

GATHER 'ROUND THE RADIO
E-NEWSLETTER FOR THE METROPOLITAN
WASHINGTON OLD-TIME RADIO CLUB
THE GRTR STUDIO EDITION JANUARY 16, 2017
THE AIRWAVES IN-STRIDE ISSUE

THE SET-UP

Hello fine listeners, and welcome once again to the mythical confines of the GRTR Studio where we broadcast information and inspiration about radio, music, nostalgia, personality, books, and beyond. Terry Gross continues to be our inspiration. Listen to her "Fresh Air" radio show, live or podcast; check your NPR listings.

Chuck and Joanie and I are here in the Mud Room with our coffee and corn bread. The dusty old courier pouch is flat; but the place is humming as Chuck pipes in tracks from "Case Lang Viers," those extraordinary ladies who take folk-rock to ethereal and lyrical

heights. Chuck has fired up the creaky old sound board, fine-tuning the squawks and hums; and Joanie has her eye on the clock as it sweeps towards network feed. The down-home harmonies of “Best Kept Secret” fade.

ON THE AIR

Hello everyone, and welcome to the broadcast! The airwaves are crackling too, in anticipation, as the February issue of “Radio Recall” is in the works. Editor Jack French has plenty lined-up, articles and line drawings. One feature will be the “Ask the Expert” column; and for this Jack has enlisted a scholar and researcher of Media Studies. Her subject will be “broadcasts in the early years.” She will discuss the vagaries of verification and chronology. Names will be familiar and her research spans decades. Another good catch for Jack, who has over the years related great stories and myths, and how they persist. Look for the next “Radio Recall,” Will it be in truth Jack’s penultimate issue?


LIVE RADIO BROADCAST AT GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY – SOON!

The Center for the Fine Arts at George Mason U. in Arlington Virginia is presenting a period-piece radio broadcast, using the authentic full-stage style of a BBC Radio studio in the 1940s. Original script of the travails of broadcasting an Agatha Christie story to the war-weary populace of the British Isles.

The group is the Aquila Theater: Date: Sunday January 22, 2017. The Promotion:



Aquila Theatre: *Murder on the Nile*

- January 22, 2017 at 4:00 pm
Concert Hall 

Set during World War II at the BBC Home Service studios in London, Aquila Theatre's production features members of a theater troupe preparing for a live radio broadcast of Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Nile* when yet another air raid threatens the performance. Air raid sirens were a regular occurrence in London during this time as Great Britain was on constant alert to bombings by Germany. Yet somehow, the show goes on and the story unfolds. Famous heiress Kay Ridgeway boards a honeymoon cruise with her penniless new husband, and it's inevitable that foul play will follow. The passenger list on this treacherous journey includes a spurned lover, a protective uncle, a troubled doctor and a slew of other colorful characters, as well as the world-famous investigator Hercule Poirot, who must call on all his intuition and investigative skills to solve this baffling mystery. This deliciously dangerous murder mystery is one of Dame Christie's most popular tales. For Britain's foremost mystery author, whenever class, wealth, and reputation are on the line, a murder or two cannot be far behind!

Known for its breathtaking interpretations of theatrical classics, Aquila Theatre brings its signature style of thrilling physicality and stunning design to this gripping play. Book a one-way ticket on this Nile cruise and see if you can figure out "whodunit!"

Additional: Discussion before the Show. <http://cfa.gmu.edu/calendar>

\$44, \$37, \$26. 2 Free Student Tickets Available with Mason ID.

FROM THE DUSTY ARCHIVES

This year of 2017 is special for Canada and the world: 150 years ago, Canada became a country. Celebrations will be year-long; Dominion Day, July the first will be the major event, based in Ottawa and plenty of other places.

