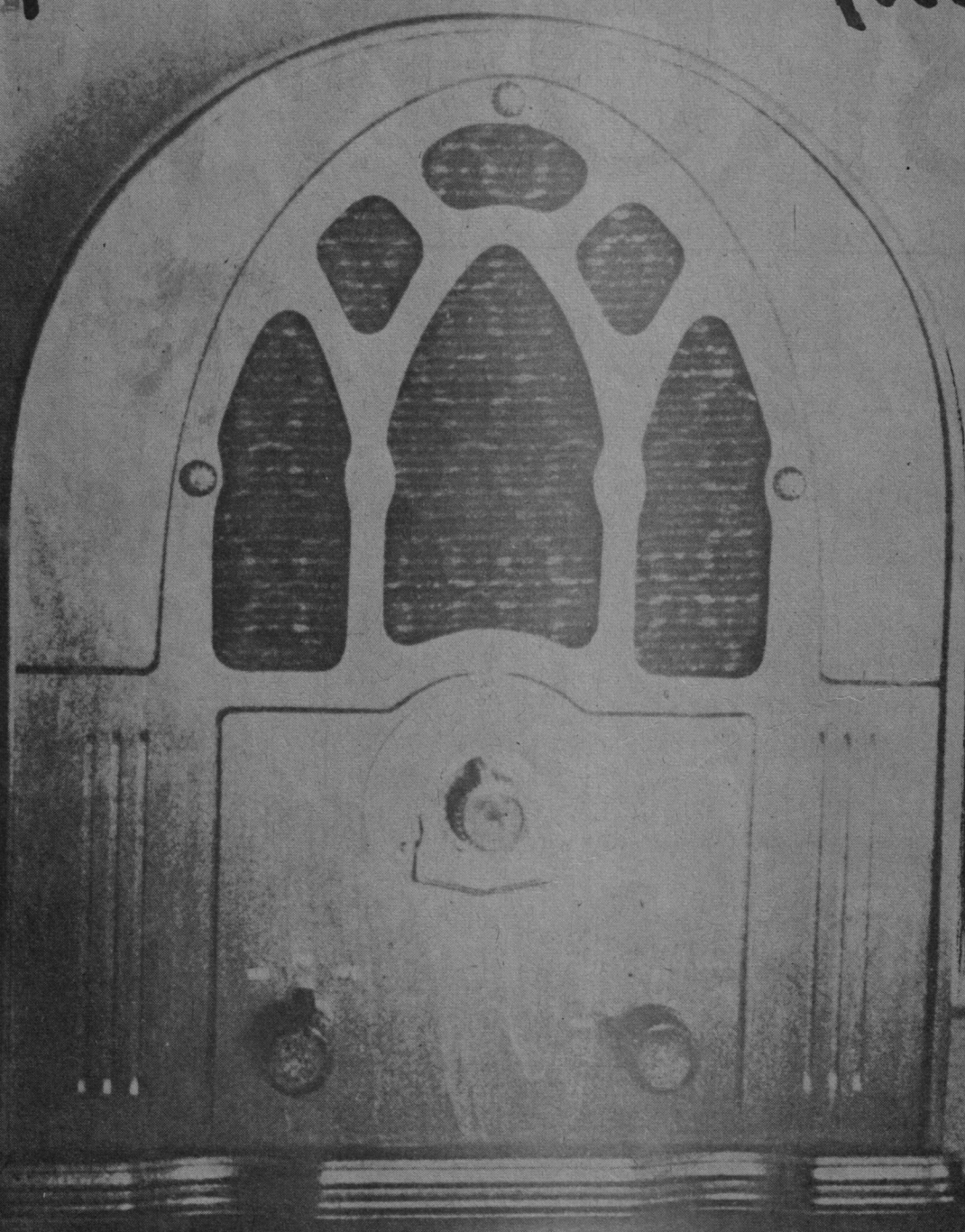
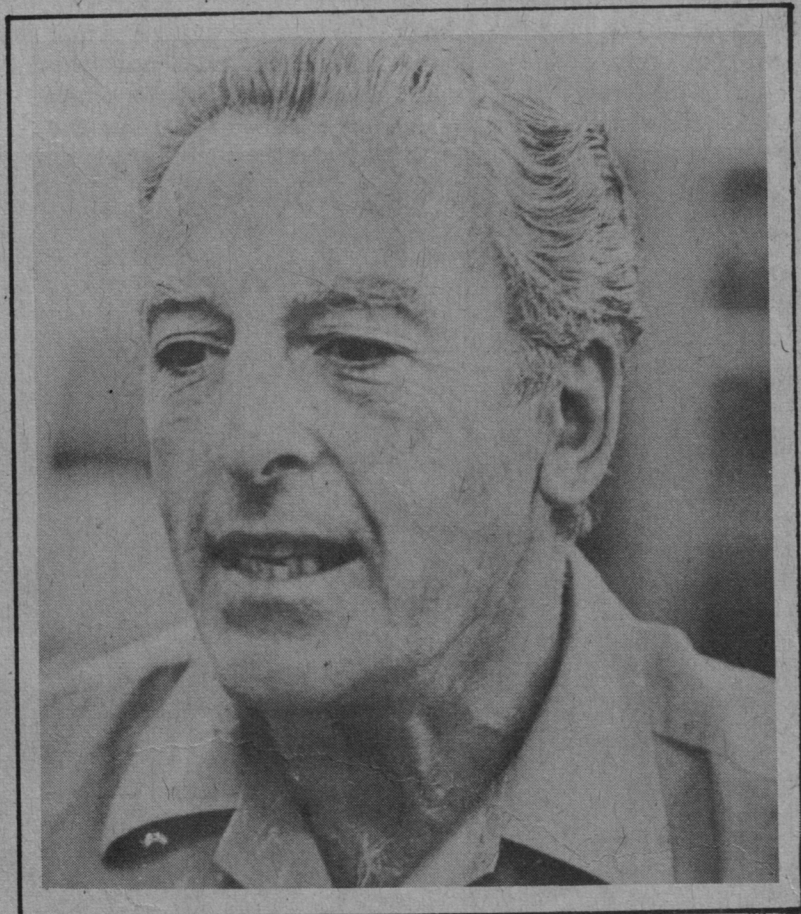


THE MASTER OF RADIO HORROR....



AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH

HYMAN BROWN



CREATOR
of
the



CBS RADIO
**myStory
theater**

By Judith M. Kass, author of the forthcoming Tantivy Press book DON SIEGEL. Judith is editor of United Artists newsletter IMAGES.

PLEASE TURN PAGE

On the morning when Quasimodo's *Monster Magazine* interviewed Himan Brown, this genius of radio mystery drama was wearing a brown suit, brown shirt and brown shoes. His office has brown rugs, brown furniture, predominantly brown paintings and a beat-up old brown radio in one corner.

But, Himan Brown's conversation is red! The red blood of vampires, werewolves, monsters. The red blood that leaks out after mystery murders of the kind Hi Brown has been producing and directing for many years on radio and in films. Today, he's the producer-director and guiding force behind the highly successful *CBS-RADIO MYSTERY THEATER*.

Hi Brown is a combination of brown and red: the brown of years of highly polished accomplishment, and the red of the *DRACULA AWARD*, which he recently was given on behalf of himself, CBS and the show's host, E. G. Marshall.

