

# JOHN R. BRITZ, ABC.

By MONROE R. UPTON

JOHN R. BRITZ, who may be found at the KYA unit in the ABC chain of stations, is vocal director in addition to being in charge of considerable of the arranging and orchestra directing. He was born in Budapest in 1884 and, like his fellow ABC director, Liborius Hauptmann, was trained first in the university to be an engineer. He came to America in 1907 as an engineer; returned to Hungary in 1909, and came back to America in 1912. All of this time he was still a mechanical and electrical engineer. It was in Kansas City at the age of twenty-eight that he went over to music.

It must not be supposed, however, that John R. Britz answered an advertisement in a magazine, studied during his spare time for six months, and then amazed his friends by suddenly blossoming forth as a saxophone player at a house party. In the first place, he can't even play a saxophone. He only plays the string instruments, 'cellos, violins and piano. In the second place, he began studying the piano at the age of five and studied for about eight years. He studied the 'cello for six years and graduated from the academy of music, which included instruction in harmony and the history of music. Furthermore, he was fortunate in having musical parents. His mother played the piano very well. Although his father loved music he never mastered an instrument. General manager of a large machine and electrical works, he would come home in the middle of the day and practice faithfully on the violin, but it seemed impossible for him to acquire any skill on the instrument.

Even with all this, Britz attributes his ability to successfully desert engineering for music, at the age of twenty-eight, to the further fact that he had years of work in chamber music in Hungary, the finest kind of training for a musician.

In America John Britz's musical life has been chiefly bound up with the comic opera and the musical comedy. He has a sincere affection for the bright and tuneful music of the modern musical show. His first theatrical engagement in the United States was with Ziegfeld's Follies, as 'cellist in the orchestra. He was musical director for the Chocolate Soldier for two seasons, was with

Mitzi and Sari, played San Francisco with Florabella and Watch Your Step, among a great many other engagements, and landed in Portland as musical director for the Orpheum. In Portland Britz was infinitely more than a mere theatre orchestra director. He was director of music for Oregon's year's pageant, the Portland Rose Festival, for several seasons. But more than that he contributed to the cultural life of the Northwest by producing with local talent a number of

the light operas he loves, including Sari, Robin Hood, The Mikado and the Chocolate Soldier. He was hailed as one of the most beneficent cultural influences that ever invaded the western cities. A Portland paper says editorially: "Tall buildings are not a city. Walls and sidewalks are not a city. Bank accounts are not a city. It is the people who are the city, and the character of the people fixes the character of the city. The big thing in this or any other town is not merely to make the city limits bulge, but to make growing youth and those in maturity rise upward in brains,

taste, culture, education and purpose. That is the reason Portland should help John Britz make a success of his highly laudable enterprise. John Britz is setting an example in his effort to give the town a field in music that adds grace and charm to the city's cultural life."

This is the man, then, the radio has been fortunate enough to win for itself. During the past four years he has been connected off and on with all of the Portland stations. During this time he has always looked toward radio with a great deal of faith in its possibilities and future. On January 1 of this year he became permanently connected with the ABC staff.

Britz knows 86 comic operas and 14 grand operas backward and forward. His favorite operas are Hansel and Gretel by Humperdink and Strauss' Rosen Kavallier. Brahms and Beethoven are perhaps his favorite composers, and among the moderns Richard Strauss. He is interested in vaudeville and the movies, but has a sane estimation of their value. He reads principally in English, which he considers the most expressive of languages. Shakespeare gives him more than any other writer. He is fond of Jakai.

(Continued on Page 74)



JOHN R. BRITZ

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(Continued from Page 22)

the Hungarian, and has enjoyed in times past the novelists of the romantic school, both French and English. In magazines he prefers those with style and intellectual liveliness, including Plain Talk, The Nation and the American Mercury.

This musician is not at all superior toward the struggles of America's own music, jazz, to circulate in the best of society. He admires the new idea of sound combinations symphonic jazz is producing and has high hopes for its future. He loves a good popular song and points out that most of the classics used a popular song for a starting point.

He has in his possession the only existing copy of a selection of Viennese folk tunes compiled by Hans Schrammel. These are from the tunes Kreisler has drawn from so liberally. In the suburbs of Vienna the city people go for their holidays to sit on benches in the yards of the country folk where they drink wine and whistle, yodel and play on the violin these native melodies. He expects to use this rare compilation in his work on the ABC.

John Britz is fond of all sorts of card games, and especially of chess. The fact that he made and lost a fortune on horse racing attests to his fondness for that sport. Because he loves the out of doors so well is the reason he prefers to live in the West rather than the East. He has two children, a girl seventeen who has just finished high school in Portland, and a son, who is seven.

## THE RADIO TATTLER

(Continued from Page 10)

replacement of policemen and legislators, and their long time mileage on a gallon of juice, there is no limit to their scope. And lest there be some young thing who takes exception on the age-old argument that a robot has no "it," that modern-day essential, let us say, you'd be surprised.

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As between the bandy-legged, tottering millionaire who likes his brides young, and a fine, upstanding robot with a twenty horsepower motor who has just been wired for the diplomatic corps, we'll bet on the robot. There isn't a girl in the world who wouldn't prefer the robot, and that for one reason alone—she can handle him!

## RMA PATENT PLAN PRESENTED TO MANUFACTURERS

The Radio Manufacturers' Association, comprising virtually all prominent manufacturers of all radio products, is now beginning a campaign among its members, it was announced today, to effect an interchange, or cross-licensing, of radio patents. Under the direction of the RMA Patent Committee, headed by LeRoi J. Williams of Cambridge, Mass., Chairman, the RMA cross-licensing plan is being submitted to all manufacturer members, adoption by a majority being required before the plan is placed in operation.

Following somewhat the patent pool plans which have worked so successfully for the automobile and aircraft industries, the principal objects of the RMA patent cross-licensing plan are to minimize radio patent litigation and to make available to the public the widest possible use at the lowest cost of modern radio and future developments. Under the plan radio patents would be exchanged and made available equally to all manufacturers adhering. The RMA plan was submitted to its membership last June and also to the Department of Justice, which has raised no objections to the patent interchange proposals.

"During the last few years," according to a statement by Chairman Williams of the RMA Patent Committee, "there has been considerable litigation over patents in the radio industry. The difficulties and expenses of such litigation prompted the Radio Manufacturers' Association to make a careful study of the advisability of its membership—comprising practically all of the industry—entering into a patent interchange or cross-licensing agreement. The result of these studies was the submission to its membership last June of a proposed patent interchange agreement. The membership approved the form of the agreement and recommended that it be submitted to the membership for individual action.

"The Radio Manufacturers' Association is now beginning a campaign for effecting a cross-licensing of patents between its members under the document approved by the Association.

"It is the plan of the Committee to submit to the membership a thorough discussion of the form and nature of the agreement and analyses of the economic and practical aspects of operations under such an agreement, calling attention particularly to the notable success of such agreements in the automobile and aviation industries."