "Refreshing Radio" and "Aisle 750", *Morning Overture*, *Serenade In the Morning*, *Serenade In the Afternoon*, and *Limelight* were the only program titles. In October 1964 the Sinatras sold to entertainer Danny Kaye and his wife Sylvia (Fine) and Lester Smith (general manager and part owner since the mid 50s). Well capitalized and with a profitable station Kaye-Smith Enterprises (as they would later be known) acquired automated Portland multiplex stereo FM outlet KGMG from International Good Music (IGM) the following year, moving studios to KXL where it became KXL FM, "Better Music", at first duplicating the AM but soon programming separately after 4 P.M. Beginning September 1966 the music on the FM evening shows was taped for syndication by IGM (whose software and syndication company BPI Kaye-Smith would later purchase as well). By 1970 , "KXL FM stereo, the beautiful music station, a beautiful music oasis", had become the focus, and the AM partially simulcast the FM to 1974, after which it was programmed separately until a 1980 format change. At about this time, or earlier, the FM began using syndication tapes from SRP, later TM Productions, and still later received Unistar's "Special Blend" format by satellite until April of 1990 when beautiful music was dropped for "lite favorites".

As the new decade dawned album instrumental-based outlets began to proliferate. About eighteen signed on or moved to the format in 1960 in the U.S. and Canada, and more than that the following year. As the economy improved in 1962 over two dozen entered the field. But, while some owners were enthusiastic, many simply regarded it as a viable resort - a safe, adult haven - where they could "hole up" until something better came along or until a market developed which allowed them to more advantageously dispose of their holdings. For them it was inexpensive, low-maintenance, and its mostly-music arrangement lent itself to automated operation, freeing time and staff for more important items of business. Yet it was novel, respectable, perhaps even cultured, and was said to attract an affluent audience. It was making money for some, so might be worth a try. As 1963 drew to a close beautiful music stations graced most cities, many suburbs, and some outlying areas. By the end of 1967 few Americans could not access one or more on their AM and FM radios.

Good Music, High-Fidelity, and Stereo

"Good music" was, first, classical (concert) music and light classical - music that had retained its substance, impact, freshness. and interest generation after generation - the works of the great masters. Beautiful and high in entertainment value, good music was also considered to be intellectually stimulating, culturally broadening, and morally uplifting, enriching, edifying and ennobling the listener, rendering him or her a better person and better citizen. At the middle of the 20th century few would have disagreed with this assessment. Radio of the 1930s had taught them. Because of its timeless appeal and supposed benefits good music was thought a good investment, both of money and of time spent in enjoyment, study, and advocacy of its institutions. Even listeners themselves favoring swing bands, rhythm singers, romantic balladeers, or polka music wanted their children to be exposed to 'good music' and learn to appreciate it so they might improve themselves and cultivate richer, more fulfilled lives. It was also regarded as the music of choice of the successful, the moneyed, the educated, established families, business, social, and community leaders who often sat on boards, supported and underwrote cultural events.

As the inanities and frivolities of the hit parade, and soon rock 'n roll, came more and more to dominate radio in the 1950s, the meaning of the term was extended to include theater music and skillful, durable orchestral and vocal renderings of classic popular standards. Beginning in 1953 a 'good music' station was one that programmed not only concert, opera, and light classical music but, to some extent, these genres as well. By 1957-1958 jazz, traditional or modern, motion picture, and folk music too had become 'good music' and were included on many of these stations. By the turn of the decade a good music station was an outlet that offered 'adult' (no teen hit parade, country music, rhythm and blues or jive) and/or cultural (concert music and fine arts) programming.

For purposes of this history a 'good music station' was not a classical, or mostly classical, outlet or a primarily popular music operation but a combination of both including some or all of the additional genres listed above. A refinement of the generalist, full-service broadcasting concept, most were block-programmed. A show devoted to symphonic masterpieces would be followed by one featuring orchestral popular music and standard vocalists, then a community or arts interview, an hour of continental selections, one from the "romantic masters of the piano", a calendar of cultural events, an hour or two of cocktail music, then a newly-released album would be featured followed by a live concert broadcast, an hour of news analysis, and a jazz program. Most were small, community-oriented, FMs owned by husband and wife teams, electronics hobbyists, sometimes newspapers or local businessmen, all partaking in the post-war climate of optimism to bring the best to their communities. Few made money. Advertising time was often bartered by owner-operators for local goods and services.

