# HOW TO ENTERTAIN WITH RADIO

## THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE GUESTS

**Are you pleasing yourself or pleasing your guests? That is the fundamental question every host giving radio entertainment must ask himself. Inevitably the host is torn between two desires—first, to "show off" and demonstrate how many stations he can catch, and secondly, to give his guests a pleasant evening. How best can he do the latter in manipulating his set? By switching wildly through the night, or sitting pat and quiet? Read what "Switch" thinks.**

Probably in hundreds of New Zealand homes nightly the same scene is being enacted. The host sits at the receiving set and proceeds to treat his visitors to music or speech mysteriously inveigled from the outer darkness. With the turn of his dials he produces music or speech from the loudspeaker from near or far

It is the host's chief desire to please his guests, but an unseen conflict rises between the duty to entertain and the desire to "show off" what his set can do. If he has a set capable of reaching out from station to station, he invariably commences a series of jumps through the ether.

### UNNATURAL CONTRASTS.

What is the natural result? His guests are inflicted with a weird medley of a disjointed character which defies even the most skilful arranger of musical "switches" to emulate. To the average mortal who has a liking for music, this bewildering exposition soon becomes a positive infliction, but to the cultured lover of music the effect is utterly appalling. For example, the guests sit rapt in pleasure listening to the vocal number, "When Shadows Gather," but before four or five bars have issued from the loudspeaker there is a gurgle, and in a twinkle a jazz orchestra is pounding out "Ain't She Sweet?" Before the guests have time to recover from the shock they are switched on to a tenor who is in the middle of "The Link Divine." He is not permitted to proceed far, however, but has to give place to a brass band "lifting the roof" with "Star of Hope." But the triumph of the band is short-lived, for in a trice the scene is changed again, and the solemn tones of a mighty organ are threading through a Beethoven "Andante" murmur alluringly from the loudspeaker. But the host is not to be denied, and he swings his audience back to the jazz band and "Gimme a Little Kiss, Will Ya, Huh?" A homeopathic dose of the snorting and shrieking of a saxophone, and the listeners are introduced to Professor Blank in the middle of a discourse on "The Einstein Theory." His learned disquisition survives only half a minute, and then comes a fragment of a weather forecast. The climatic conditions to come are sufficient unto the day thereof, and the host recklessly obliterates the meteorologist's prognostications, and gives his guests a nibble at a piano virtuoso's conception of Chopin's "Waltz in A Flat," which is followed by a slice of "There Ain't No Maybe in My Baby's Eyes," blatantly asserted by a nasal-voiced tenor and endorsed by a jazz band from a distant Australian station, or quite likely, on the other hand, invitingly played by a first-class combination of talent. Possibly some of the guests feel their feet tingling to the alluring beat of the music, for many of us relish the tripping lilt of ultra-modern dance music, but this pleasure is short-lived, for the host whisks his guests into the middle of Handel's "Largo" played by a 'cellist.

### OUTCOME OF A MAD FANDANGO.

And so the thing goes on without a respite until at length the guests, with their musical sense shocked and bewildered, declare it is time to depart. The tenets of good form have prevented them from expostulating against their host's mad fandango through the air, but they go away with a feeling of disappointment, and regret. The host closes down with the self-satisfied air of a man who has treated his visitors in regal style. But, what a farce the whole affair has been! And it could have been avoided by just a little thoughtfulness and common sense.

The man in the street is quite aware that the wizardry of radio permits the owner of a good receiving set to pass from one station to another. He is not averse to this changing over, either, but he does not relish his entertainment being served up in disjointed fragments. If the host is inclined to change from one station to another, by all means he can do so without shocking his audience by switching in and out in the middle of the broadcast items and producing an incongruity more like a phantasmagorial nightmare than an entertainment which could be thoroughly enjoyable and satisfying.

