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What the Ear Sees: Performing Bodies, Hollywood Spectacle, and the Mass-Mediated Musical

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By

Emily Lane O'Brien

Evanston, Illinois

Table of Contents

Abstract

Within scholarship on mid-century Hollywood musicals, celebrity, glamour, and spectacle are commonly included in the conversation about the films themselves. Yet, what happened when these films – which privilege visuality – were adapted into purely aural forms, has not been as deeply analyzed. In this project, I track the cross-media life of Hollywood musicals, researching the ways that these films did not exist stagnantly on screen, but were functional material that had many iterations throughout media forms during the height of their popularity, including on the radio. Without considering these broadcasts – and all the ways that listeners consumed film properties – scholarship on the Hollywood musical is incomplete. This forgotten genre – radio musicals – affords a new vantage point on audience and media interaction that has been obscured by scholarship in the past. I mine radio remediations for the ways that listeners are invited to engage with the musical, looking across media to radio, to imagine the ways that audiences may have heard the musical during the mid-century. For example, in radio broadcasts of Hollywood musicals, the sounds of song and dance encourage listeners to imagine the visual and physical aspects of a musical performance through aural cues. By examining this forgotten genre, I seek to illustrate the multifaceted lives of the film properties in the mid-century and introduce a new vantage point for scholarship today.

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Introduction

A teen girl goes with her mom to see her favorite film star's new movie. She has seen many of them, and this new one has her extremely excited; a musical, the film is sure to be full of singing and dancing. She has been getting ready by listening to some of the tunes on the radio and her own record. After the screening, she goes home, sits down with a few magazines that feature the press from the film. One of them has how-to instructions teaching her the choreography of the hit dance. She learns, so do her friends, and they do the dance together at their next gathering. An ever-avid fan, our teen girl tunes in when her favorite performer appears on a weekly evening radio show as himself, showing off his singing and dancing in between lively banter with the host. A few years down the road, she learns that that the old film is going to be performed again – this time on a radio anthology show - and as she has not seen it since, she is excited to remember one of her favorites. In the mid-twentieth century, fans like this could look to many distinct types of media through they could interact with their favorite stars and films.

Within the scholarship on Hollywood musicals, celebrity, glamour, and spectacle are commonly included in the conversation about the films themselves. Yet, what happened when these films – which privilege visuality – were adapted into purely aural forms, has not been as deeply analyzed. From roughly 1930 to 1950, films and film musicals were *remediated* – where older cultural forms are re-mapped onto new media – by production studios to radio, carrying

with them aural vestiges of visual performance. In these radio broadcasts, the sounds of song and dance encourage listeners to imagine the visual and physical aspects of a musical performance through aural cues.

Figure 1 Stock Photo by H. Armstrong Roberts

In this dissertation, I address representations of performing bodies – primarily that of stars - in transmedial radio musical productions by focusing on issues such as voice, dance, and

spectacle which are common in conversations about the film musical. I track the cross-media life of these Hollywood musicals, researching the ways that these films did not exist stagnantly on screen, but were functional material that had many iterations throughout media forms during the height of their popularity, including on the radio.

Keeping this in mind, I want to consider one of the ways that mid-century audiences interacted with musicals regularly, remembering that "film" "radio," and "stage" are indiscrete genres whose definitions are separated by permeable barriers. For that reason, I purposefully move away from terms like "film musicals" and use instead the term "mass-mediated musical" or, more specifically, "Hollywood musical." In this way, I hope to better account for the multimedial reality of musicals at this point in history.[1] Taking the focus from the screen, I aim to analyze just one aspect of the circulatory process of these musicals, tracing the ways that radio productions invited listeners in the US to interact with Hollywood musicals. By focusing on radio adaptations, I achieve the goals of my project: to explain the importance of radio musicals to the study of film musicals and their stars, to investigate the effects of the interaction of film and radio on the generic conventions, and to understand the ways that meaning was made on the radio.

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[1] The multimedial reality of Hollywood musicals extends past "Hollywood" itself; these film properties were often related to – or often direct translations of – Broadway Musicals, which have their own multimedial lives on the stage, in records, on the radio, and in film. As such, the Broadway Musical is not a distinct, separate piece of the American Musical entertainment puzzle, but is another anchor in the complicated web of musicals during this time.

The Archives

This project will focus on radio adaptations of the mid-century US mass-mediated musical, from the 1930s to the 1950s. Many scholars have considered this time the "golden age" of both radio drama and the Hollywood musical. By studying the two jointly, I clarify the ways these disparate genres worked simultaneously to establish a prominent production trend – broadcasts centered around the translation of films to radio.[2] The genre of the Hollywood musical is specifically interesting because of the amount of visuality implied in Hollywood musical performances. From Busby Berkley to Vincente Minelli to Baz Luhrman, Hollywood musical directors lean into the visual elements of a film to stunning effect and from Judy Garland to Fred Astair, the bodies of Film Stars are the sites of their performance, the The genres that it borrows from – live theatre, film, and musicals all have their own kind of visuality – I am curious as to how they merge here.

Though at this time radio programs were created all over the country, most of the remediated Hollywood musical production was in Southern California, where the stars of Hollywood films were already working, and where radio actors hoped to translate their celebrity into film careers. Hollywood drew on radio talent, and radio drew on the films' content. The partnership began through mutual benefit, yet Hollywood came to dominate the alliance between the two and radio

[2] Frank Krutnik, "'Be Moviedom's Guest in Your Own Easy Chair!': Hollywood, Radio and The Movie Adaptation Series," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 33, no. 1 (March 2013): 24–54.

came to rely too heavily on Hollywood.[3] Radio productions reliance on Hollywood content is often cited as a reason for their ultimate decrease in popularity and replacement by television which created and maintained its own content. Yet, these productions explain more than the waning popularity of radio in the 1950s. Looking into how radio productions remediated Hollywood content clarifies the ways that shared knowledge was created and audiences were informed and knowledgeable listeners through the relation of radio musicals to the films themselves. Frank Krutnik affirms, these programs were an example "of a much broader programming trend that characterized a critical period in the development of US radio."[4]

In the following chart, I've outlined many of the individual programs relevant to this work. Further investigation shows that they aren't *all* direct adaptations of popular Hollywood musicals. Some are, but others live within the fuzzy lines that delineate the genre – comedy or variety shows with singing and performances by Hollywood stars, radio versions of popular novels or plays with a few songs thrown in here and there, brand new musicals written for a Hollywood radio broadcast, and more.

Title	Program	Network	Date
	The Packard Hour	NBC	Sept. 18, 1934-March 19, 1935 Oct.1,1935-March 17, 1936
"Daddy Long Legs."	Special Preview Broadcast	NBC	December 30, 1934
"Broadway Melody."	Special Preview Broadcast	NBC (KFI)	August 24, 1935

[3] Alan, Havig,"Fred Allen and Hollywood." J*ournal of Popular Film and Television* 7, no. 3 (January 1, 1979): 282.
[4] Krutnik, "'Be Moviedom's Guest in Your Own Easy Chair!': Hollywood, Radio and The Movie Adaptation Series," 24.

“Burlesque”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	June 15, 1936
“Irene”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	June 29, 1936
“The Vagabond King”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	August 1, 1936
“The Jazz Singer”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	August 10, 1936
“The Gold Diggers”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	December 21, 1936
“Tonight or Never”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	January 25, 1937
“Madame Butterfly”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	May 8, 1937
“She Loves Me Not”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	November 8, 1937
“Naughty Marietta”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	March 28, 1938
“Mad About Music”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	April 18, 1938
“Miss Brown of Worchester”	Screen Guild Theatre	CBS	January 15, 1939
“Broadway Bill”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	April 24, 1939
“Sing, You Sinners”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	January 15, 1940
“Swing High, Swing Low”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	February 26, 1940
“Show Boat”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	June 24, 1940
“Strike Up the Band”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	October 28, 1940
“A Little Bit of Heaven”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	December 20, 1940
“Love’s New Sweet Song”	CBS Silver Theatre	CBS	January 26, 1941
“Babes in Arms”	Screen Guild Theatre	CBS	November 9, 1941
“Holiday Inn”	Screen Guild Theatre	CBS	January 11, 1942
“Weekend In Havana”	CBS Silver Theatre	CBS	January 18, 1942
“Morning Glory”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	October 12, 1942
“Yankee Doodle Dandy”	Screen Guild Theatre	CBS	October 19, 1942
“Broadway”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	November 30, 1942
“A Star Is Born”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	December 28, 1942
“My Gal Sal”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	January 18, 1943
“This Is the Army”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	February 22, 1943
“For Me and My Gal”	Screen Guild Theatre	CBS	March 22, 1943
“The Road to Morocco”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	April 5, 1943
“Thank Your Lucky Stars”	Screen Guild Theatre	CBS	August 27, 1943
“The Phantom of the Opera”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	September 13, 1943
“Dixie”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	December 20, 1943