Perhaps the epitome of 'good music' radio was the IGM Heritage Music network of the early 1960s. International Good Music Inc. was founded in Bellingham, Washington by Lafayette Rogan Jones, veteran owner of that community's KVOS AM, in 1958 to assemble and sell radio automation systems. Part of his plan was to offer "the best possible" taped music for them. Accordingly he engaged a "panel of experts", among them conductor Alfred Wallenstein, young harpsichordist Igor Kipnis, jazz writer and critic Martin Williams, concert promoter James Lyons, and humanist Edward Block (also the series' announcer and commentator), in 1960 to select the best in each genre of 'good music' for inclusion. The Heritage Music format of symphonic and light classical works, recorded concerts, orchestral and vocal standards, show tunes, jazz and folk music, was heard on the Heritage Stations Group, a tape network consisting of six IGM-owned FM outlets in the west, thirty-five to forty client FMs in urban areas throughout the country, and several AM stations. It did not do well. Apparently listeners did not want the best possible music or even the best of the best. Most clients did not renew for a second year. The advent of FM multiplex stereo appeared to date the format. IGM ceased issuing new Heritage tapes in March of 1962 and soon turned to the production of middle-of-the-road instrumental and vocal offerings.

As the 1960s wore on this kind of inclusive programming proved difficult to sustain. Concert works were too lengthy, jazz was increasingly turbulent and angry, folk musicians became mainstream popular artists or bought electric guitars and turned to rock. Broadway shows lost their appeal. Good music stations adopted more saleable popular music policies, evolved into beautiful music operations, or were sold. By the early 70s there was no longer any consensus about what constituted 'good music'. Jazz and

classical music were more and more becoming the province of educational outlets and non-commercial public radio.

Most beautiful music stations of the 1950s and many in the 60s mixed light classical with popular orchestral music and regularly devoted shorter, usually evening or weekend, programs to other good music genres for variety, contrast, and additional listener appeal, but dropped them as uniform programming through the day became the rule around 1968 or with the adoption of automated operations.

High-fidelity was the high-quality reproduction of sound. Once radio became established industry engineers sought to improve the fidelity of narrow bandwidth, often long-distance AM broadcasts at the source and in the transmission, reception, and reproduction of the signal. Commercial 78rpm records were noisy to begin with and became increasingly so with rapid wear. High-fidelity in the 1930s was the sphere of motion pictures, electrical transcriptions, very high-end radios, and recently-developed FM broadcasting, all of which stimulated a consumer fascination with sound quality that gave birth to the first high-fidelity enthusiasts. Though the world conflict in the 1940s diverted the energies of sound scientists and engineers to the war effort the culture of sound redeveloped strongly in late in the decade as a consequence of the perfection of vacuum tubes, commercial FM radio, the advent of tape, the introduction of long-playing microgroove vinyl recordings, technical improvements in function and design of microphones, amplifiers, speakers, and the manufacture and marketing of sound equipment for household use. "Hi-fi" fairs publicized and demonstrated the latest components which spread abroad with suburban growth and the increase in 'disposable' household income. High-fidelity enthusiasts (today we call them 'audiophiles') multiplied, obsessed with building or buying the ideal sound system, avid for the most modern and highest quality recordings of symphonic, orchestral popular, and band music, even trains and thunderstorms, to test their equipment, devoting significant quantities of leisure time to the consideration, comparison, and discussion of the relative merits of products with names such as Williamson, Altec, Ampex, Klipsch, Acoustic Research, JBL, Dynaco, KLH, Tannoy, Marantz.

Hi-fi enthusiasts naturally gravitated to the greatly superior sound of FM radio and became, with lovers of classical and other 'good music' genres, the main audience for frequency modulated radio through the 1950s. As AM-style generalist and live programming had become economically unfeasible on FM stations owners who kept their licenses and chose not to simulcast their AM stations, storecast, transit-cast, or provide background music to subscribers opted for mostly recorded classical or other good music formats including, increasingly, beautiful music. Manufacturers of hi-fi components and high-fidelity stores supported and often advertised on these stations, and they, in turn, cultivated enthusiasts by sponsoring or participating in hi-fi fairs and undertaking experimental binaural and stereo broadcasts of live or recorded music on their own or with neighboring outlets. Enthusiasts were often inspired to construct special units to better hear and appreciate their local FMs. The 1958 introduction of commercial stereo recordings and sound systems (stereo tapes of a limited number of titles had been available since 1955) proved a turning point for the medium. For the first time in ten years the number of FM stations increased rather than decreased. High fidelity, once a hobbyist plaything, became a widespread industry. Enthusiasts now anxiously awaited the Federal Communications Commission establishment of a national standard for FM multiplex stereo transmissions.

