

1940's Radio Hour

Audition Notice

Director: Rachael L. Rose, Assistant Director: Mary Ann Tweedie, Music Director: Jose Reyes

Audition Dates: August 27th and 28th; 7 pm, Registration begins at 6 pm

Mandatory Dates (Includes Performance Dates): 11/12; 11/16; 11/17; 11/19; 11/24; 11/25; 11/26; 11/27; 11/28; 11/30; 12/1; 12/2; 12/7; 12/8; 12/9; 12/14; 12/15; 12/16; 12/20; 12/21 & 12/22

Welcome to the Barn's production of the 1940's Radio Hour!

It was a time before TV's and most definitely before the beloved technology we couldn't exist without in today's society.

Let us take you back to a time where the world had only radio broadcasts to link them to "live" news and entertainment. Picture a family around their radio after dinner. Mama's knitting, Daddy's reading the news paper and the kids lay on the living room floor playing checkers listening to a broadcast of the "Mutual Manhattan Variety Cavalcade".

The country was united together in fighting the War. WWII that is...when it is believed that WWII was the last war that the government did not hide anything from the American people, especially when it came to war. USO shows abounded in order to keep troop morale lifted. Everyone had their part in keeping the country going.

...and the Cavalcade was no exception. They brought joy into every home tuned into each broadcast. 1940s Radio Hour is a comedic yet poignant show getting ready to record a broadcast for the troops overseas.

Take a look at broadcasts from "Prairie Home Companion", a still-running radio broadcast <http://prairiehome.publicradio.org/> and learn about their history at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Prairie_Home_Companion and you will have the feel we want for our production.

Above all, I want the over the top character development but you must retain an innocence and "naiveté" that was indicative (in general) of that time. One of our main focuses will be to keep the show as close to period as possible...from costumes, to language, to music to affect...

I want you to audition as your authentic self portraying these characters. Look for the character that speaks to you and just GO FOR IT!

Below is a detailed description of the characters and below that a concise description of the show and summaries of the characters.

We look forward to working with you and creating a beautiful, endearing show that will take us and our audiences back to the 1940's.

Keep an eye on the website for musical and script audition selections in the coming days. Should you want a script, please contact Rachael directly at rlrose1031@gmail.com and make arrangements to get one.

Break a leg, Rachael, Mary Ann & Jose

Pops Bailey (non singing role) – the stage doorman. Over 60. The traditionally wizened, crotchety, miserable, crusty, foul-tempered stage door keeper who makes book on the company phone and reads hidden copies of “Show Girl.” Listens to the races and other shows on his radio during the broadcast. Quits every night. Always mopping up – actually just moving the dirt around with a mop that should have been condemned years ago. Has been fixing the Coke machine for six months. It works for him or anyone who knows the secret kick. Plays cards with Lou, the stage manager. Concerned with keeping the Life magazines in order so he can tell who’s winning the War. He moves slowly. Stands still a lot. Makes the easy marks: the eager B.J., the know-it-all Neal and Wally, the delivery boy. Admires Johnny Cantone, but of all of them, is really fond of only Ann. Always ready to start an argument or start into a conversation he’s not a part of. Has a muttered, mumbled gripe that seems to run under the whole show. Was in World War I. Has a son in the Pacific. Chomps on a frequently unlit cigar and hardly ever calls anyone but Lou by their real names, but by “Pal”, “Buster”, “Charlie” and “Bub”.

Lou Cohn (non singing role) – the stage manager. Busy keeping the true stage manager’s tradition by being the entrepreneur’s entrepreneur. About forty. Big shot. Always trying to impress Ginger, the waitress whose job here Lou is responsible for. Keeps four or five conversations going at once, and all of them straight. Wears a hat because he’s sensitive about his hairline. The surrogate boss during rehearsals which he conducts. Choreographs the numbers. Players rehearsal piano like a Nazi. Echoes everything Clifton says. Official and obnoxious sometimes. Hardass about the seriousness of his job. Unlike anyone else, Lou has no ambitions to be anything else but stage manager. He is perfectly content with a job that has plenty of authority and no responsibility. Cues the audience, Clifton, the band, the performers, performs the sound effects, runs the lights and controls all of the stage “effects”. Takes his cues from a headset he wears over his hat.