Hi Brown: Let me just fill you in on myself. I've been at this since the very early thirties. Actually, in 1932 I did *FLASH GORDON*, who was the very first of the super-heroes in radio. We blew up Earth every Tuesday and Thursday. *FLASH GORDON* was interplanetary. Now remember, that's over forty years ago. And then of course, the big surprise was in 1938 when Mr. Welles had the Martians invade and create that big furor. For years before I'd been destroying civilizations. But the power and personality of Orson Welles proved again that storytelling isn't enough. It's personality. Orson is an incredible human being and probably one of the greatest narrators in any medium.

Judith M. Kass: Did he ever work for you?

HB: Oh yes. Orson worked for me in 1934-35. I was doing all sorts of radio dramas—mostly detective serials and mystery stories. In 1935 I even did a series written by Fulton Oursler called *THATCHER COLT DETECTIVE MYSTERIES*. Colt was the fictitious New York City Police Commissioner, and we

did a different adventure story every week. I was also doing *DICK TRACY* and *TERRY AND THE PIRATES* at that time. But, *INNER SANCTUM MYSTERIES* was the first of my *MONSTER* creation things.

JMK: Where did the creaking door come from?

HB: I was doing *DICK TRACY* and we had three or four different doors for different situations. One of these doors had a beautiful, hair-raising creak.

JMK: Accidentally?

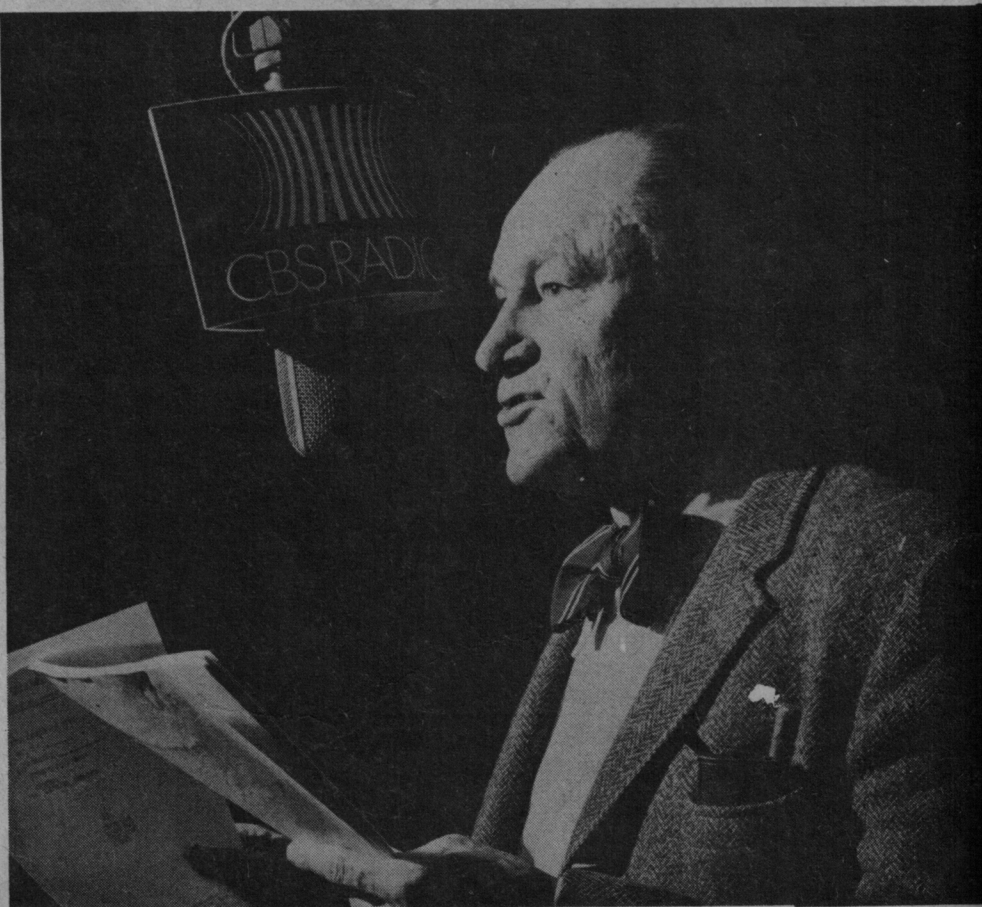
HB: Accidentally. It just creaked. Something was wrong with the hinges. They tried to doctor it because I wanted to use this door but it always squeaked. So I had this door set aside for the times we were in cellars, haunted houses, or in somebody's attic, or some such thing. Everytime I heard this door creak (long before I even sold *INNER SANCTUM MYSTERIES*) I just thought this would make a *HELLUVA* idea for a program. The doo-oo-oo-r creaks open in all its eeriness and monstrosity, and sinister voice

says, "Come in." But remember the actuality behind that voice is anybody's own creation. You create your own monster to go with the voice. That's what's so wonderful about radio. You bring to ME your own fantasies, your own fears, your own imagination! That's how the creaking door happened.

JMK: The *INNER SANCTUM* series was your idea?

HB: Completely. Suffice it to say that now I'm using the creaking door on the *CBS Radio Mystery Theater*, and it's mine. It's not only copyrighted; it's *TRADEMARKED*. There are only two sounds that have ever been trademarked by the United States Department of Copyrights—the NBC chimes and the creaking door. There is such a distinctive thing to the creaking door that it's illegal if anybody uses it in the same way. I've stopped lots of people from using it.

JMK: Who was the source of that quote about the little boy who said "I like radio better than television because I can see the



E. G. Marshall, host of the CBS Mystery Theater and co-winner of the *Dracula Award*.

pictures better."

HB: The READER'S DIGEST had a survey about a year and a half ago, just when we were beginning our series. They asked several hundred children: "What do you like better, radio or television?" and one little boy said, "I like radio better because I can see the pictures better." But I just recently had an experience. Friends of ours have a youngster of about eight or nine who listens to the radio religiously. The mother knows that between seven and eight o'clock the boy listens intently—and so when it became quiet one evening, she went into his room. The radio was shut off. "What happened?" she asked. He said he had to turn it off because it was too scary. "Whaaat? After all that you see on television, this is scary? You look at television and it has no effect on you?" He answered, "Yeah, on television I can see it, so it's not so scary."

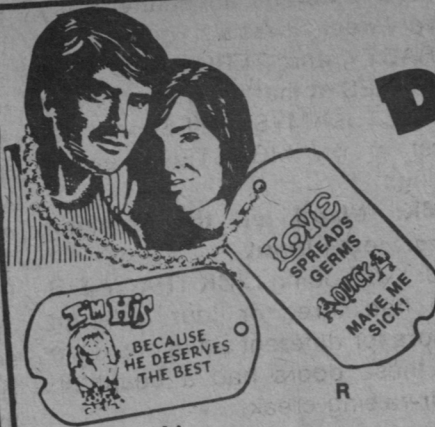
JMK: You feel the pictures stay in your mind more on radio?

HB: Of course. On television the boy saw what the director wanted him to see. But with radio he can add HIMSELF to it, then it becomes much scarier and ominous.

JMK: What are the sources for some of your scripts? The classics? Movies?

HB: We can adapt any of the classics and embellish them and enlarge them, as long as they're in the public domain, and so I've been going into ALL of the classics. You know we've done most of Poe, Hawthorne, de Maupassant, Oscar Wilde, Stevenson, Bierce. I just did Ambrose Bierce's incredible story THE DEATH OF HALPIN FRASER. It's a WEIRD story, very weird. Bierce himself only wrote four pages, but my author took that and made it into an hour. I just now am doing THE PEARL NECKLACE of de Maupassant. The major change in this classic was changing the locale from Paris to New York City at the turn of the century.