“Mr. Margie”	CBS Silver Theatre	CBS	January 16, 1944
“Wake Up and Live”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	February 21, 1944
“The Gay Divorcee”	Screen Guild Theatre	CBS	March 6, 1944
“Coney Island”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	April 17, 1944
“Springtime in the Rockies”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	May 22, 1944
“Naughty Marietta”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	June 12, 1944
“Maytime”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	September 4, 1944
“The Vagabond King”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	December 25, 1944
“Lady in the Dark”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	January 29, 1945
“Road to Berlin”	Cavalcade of America	NBC	February 5, 1945
“Swanee River”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	April 2, 1945
“Sing, You Sinners”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	May 7, 1945
“Barnade Bill”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	April 1, 1946
“Music for Millions”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	May 27, 1946
“State Fair”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	June 24, 1946
“Coney Island”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	September 30, 1946
“Meet Me in St. Louis”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	December 2, 1946
“Do You Love Me?”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	December 23, 1946
“Alexander’s Ragtime Band”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	April 7, 1947
“The Jazz Singer”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	June 2, 1947
“Anchors Aweigh”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	December 29, 1947
“Mother Wore Tights”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	February 2, 1948
“The Al Jolson Story”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	February 16, 1948
“When Irish Eyes Are Smiling”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	March 15, 1948
“State Fair”	The Railroad Hour	ABC	March 21, 1949
“When My Baby Smiles at Me”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	April 25, 1949
“Emperor Waltz”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	September 26, 1949
“Music in the Air”	The Railroad Hour	NBC	October 24, 1949
“Mother Wore Tights”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	November 14, 1949
“Brigadoon”	The Railroad Hour	NBC	January 30, 1950
“Red, Hot, and Blue”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	February 6, 1950
“Jolson Sings Again”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	May 22, 1950

“One Sunday Afternoon”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	September 4, 1950
“You’re My Everything”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	November 11, 1950
“Wabash Avenue”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	November 13, 1950
“The Wizard of Oz”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	December 25, 1950
“The Barkleys of Broadway”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	January 1, 1951
“Birth of the Blues”	Screen Guild Theatre	ABC	January 18, 1951
“Easter Parade”	Screen Guild Theatre	ABC	March 22, 1951
“Oh, You Beautiful Doll”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	April 16, 1951
“Movietime USA - A Salute to the Industry”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	September 24, 1951
“Show Boat”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	February 11, 1952
“Top O’ the Morning”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	March 17, 1952
“Royal Wedding”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	April 14, 1952
“On Moonlight Bay”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	May 5, 1952
“Two Weeks with Love”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	September 8, 1952
“Grounds for Marriage”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	November 10, 1952
“Strictly Dishonorable”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	December 8, 1952
“State Fair”	Theatre Guild on the Air	NBC	January 4, 1953
“Lady in the Dark”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	February 16, 1953
“My Blue Heaven”	Lux Radio Theatre	CBS	February 25, 1953

The transmedial life of Hollywood musicals where broadcast programs featured both radio versions of films, as well as varied types of translations, adaptation, and remediations of musicals created specifically for the radio. To highlight the appearance of musical stars in listeners’ homes, the original cast from the film often portrayed these characters, though other Hollywood actors occasionally filled in. However, the actors’ film stardom was always foregrounded using phrases like “straight off the silver screen,” “direct from Hollywood,” and

"your favorite film star" to describe the guests.[5] Such references to the players' celebrity allowed the listener to imagine these stars performing in their living room. These constant reminders to the audience about an imagined visual presence of the stars was echoed by other representative tools which encouraged audiences to imagine the actual people whose voices they were hearing. These markers of visuality and a star's presence were underlined with an opening sequence where stars introduced themselves in their voice, and dance sequences where the sounds of tap were broadcast on the radio, in effect representing the performers with bodily sounds - vocal production and dance.

[5] While this is generally true for all radio musicals that I discuss, the best example of this is "Movietime USA - A Salute to the Industry." *Lux Radio Theatre*. Vine Street Theatre: CBS, September 24, 1951.

Figure 2 Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby and Judy Garland rehearse for "Connie Haines & Bing Crosby & Frank Sinatra." *Command Performance*, June 3, 1944.

Some Hollywood companies had radio broadcast shows that exclusively produced their films, while other shows produced radio versions of films from many different studios. The radio programs I will be focusing on include *MGM Theatre of the Air* (WMGM/syndicated, 1949 – 1951), *Lux Radio Theatre* (NBC/ CBS,1943 – 1955), *Screen Guild Theatre* (NBC/CBS/ABC from 1939 – 1952), *Cavalcade of America* (CBS/NBC, 1935 – 1953), *NBC Theater* (also known as *Screen Directors Guild Assignment* or *Screen Directors Assignment,* NBC, 1948 - 1951), *Stars Over Hollywood* (NBC, 1950 – 1951), and *The Packard Hour* (also known as *The Fred*

Astaire Show, NBC/CBS 1934 - 1936). In these productions, broadcasters use narrative and sound in cooperation with many other signifiers, not just to tell the story, but also to give listeners a full-as-possible version of the spectacle expected in movie musicals. As a result, "performances" take on a different meaning. Here, the corporeality necessary in musical performance is rendered in sound, allowing for the experience of "watching" a film inside the home.

By focusing on the ways that purely aural media intersect and intertwine with visual representation, how the radio disseminated performances as acousmatic sound – sound separated from its source – can become known. Through an emphasis on indexical listening, broadcasts prompt audiences to imagine the visual aspects of a musical performance through aural cues. Musical performances, which often rely on the visual spectacle of performing bodies, were communicated on a purely aural medium, and an investigation into them will disentangle how listener's imaginations were influenced in mid twentieth century by music, sound, and genre knowledge.

Significance

This forgotten genre – radio musicals – affords a new vantage point on star, audience, and media interaction that has been obscured by scholarship in the past. While film musicals have been rigorously researched by sound studies, film studies, and musicology, the impact of radio adaptations on audience reception has not been considered. Overall, existing film musical

scholarship disregards or even completely ignores the existence of radio adaptation of film in the 1930s and 1940s. When it is addressed, it is considered merely an oddity or peripheral medium. However, many radio broadcasting programs navigated cross-mediation of these texts. The sheer number of programs, combined with the longevity of a few, suggests that they are not as peripheral as previous research has suggested – millions of listeners tuned into these programs. My project addresses this lack of scholarship, filling in a lacuna in media studies, musicology, and scholarship on the musical while investigating a fascinating, noteworthy, and endlessly weird genre.

Additionally, this project delves into ideas of audience and media interactions, giving a better understanding of the lens through which audiences experienced musicals and the circulation of musical-related media of the time. Currently, scholars write as though these stories, actors, and performances only exist in fixed and immutable filmic forms. In fact, for audiences, all of these different genres would have been in contact with each other and would have informed the ways that other media were encountered. The existence of radio adaptations, along with other types of film musical-"esque" performance on the radio – new storylines, revues, excerpts, etc., suggests that – to contemporaneous audiences – these texts were much more plastic than scholarship has suggested. Scholarship on film musicals – works such as Altmans' *The American Film Musical* and Feuer's *The Hollywood Musical* do close textual analysis of the films, but do not regard the multimedial lives the films have. As a result of the remediation of radio, along with records and

advertisements, these films were situated for consumers not in a vacuum, but in dialogue with and through other representations of the musical.

Often airing after the film became a hit, these radio shows worked to renegotiate the filmic experience, reminding the audience of their enjoyment of film, but also perhaps altering those memories slightly. Judging by the on-air experience, a previous interaction with the musical is expected – these shows were broadcast for audiences who had seen, and were fans of, the original film. Here though, the films and on-screen stars are transported into listeners' homes, creating an intimate experience for fans of musicals and musical stars.

Finally, this project contributes to a growing interdisciplinary field that is bringing musicology and sound studies together to foster a comprehensive approach to mass-mediated musicals. In this project, I merge these fields to investigate how, within radio musical performances, music works as entertainment and as a signifier of visual meaning, communicating the spectacle of musicals through a radio broadcast. This project investigates how "extra musical" sounds shape and enhance our understanding of these musical performances, giving character, texture, and spectacle to what could otherwise echo many broadcasts of popular song on the radio.

This is a study about the genre of the radio musical, identifying what makes this genre and these performances work. The radio musical operates within and related to other genres, like Hollywood film, radio dramas, and musicals. Many of the ways that the radio musical functions

are also the ways that other genres work, but this study looks at the specificity of the radio musical. The ways that it is unique and different from other genres, characterized by its medium, and specific to the time and place in which they flourished.