Clifton A. Feddington – the band leader, announcer, general manager, head-of-everything at WOV. Co-produces with Saul Lebowitz, who we don’t see but whose phone calls we sometimes hear about. Has a dark, cluttered office which we only see glimpses of during the show. Corporate offices at 1648 Broadway, above the deli. Has a deaf secretary. And ulcers. We see him in various states of hysteria; carrying contracts, letters, running his hand through his hair. Always has problems. Always with his Bromo. A bigger entrepreneur than Lou. Has more corporate tax dodges than Westinghouse. But his luck’s not so great. Founded “Clifton Records: the signatures series” just in time for the 1942 record industry strike. Sells commercial time on the Calvacade real cheap to attract lots of listeners since the number of sponsors means the show must be popular. He, and everyone associated with this station, treat this and every broadcast as if the world’s listening. And every night is an audition for a network slot since who knows who may be listening in? A real cheapskate. Very genuine and vulnerable. A Jimmy Stewart with a mic style like a young Bob Hope. Not too effective as a Warner Baxter type but he tries to be. Even has trouble hyping the audience during ads. But that’s his charm. He and the others survive every catastrophe, every foul-up, every goof-up, every goof-off. Lives a paper chase from his office to the greenroom and back and forth and back and forth. Wears a William Powell moustache. Working at WOV since 1936 when he got the job from Johnny Cantone’s uncle, Salvatore D’Angelis.

Neal Tilden – comic cabby. Son of the wealthy Tildens of Gramercy Park. Got cut-out of the will because he was “a bum in show business”. Lives with his mother. Wants to do it all: sing, dance, comedy, act, lead the band, choreograph. Clifton won't even give him a ballad. Been at the station since the beginning. Came in with Ann Collier and Johnny Cantone when things were just starting. Really tight. Keeps his money in a teeny clip purse. Still hoping for the “featured vocalist” slot if Johnny ever leaves. Has seniority (he thinks). The resident crybaby. A real whiner. Always sneaking around doing things he's not supposed to be doing. Always putting everybody else down – especially Cantone who he admires a lot. Gets called into Clifton's office pretty regularly for early-morning chew-outs. Carries a pipe for the “right look”. Horses around a lot during the broadcasts. Has trick pants that drop during his comedy shtick to help get laughs. Pants that unfortunately continue to fall at inappropriate times during the broadcast. Treats Wally like Cantone treats him. Always has advice and “big news” for Wally. Wants to be important. Would like to be in love with Ann, but doesn't even try. At the bottom line, a very lonely guy who's the clown.

Ann Collier – “Old Standard” in Clifton's Cavalcade. She's been there since it started in 1936. She works during the day as a secretary for a large corporation – a private secretary for the boss. Has been married once. “Dating” Johnny Cantone at the moment. Must sound like the “big band vocalists” of the period: has a voice like Peggy Lee, Ginny Simms, Dinah Shore, Doris Day, Helen Forrest, all rolled into one. A gorgeous redhead. Dances in the “Blue Moon” number a kind of reverse Astaire/Rogers routine: she does all the dancing while Neal stands still. Sings the song to the boys overseas. Gets offers all the time but claims she is perfectly happy where she is.

Geneva Lee Browne – a beautiful, high-class, black singer from Kansas City where she played the Chesterfield Club with her own group, the Chocolate Drops. Started in New York at fifteen in the Hot Chocolates Revue at the Cotton Club. Is a songwriter and plays the piano. Sings one song like Ella Fitzgerald with lots of scat and sass, the other song is simple and bluesy. Conducts the band during her numbers. Wears a gardenia in her hair. Comes in with members of her band: a trombonist, a bassist, a reed and a couple of others – all black – who play in Zoot's band now and before and after hours at various jazz clubs on Fifty-Second Street. Her second job is singing. And her third job. And her fourth job. She is always performing and always dressed to kill. A musician. Plays piano, but sings like it's an instrument too. Sassy, brassy and loud with a Pearl Bailey.