JMK: That reminds me of what you did to THE GOLEM. What was the purpose of moving that



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story into the Hitler era?

HB: Because everyone has seen so many versions of THE GOLEM. I still retained the original concept of a man-made monster. Now I did THE DYBBUK EXACTLY as Ansky had written it. It's the first story of possession. Really predates almost anything. I did that traditionally. But with THE GOLEM my author had the idea that he wanted to save a town during the Nazi period. It was just an author's desire to use a device and a character, which in itself, was fictitious—the creation of a Golem...

JMK: I wanted to ask you how much you personally influence the direction in which a script develops?

HB: I influence things a great deal because I have very definitive ideas. From the minute the story synopsis comes to me to the time the script is completed I work with the author. I make suggestions about the story, possible sound effects, casting and music. When I have the final script I will edit words, lines, speeches. Often I ask for changes. I get the changes, and then I reread the script with the cast in mind. The casting is critically important I HEAR the people I hope to use... and then put out my calls a week in advance of the actual taping. At this time I also talk to my sound effects man. I have the same man for every show. In theater and in motion pictures over the last ten years, the most successful operations have been where one man manages the whole operation. Men like Elia Kazan write, direct and produce. Men like Sidney Lumet direct and write. The more one person is guiding the whole effort, the better the final result. From the initial decision "We're going to do THE DYBBUK," to the final edit, I relate to the production, every step of the way. I sign the checks for the actors; I negotiate with the unions; I do everything myself. This is my own little world.

JMK: How long does it take you to complete the whole show, say, from the time you tape to when it's really a finished tape?

HB: My authors will spend maybe an hour with me on a storyline. Then, they may take anywhere from three days to two weeks to write a script. I spend about six hours on each script before the actual taping begins. I read, I reread, I cast, worry about sound effects and music. In the studio we work for three hours; then we spend about three MORE hours editing the tape. E. G. Marshall comes in every two weeks and records all his pieces, which we then edit into the show.

JMK: I was surprised to see you putting in the music while the actors were taping.

HB: Yes, I don't like to lay in the music afterwards. It's too tedious. We don't have that much time. In films, everything is done later. Remember, I did 195 one hour shows last year. In the history of broadcasting that's never happened. We used to do one half-hour show like INNER SANCTUM once a week. Now I'm doing four INNER SANCTUM's ONE hour shows each a week. This is a TOUR DE FORCE for me as a producer, director, creator, and I'm having the time of my life.

JMK: You act like it. You seem delighted.

HB: It's just wonderful. By the way, I see that Vincent Price was featured in a recent issue of MONSTER MAGAZINE. He was my host for the CHEVY MYSTERY SHOW, which I did in '60 and '61 at NBC—a one-hour mystery series for television.

JMK: While I watched one of your tapings I noticed the sound effects man pounded his chest. I was surprised that such effects aren't added later.

HB: We use all of the sound as it happens together with the cast. And all of the sound is real—we don't "fake" the sounds. You don't create thunder by shaking sheets of metal. You go out with the finest equipment and you record an actual storm. When there is physical body contact (the guy has to sock a guy), I have him sock the hand. Or, when there is a [redacted] shuffling, the sound man will do this with his body. The question I always ask is "is this the most realistic

sound we can get?" We use cartridges today so that complicated sound patterns can be prepared ahead. If I have an automobile going and another car is side-swiping it, and this causes the first car to go into a skid and hit the side of a road and tumble down a mountainside, I'd need four guys to do this, twenty years ago. I record two, three days a week. That gives my sound man two full days to prepare. All the sounds are on tape to begin with—then we mix swiping and make one piece of tape. Then he'll take that piece of tape and add it to the skid of the wheels. Then he'll tape in a fourth step, a fifth step and add the crash and the tumbling down the mountainside. And if I want the car to explode, he'll add that. When we're finished he has one piece of tape, pushes one button. It took him three hours to do this. The whole sequence is thirty seconds. Push a button and we're in business. If we're doing it on film, we would have four guys mixing and it would take them a whole day to create this whole thing.

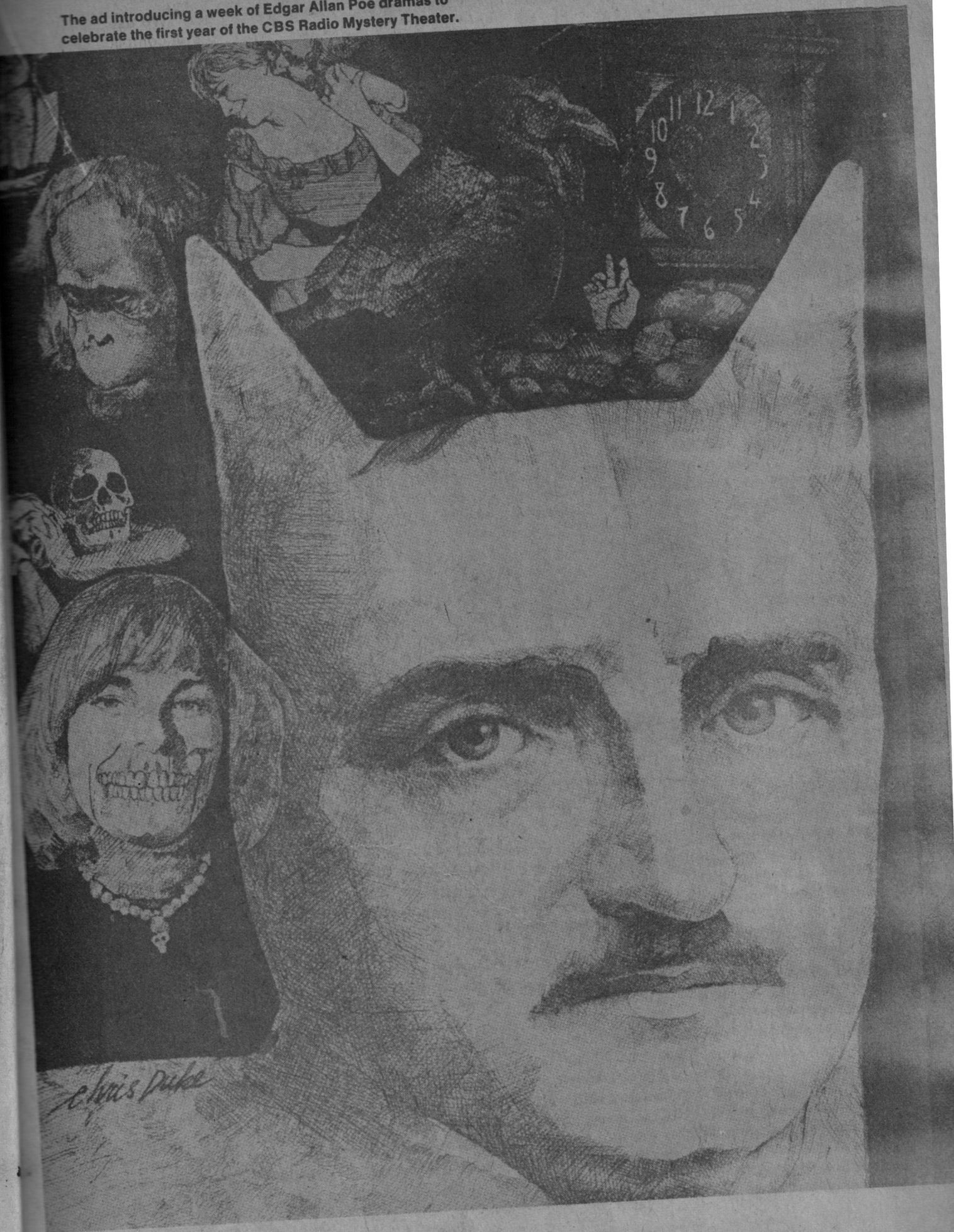
JMK: Do you ever gets sounds from other media, say from video or film...?