Methodology

This project brings together strands of research from media studies, sound studies, and musicology, grounded in a theory of semiotics as introduced by William Reddy. Both expanding on and critiquing a traditional semiotic theory (a la Pierce) Reddy introduces the concept of translation, where semiotics takes place, not just linguistically, but "among sensory modalities, procedural habits, and linguistic structures." This theory allows for an analysis that incorporates a physical and emotional element to my interpretation of radio circulation. By grounding by scholarship in a history of circulation, I integrate close analysis of radio texts with scholarship surrounding film musicals, broadcasting histories, and studies of popular culture of the time to better understand the ways that spectacle, stardom, race, dance, the representation of the audience were navigated in the circulation of Hollywood musicals. By examining these musicals both as independent moments of cultural production, as well as a unit within a larger web of media, I will be able to address the ways that audiences were prompted to understand the musical on the air and the impact it may have had on Hollywood musical films. By thinking about mass-mediated musicals through networks of circulation, this project will re-examine musicals within

a network of meaning, showing that it is important to understand musicals of the 1930s and 40s within the broader mediascape of the time.

Radio has always been a tool of remediation, taking content from cultural forms like the minstrel show or a film, and re-mapping them onto the air.[6] By the late 1930s, Hollywood and radio industries had developed a symbiotic relationship. With respect to that relationship, Michele Hilmes observes that there are two primary functions of the structure of radio adaptation shows like *Lux Radio Theatre* and *Screen Guild Theatre* – to provide summary to help audiences understand the abridged plot and to lead the audience back to the "Hollywood" frame, and the grandiose entertainment values that the Hollywood connection implied.[7] The forces of the relationship between institutions shaped these broadcasts in the process of creating mass-mediated musicals through production records, periodicals, industry publications, and scripts.

From the advent of the medium, audiences had an important role in the creation of radio's social codes and generic conventions.[8] During the period of the 1930s and 40s, educational periodicals and magazines were published, including listener columns and letters to the editor

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[6] Jacob Smith, *Vocal Tracks: Performance and Sound Media* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), Kate Lacey, *Listening Publics: The Politics and Experience of Listening in the Media Age* (Cambridge, UK ; Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2013), and Michele Hilmes, *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922-1952* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

[7] Hilmes, *Radio Voices*, 102, and Krutnik, "'Be Moviedom's Guest In Your Own Easy Chair!' Hollywood, Radio and The Movie Adaptation Series," 29.

[8] Elena Razlogova, *The Listener's Voice: Early Radio and the American Public*, 1st ed (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 3.

about an audience members' own experience."[9] However, the consolidation of the commercial network system around the same time led to a restructure of broadcasts and narrowing of their intended audience - generally white, urban, and upper-middle class. This, Clifford Doekerson claims, brought the self-imposed system of censorship that guided the motion picture industry, to the airwaves."[10] Many performers, producers, and other talent also crossed the lines between media frequently. Investigating the ways that audiences and listeners interacted with film and radio brings to light a greater understanding of the ways producers and performers navigated the intersection of the two media, relying on audience understanding and knowledge to navigate the ways that Hollywood broadcasts were created and understood.

These arguments are confirmed through active listening and analysis of specific recordings.[11] In understanding how radio producers created radio dramas that evoked spatial and temporal structures – what he calls "theatre of the mind" – Neil Verma identified the ways that sonorous marks were used to "indicate the place for the listener that is created by coding foregrounds and backgrounds."[12] Similar to these radio dramas, radio musicals produce sonorous marks, yet in these broadcasts, these marks generally indicate the body movement of the star, not the

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[9] Razlogova, *The Listener's Voice,* 70.
[10] Clifford John Doerksen, *American Babel: Rogue Radio Broadcasters of the Jazz Age* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 126.
[11] In these close readings, I take up C.S. Peirce's semiotics and William Reddy's theory of translation, to understand practices of remediation and adaptation on the radio.
[12] Neil Verma, *Theater of the Mind: Imagination, Aesthetics, and American Radio Drama*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 35.

"audioposition" of the listener. The sonorous marks I investigate – the sounds of dance and performance, the marked or un-marked voice, the Hollywood star, etc. – all have critical bearing on the ways audiences perceive the "invisible" body of the performer.[13] For example, a voice, marked by the "rasp" as well as context and dialect – as Melvin Patrick Ely identified in his work on *Amos'n'Andy* – would have been indexically linked to a black body for contemporary audiences.[14] Following Bakhtin, I observe that in these remediations, "meanings evolve dynamically in open-ended interpretive processes," creating and recreating significance though aural cues. [15]

Throughout the parallel operations of the film and radio industry formats, stars, and indexical signs crossed the boundaries of media, each circulating and informing the other. In addition to the ways these industry interactions influenced media production, meanings become more specific through a dialogic citational practice between iterations of the musical – audiences would be reminded of filmic moments while listening to the radio and radio performances while watching films. By looking at drafts and other papers that deal with these adaptations, as well as

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[13] Nina Eidsheim, "Voice as Action: Toward a Model for Analyzing the Dynamic Construction of Racialized Voice," *Current Musicology*, no. 93 (Spring 2012): 9 – 33.
[14] Smith, *Vocal Tracks,* 117, And Melvin Patrick Ely, *The Adventures of Amos "n" Andy: A Social History of An American Phenomenon*. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001).
[15] Susan Petrilli, "Bakhtinian Dialogics and Sign Interpretation: Mikhail Bakhtin and Charles Peirce," *Revista Diálogos,*3. (2015): 119.

audience feedback through newspaper clippings and letters to the station, I offer a clearer understanding of the ways that structures of cultural industries impacted their productions.

Like scholars of adaptation studies, I look at the resulting heteroglossia of these mass-mediated musicals through the idea of remediation. I view radio and radio musical performances within a web built of dialogic interactions of cultural products. While these dialogic remediations explain the ways that mass-mediated musicals engage with the listeners, there is also an intimate relationship between a particular broadcast and a listener, resulting in both mental and physical responses to signs on the air. As Jonathan Sterne observes, "on the basis of their sonic character, sounds become signs - they come to mean certain things."[16]

In his unfinished work on radio, Adorno posited a theory that focused on what he called the physiognomic nature of radio – the social and interactive aspects of the medium – and the characteristics of radio phenomena. Adorno was interested in the "how" elements of radio, the way that radio subjects all programs to the same conditions, no matter the content. Though he recognizes that studying radio by this descriptive (or phenomenological) method can sometimes take the form of hypothesis – which, of course, my study does as well – it is important to dwell on this phenomenon because it is the phenomenon that determines the reaction of the listener. By

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[16] Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 94.

thinking about the radio *itself* we have a clearer understanding of what the listener hears.[17] Still, the *how* of radio is always related to the *what.* Even Adorno recognizes in a footnote that "no listener is completely left to the phenomenon because [s]he always has a background of general knowledge which links the phenomenon with its causes."[18]

The dialogism inherent to the circulation of mid-century radio saturates narrative tools, including text, music, vocal intonation, and soundscape. Radio versions of film musicals on *Screen Guild Theatre*, for example, take advantage of heteroglossia using a narrator, allowing each of the characters to have their own speech types and uniquely musical voice. These linguistic and musical accents are organized in the radio broadcast just as the social diversity of speech types is orchestrated in the novel. In this vein, radio adaptations of film musicals build on the films in several ways, using aural signs, and placing radio within the larger cultural context of Hollywood, building on the clout of the film musical, and imbuing the radio broadcasts with the "sparkle" of celebrity to capitalize on it. As radio journalist David Glickham observed in 1939, "Listeners too, are still fascinated by the 'magic name of Hollywood'… It has been pointed out that as long as Hollywood talent shows continue to sell the sponsor's product, there

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[17]Theodor W Adorno and Robert Hullot-Kentor. *Current of Music: Elements of a Radio Theory.* (Cambridge, UK: Polity), 2009.
65. As he rightly observes, "The man who sits in his armchair and listens to radio does not hear what is going on in the conference room or in the studio of the network. He doe not hear wave-lengths and frequencies. He hears only what goes on *under his nose."*
[18] Adorno, *Current of Music*, 65.

will be buyers for this kind of program."[19] As the programs themselves foregrounded inter-media connections mass-mediated musicals engage with the listener through transmedial dialogism, highlighted through adaptation.