In 2007, Canadian author Elizabeth Hay wrote a wonderful and heartwarming novel, *Late Nights on Air*. It is the story of "a small radio station in Yellow Knife." Characters come to life as they converge on the station to work, broadcast to the people, and find their own inner worth. Here is my review from the GRTR of April 14, 2014:



Book Review

Imagine a small town on the plains of western Canada. Call the town Yellow Knife, and you have the setting of Elizabeth Hay's novel: "Late Nights on Air." (Toronto: McClelland and Stuart, 2007) The radio station is a modest cinder-block affair just off the main street; but the power and the importance it offers to the populace for miles around is astounding. Hay creates a nice balance between the workings of the station and the outside world. There is the great controversy of the corporate giant that wants to scar the land by laying an oil pipeline. There is the native Dogrib culture (a First Nations people) who are in danger of losing their identity and culture. And there are the townspeople and the far-flung homesteaders who depend daily on the friendly voices and the substantive content zapping its way out of Yellow Knife.

Hay's depictions are poetic. She writes about the air, the earth, the lakes; and how summer can become a chore with its scant three hours of twilight of a summer's night. The people at the station are destined to touch upon all aspects of prairie life, and Hay throws two new job-seekers into the mix of steady locals who have run the station for years. Some infighting and jealousy ensue; but eventually we see how personal qualities can out-distance inexperience. Dido is from Holland; her English is impeccable, and her voice has that certain-something. "Start her with the overnight," says Harry the manager. And as soon as "the words begin to pronounce themselves," Dido is given the mid-day slot.

Gwen is the waif who has driven two thousand miles to escape abuse from husband and father-in-law alike. She works hard, becomes visible in the community, and soon she is doing interviews around town. She takes her recorder and becomes an expert at capturing ambient sound. She decides that an interview with a beauty shoppe owner

should certainly have the sounds of ladies murmuring and the precise “snip snip snip” of elegant Italian drop-forged scissors.

Soon a native Indian speaker has been hired to translate the news and cultural events into Dogrib; and a crowning moment comes when a Dogrib children’s choir gets air-time to sing a program of folk songs. Hay wanders a bit in her narrative flow; but her passages of reminiscence for Gwen and Dido are rich with family and literature and the lure of distant adventure. The prairie landscape has answered their yearnings; but the two ladies also realize the importance of the signals they send bouncing off the great canopy of sky.

Gwen plays overnight quite often; and an elderly lady (Lorna, the hairdresser) always enjoys hearing a segment of classical music around midnight. Gwen plays a few numbers from a new release of Kathleen Ferrier singing art songs. The next morning Gwen is distraught because Lorna always called in to thank her for the piece; but that night she had not. Lorna had wandered off into the night, and her husband is helping townspeople search her favorite woodland trails. Had she truly tried to follow the music of the spheres? Gwen tells Eleanor, the station receptionist: “I knew something was wrong; Lorna loved Kathleen Ferrier.”

Elizabeth Hay has captured a unique locale and way of life; and the importance of radio is paramount in the portrayal.

COMMERCIAL



Good news folks, the Dayton Dragons are keeping us on for the 2017 Season. Doug in Public Relations called me the other day with a special invitation for the MWOTRC.

The Club will be the guests of Dragons Management at the Futures Game, where stars from the Major-League Red Sox will play against Dayton Dragons. It’s a “friendly” and it is

ever so much fun. I'm going to ask Club President Bert Rude to be in charge of arrangements: transportation and lodging to Dayton for this wonderful baseball opportunity. A bus charter would be a great way to go, and lodging can be found, not from Fifth Third Field, or at least over by the Canal. Souvenirs and food will be provided by the Dragons Kitchen.

Save the Date: Saturday April 1, 2017. Imagine that! We will be able to read our hot-off-the-new-press April 2017 RADIO RECALL while we enjoy our great seats in the Right Field Pavilion.

MUSIC CODA AND NETWORK FEED

Thanks ever for tuning in, folks! Bert will keep us up-to-date on arrangements for us to be Dragons for a Day! Now to the plaintive harmony of the Case-Lang-Viers tune "Delirium," we say, "So long from the little tin pot studio down by the creek." Soup and sandwiches in the Mud Room, anyone? But, of course!

Mark Anderson

Carlisle PA