HB: Of course. There are sound libraries. But by this time, we've created a pretty extensive library of our own. We have several hundred sounds. I have my own equipment, because don't forget I've been in films for twenty-five years. So we've picked up a lot of sounds. I have all kinds of sound loops and effects that we are able to use. Other people borrow from us.

JMK: Was the taping I saw of THE TRANSFORMATION an average session? You were having some trouble there.

HB: It's not a question of trouble. It's a question of judgment, of taste, of accepting what I'm getting. The star will get the script ahead of time. The rest of the cast comes in, and in one hour they all read the script. It's then I have to put it together with them. If I don't like the balance or the levels, or anything, I stop and go over it again.

The ad introducing a week of Edgar Allan Poe dramas to celebrate the first year of the CBS Radio Mystery Theater.





A rehearsal conducted by the master of radio horror himself, Himan Brown.

JMK: I noticed you telling people to move in to the microphone. You were orchestrating the whole thing.

HB: You have to. The microphones today are tremendously sensitive. We're not working with old equipment. That's why the word "nostalgia" kills me. I don't believe in nostalgia. We're not DOING what we did in the '30s or '40s. We're using a theatrical form, radio drama, which was dead for fifteen years. This is the spoken word; this is LISTENING to drama. But we're not doing it the same way we used to do it. The microphone I used today didn't exist in the '30s. Electronics has reached such a point of sophistication that we use a mike with its own amplification. It is so terribly sensitive that someone's breathing reacts on our needle. I can get presence, contrast, off-

mike voices on it with great success. And then I've created a whole world of effects—ghost voices, echo chambers, eerie sounds. I use all kinds of filters and chambers to get an effect of another world, of death and so on. I keep listening and if it's not right of course I stop and do it again. But that's hardly trouble.

JMK: And then you go back later on and . . .

HB: And take out what I don't like. But you have to be sure that your levels are the same, that your backgrounds match when you cut into a sentence! It's a highly skilled art.

JMK: During the recording session, you said, "I don't remember music under there." I was struck by the fact that, with all that was going on, you remembered where the music was.

HB: Such a thing, again, is a per-

sonal thing. It's like a doctor going in for an operation: The X-rays showed him one thing. When he opens . . . he says, "My God!" and finds something else. I did Edgar Allan Poe's THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM. It's a tiny little story about a monstrous torture device that is terribly frightening. My author de-veloped this story into a CIA situation. In THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM that I did, the enemy was supposedly trying to get some kind of information which an agent had memorized and which would be the most destructive force in the world, capable of destroying civilization. It was a monstrous thing that this man had in his head. I wanted the other man who was trying to get this knowledge to play this as the villain of villains; five times as evil than Vincent Price, five times more villainous than the most

deadly villain. I cast Norman Rose for the part. He's a fine, sensitive actor. He came in and began to read the part, and he underplayed it completely with a softness and a gentleness, and a kindness, which was a thousand times more frightening than if he had his fangs out and he was frothing at the mouth. It was infinitely more frightening. I said, "Norman, what a joy to have this concept." And I tell you, if you listen to it, his underplaying, against the horror of the man and woman who are facing the pit and the pendulum, and his complete ease with all of this death and destruction, accepting it for himself almost as if it were a joy—it was horrendous. That's how these things happen. You don't always see the thing, and I use the word "see" in quotes, because I SEE it.

JMK: I assume you also cast voices, that you're always listening to someone's voice.

HB: I have people coming in constantly to see me. I go to the theater. I'm using an awful lot of younger people from Broadway, such as Tony Roberts and Carole Shelley. You take all the people on Broadway—from EQUUS—I got Marian Seldes, Roberta Maxwell, Frannie (Frances) Sternhagen. Fred Gwynne, who was in CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF, Keir Dullea, who was in the same show with him, Kate Reid, all these people. And they have very special qualities. A man like Fred Gwynne has an incredible voice for radio, and he never had done radio until I came along, strangely enough. Marvelous voice—he played in THE MUNSTERS on television. And he does an incredible, beautiful job. He did THE TELLTALE HEART for me — frightening.

JMK: I remember Ralph Bell who played in THE GOLEM from early radio years ago.

HB: There is also Larry Haines, Mandel Kramer, Mason Adams, Bryna Raeburn, Leon Janney. Their voices today are exactly as they were in the '40s. Nothing has changed. Their talents, of course, are enhanced. They certainly don't need the income from radio.

They do it because they love to act. Ralph Bell makes a fortune in commercials and voice-overs.

JMK: And now with Mystery Theater he has a chance to ACT.

HB: Yes. They all love to act, and it's easy for them. All the star personalities I use, like Kim Hunter, Howard DaSilva, Keir Dullea, Julie Harris, Fred Gwynne, Celest Holm, Ruby Dee, Richard Kiley and so many more.

JMK: What else do you do to get good voices for the show?

HB: It's not just a question of voices. It's a questioning of acting. First comes the acting, then comes the voice. I've got to have performances. My listeners have to relate to what's going on. They have to identify. They have to LIVE every minute. Happily, it's very easy to match voices with performance. New York City has 3000 actors. There's a well of talent here that's literally overwhelming.

JMK: I guess you keep track of who's in New York at all times.

HB: Of course. They call me. Mercedes McCambridge, who's done ten or twelve shows for me, keeps me posted as to when she is in New York. She's been with me since the early '40s. She's a brilliant actress.

JMK: I understand that Orson Welles calls her the greatest female radio actor.

HB: There's no question about it. I would say that, also. For me she's a dear, dear friend, and one of my oldest, working companions in the business. She's contributed a great deal to CBS Radio Mystery Theater.

JMK: Like the TWILIGHT ZONE or STAR TREK? Have recent shows influenced the direction of your show?

HB: No. In none of my mail has anybody mentioned that type of show. Mr. Serling himself tried a radio series. He bad-mouthed the whole world of radio because he was unsuccessful. His concept was wrong. His approach was wrong, and he lent his name to shows whose scripts he didn't even write, let alone read. He was just a narrator. It seems to me he's more interested in being a personality than in actually working.

JMK: He does those commercials.

HB: He sure does. But it's not good when a man goes on as a narrator when he HAS a reputation as a writer. E. G. Marshall is not a writer; he's a personality, who says, "I'm E. G. Marshall. Come in, I want to tell you a story." But when Serling says that, his identification with TWILIGHT ZONE and other shows implies that he's written it; I think that that's a cheat. But, in some 250 shows, I've done maybe only five that have been science fiction. I find that we do the human interest things, now, that have a thread of mystery, a thread of suspense, but are basically strong dramatic, emotional situations. 195 shows is an overwhelming chore and the mystery-suspense format needs variations. I'm doing a story right now about a policeman. It's his last day on the force. In thirty years, he's never pulled his gun. So, you know before the script is over, he's going to have to pull his gun and kill somebody. We do that kind of story. A human interest situation built around the relationship of a policeman and the community. There are a certain amount of detective stories and some spy stories, to give the series the variety of interest it needs.