In Film Adaption and its Discontents, Thomas Leitch considers the ways that novels are adapted into film addressing the "specific problems adaptions raise," and recognizing that people were responsible for curating and combining elements in signature ways - the ways by which the projects they participated in could be identified.[20] Like Bakhtin, Leitch recognizes the influences of other "voices," attributing the organization to a specific author, or authors. Describing a gap between adaption and allusion, the slippery categories that make up adaptions and consider their differences, Leitch promotes a "grammar of hypertextuality" through which these relations can be described.[21] These categories range from celebrations, where the resources offered by cinema are subordinated in the "attempt to preserve their original texts as faith fully as possible," to allusions, where quotations and references are embedded in a film's larger structure. "Although each individual allusion may be limited in scope," Leitch observes, "the tone... depends on the dense patterns of references they create," and "may establish a directorial signature."[22] Leitch's

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[19] David Glickham, quoted in Krutnik, "'Be Moviedom's Guest in Your Own Easy Chair!' Hollywood, Radio and The Movie Adaptation Series," 32.
[20] Thomas M. Leitch, *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents: From "Gone with the Wind" to "The Passion of the Christ."* (Baltimore, Md: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 20.
[21] Leitch, *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents*, 94.
[22] Leitch, *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents*, 122.

approach can give a better understanding of the differences in adaptions, allowing for two adaptions to draw on their source's texts in a vastly unique way, but still be seen as using adaption to get there.

As Bakhtin analyzes the genre-driven differences in approaches to heteroglossia, an analysis of the ways film and radio use and structure double-voiced, dialogized discourse to organize storytelling media can tell us much about the form itself. Radio versions of film musicals on *Screen Guild Theatre*, for example, take advantage of heteroglossia using a narrator, subordinating any "authorial voice" for the "language" of the character. Similarly, each of the characters has their own speech types and uniquely musical voice. These linguistic and musical accents are organized in the radio broadcast, just as the social diversity of speech types is orchestrated in the novel. This project reconstructs the ways that dialogism saturated iterations of mass-mediated musicals throughout the first half of the 20th century.

Radio Musicals: What We Still Don't Know

Film musical scholarship generally ignores or only briefly touches on radio musicals, yet much of this scholarship still has bearing on the musical, no matter the medium. Written before the internet allowed for the uploading and archiving of radio shows,[23] foundational scholarship –

[23] To be sure, much of this dissertation is in thanks to the passionate Old Time Radio Community of both professional archivists and hobbyists. I first encountered many of these radio shows through online databases such as *OTRcat*, the *RadioGold Index* and *archive.org*.

such as work by Rick Altman and Jane Feuer - does not reference radio at all yet gives a lens through which to view the genre of the Hollywood musical in this time. Altman's work focuses on genre, defining what a film musical is,[24] while Feuer acknowledges some universal elements of the film musical, such as community, the celebration of entertainment and popular song, and the reflexivity inherent in entertainment about entertainment.[25] Both authors include "spectacle" as a necessary part of the musical genre. Feuer observes that the ways that musical films are cut and presented creates "stages" on which musical performance happens, taking the audience into the world of theatre on the screen.[26] Importantly, Altman doesn't include anything about visuality on his list of seven characteristics of the film musical though he does discuss spectacle, particularly in his writing on the show musical.[27] Altman finds films within the musical genre to be dualistic, repetitive, predictable, nostalgic, symbolic, and functional.[28] By his definition, it seems plausible that musicals from other media, including radio, could be a part of this definition, since by following the format of cinema, radio performances of musical retain music of these elements. Yet, perhaps because of trends in film studies, scholars after Altman viewed visuality as an important part of the film musical. As Amy Herzog observes, "Musical moments tend toward spectacular staging's, fantastical juxtapositions, and movements that would be

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[24] Rick Altman, *The American Film Musical*, (Bloomington, In.: Indiana University Press, 1987), 20.
[25] Jane Feuer, *The Hollywood Musical*, 2nd ed (Bloomington In.: Indiana University Press, 1993),102.
[26] Feuer, *The Hollywood Musical*, 23.
[27] Altman, *The American Film Musical*, 235.
[28] Altman, *The American Film Musical*, 330-334.

improbable in the rational world[29] Though in this project, I do not want to argue against the importance of visual spectacle in the musical, I do believe, that through remediation, radio musicals offer an alternative – the multisensory representation of visual spectacle thorough aurality.

This alternative approach stems from the importance of performing bodies within radio musicals, and a focus on dance, as well as meanings inherent in different vocal performances. The star phenomenon means that stars can appear in voice only on the radio yet retain the power of their Hollywood screen careers. A function of dialogic mediation, Richard Dyer claims that "the star phenomenon consists of everything that is publicly available about stars… [thus] star images are always extensive, multi-medial, intertextual."[30] The radio, like film, print and other circulating media simultaneously added to that star image, while exploiting it to fill out the narrative of the story. Celebrities like would appear on the radio as part of their careers as movie stars, allowing the audiences to use their memories of the stars as a starting point for their imaginations. For example, Fred Astaire appeared on the radio 42 times, Gene Kelly, and Judy Garland over 125 times between 1935 and 1955.

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[29] Amy Herzog, *Dreams of Difference, Songs of the Same: The Musical Moment in Film*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 2010.
7 For Herzog, the musical moment in film that she discusses throughout the book is embedded with visuality – she transfers between the musical moment and the musical spectacle as though they are synonyms.
[30] Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*, 2nd ed (New York: Routledge, 2004), 3.

Dance on screen has been much discussed and even given the term "screen dance." Yet, though dance was performed on the radio and was audio recorded in multiple ways, a discussion of "sound dance" has yet to emerge in dance studies. These sound exhibitions of dance were varied in genre, from Russian Dancer Ivan Bankoff's "Dance by Radio" in 1924,[31] to tap dancers as an "exclusive radio feature" in 1929,[32] and ballet instruction on the Radio in 1930.[33] Radio performances of dance were often billed as way for people around the country to have an opportunity for a "whisp" of big city nightlife and a "peak behind the scenes." (see figure 3) [34]

[31] "Radio," *Variety,* Wednesday, August 6, 1924. pg. 25.
[32] "Tap Dancers are Exclusive Radio Feature on N.B.C." *San Francisco Chronicle,* Sunday, March 24, 1929
[33] "Radio Dance Instruction," *The Sun.* Jun 8, 1930. pg. MR7
[34] Robert S. Stephan, "The Girl Show Comes to Radio," *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, October 6, 1935.

Tap Dancers Are Exclusive Radio Feature on N. B. C.

"Now will you believe that we do dance over the radio?" Sylvano Dale and Wilda Kimball, N. B. C. step dancers, are the only "radio steppers" on this coast. They use a special dancing mat when broadcasting.

Dancing on the Air Accomplished by Means of Specially Contrived Mat, Shoes and Technique

Wilda Kimball and Sylvano Dale are the only radio tap dancers on the Pacific Coast. They broadcast over the N. B. C. System stations.

The distinction causes them no little embarrassment.

"Even though Dale dances twice a week on the 'Plantation Echoes' program and Miss Kimball helps him in a duet number in the Saturday night big show, some folk are convinced that radio tap dancers don't exist," Miss Kimball explains.

It's like htis:

Folk think Kimball and Sylvano and their tap dance is just a trick of the drums.

"But don't listen to this," the vivacious brunette explains. "We have to have a special dancing mat, all made of maple, covered with canvas and studded with maple strips, on which to dance before the microphone. We have to wear especially made shoes with full wooded soles, and there has to be an especially trained accompanist and exact microphone placing or tap dancing doesn't carry over the air at all."

Dale has been a vaudeville headliner for fifteen years. He came here last November and, with Miss Kimball, became an exclusive N. C. B. artist. He tried radio dancnig with metal-tipped soft shoes which he had used on the stage, but soon discovered that the effect produced was not convincing. The unique mat is his own invention. Radio audiences know the result.

Figure 3. "Tap Dancers are Exclusive Radio Feature on N.B.C." *San Francisco Chronicle,* Sunday, March 24, 1929

However, though these performances sometimes comprised, as in the case of the Nicholas Brothers, a huge chunk of these celebrities' performance careers, little is mentioned about them when such careers are discussed. For example, the most in-depth mention of radio performances in *Tap: The Greatest Tap Dance Stars and Their Stories* by Rusty E. Frank and Gregory Hines – a fairly exhaustive look at tap dancing in popular culture from 1900 to 1950 – comes in a caption

of a news clipping, "Even radio featured tap dancers. The Nicholas Brother's taps were heard weekly on Cab Calloway's broadcast from the Cotton Club during the 1930s,[35] but even before that a noticeably young Fred Kelly was spotlighted on WWSW's "Jamboree," 1929."[36] Yet, as these performances were happening weekly, tying the Nicholas brothers to the Cotton Club, Cab Calloway, and Harlem, it seems to me that those performances would have an impact on their film performances, especially on those parts of the film audience who listened to the broadcasts. Similarly, filmed performances of tap dance would also necessarily influence the ways that tap sounds were heard on the radio – audiences would have a better understanding of what they were hearing.

