

"CAVALCADE OF DRAMA"

Great Names In ZB's New Sunday Night Feature

IN radio entertainment, the words "This is a C. P. McGregor Production" spell quality.

The C. P. McGregor Studios of Hollywood, California, who gave listeners such great shows as "Lady Courageous," "Problems for Pamela," "The House of Peter MacGregor," may be justly proud of the Cavalcade of Drama, which reaches a new standard in quality of production, excellence of cast, and brilliance of story.

A new series will start at all ZB stations and at 2ZA on December 17. At 12B the feature is "Her Britannic Majesty, Victoria Regina"; at 2ZB, "The Mighty Barnum"; at 3ZB, "The Life of Stephen Foster"; at 4ZB, "Elizabeth Barrett Browning"; and at 2ZA, "Marie Antoinette."

Great names all, recalling great personalities of history, and promising a wealth of drama, romance, tragedy and humour, according to the courses followed by the lives which are portrayed.

First and Greatest Showman

A short resumé of the life-stories of these heroes and heroines may illustrate what is enacted so vividly in this fine radio programme:

Let us begin with "The Mighty Barnum," the greatest showman of all time—and the first.

The story opens in Bethel, Connecticut, on November 8, 1829, and begins with the marriage of Phineas Taylor Barnum to Charity Hallett. Phineas Barnum was a very human person, and full of humour—very often unconscious humour. His natural matter-of-fact behaviour at his wedding gives one an insight into his character.

Barnum had a newspaper business, and was absolutely brimming over with ideas. They may have been very good ideas, but for the editor they had unexpectedly awkward results: Barnum was eventually taken to court and sued for slander and libel. He lost the case and it cost him 500 dollars. To pay this he had to sell his newspaper. He decided to start a general store, but his interest was not in it. By no means. His real interest lay with his rapidly growing collection of monstrosities. He had conceived the idea of making a museum, and to this end he

let the rent bills mount up, and spent all his available money on, for example, a cat with a head at each end, or a lizard with two tails. Then someone told him about the nurse of George Washington. His informant claimed that she had been mummified or something and Barnum was very interested indeed. This proved to be the beginning of his career as a showman.

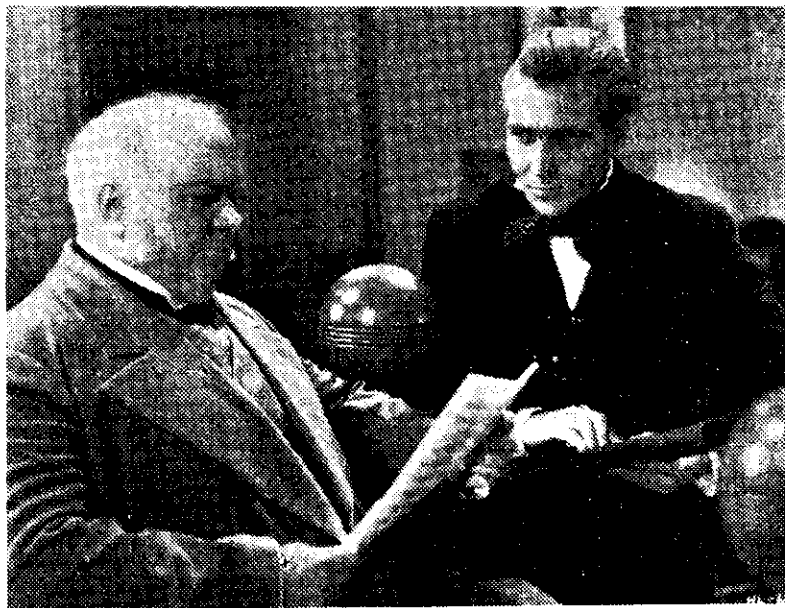
He then founded his "Greatest Show On Earth"—and the "nurse of George Washington," in the person of an ancient negress by name Joyce Heth, was his big success. From then on his life became too full to tell in detail here.

But several important happenings stand out. In 1841 he bought the American Museum where "General Tom Thumb" was shown. In 1850 he was impresario for Jenny Lind. He took her to America and never had there been such a sensational success before. All

of the Dauphin of France. She goes happily, a gay young girl, to find that her husband is a feeble-minded young man who does not like court life. He prefers to make clocks in his workshop. They have no children for some time and the old King Louis XV. mocks the Dauphin, who is hurt and angry. A close bond of sympathy is formed between him and his wife. And although she is gay and leads a brilliant and dangerous life at court—with such success and so many admirers that the du Barry, mistress of Louis XV. becomes madly jealous—this bond grows stronger and stronger between them. Later they have two children, and might have remained happy had it not been for the Revolution which brought an end to their peace—and to their lives. The story of their imprisonment and separation from each other and their children is one of the greatest tragedies of history.