This came in the spring of 1961. On June 1 the first stations to adopt that standard were on the air. By the end of that year beautiful music outlets WJBR in Wilmington, Delaware, CHFI FM in Toronto, Canada, CHQM FM Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, CFMO FM Ottawa, Canada, WDBN FM in Medina, Ohio, and possibly WKFM FM Chicago, WLDM FM Detroit, and WTFM FM Lake Success, New York, were among the earliest good music and classical stations broadcasting in stereo at least part of each day.

Possessing a very strong, and soon grandfathered, signal, WDBN FM, located thirty miles south of Cleveland and ten miles northwest of Akron, Ohio, included all the latter and part of the former in its extensive area of coverage. The station signed on October 17, 1960 and began stereo operations in November a year later. Principals Theodore and Elizabeth Niarhos devised a characteristic slow and mesmerizing string-laden sound, all or mostly all instrumental, that would later be adopted by many stations. Through their Independent Music Broadcasters they became the first beautiful music station to market program tapes, but there were few takers in 1963. In time they assembled one of the most complete and comprehensive beautiful music-easy listening record libraries and built a substantial following in northeast Ohio. Marketed as "The Quiet Island" ("in radio's sea of noise."), WDBN would by the early 70s have one of the nation's largest FM audiences. In April 1968 Mr. and Mrs. Niarhos sold, for what was then a record price for an FM station, to Robert Miller, and relocated to Florida where they bought and ran WVCG AM and WYOR FM in Coral Gables through most of the 70s. Miller, whose father, a former mayor of Cleveland, owned that city's WERE, tightened the format and realized a tidy profit over the next twenty years, endearing himself to many local residents through his activism in community affairs. Using an Electro-Voice Quadrosonic system on Sunday evenings in April of 1971 WDBN became one of the first radio outlets to offer quad broadcasts. A 1988 sale ended the station's beautiful music.

Another important early stereo outlet, this one in the New York City area, was WTFM FM. Built by Willam Reumann of WWRL/WRFM in Babylon on Long Island it was acquired by Frank Perloff's Friendly Frost chain of appliance stores in March of 1960 to help their sale of FM receivers (Friendly Frost, in turn, constructed WQMF FM which under the subsequent ownership of Warwick Associates would become beautiful music powerhouse WCTO FM. And, interestingly, WTFM's frequency earlier belonged to WPAT AM!). Later in 1961 its beautiful music operations were moved to a newly constructed facility on the Long Island Expressway in nearby Lake Success where 24 hour stereo broadcasts began in December or early 1962. Within a year WTFM began appearing in the Hooper Radio Audience Index.

General manager David H. Polinger was a staunch advocate of FM as the proper and exclusive medium for adult listeners. "Let the kids have AM and TV", he told a mid 60s convention programming panel, and devoted WTFM FM entirely to adult programming - popular orchestras, MOR vocalists, Broadway LPs, some light classical selections, with weekend symphonic and operatic features including, later in the decade, jazz and discussion/reviews of audio equipment. The station is said to have built a library of 90,000 records. Most show titles contained the words 'stereo' or 'stereophonic'. A number of well-known announcers got their start here and some already-established personalities, such as former WMCA "good guy" Dean Anthony, were employed. Listeners recall them as personable but feel that their presentation of the music was sometimes forced and unnatural. Eventually the facility was part of

a mini-mall that included a high-end audio store and a restaurant from which diners could watch the announcers. Visitors to the nearby 1964 World's Fair recall station personnel handling records with white gloves in a special broadcast booth.

As the 1960s came to a close WTMF began to lose its popularity to more carefully programmed and cleanly-formatted beautiful music outlets, often those running the new high-quality syndicated formats. Fall 1978 saw the beginning of a year-and-a-half transition to adult contemporary music, which did less well and hastened the 1982 sale.

By 1963 beautiful music radio stations had become numerous. Some, as we have seen, were already established and going concerns, others considered and honest attempts to entertain a target audience and turn a profit. Still others - many, in fact - were being run only in 'license-holding' mode, as poorly-conceived and under-capitalized, often closet or back room, operations, programmed randomly, with little plan or forethought, from inexpensive and second-hand records, inferior sounding tape or dated transcription libraries, by inexperienced, distracted, or uninterested personnel. Too often little effort was expended because their owners and managers just did not care.

End of Part One

Part Two to follow.