Biff Baker – plays trumpet in the band. Started with Zoot when the band was only a six-piece combo in 1936 on WOV. From Chicago. Plays trumpet or saxophone in the band. Like Beneke. Carries his horn in a wrinkled brown bag. Has been playing with Glenn Miller for the last few months and the Cavalcade every week off and on since 1936 and, most recently, while in training at Ft. Bragg, Jew Jersey. This is Biff's last show. Tomorrow he goes overseas in a fighter squadron. Baby-faced. Mid-twenties. Enters in uniform. Has a girlfriend in Park Ridge, Illinois that he's been dating since high school. Sings and plays in the band.

Connie Miller – 17 year old bobby-soxer from Ogden, Utah. Born about ten years too late: would have been a great Berkley girl. Always in love. “Seriously dating” B.J. Gibson. Very young. Enthusiastic. Taps and jitterbugs. Swoons for Cantone. Only been with the Cavalcade since the fall. Has a little Judy Garland in her. Sings like Marian Hutton. Drinks twelve Cokes during the show and lines the bottles up under her chair. Has a pushy mother who is trying to get her into show business. Hangs with Ginger, who acts as a kind of big sister to her. An elevator operator at the Astor Hotel during the day.

Johnny Cantone – Featured vocalist with the Cavalcade, who is on Sinatra's bandwagon. From Brooklyn. Ex-welterweight boxer. Rough guy. Always pinching Neal's cheek and slapping him. Somewhere between a late-forties to late-fifties Sinatra sound. Has got the public sass of the latter. Class. Wears a diamond pinky ring that he "plays" in the lights during his numbers. Voice like velvet. Drinks during the show. And sometimes during his numbers. Which galls Clifton but Johnny's uncle got Clifton the job, so what can you do? Smarmy and greasy but as much of a punk as he is, he is also a sweet, vulnerable, sad little kid who plays a tough guy to protect himself. Gets pretty sloshed during the show. Not a particularly funny sloshed either. Married. Wears a wedding band. But, his wife Angel, left him years ago. Been with Clifton since the beginning. Now in his thirties. Pays bobbysoxers to scream for him at the stage door. Dating Ann at the moment. Or, as Ginger says, "They share the same bar." Interested in Connie most obviously but isn't too choosy. He'd go with anything that would hold still long enough. All the flirting, successful or not, gives great boosts to his ego. Doesn't get along with Ginger. Waves to the audience before and after numbers. Throws flowers to them. Gets away with all the dramatics he sings with because he is good. So good that the waste is even more painful to watch.

Ginger Brooks – the bubble-headed waitress-turned-star discovery of Lou's who found her in a restaurant where she still works and conned Clifton into signing her on. Caricatured but the parody is her own. Leads with her lower lip like Betty Boop. Pinup, Betty Grable look. She rehearses in a slip. Chews gum but takes it out of her mouth and holds it while she's performing. When she's sitting and her legs are crossed, and she's not adjusting the seams in her stockings, she wiggles her foot back and forth. Always moving. Has the biggest Keane blue eyes in history. Has a cab driver boyfriend named Bruno. Gets away with murder. Acts as Connie's big sister. Speaks with a Gracie Allen vacancy. Her makeup is as important as the War. And is always "thick and perfect".

B.J. Gibson – the third of the Gibson brothers to work for Clifton. Tall, preppy, about twenty; a student at Yale who commutes to the weekend rehearsals and Monday night performances. Dating Connie. Taps and jitterbugs. Really aggressive about his career. Always wants to know how he did and elicits praise from people whose opinions he respects. Worships Cantone but keeps it a secret. Picks up tips everywhere – especially from Cantone. Good-looking. Squeaky clean, Dick Powell look.

Wally Fergusson (non singing role) – poodle-eyed young hopeful from Altoona, Pennsylvania who came to New York to work for his uncle at the drugstore and hopefully get his big break into show business. We never see his Uncle Dominic, but we hear his phone calls. In love with him the minute you see him. Attends every rehearsal and performance when they'll let him. Always practicing everyone else's routines in case they ever need him. Pops' albatross. Makes deliveries during the show but inevitably leaves most of them in the studio while he hangs around. Piles of bags by the end of the show. Works in the Piccadilly Drug Store on Forty-Fifth street. These folks are the biggest starts in the world to him, especially Cantone. Goes on tonight for Ray Owen and tries real hard but screws up everything he's a part of.