JMK: Let's talk about monsters. You talked about THE DYBBUK and THE GOLEM.

HB: We did FRANKENSTEIN. We've done all the classic monsters.

JMK: Have you invented any monsters?

HB: Well, we're always inventing demons and characters from the other world. We did THE CANTERVILLE GHOST. We had to create voices in the netherworld. Well, the Wollstonecraft thing (THE TRANSFORMATION) is a monster that comes out of the deep. Actually, we had to invent the monster. It's all in the voice... in the backgrounds. I very often will mix my monster's voice with a kind of contemporary sound. It's not music. It's an atonic kind of sound, which seems to come out of him, so that his voice also has a

tone to it. This adds to the effect. Very often I invent echo effects and filter effects. I distort the voice just the way they did with Mercedes McCambridge in *THE EXORCIST* to get that monster effect. I would say that we're constantly inventing monsters, because I have to give the monster flesh and bones. If he's a wraith, I gotta make a wraith. If he's a ghost, what does a ghost sound like? So we're constantly playing around with electronic effects, with sound effects, with all that radio can give to make the total feeling much more monstrous.

JMK: Is there any KIND of show that you like to do best?

HB: It's like saying to a mother, "Which child do you like best?" or "Who in your family pleases you more?" I would say that from the beginning of my career in radio I have never been without a mystery series. To me, mysteries are the backbone of entertainment. I use the word entertainment very strongly in everything I say, because this IS entertainment. It may scare you, it may frighten you, but it's still theater. It's still entertainment. And mystery as SUCH is very special form. Remember, we go back to the Gothic mystery. Shakespeare had the ghost in *HAMLET* and *MACBETH*. He used all of these effects, and you heard voices all over the place and felt all the psychological involvement with killing and death and horror.

JMK: That's grisly. Killing and death and horror.

HB: Well, we don't use it as reality. It's fantasy.

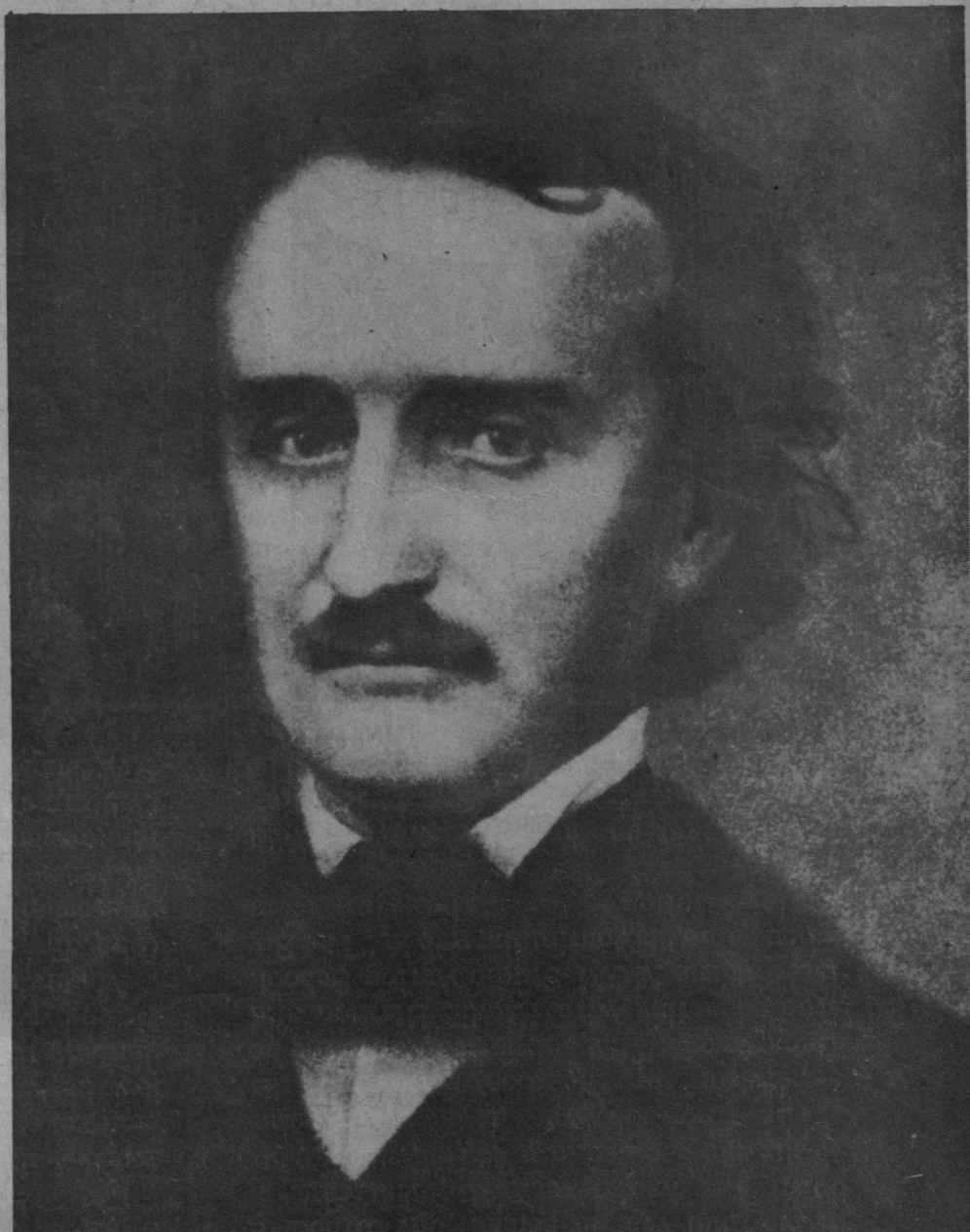
JMK: Yes, but people love to be frightened.

HB: That's right. And what a way to release yourself. What a way to get rid of any inhibitions. Again, to me it's entertainment. Now, it may be a special KIND of entertainment, in fact it is. I've never been without it, really, because I started in '32 with *FLASH GORDON*, and I'm still doing it. That's 43 years ago. Sure, I have done every other kind of drama conceivable. I've done soap operas like *JOYCE*