Many listeners who saw Norma Shearer (above) in the M-G-M film "Marie Antoinette" will be looking forward to hearing the radio story of the tragic queen



Stephen Collins Foster takes a manuscript to his publisher: A scene from the Action Pictures' release "Harmony Lane" with Douglass Montgomery portraying America's greatest song-writer. Foster figures in the ZB feature "Cavalcade of Drama"

to find that Suzannah was dead. He was heart-broken.

Then he returned to his brother at Pittsburgh. The story of his life, of his marriage, his successes, his separation from his wife, his fall into oblivion, and finally his death in 1864 alone and in pain, when his wife ("Jenny of the Light Brown Hair") and his brother were coming too late to see him, makes one of the most touching radio dramas C. P. McGregor has ever produced.

Barretts of Wimpole Street

The last two names in this series are women's names — Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and Queen Victoria.

Many people know the story of that house in Wimpole Street—number 50, where the Barretts lived in fear and trembling of their stern and unjust father, Edward Barrett. The family consisted of Edward the father, Muzzie the mother, Sissie, Stuttering Stormie their brother, Elizabeth, the invalid poetess who later became the wife of Robert Browning, and Uncle Sam Barrett who brought his favourite niece Elizabeth a love-charm locket from Jamaica. The story of Elizabeth Barrett and her admiration for Robert Browning, the poems she wrote to him, their meeting, and their romance, forms one of the most touching love stories of all time.

Victoria Regina

Lastly, a word about "Her Britannic Majesty, Victoria Regina." She of the long and mainly peaceful reign—and the triumphant Diamond Jubilee.

Many people to-day can still remember seeing the little old Queen at the turn of the century, and they can also remember her funeral. The radio play opens in 1820 when Victoria's father, the Duke of Kent, was dying.

Victoria's christening at 30 days old is depicted and the blessing and curses which are supposed to have been bestowed on her that day, at her father's deathbed.

At eighteen Victoria came to the throne, and then shortly afterwards she met and married Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, the man she was to love dearly all her life, and mourn greatly at his death, so many years before her own.

Such stories as these make a most remarkable production. So tune in to "The Cavalcade of Drama" at 9.5 p.m. from all ZB stations on Sunday, December 17.



"The Mighty Barnum" is featured in the "Cavalcade of Drama" series. This is how the world's greatest showman was portrayed by Wallace Beery in a United Artists' film some years ago

the seats were sold out weeks ahead to hear Jenny Lind sing. Barnum auctioned the seats for fabulous prices, and publicised the fact far and wide—such was his genius for showmanship. Actually he was the first showman—and to-day men still use his methods.

In 1871 the great travelling circus "Barnum and Bailey's" took the road. Barnum wrote several books, of which his "Autobiography" (written in 1854) is one of the most interesting.

After a tumultuous career, the Mighty Barnum died in 1891.

Tragic Queen

The tragic story of Marie Antoinette has stirred the world to pity. The radio play opens in 1769 at the Palace in Austria when Marie Antoinette was about fourteen years old. An Ambassador comes with an offer to the Empress Maria Teresa of Austria from Louis XV. of marriage between his grandson the Dauphin to Marie Antoinette. In 1770 she goes to France, the affianced bride

America's Troubadour

Stephen Collins Foster, the American Troubadour, was the first of the Tin Pan Alley song-writers. His simple melodies will live for ever—and although Stephen Foster was recognised as a genius during his lifetime, he died as a derelict in the Bellevue Hospital, New York. He was born in Pittsburgh in 1826. The brilliant C. P. McGregor production vividly depicts his struggling ill-starred life. Foster's first song "Oh, Suzannah," was written to his first love, Suzannah Keller.

When he was a young man he worked as a clerk in his brother William's business. He borrowed 200 dollars from his brother to go to Cincinnati, and on arriving found that the song had preceded him, and that a publisher was selling it. Foster told him that the song was his—and was paid 200 dollars for it, which enabled him to pay back his brother. When eventually Foster returned home he called at Suzannah's house only