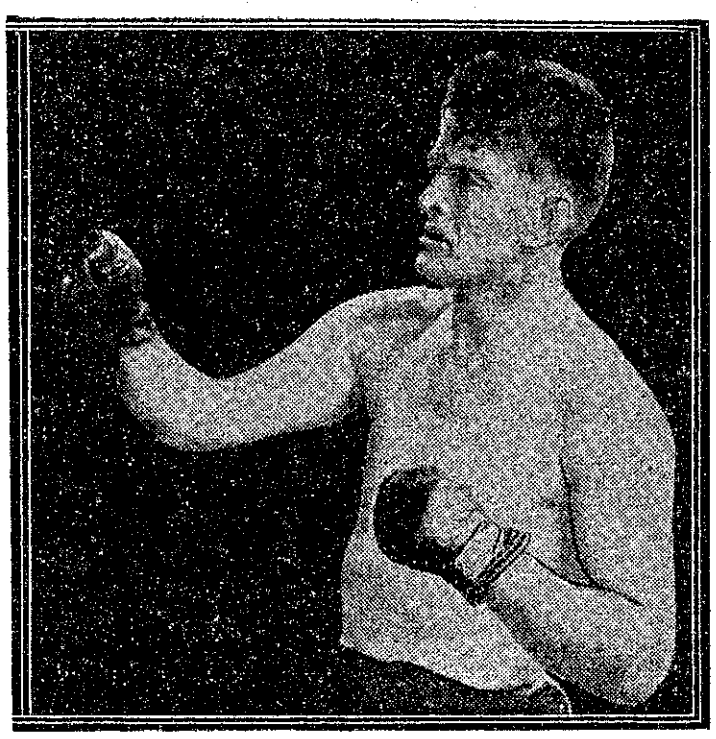
### ORGANISE THE PROGRAMME.

If his guests relish the lively music of a jazz band in preference to higher class music he should let them hear it.

This brings one to another aspect of entertaining by radio. It is a simple duty of the host to cater for the tastes of his guests, if he is desirous of pleasing them. When he possesses a set that is capable of affording a variety of programmes from various stations from which to select his items, there is no difficulty in complying with the tastes of his guests. The programmes of the various stations appear in the Press, and by studying these he is able to compile an entertainment that will afford the maximum of pleasure to his visitors. Even in a small gathering there are likely to be widely varying tastes, and by judicious selection the individual desires can be catered for in due proportion. There are many people who would prefer to listen to only one station which is being received well, and are agreeable to hearing some items that are not in accordance with their taste, in preference to being switched over to another station in pursuit of a more welcome item which is spoilt through unavoidable static, fading, and distortion. Much should be left to the host's own common sense or experience in such cases if he is prepared to exercise it, but thoughtlessness in this respect spoils what could be a completely enjoyable night for a party of guests.

Excessive volume is another and rather frequent blight upon entertainment by radio. Far too frequently the proud host cannot resist a tendency to demonstrate the power of his set. Scarcely anything could be more unpleasant to the musical sense than the distorted tumult created by the overloading of a set with the music of a band or orchestra. An essential, next to correct pitch in musical expression, is tonal quality. It is not sufficient for an artist to paint a landscape true to proportion and perspective; the correct colouring is an indispensable corollary. Tone and expression are the colouring of music. Neither can be obtained when the valves of a radio set are overloaded. Faithful definition of light and shade is impossible when the volume is excessive. If a broadcast station is close at hand, it is most desirable to keep the volume down to that point where the tone becomes natural. Even faithful reproduction, if with tremendous volume, in an ordinary room, is objectionable to all tastes. It is nerve-racking, and produces quite an opposite effect to what music naturally causes. How, then, can our guests enjoy their radio evening under such circumstances? It is the happy medium which radio entertainers should strive for, and an abiding consideration for the pleasure of one's guests would preclude stentorian reproduction from the loudspeaker.