Stanley (non singing role) – a twenty-ish stage hand. Lugs cable and runs around a lot and otherwise lives in the control booth. Drinks coffee and eats constantly. Has a thing for Ginger whose numbers he watches a little more animatedly. Not too bright. Punches in like Pops and Lou.

The 1940s Radio Hour is a Play with Music by Walton Jones. Full of 1940s music, dancing and old-time sound effects the play portrays the final holiday broadcast of the Mutual Manhattan Variety Cavalcade on the New York radio station WOV in December 1942.

Fabled [WOV](#), a seedy little [New York radio station](#) takes to the air at the beginning of [World War II](#), this time to record a broadcast for the [troops](#) overseas.^[1]

The narrative concerns the harassed producer whose leading singer is often drunk, the delivery boy who wants a chance in front of the mic, the second banana who dreams of singing a ballad, and the trumpet-playing sound effects man who chooses a fighter plane over Glenn Miller.

Characters

- **Clifton Feddington:** The announcer and general manager (head of everything at WOV). He has ulcers from it all and is sometimes hysterical.
- **Ann Collier** The 'old standard' in the Radio show since its start in 1936. She sings like Dinah Shore, Doris Day, and Peggy Lee (all rolled into one). She is a secretary by day, and at looker by night who is dating Johnny.
- **Johnny Cantone:** Featured vocalist with the Cavalcade who is on Sinatra's bandwagon. He's an ex-boxer and a rough guy who drinks too much and has a voice like velvet.
- **Ginger Brooks:** A bubble-headed waitress-turned-singer. She has a pinup, Betty Grable look with lots of makeup and speaks with a Gracie Allen vacancy.
- **Geneva Lee Browne:** The southern Belle of WOV got her start in music at age 17 performing in local Swing ballrooms around the Atlanta area.
- **Neal Tilden:** Cab driver by day and singer, dancer, and choreographer at night. He is hopeful for the 'featured vocalist' slot.
- **B.J. Gibson:** The third of the Gibson brothers to work for the Cavalcade. He is squeaky-clean, good looking, and a preppy student at Yale.
- **Connie Miller:** A 17-year-old bobbysoxer from Ogden, Utah. She is perennially in love and runs an elevator by day.
- **Pops Bailey:** A crotchety, wizened stage doorkeeper who is a racing bookie on the company phone and reads hidden copies of Show Girl magazine.
- **Lou Cohn:** A big shot (at least in his own mind) who tries to impress the girls and is sometimes obnoxious. He runs the show and is the sound effects man.
- **Wally Ferguson:** Young hopeful from Altoona, Pennsylvania who came to NYC to work for his uncle at the drugstore to get his big show-biz break.

- **Biff Baker:** A young trumpet player with the Zoot Doubleman orchestra who will be leaving after the concert for Army duty.
- **Stanley:** Lugs cable and runs around a lot and otherwise lives in the control booth.
- **Zoot Doubleman:** WOV Orchestra Leader ****PLEASE NOTE: THIS ROLE HAS ALREADY BEEN CAST**

[edit]List of Musical Numbers

- "(I've Got a Gal In) Kalamazoo" – Clifton, Chorus
- "Pepsi Cola" – Neal, B.J., Connie, Ginger (with sounds performed by Lou)
- "Hey Daddy" – Connie, The Band
- "Love Is Here to Stay" – Johnny
- "That Old Black Magic" – Ann
- "Ain't She Sweet" – Biff, All
- "How About You?" – B.J., Connie
- "Blue Moon" – Neal
- "Chiquita Banana" – All Girls
- "Rose of the Rio Grande" – Geneva, Men & The Band
- "I'll Never Smile Again" – Johnny, Quintet (Neal, B.J., Ann, Ginger, Connie)
- "At Last" – Geneva, Band
- "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" – B.J., Connie, Ginger
- "Blues in the Night" – Ginger, Men
- "Jingle Bells" – All (except Johnny)
- "I Got It Bad (and That Ain't Good)" – Geneva
- "You Go to My Head" – B.J.
- "The Five O'Clock Whistle" – Connie, The Band
- "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" – Ann
- "Strike Up The Band" – Full Company
- "I'll Be Seeing You" – Full Company
- "Mutual Manhattan Variety Cavalcade" – Full Company

** http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_1940%27s_Radio_Hour (2012, August 2)