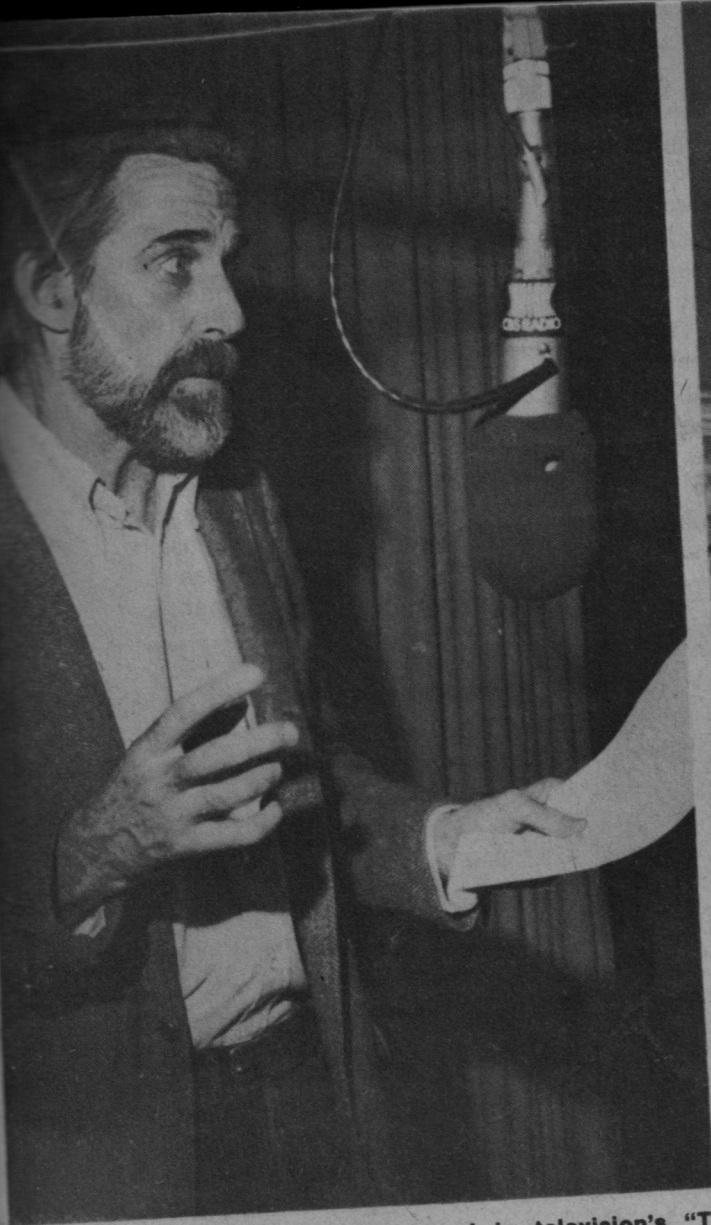
JORDON, MD. I've done straight dramas like *GRAND CENTRAL STATION*. I've been involved with every form of theater, it seems to me. I've made feature films. I've made documentary films. My career has spanned everything that is entertainment. In 1950 when television came, I was asked to do the television show *LIGHTS OUT*. And I did it for about a year and a half. That was also one of the very eerie, early, early mystery series. But I wasn't happy, because I was still doing *INNER SANCTUM* mysteries as a series for television on film.

JMK: You have made feature films also?

Yes. They were straight dramas but not especially successful. They were features made for TELEVISION even though they were going to be theatrically released. That was back in 1957. I was ten years ahead of myself, but that's all past history. Now I don't want to do anything more than create radio dramas and keep moving, because I have many other thoughts. I would like to do some very special straight drama, and all of that will happen as soon as we create a stronger and



Edgar Allan Poe never dreamed that his "The Pit and the Pendulum" would ever be switched into a horrifying C.I.A. story.



Fred Gwynne, who starred in television's "The Munsters" series (right), starred as a mad murderer (left) in the CBS Radio Theater adaptation of the Edgar Allan Poe classic, "The Tell-Tale Heart."

stronger interest, and audience.

JMK: Do you ever think about retiring?

HB: Never! The word "retire" is like the word "nostalgia!" It's a terrible word. Why should I retire? As long as I'm healthy, I'll never stop working, there's so much to do. Remember, for twenty years I staged the Chanukah Festival at Madison Square Garden for the Bonds of Israel. Singlehandedly, I would do a 2 1/2 hour show, three different performances, with 20,000 people and the greatest entertainment possible. I'm constantly doing multi-media shows. Most of these shows are institutional or education. I'm working constantly in the milieu.

JMK: Do you still act yourself? I remembered that you played Jake on THE GOLDBERGS, in the 30's radio.

HB: No I've stopped acting. I can get much better actors than I am myself.

JMK: Who was Jake, by the way?

HB: Molly Goldberg was a Jewish lady who lived in the Bronx, and Jake was her husband. He was in the dress business and worked on Seventh Avenue. They were a typical Bronx Jewish family with two children, and people could identify with them. The show was full of Jewish dialect. The chauvinism was disgusting by any of today's standards. But people like it. It was the time of AMOS

AND ANDY. Those people don't exist any more.

JMK: Molly Goldberg had a big revival on television.

HB: Up through the early '60s, then the show died. All these ethnic things die. The Mike and Pat jokes, the "Meyer, I luff you," German jokes; they don't exist any more.

JMK: How does your family feel about your new career?

HB: My son is one of the most important producer/makers of TV commercials in the business. He is in my opinion the best director, the best editor, the best cameraman, the best producer of commercials in the business —Barry Brown. My daughter is

teaching at NYU and at Hofstra. She teaches transcendentalism, all of this psycho—whatever, the names escape me. This whole new world of psychotherapy, of meditation, of healing, and so on. She's very much into it, and so what I'm doing is very close to her. I feel that the minute a man or woman stops working, they've stopped existing. What should I do? Go hit a ball on a golf course? I walk a great deal. I'm six feet tall and I weigh 176 pounds, which is absolutely perfect for me, and why should I stop? I find that my

friends, when they do retire, have literally written themselves a death certificate. Why should I retire: Physically, my work is not a drain. Emotionally, yes, I'm keyed up, but I've been keyed up all my life. On the other hand, I've never smoked a cigarette in my life and I don't drink. Occasionally a glass of wine, but that's it. So, the emotionalism, my being keyed up, doesn't put me into bad habits necessarily. As long as I'm physically able to get to the studio, create and talk, I'm going to keep doing it.

JMK: Your named changed somewhere along the line.

HB: Yeah. When I was about sixteen or seventeen years old. Chaim, C-H-A-I-M, is my Hebrew name. It means life. And Chaim is a traditional, classic name. Chaim Solomon was an important part of the Revolutionary War. He helped get the finances George Washington needed to win. Chaim Weitzman was the man who helped found Israel. A dear friend of mine is Chaim Gross, the sculptor. They spell it C-H-A-I-M, H-A-I-M, all kinds of spellings when I



Raymond Johnson, the original host of the radio show "Inner Sanctum", is seen here in a 1937 publicity shot with Mercedes McCambridge.

Academy Award winner Mercedes McCambridge, (the voice of the Devil in "The Exorcist") acclaimed by Orson Welles as the greatest living radio actress, doing her part in "The Horse That Wasn't For Sale."



was fifteen or sixteen or seventeen, I never saw a Y. My name is usually spelled H-Y-M-A-N, but I looked at all the Biblical spellings and there was no Y in the name. All my friends, who were Hymans, changed to Herman, or Hiram, or Henry or Hank. I figured, "Why should I change my name? I'll just change the spelling." So I'm the only Himan who spells it with an I.

JMK: I was really referring to Hi. For a while you were Hi Brown?

HB: People have made it Hi Brown. I use the word Himan on all my letter-heads, all my publicity, everything I do. Some of the people who send out releases, or who meet me, call me Hi, of course.

JMK: Have you noticed a change in attitudes of your audiences over the years?

HB: No, there's a very strange that has happened. One of the most exciting developments of the CBS

Mystery series is that young people from the ages of about eight or nine to twenty-four all through college, are a tremendous part of our audience. They have discovered the spoken word. They have the same reactions, the same enthusiasms that we had in the '30s and '40s even though they never knew that period. It's as if they discover sex at age 14, or 15. It's like "Have you heard, do you know that this is happening?"