The good name of radio lies at the disposal of all owners of receiving sets, and this trust should be faithfully honoured. How can anyone who is unacquainted with radio be favourably impressed with it when his host persists in the pursuit of a far-distant station on a night when the ether is full of static? Beginners and veterans are equally hateful of static, and yet many a radio host racks the feelings of his guests by long-distance reception on a bad static night. It is no pleasure to the listeners to have their ears assailed with an atmospheric bombardment, no credit to the operator of the set for permitting this objectionable racket to upset his guests, and it gives radio an undeservedly bad name. If static is so intense that it is likely to seriously spoil reception, it would be far better to close down the set for the night, and to arrange for another evening's entertainment if practicable.



**GENE TUNNEY**
**WORLD'S CHAMPION HEAVYWEIGHT BOXER.**
**The broadcast of the fight between Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney for the world's championship, excited a great deal of interest and gave a distinct fillip to the consideration of short wave sets. Arrangements were made by the Radio Broadcasting Company for the reception of the short wave broadcast, and both at Auckland and Wellington it was possible to receive sufficient of the fight for shorthand notes to be taken and announcements made over the air. A trouble experienced at both centres was that of howling valves, which frequently completely spoilt reception at exciting points. Nevertheless, the public was given the very best service possible, and the result was on the air from the New Zealand stations within three minutes from the conclusion of the fight. As technical equipment and skill advances this feat will be possible of development.**

# Useful Hints for the Novice

*(By "AJAX.")*

There is no more acceptable form of home entertainment than broadcast listening, with its endless variety and interest. With the introduction of a high-class broadcast service in New Zealand, wireless as a hobby has undergone a complete change and is now invading the homes of all and sundry. Previously broadcast listening was the pastime of people who were mainly interested in the technical wonder of it. Now there are thousands who buy wireless sets without the slightest desire to become deeply acquainted with the technical side of radio. Unfortunately it is not possible for the radio dealer to go into all the detailed instructions necessary to the proper installation and operation of a receiving outfit when it is purchased by a beginner—a novice whose sole object is to obtain interest and entertainment with his outfit and without any desire to become acquainted with the technicalities of it.

Take the novice with a crystal set. He should realise that strength of reception is obtained through the quality of the crystal and the efficiency of his aerial and earth connection. There are some crystal sets on sale with tuning devices which limit the desirable length of the aerial. The novice should ascertain from the dealer what length of aerial is recommended for that particular set. Generally speaking, the longer and the higher an aerial is for a crystal set the better will be the reception. As the strength of reception with a crystal set also depends largely upon the amount of electrical energy picked up by the aerial it comes as a natural factor that the longer the aerial the greater the energy it will pick up. However, if the aerial device is too long for the tuning devices within the receiving set, the set cannot be adjusted to the length of the aerial and the set is rendered out of tune with the aerial. Weak reception is accordingly inevitable. If an aerial is rather on the short side this is, for tuning purposes, compensated for by throwing into series or adding to the length of the aerial a coil of wire inside the set. It will be patent to anyone that the coil of wire inside the set is a poor substitute for picking up electrical energy as compared with an aerial exposed aloft to the waves from the broadcast station. The same can be said of the tuning condenser, which is placed in parallel with the tuning coil within the set. This makes out a good case for having one's aerial as long as possible compatible with the aerial tuning device within the crystal set.