In a time of "listening in good faith," where what was heard on the radio was thought of as "not a copy or *image* of a sound, but the sound itself reproduced,"[37] a simple tap of a dance shoe could register very differently, whether it was framed by the stardom of Gene Kelly, James Cagney, or Fred Astaire. In this way, I argue that the reciprocity of film and radio in musical performance necessarily impacts an audiences' experience of both media. Film musical scholarship, too, shows the importance of dance within the film, which supports the idea that the

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[35] For more info on the broadcasts of Calloway's music, see Nathaniel Sloan, *Jazz in the Harlem Moment: Performing Race and Place at the Cotton Club,* Stanford University. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2016.
[36] Rusty E. Frank and Gregory Hines, *Tap! The Greatest Tap Dance Stars and Their Stories, 1900 - 1955*, Rev. ed, Da Capo Paperback 0635 (New York, NY: Da Capo Press, 1994), 95.
[37] Kate Lacey, *Listening Publics: The Politics and Experience of Listening in the Media Age*. (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2013), 60.

movement of dance, and all that it implies is not "lost" on the radio – or else it would not have repeatedly been performed. As Jerome Delamater observes, "the history of the Hollywood musical displays a moment toward integration among the choreography, the photography, and the editing."[38] Using Astaire as an example, he observes the importance of dance in many of the star's films. Like Astaire biographers, Delamater ignores Astaire's protracted career performing on the radio, though on-the-air dance was equally as important.[39] By foregrounding radio remediations of film musicals, I examine the ways that spectacle is rendered through sound, arguing for a sound-specific intervention film musical scholarship.

Privileging Sound

As mass-mediated musical scholarship has privileged visuality, a turn to the aural in radio adaptations necessitates a turn to the realm of sound studies as a lens through which to view these programs. Through the radio, aspects of bodily performances are represented through nothing but sound. Acousmatic sound, theorized by Pierre Schaeffer, and more recently reassessed by Brian Kane, is sound that come from an unseen source, condensing sounds to the field of pure listening.[40] This type of listening, however, still allows for indexical listening -

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[38] Jerome Delamater, "A Critical and Historical Analysis of Dance as a Code of the Hollywood Musical" (PhD Dissertation, Northwestern University, 1978), 19.
[39] Todd R. Decker, *Music Makes Me: Fred Astaire and Jazz* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).
[40] Brian Kane, *Sound Unseen: Acousmatic Sound in Theory and Practice* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014), 24.

identification of sources and causes - allowing for the emergence of a sound object and referencing a network of associations and experiences.[41]

Voices in radio broadcasts are imbued with cultural markers of the bodies from which they come. Timbre, tone, texture, and pitch of voices can have implications about race, gender, age, socioeconomic status, and the geographic location of bodies. Scholars of sound, recording, and film have addressed the implications of vocal representations of various media. Roland Barthes applies a twofold opposition between phono-song, in which everything has to do with communication, and geno-song, where the diction of the language lies.[42] Barthes argues that though the voice is not personal, it is individual, and though it has no personality or civil identity, it is nonetheless related to the materiality of an individual body as it uses language.[43] Through voices and their particularities, individual bodies – and the famous film stars that inhabit them – can be signified. While Barthes identifies voices as representative of individuality, Jacob Smith identifies the ways that these markers of individuality are culturally and technologically constructed. Timbre – or what the sound is rather than what is does – is impacted by long histories of auditory memories.[44] In his example, the "rasp" has sometimes been racially marked and indicates "blackness, class conflict, masculinity and catharsis." This timbre is tied closely to

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[41] Kane, *Sound Unseen*, 27.
[42] Roland Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice," in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977): 182.
[43] Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice," 182.
[44] Smith, *Vocal Tracks,* 117.

histories of the minstrel show and the desire to notate racial difference with the advent of recording technologies.

Scholars identify the ways that the corporally enacted voice is not only created by the speaker or singer, but the listener as well, using sonic information and indexical listening to understand the sounds of the voice. Nina Eidsheim describes these indexical memories as pre-conceptions to untangle timbre from racialized and essentialized conceptions of voice.[45] Like Smith, Eidsheim recognizes that voices are culturally constructed, highlighting the ways that hearers in the *ecouter* mode of listening also contribute to this cultural construction.

While racialized timbres of voices were prevalent in radio musicals, so were other preconceptions of bodily representations of voices on the radio. Beyond race, characters can be represented on the air through vocalized shorthand implying gender, socioeconomic status and other identity-forming aspects. As Jennifer Stoever identifies in her work on the "sonic color line," where sonic cues replaced or exacerbated visual cues of racial difference. For political and economic utility, the radio contributed to the integration of immigrants, and for the first time, institutionalized the crossing of previously segmented populations.[46] Hilmes and Douglas illustrate what Nina Eidsheim theorizes - on air, actors could cross gender and racial lines within

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[45] Nina Eidsheim, "Voice as Action: Toward a Model for Analyzing the Dynamic Construction of Racialized Voice," *Current Musicology*, no. 93 (Spring 2012): 13.
[46] Susan J. Douglas, *Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 35.

the story, through vocal representation. Douglas recognizes the ways that "listeners made all sorts of assumptions about a speakers intelligence, honesty compassion, generosity, and competence simply based on accent, as well as on the tone of voice and delivery."[47] These assumptions invited listener to take what they heard and make it visual – if only in their mind.

Representations of bodies through voice have been well theorized, corporeal sounds indicate bodily movement have been discussed less so. In her essay on bodies in sound studies, Deborah Kapchan investigates what might be the outcomes of attention to sounds and affect to our understanding of "sound bodies."[48] Here, she calls for more work into bodies within sound studies. She claims, "every movement has a vibration, and every vibration has a sound."[49] Though she rightly points out that many of these sounds are inaudible to the human ear, I am interested in the ones that are audible through technological mediation. Steps, dance moves, a deep breath in; these are all ways that bodies are represented on air, in ways outside the voice. Here, I am responding to Kapchan's interest in sound knowledge through corporeality and recognizing the ways that performers moved on the air.

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[47] Douglas, *Listening In,* 102.
[48] Deborah Kapchan, "Body," in *Keywords in Sound.* ed. by David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 34.
[49] Kapchan, "Body," 34.

Chapter Summaries

In what follows, I examine radio versions of Hollywood musical productions to understand the ways that audiences listened to these broadcasts and understood the spectacle of the musical through a purely aural medium. In the first three chapters, I mine radio remediations for the ways that listeners are invited to engage with the musical, looking across media to radio, to imagine the ways that audiences may have heard the musical during the mid-century. I approach the films not as fixed media objects, but as living properties, reimagined, and reused in multiple media forms to expand the reach of the Hollywood genre. Here, I also I look to the work of specific performers, thinking about the ways their star identity supports audience listening practices. This first section looks at the way radio musicals work and, as a result, further defines the genre as one that resides in the in-between of radio dramas, live theatre, and films.

The first chapter offers a brief history of radio-film interaction and looks at the ways that these productions work within a web of media – working within the genre on radio, in magazines, in phonograph recordings, and on the movie screen. The business of radio production intertwined increasingly deeply with the Hollywood film industry, working as part of a multimedial landscape to produce the persona of film stars. This chapter looks to rebuild radio productions' likely contexts and place them within the context of their contemporaneous landscape.

The second chapter looks at the phenomenon of what I call kinesthetic listening – the experience of feeling an engagement with what a listener is hearing in in their body. Here, I

compare this to other phenomena of radio dramas as identified by Neil Verma, identifying the way that radio musicals – and the singing and dancing techniques performed in them – invite listeners to engage physically with what they hear on the radio. By investigating the work of two performers known for their distinct performance styles – Judy Garland and Fred Astaire – I consider the ways that bodily performances are rendered. This chapter looks at the ways that radio musicals borrow from and build on radio dramas of the time.

The third chapter investigates the production techniques and language around liveness and fidelity, investigating the ways that in studio audiences, star and host conversations and interviews, and other elements work together to create a sense of truthfulness and liveness. In these productions, previous audience knowledge – a listener's experience with live theatre, musicals, and film - is reinforced by moments of audience education. In this chapter, the investigation of fidelity works as a tool to understand how audiences interacted with radio musicals in a similar way to live theatre.

In the final chapter, I deep dive into a case study of Holiday Inn, a film that was reimagined two times on the radio. In this chapter, I analyze the ways that the music of the film is used to renegotiate the racialized performances from the screen to the radio. By unpacking the complexity behind what is seemingly a short, inconsequential – though deeply racist – segment of the film, I look at how race, voice, bodies, and stars are represented in detail. This segment

reveals quite a bit about ways that audiences were educated, music was understood, and racial anxieties were mediated through the radio musical.