Suddenly, they've come upon this new experience of listening, and that's what the word is, "listening." They've grown up in a generation when they didn't have to listen. They looked. Everything was spoon fed to them. Now suddenly, they have the joy of listening, and listening is almost as special as touching. It's more special than seeing. I find that once you discover that, it's the same in every generation. This is why we have this excitement.

JMK: Do you find that they're any more sophisticated?

HB: Oh yes, of course. The kids

today of nine, or ten, are infinitely more sophisticated than we were at the same age. They've had YEARS of exposure to all sorts of experiences. They're tremendously sophisticated. We've had many young people come to the studio, and they're keenly interested in sound effects; they're keenly interested in how the actors develop their emotional roles in the way that they do.

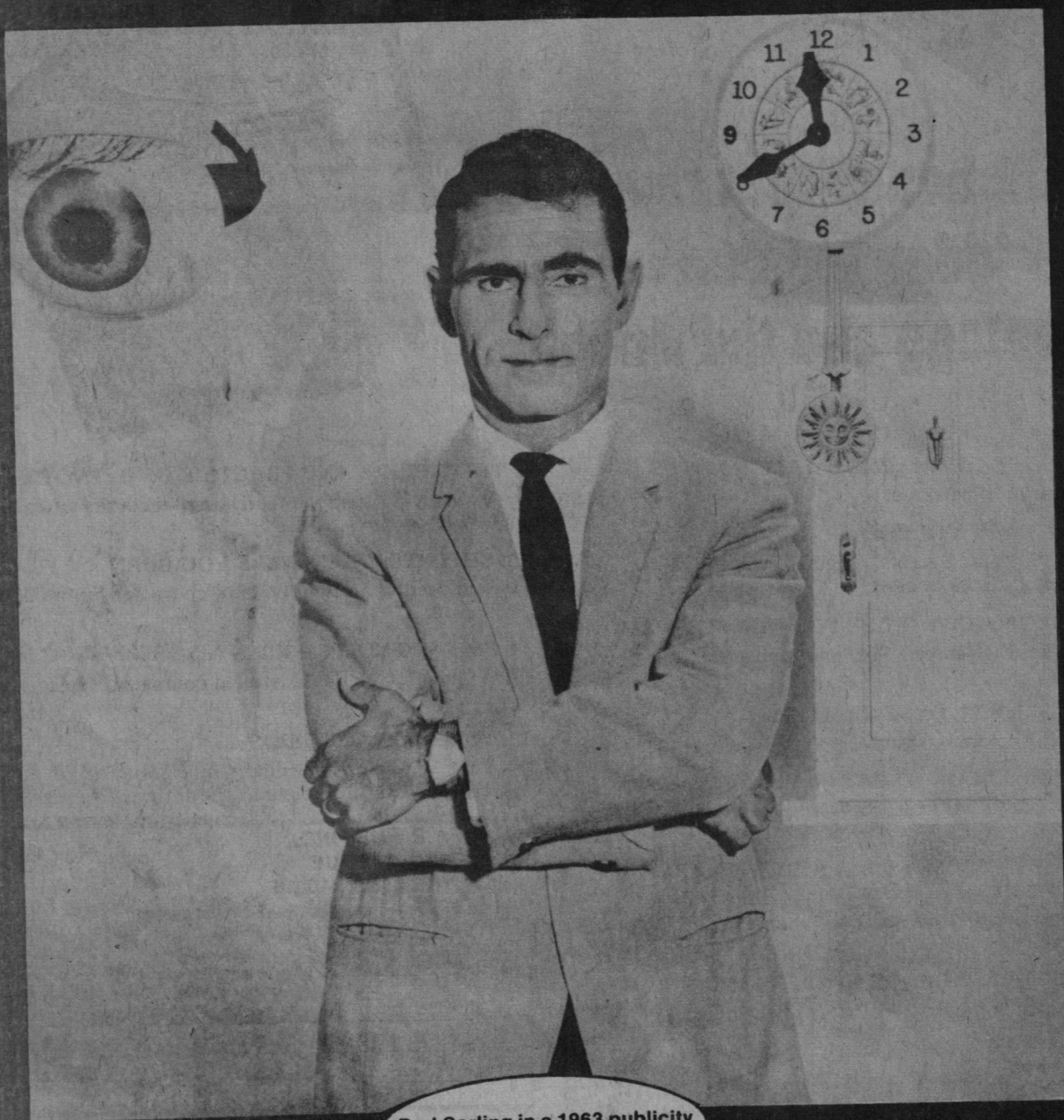
JMK: And quickly, too.

HB: Yes. Well, this is the skill of an actor. A man like Laurence Olivier is able to take his emotions and strip them down to the essentials

in a few minutes. He is a great actor. Acting is like any other skill, I suppose. A doctor touches you, and immediately he knows whether your liver or your pancreas is enlarged. These actors can, to use a phrase, "turn on" very quickly and very skillfully.

JMK: You said that you weren't influenced by other media; but still there's been THE EXORCIST, ROSEMARY'S BABY ...

HB: I just did a radio script of THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA. I remember PHANTOM OF THE OPERA with Lon Chaney. But it's a huge novel. How do you do such



Rod Serling in a 1963 publicity still for "Twilight Zone."



Lon Chaney as the "Phantom of the Opera."

a novel in fifty minutes? Well, you can't really do all in fifty minutes, no more than they could have done it as a movie in two hours. But somehow I distilled the horror of the opera ghost, the chandelier falling, the ghost being chased through the flies, backstage and up onto a roof into my framework.

JMK: Did you use a lot of music for this broadcast?

HB: Oh yes! The locale is the Paris Opera House. An opera was going on in the background. I can effectively create that illusion. But there is a greater sophistication. There is a more general knowledge and understanding of lots of

things now and this of course, makes my life a little bit easier. I find that we get a much, much quicker acceptance from the audience. Our hugest increases in audiences, and believe me they have been huge, are in those below the age of 49. People after the age of 49, the so-called "Golden Agers," they've remained constant. They haven't gotten quite that excited because they have had it all before. They enjoy the dramas and love everything I'm doing, but the big increase has been with people who never experienced it. And they have suddenly come to radio drama as

if it was a new invention, a new creation . . .

JMK: But if you were 49, you would have had radio, and you would remember it.

HB: That's right. But that older audience somehow stays with television. Younger people never really cared for television that much. College students today don't relate to television quite as much as people of fifty and over. I don't gear my scripts to any particular age. I gear my scripts to entertainment, to what is good showmanship, what is good listening. To what is good; to use the word once more—good

theater. I'm entertaining people. They are no rules. If there were rules, a guy could sit down and turn out a hit every five minutes. For example, the show **GOODTIME CHARLEY** had some of the greatest lyricists and book writers, but it got lukewarm reviews. Alan Lerner sits down with Frederick Loewe; Richard Rodgers sits down... even they turn out flops, because there is no formula.

JMK: THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW is on now, and THE STEPFORD WIVES.* Do you find that there's any more call now than before for shows like these that are a little more bizarre and offbeat?

HB: I myself am doing shows as bizarre, as far out, and as horrendous as I feel I can go within the limits of good taste. Remember radio does not give me the leeway that films or live theater does. I have to stay within the limits of good taste. Of course, things have opened up a great deal. Language is a lot freer today than it used to be. But I go as far as my writer, my imagination, will permit me to. Within the bounds of, as I say, decency and good taste. The Grand Guignol has been there long before **STEPFORD WIVES**. Heads would go flying across a stage, and limbs would go screaming, and bodies disappear. You do these things physically on a stage, and they're very, very effective. I do them on radio, too, but I do them with sound, or with voices, and with your imagination.