An aerial which is screened from the broadcast station is at a disadvantage. It has been conclusively established that intervening objects close to an aerial cast a radio "shadow." A radio "shadow" differs from a light shadow in the peculiarity that the former converges to a point, whereas the latter broadens out. Therefore, although an object may be directly between the broadcast station aerial and the listener's aerial, unless the object is close to the listener's aerial there is no screening effect. But to run an aerial so that it is screened by the close proximity of a house or trees which are between the broadcast station and the listener's aerial is to reduce strength of reception very substantially. An average aerial should be free from screening effect, and at least 30 feet above, not only the ground, but above every object. An aerial suspended to 30-feet masts has its electrical height proportionally reduced if it passes directly over a hedge, tree, fence, or building. In the cities it is seldom one can erect an aerial of a good length without its passing over one or more of such objects. If the tree happens to be on the listener's own property he can improve matters by cutting it down or reducing its height, but other objects, such as fences and buildings, have to be tolerated. The best way of overcoming these disadvantages, if the aerial cannot be placed so as to avoid passing over them, is to raise the height of the aerial. I have seen an aerial for a crystal set placed on two ten-foot masts on the top of a two-storied house, with a long galvanised iron roof. The owner nurtured the mistaken idea that his aerial was 45 feet in height, but reception was relatively poor. Acting on advice, he increased the height of his masts to 25 feet, and reception increased in volume quite three-fold.

To obtain the maximum advantage from an aerial, the lead-in should never be longer than the actual aerial. It is also bad practice to bring the lead-in back underneath the aerial to the point where it enters the house. A good plan is to arrange the aerial so that the lead-in comes away from it at right angles to it. The lead-in should, if possible, not be brought within four feet of the side of the house, or any projection from the house, until it is run through the wall or window frame. The receiving set should be as close as possible to the point where the lead-in enters the room. This saves loss of signal strength.

It is a good plan to use about 14 feet of rubber-insulated wire for the lead-in. It can be spliced on to the "tail" of the aerial and then firmly soldered. The nearer end of the aerial should have its "tail" twisted around it five or six times, and then the twists should be securely soldered, otherwise the aerial will unwind and sag badly. Always bring the lead-in away at the very extremity of the aerial. The aerial should not come closer than five or six feet from the mast, the insulators being so spaced as to keep it that distance away. It is better to use galvanised iron wire for the halyard of the aerial instead of rope. The latter gets tight in wet weather and loose in dry weather, and it is subject to rot unless specially prepared for the purpose.

The lead-in wire should not be finer in size than the aerial. If it is composed of finer-gauged wire, this can be compensated for by a greater number of strands. The earth wire forms part of the aerial system and may be likened to a drain. Therefore the heavier the gauge of wire the better, so that it offers a minimum of resistance to the electrical current. It is not generally known by the novice that the finer the wire the greater the resistance, unless the wire is stranded, and then the greater number of strands compensates for the fineness of its gauge. No single-wire aerial should be finer than 14 gauge. The stranded wire makes a very excellent aerial, and seven strands of 20 gauge is a deservedly popular type.

An aerial should be well insulated to prevent leakages. Many listeners are satisfied with two insulators at each end of the aerial, but I prefer at least three at each end. Generally speaking, the quality of insulators on the New Zealand market are excellent. The "shell" and the "egg" types of insulators possess the advantage of tremendous strength for their size, and there is no danger of their carrying away. At one time there was a cheap type of insulator on sale which had a metal hook at each end, and some purchasers found that the hooks pulled out under the heavy strain on the aerial occasioned by gales. A better-made insulator of similar design is now on sale, and it has stood severe tests. It is not a bad plan to lower the aerial occasionally to clean off rust stains and dust or soot which have lodged on the insulators. This will avoid electrical leakage across the insulators. Heavy rain will wash dust or soot off insulators, but rust stains require personal attention. When an aerial is being erected it is advisable to clean the insulators before they are hoisted up, as they may have become muddy or dirty through lying on the ground.

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Some broadcast listeners in Australia think the time is ripe in the Commonwealth for a "silent night," as in New Zealand A correspondent writes to the Sydney "Wireless Weekly": "I think every A and B class station should be off the air one night a week, as we never get a chance to get overseas. I have never had America properly since 2LO came down in their wave. I am sure the bulk of those that pay the fee would welcome one silent night a week for A and B class stations. Why not Sunday night, not afternoon, after 5? I am sure Uncle and Hello men would think it a fair go."