Through these means, this dissertation serves as a ground of research for this unique genre. By looking into the ways that the radio musical was couched in a particular time and culture, I can recreate a musical's likely contexts and illustrate how audiences may have understood the genre. Further, by a close analysis of several productions, I can make some overarching observations about how the genre operates and what it contributes to the study of film musicals. By no means, an exhaustive study, this dissertation shows what is possible - where the study of the genre can go and why it is worth the work.

Chapter 1 - Dialogic Remediation

In early December 1936, film stars Joan Blondell and Dick Powell appeared on *Lux Radio Theatre*, performing in anticipation of the Christmas Day opening of *Gold Diggers of 1937*. The radio show is hosted by Cecil DeMille, who points out that this is Blondell and Powell's sixth film starring together. Newly married, the two cheerily promoted their newest film while also discussing their personal life with the host, who proudly touted that this was their first performance since their wedding. This occasion became an opening through which the announcer brought the audience into the actors' private lives. He begins by using their marriage to explain their acting technique, then summarizes their individual lives, re-telling each as a "Cinderella" story that leads them to this marriage, moment, and their star turns. In this way, DeMille as host serves to both illuminate and bring close the opulence of Hollywood life, foregrounding the glamourous parts of Hollywood while also making it seem accessible to the at-home audience, given, of course, that they purchase that key to it all: Lux Soap.

Though a new film, the movie followed the hit *Gold Diggers of 1933* and *Gold Diggers of 1935*, in which Blondell and Powell had also appeared.[50] The broadcast also highlighted the fact that the newest version of "Gold Diggers" was one of a series: the broadcast closed with an interview with the film's producer, Jack Warner. Warner explains to DeMille that he wanted to

[50] Powell appeared in all three films. Blondell appeared in Gold Diggers on 1933 and returned for Gold Diggers of 1937.

"introduce some forward step in the art of musical entertainment with each version of *Gold Diggers*."[51] Warner makes it clear that the film's presence as a part of a series is a notable one. [52] The show combines aspects of multiple films within the series within the broadcast. With two stars who'd appeared in multiple iterations of the "Gold Diggers" series, Blondell and Powell, the show combines the already-familiar plot of *Gold Diggers of 1933* with the music of *Gold Diggers of 1937*. This is yet another example of the ways that radio productions pushed the boundaries of these materials outside of what can be considered "adaptation," suggesting that the term doesn't encompass the entirety of the genre and supporting an argument for interpretation as "remediation." Both versions, *Gold Diggers of 1933* and *1937* are backstage musicals that follow similar storylines – a stage musical production is plagued by money woes, the characters attempt some trickery to ensure they have the money to mount the show, and they all end up in heterosexual partnerships by the end.

Given that the two films share similar plots, the music of the new film can be easily introduced within the structure of the older film. Though the songs of the first film – most notably "Lullaby of Broadway" – are popular hits, the creators of the broadcast use this opportunity to play new songs to existing Gold Diggers fans, familiarizing them with the tunes

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[51] "The Gold Diggers." *Lux Radio Theatre*. Vine Street Theatre, Hollywood: CBS, December 21, 1936.
[52] Gibbons, Cedric. "Gibbons Consent to Voice Double on Radio," December 29, 1937. Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

before they see the new film. Circulatory combinations such as these serve several purposes, both reminding the audience what they liked about the old film, advertising the new one, and giving audiences a primer of what to expect in the new film without giving away the ending – albeit a predictable one – of the new film.

Through this performance of *Lux Radio Theatre*, Lux offers listeners the opportunity to use their previous knowledge to interact with and understand new material. Though radio productions needed to be accessible to listeners new to the material, the *Lux Radio Theatre* performance of Gold Diggers offers multi-layered opportunities for listeners to interact with the broadcast. In addition to being a fascinating example of remediation and the complicated web that was spun through the use, re-use, and re-imagined versions of film-properties, the Gold Diggers broadcast is another example of the diversity of approach that productions like *Lux* used to address the remediation of Hollywood material.

Dialogic Remediation

An analysis that builds on both remediation and dialogism clarifies and makes sense of the radio musical's likely contexts of reception to understand and analyze audience perception and behaviors with limited access to actual reception histories or personal accounts. By using the term "dialogic remediation," I infer the contents of the contemporaneous heteroglossic background based on analysis of the material itself and of material available in the archives, considering the inherent dialogism of mass media. I address these texts as remediations –

regarding them as new media forms for old media texts. Complicated and specific historical and social conditions color and shape any cultural product a tapestry-like background is derived from dialogism that is inherent in everyday things – the observance that "everything means, is understood, as a part of a greater whole."[53] By placing text within context, each utterance, or meaningful unit of communication, is impacted, and bound to the meanings produced by the conditions of the moment. By taking language as a living discourse, scholars can insure "a maximum of mutual understanding in all spheres of ideological life."[54] In this chapter, I aim to get away from viewing these broadcasts as the "shows themselves," and instead aim to expose the complexities of the charged social context in which an utterance is produced.

I do this to mine the broadcasts for a deeper understanding of the working dialectical synthesis, or polyphony, that produced meaning during the original broadcast. Just as a melody can be harmonized and orchestrated in a seemingly infinite number of ways, an utterance is configured by the milieu of the cultural context. Any utterance has an intentionality, yet it also "enters a dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value judgements and accents, weaves in and out of complex interrelationships, merges with some, recoils from others, intersects with yet a third group; and all this may crucially shape discourse, may leave a

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[53] M. M. Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel." *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Translated by Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson. University of Texas Press Slavic Series 1. (Austin, Tex: Univ. of Texas Press, 2011), 426

[54] Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," 439.

trace in all its semantic layers, may complicate its expression and influence its entire stylistic profile."[55] So what might be a simple sigh on the radio never is just a sigh, but can communicate frustration, anger, faintness, laziness, exhaustion, etc. Because of the context of the sigh – the music, the plot, the actor, musical accompaniment, or lack thereof, the broadcast, the time of day, memories of other sighs and their contexts, the tone of another's response, or even the mood of the listener – the sigh takes on a specific meaning produced in dialogue with many other factors. Thus, understanding how audiences understand and made meaning out of radio broadcasts, it is necessary to uncover the heteroglossic background outside of the work that is in dialogue with it: the matrix of forces that color the meaning of any sound heard over the air.

I find this approach – as first described by Bakhtin – particularly useful; by highlighting the "utterance," he is inviting his readers to think through language, but also outside of it. While Bakhtin's approach is centered on novels, and thus linguistic material, his ideas can be easily expanded to include extra-linguistic material, accompanied by the crucial shift from seeing to hearing. In fact, Bakhtin borrows from musical discourse, and defines many of his examples through terminology originally applied to music; *orchestration*, or the aggregation of *overtones* that color any utterances meaning, is the means for achieving the *polyphony* of the novel. Thus, because so much meaning is made on the radio through music, soundscapes, and sound effects,

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[55] Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," 276

an "utterance" here remains a unit of meaning, but the identity of the unit has expanded to include *sonorous marks*.

Many argue that by listening to these programs, audiences could be transported through their own imagination, a phenomenon that has been popularly described as the "theatre of the mind."[56] To understand how radio producers created radio dramas that evoked imaginary spaces, Neil Verma identified the ways that sonorous marks were used to "indicate the place for the listener that is created by coding foregrounds and backgrounds."[57] Adding onto what Verma defines as radio broadcasts' sonorous marks, is Bakhtin's novelistic word, or utterance. Through the listener's imagination utterance "made specifically social, historical, concrete and dialogized."[58] The multiplicity of sources for any phrase or utterance is not solely located in a single entity, but all utterances are ventriloquized – a word, phrase, or any utterance is built through uses that have come before. On the radio, sound makes meaning is made in two ways simultaneously – sonorous marks make meaning in the moment, continued within the broadcast, while sounds –

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[56] As Verma states, "Whenever old radio plays resound, we utter the same phrase every time: 'Radio, the Theatre of the Mind." He identifies the complicated history of the phrase, with crooner Smilin' Jack Smith, radio curator Ken Muller, actor Joseph Julian, identified as the source of the quote within scholarship. Still, in scholarship, the phrase has been used, not only for radio but other kinds of unstaged drama, such as Shou-ren Wang's scholarship on British un-acted drama, or experimental projects on animation, such as Eric Wheeler's so-titled attempt to build a program that animates through text input. In popular writing however, "Theatre of the Mind" becomes synonymous with radio drama, with articles from the mid-century to today describing radio with that phrase.