JMK: In the John J. O'Connor story (THE NEW YORK TIMES, Sept. 25, 1973), you remarked that, "Even at it's best, THE GREEN HORNET meant nothing." That's a relative question, isn't it? It meant something at the time. We were fighting World War II then.

HB: I meant that even at the time, **GREEN HORNET** was corny to me. Those kinds of characters were puerile compared to what we want today. Today, who would

dream of **THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL**? We don't go in for that any more. Peter Falk or Telly Savalas don't play that kind of thing. Today our leading characters, our heroes, have to be more real.

JMK: Then you're getting back to the more sophisticated audience that's demanding more sophisticated programming.

HB: That's right. Even in those days when they were doing **THE SHADOW** I wouldn't permit myself to do such corny things. The host behind the creaking door on **INNER SANCTUM** is an example. With him I was poking fun at all those other people. When that voice said, "Come in—there's nothing in here to frighten you,"—or "Pull up a tombstone and sit down,"—or—"Ghost to ghost airwaves," I was poking fun at those characters who were screaming: "Hi ho, Silver, and away." Today, the cop, the detective, or the sheriff are not **LONE RANGER** characters on horses. They're in helicopters, in cars; they're using computers. It's altogether different. This is what I mean. I couldn't succeed with the old formula for three seconds, more than once a week. Nobody has been able to make it succeed, except on a nostalgia level. You can't sustain that seven days a week, 365 days. I'm into my second year and here it is April, and we've got a new rating.

JMK: What does a rating mean?

HB: Well, we get ratings two, three times a year. It's like the Neilsens for television shows. We have the same thing for radio. Our ratings are tremendous. Our audience keeps growing.

JMK: Is there a horror story in THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME?

HB: There might be. Well, we've used characters like the hunchback, Quasimodo. There's no problem with characters like that. I don't have to spend six hours like Lon Chaney did in a make-up room! When my audience **HEARS** Quasimodo they also see him. He's much more horrendous in their imagination

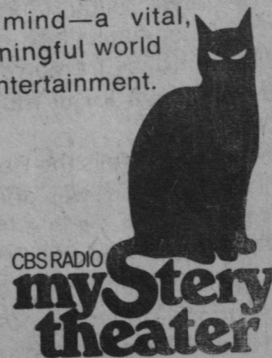
than if I had to create him visually.

JMK: What kind of listener response have you had?

HB: I get mail constantly. We've gotten **TREMENDOUS** mail. There are all kinds of listeners, you know. I get guys that analyze the shows for me. One listener sends me a breakdown every month listing what he thinks is the best show of the month. Professors at schools, all sorts of people, use tapes of the shows. Actually, many of them are making tapes of the shows, building files of the show. I can't stop that. They make cassettes for themselves. Many people can't hear the show during the hour that it's on 'cause in different parts of the country it's on different hours. CBS has 225 stations broadcasting the series.

JMK: Is there anything you'd like to bring up?

HB: I think that "listening" is terribly important. We are giving people the opportunity, the thrill of using their imaginations through radio drama. It's the most personal form of theater I know and we just let it die for years. Why? No rhyme or reason. Madison Avenue suddenly said the box, TV, is everything. Hooray! But now we are proving that radio drama is a potent, meaningful form of entertainment, and suffice it to say that all the actors who work for me are from theater, and from motion pictures, and they just ache to do radio drama because it is an uninhibited medium of expression. No makeup, no costumes, no floundering and worrying about learning lines, all of that. I feel that radio drama is a form of theater. I stress that again and again and again. To me, radio drama isn't a stunt. Radio drama isn't nostalgia. It's the theater of the mind—a vital, meaningful world of entertainment.



* Be sure to read the story of "The Stepford Wives" in this issue.

YOUR FAVORITE RADIO STATIONS WHO FEATURE...



CBS RADIO
myStory
theater

ALABAMA			ILLINOIS			MONTANA			CBS RADIO		
Birmingham	WYDF	850	Champaign	WDWS	1400	Butte	KBOW	550	myStory theater		
Mobile	WKRG	710	Chicago	WBBM	780	Billings	KOOK	970			
Tuscaloosa	WJRD	1150	Danville	WDAN	1490	Great Falls	KARR	1400			
Tuscumbia	WVNA	1590	Decatur	WSOY	1340	Helena	KCAP	1340			
			Normal-			Kalispell	KGEZ	600			
			Bloomington	WAKC	1440	Missoula	KGVO	1290			
ALASKA						NEBRASKA					
Fairbanks	KLRB	900	Peoria	WMBD	1470	Hastings	KHAS	1230			
			Quincy	WTAD	930	Omaha	KLNG	1490			
ARIZONA			Rock Island	WHBF	1270						
Phoenix	KOOL	960	Springfield	WTAX	140						
Tucson	KOPO	1450									
			INDIANA			NEVADA			RHODE ISLAND		
			Anderson	WHBU	1240	Las Vegas	KLAV	1230	Providence	WICE	1290
ARKANSAS			Fort Wayne	WGL	1250	Reno	KBET	1340			
Fort Smith	KFPW	1230	Indianapolis	WIBC	1070				SOUTH CAROLINA		
Hot Springs	KZNG	1340	Marion	WBAT	1400				Anderson	WAIM	1230
Little Rock	KLRA	1010	Muncie	WLBC	1340				Charleston	WQSN	1450
			South Bend	WSBT	960				Columbia	WIS	560
			Vincennes	WAOV	1450				Florence	WJMX	970
									Greenville	WMRB	1490
CALIFORNIA											
Bakersfield	KPMC	1560									
Chico	KHSL	1290									
Eureka	KINS	980									
Fresno	KARM	1430									
Los Angeles	KNX	1070									
Palm Springs	KCMJ	1010									
Redding	KVCV	600									
Riverside	KPRO	1440									
Sacramento	KFBK	1530									
San Diego	KSDO	1130									
San Francisco	KSFJ	560									
COLORADO											
Colorado Springs	KVOR	1300									
Denver	KOA	850									
Durango	KDGO	1240									
Grand Junction	KREX	1100									
CONNECTICUT											
Hartford											
Manchester	WINF	1230									
New Haven	WELI	960									
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA											
Washington	WTOP	1500									
FLORIDA											
Daytona Beach	WNDW	1150									
Fort Myers	WINK	1240									
Fort Lauderdale	WFTL	1400									
Jacksonville	WMBR	1460									
Key West	WKWF	1600									
Lake City	WDSR	1340									
Melbourne	WMEL	920									
Miami Beach	WKAT	1360									
Orlando	WDBO	580									
Pensacola	WCOA	1370									
St. Augustine	WFOY	1240									
Sarasota	WSPB	1450									
Tallahassee	WTNT	1270									
Tampa	WDAE	1250									
West Palm Beach	WJNO	1230									
GEORGIA											
Albany	WGPC	1450									
Athens	WGAU	1340									
Atlanta	WGST	920									
Augusta	WBIA	1230									
Brunswick	WMOG	1490									
Columbus	WRBL	1420									
Macon	WMAZ	940									
Savannah	WTOG	1290									
Thomasville	WPAX	1240									
Waycross	WAYX	1230									
HAWAII											
Honolulu	KHVH	1040									
IDAHO											
Boise	KBOI	670									
Idaho Falls	KID	590									
Lewiston	KRLC	1350									