[57] Neil Verma, Theater of the Mind: Imagination, Aesthetics, and American Radio Drama. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 2012). 35

[58] Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel*,"* 428.

often the same ones – also work as utterances, making meaning through referential, indexical, and dialogic meaning.

These sonorous marks have iterations specific to the broadcast musical, unique to this genre within radio broadcasts of the time. Mass-mediated musicals, however, reveal limitations in defining these units as simply, or only, sonic. Through diverse utterances – including sonorous marks – the mass-mediated musical relied on the circulation of musicals in a multiple mediated forms (intertextual/ adaptation) and the heteroglossic background that informed a listener's understanding (audience reception). In addition to sonorous marks that depict sonic space as identified by Neil Verma, I also investigate the sounds of moving bodies and singing voices: the sounds of musical performance and the cultural context of each sonic and extra-sonic utterance have critical bearing on the way audiences perceive the "invisible" spectacle of the musical performance in a multi-sensory way.[59] Yet, Bakhtin himself points out the dangers of dialogoic heteroglossia as a historical pursuit. He remarks, "At any given time, in any given place, there will be a set of conditions – social historical, meteorological, physiological – that will insure that a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different that it would have under and other conditions."[60] So, while he argues that "all utterances are heteroglossia" because they function as part of a matrix of forces and contexts, those conditions are practically

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[59] Nina Eidsheim, "Voice as Action: Toward a Model for Analyzing the Dynamic Construction of Racialized Voice." *Current Musicology*, no. 93 (Spring 2012), 33.
[60] Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," 428.

impossible to recoup, and therefore impossible to resolve. Still though, an attempt to recreate these circumstances is not without merit, if we are to gain a better understanding of Hollywood musicals in context.

In the reality of production, live studio audiences were perhaps less of a traditional audience and more like another member of the production team. It is important to remember that "live performance" doesn't always imply performances are directed at the live, in-person audience, and often these performances exist to shape another kind of media text from the performance.[61] In fact, in his writings about the studio audience, Astaire frequently commented on the ways that the audience was directed towards`` certain types of responses - a phenomenon that can be described as the "audience performing their role."[62] Studio audiences become a part of the production, their reactions to the action as scripted as the other performers. However, the ways that these scripts are communicated to the in-studio audience is less overt. Dance on the radio, which dates back almost to the beginning of the medium, rose to prominence with the popularity of Hollywood personalities who danced on many programs. Though technically a solely aural medium, dance on the radio becomes visual and physical through the heteroglossic experience of the listener. Straddling both sides of the line between sound and music, as singularly auditory but also visual and physical, the in-between-ness of radio dance works within and through semiotic

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[61] Daniel Keyes, "The Imaginary Community of the Live Studio Audience of Television," *Studies in Popular Culture* 21, no. 3 (1999): 68.
[62] Keyes, "The Imaginary Community of the Live Studio Audience of Television," 70

systems to transfer the "theatre of the mind" to the body. Continued investigation into the creation and reception of these productions could offer insight how these multi-sensorial meanings were codified through a transmedial (and not simply on-screen) understanding of the Hollywood Musical and its performers.

An audience-centered approach to the material focuses on modes of engagement as described by radio scholars such as Verma, Hilmes, and others. Yet, the Hollywood Musical prescribed a specific kind of listening practice enforcing its circulation as a multimedial object. Dialogic remediation is a useful way to approach radio musicals as it invites a kind of engagement with shows that remains un- (or at least under-) addressed in scholarship. Close listening and a historical consideration give way to an understanding of how listeners approached and comprehended the radio by recognizing the mass mediated reality of the ways these film properties circulated. The reality of consumption practices during this time shows that creators anticipated how audiences understood musicals through the simultaneous deployment of telling modes of construction that encourage a specific understanding and listener connection.

Like these productions, star images are built through an array of media. Thus, they are always multimedial, intertextual, and produced by not only the stars themselves, but also the media industry.[63] The star phenomenon, he claims, "gathers the aspects of contemporary human existence together." So, the star phenomenon includes not just the films, but also posters,

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[63] Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies,* 3.

advertisements, publicity photographs, performative shorts, etc. These types of circulatory media allow fans to take the stars home with them and are building blocks of the star phenomenon. [64]

Scholars have also recognized the diffuse ways that audiences interacted with stars and the resulting in fluctuating understandings of the stars. In his early study on the phenomenon of film stars and celebrity in the Hollywood musical, Greg Faller argues that film stars operate along a continuum between "celebrity" and "hero," or between "concrete" and "abstract." This evolving continuum is another way of understanding the dialogic star identity, or the concrete celebrity, and the heteroglossic background outside the work, or the abstract ideas that expand the celebrity into a more generalized "hero." Similarly, Dyer identifies how these celebrities or stars are embodiments of social categories. These categories, such as class, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, etc., are ways that people make sense of their lives. As he observes, "all of these typical common ideas, that have the feeling of being the air that you breathe, just the way things are, have their own histories, their own particularities of social construction."[65] Here, Dyer recognizes the abstract tapestry of heteroglossic social constructions – the prism through which the star identity is viewed.[66]

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[64] See also works by Robert van Krieken, Phoebe Microssan, and Steven Cohan.
[65] Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies,* 18.
[66] I use the analogy of a prism, because if you look through it in different ways, then different images of the content are revealed. Further, no one person will see exactly what another will see because they have all looked through the prism at different points, in a different order, and with a different set of eyes.

Importantly, too, the star identity itself is inherently dialogic, as these images "are always extensive, multimedial, [and] intertextual." Certainly, producers and writers of these broadcasts expected audiences to have familiarity with Hollywood musicals when listening to the broadcasts – thin plots are even thinner, character backstories aren't explained, and musical numbers are sometimes comprised of little more than a chorus. This knowledge would serve to form the basis of understanding necessary to a contemporary listening practice. For audiences of the day, these stars, their films, and the codified practices of mid-century Hollywood brought to life aural representations in multiple ways. Just as the star phenomenon is always intertextual, Hollywood musicals – like Hollywood itself – were, and continue to be a transmedial phenomenon. These stars are just one part of a circulatory system that rests on audiences' multi-modal engagement, encouraging practices that built webs of knowledge that informed all Hollywood-driven media consumption. The intermedial labor at work can be understood through a theory of remediation, observing that, "no medium today, and certainly no single media event, seems to do its work in isolation from other media, any more than it works in isolation from other social and economic forces."[67] Hollywood stars are a part of a larger transmedial, mass-mediated musical analytic so, the same can be said, and has been said, about media surrounding Hollywood.[68] The transmediality of these Hollywood products accounts for the circulation, mediation, and

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[67] Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation,* 1-5.
[68] Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies*, 21.

remediation of films, where meaning is created through intertextuality, resulting in an accumulation of cultural indices onto utterances, sonorous marks, star identities, and musical genres.

A Brief History

Throughout the 1920s and 30s, the relationship between radio broadcasting technology and the Hollywood-based film industry can be described as a state of experimentation. As primarily vessels for advertisements, sponsoring corporations kept a close eye on radio listenership. As early as 1925, radio began to look to Hollywood for endorsements, talent, and sponsorship. Hollywood looked to radio for publicity and profit. In 1927, sound films began, and Hollywood production companies began looking more and more towards radio.[69] Some studios started to use radio to promote their films – they thought of it as an investment that would see results at the box office. Warner Brothers and Paramount both bought radio stations in 1925 and 1929 respectively, using them to promote their current lineup of films and stars. Using their in-house talent, the film studios were able to create this content at little cost. Other production studios began to follow suit and experimented with radio broadcasts – MGM began broadcasting narrated versions of its theatrical newsreels, which were then followed by their first for-radio

[69] As explained in Krutnik, "'Be Moviedom's Guest in Your Own Easy Chair!': Hollywood, Radio and The Movie Adaptation Series," 25. "The phenomenal success of Samuel 'Roxy' Rothafel, in particular, demonstrated the value of such media convergence. Helmed by the ebullient Rothafel, and eventually titled Roxy and His Gang (1923–1935), the programme provided the template for the big-time variety shows that flourished through the 1930s and 1940s."

film adaption – *Anna Karenina* in 1927. In 1927, as well, MGM broadcast a 'telemovie' over its New York City affiliate WHN, which consisted of an announcer describing the action of the Greta Garbo–John Gilbert vehicle *Love* as it was being screened in Loew's Embassy Theatre.[70]

Radio, with the assistance of individual advocates within the Hollywood community, relentlessly pursued motion pictures in the 1930s, hoping to forge an alliance that would elevate and glamourize its commercial programming and bring more advertising revenue into its coffers. As the two industries began to work together, there were two distinct viewpoints on what that alliance should look like from Hollywood's power brokers. Some looked upon radio broadcasting as the chief enemy of motion pictures. They believed that audiences would become accustomed to free entertainment and that radio programming would keep people at home and made them loath to pay for movies. To people who believed this, the idea of motion picture companies cooperating with radio seemed idiotic and self-destructive. Others looked upon radio as an exploitation tool whose potential was practically unlimited; radio was an excellent way of generating awareness and enthusiasm for Hollywood product. Those of this belief felt that the film industry should develop a friendly relationship with radio, using it to remind the public constantly of the pleasures of movie-going.[71]

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[70] Krutnik, "'Be Moviedom's Guest in Your Own Easy Chair!" 27.
[71] Hilmes, 50.

Kenneth L. Watt's account of his time with an Advertising Agency's radio director "makes clear the large role played by the advertising agency radio director in the radio program origination and production process."[72] According to Hilmes, 1932 marked the turning point in negotiations between the two industries, with the motion picture companies seeking greater involvement in program production and exploiting more aggressively the value of star performers and in 1935 MGM broadcast a preview of *The Broadway Melody of 1936* (1936) featuring several of its stars, in which Louis B. Mayer took the microphone and proclaimed, "there is an inseparable and common bond between radio and motion pictures."[73]

Hollywood also began incorporating radio and radio talent into their films. Paramount reintroduced its series of radio-based films with *The Big Broadcast of 1936* (1936) and presented a similar preview broadcast for the film. Twentieth Century-Fox and Universal also liberalized their policies concerning radio appearances by performers.[74] An illustration of this growing compromise are movie adaptation programs, the longest lasting and most popular of which is *Lux Radio Theatre*. After its success, programs like it became a prominent production trend. Building on the star names and screen glamour, programs like this were attracted and remained

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[72] Kenneth L. Watt, "One Minute to Go: Backstage with an Advertising Agency's Radio Director," *The Saturday Evening Post*, April 2, 1938.
[73] "Broadway Melody," *Special Preview Broadcast NBC/ KFI*. August 24, 1935.
[74] Richard B. Jewell, "Hollywood and Radio: Competition and Partnership in the 1930s," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 4, no. 2 (January 1984): 133, https://doi.org/10.1080/01439688400260141.

popular with commercial sponsors, who used the celebrity testimonial and indirect advertising as advertising strategies a practice that limited the amount and type of on-air advertising.

Transformation of Circulation

The first half of the 20th century saw a revolution in the ways that information and entertainment were disseminated to a mass audience. Often the advent of radio is included in histories of modernity, and globalization. In fact, Kate Lacey has identified radio communication in the 1920s as a time when the term "listening public," came into its own, as "there was a congregation of listeners separated by distance but united in the immediate reception of sound, speech, and music."[75] In the US, audiences all over the country could be unified in listening to the same radio broadcast. By looking at the history of technological and cultural origins of sound reproduction, Sterne charts listening as a significant field of modern practice.[76] Certainly, through the Enlightenment and afterward, sound became a technological, cultural, and commodified object – sound, Stern observes, is a central historical question of modern life and

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[75] Lacey, *Listening Publics,* 34.

[76] Sterne, *The Audible Past,* 9. In this, I borrow Miriam Hansen's definition of modernism, which she describes as that which "encompasses a whole range of cultural and artistic practices that register, respond to, and reflect upon processes of modernization and the experience of modernity, including a paradigmatic transformation of the conditions under which art is produced, transmitted, and consumed." From Miriam Bratu Hansen, "The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism," *Modernism/ Modernity* 6, no. 2 (1999): 60.

radio had a major impact of the way the sound was circulated.[77] Yet, the transformation of circulation did not begin with the radio.

Among the many sites in which this transformation occurred, in her work on Book-of- the-Month clubs, Janice Radway observed how, as early as the late 19th century, the Book-of-the-Month clubs made books into consumer products - rendering them easily available by re-packaging highbrow entertainment for the masses.[78] In another example, Michael Denning too, observes that at the turn of the 20th century, port cities served as a place of pre-radio circulation, where millions of migrants participated in the global trade of mass-produced goods, cultures, and importantly, music.[79] However, it wasn't until the innovation of electrical sound technologies that "a restructuring and consolidation of corporate mass media interests, shifts in both representational conventions and patterns of media consumption, and a renegotiation of the social functions assigned to mass media forms" was prompted.[80]

The rise of practices of consumption in the early 20th century allowed for capitalistic structures to use radio as a means of advertisement. Not long after radios became something more than something boys tinkered with in the attic, corporate sponsors began funding

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[77] Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past, Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 6.
[78] Janice A. Radway, *A Feeling for Books: The Book-of-the-Month Club, Literary Taste, and Middle-Class Desire* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1997), 236.
[79] Michael Denning, *Noise Uprising: The Audiopolitics of a World Musical Revolution* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2015), 47.
[80] Steve J. Wurtzler, *Electric Sounds: Technological Change and the Rise of Corporate Mass Media*, Film and Culture Series (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2007), 2.

entertainment to market their products. In investigating the format of *Lux Radio Theatre*, Hilmes analyzes the important feature of the integrated commercial message. To not bore the audience, commercial material is surrounded and enclosed by more appealing material.[81] Similarly, Timothy Taylor views radio as a powerful new medium that began what he sees as the first wave of increased consumption in US culture.[82] However, from the beginning, radio was tied up in existing institutions, practices, and forms, particularly that of cinema. This didn't only limit they types of shows that were broadcast, but also served for the entrenchment of the Studio System. As Steve Wurtzler notes, "this increasing concentration of power within a relatively small number of media firms accompanied a related process through which individual corporations gained interest in multiple media forms."[83] By spreading their power through different types of media, a large corporation could use that media to advertise for itself. A song from a film could be broadcast over the radio and sold as sheet music or phonograph records.[84]

This repetition produced fears in some mid-century philosophers. The idea of the mid-cult, or the middle-brow culture of the masses, was, according to some thinkers, "supposedly smothering American individuality."[85] Critics of the time, such as Dwight MacDonald and Theodor Adorno,

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[81] Michele Hilmes, *Hollywood and Broadcasting: From Radio to Cable,* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 83.
[82] Timothy Dean Taylor, *The Sounds of Capitalism: Advertising, Music, and the Conquest of Culture*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 4.
[83] Wurtzler, *Electric Sounds,* 54.
[84] Wurtzler, *Electric Sounds,* 65.
[85] Janice Radway, *A Feeling for Books: The Book-of-the-Month Club, Literary Taste, and Middle-Class Desire,* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 1997), 205.

differentiated mid-cult from high culture and lowbrow entertainment, mid-cult "pretends to respect the standards of high culture, while in fact it waters them down and vulgarizes them.[86] Yet, by looking at people besides the elite, it is clear that in a free-market economy, early 20th-century Americans believed that culture could be separated from wealth and that genuine cultivation, gentility, and culture, or self-culture as Janice Radway describes it, could result in inward virtue and outward gains.[87] In addition, radio as a mass-cultural form was not the simple top-down repackaging of high cultural products for the unthinking masses. Audiences were involved in the creation of radio from the beginning. While observing that the idea that listeners shaped broadcasters' production practices "appears to defy common sense,"[88] Elena Razlogova observes, "early broadcasters listened to local audiences. Network writers negotiated with fans. These practices embodied the ideas of reciprocity that listeners articulated when they confronted national corporate networks and the formulaic ratings system."[89] While eventually radio would shift to what Susan Douglas describes as "narrowcasting," these radio programs were participating in the "broadcasting" convention of being for communal listening, for a potentially divers group of listeners – continuing in the mass mediated practice.[90]

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[86] Dwight MacDonald, *Masscult and Midcult: Essays Against the American Grain*. ed. by John Summers. (New York: New York Review Books. 2011), 35.
[87] Joan Shelley Rubin, *Making of Middlebrow Culture*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1992), 1.
[88] Razlogova, *The Listener's Voice,* 2.
[89] Razlogova, *The Listener's Voice*, 10.
[90] Susan J. Douglas, *Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination*. 1st University of Minnesota Press ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 2004), 225.

Madame Butterfly: A Middle Brow Radio Musical

Not only were radio musicals part of this new era of mass-cultural circulation, but they also navigated the high/ low cultural divide. On the evening of Monday, March 8, 1937, *Lux Radio Theatre* broadcast a featuring the stars of the new film, *When You're in Love (1937).*[91] While the stars, Grace Moore and Cary Grant, were there on behalf of the new picture, they act in a "made for radio" version of *Madame Butterfly* based on David Belasco's one-act play with the Puccini arias – performed by Moore – inserted.

As always, the broadcast begins with *Lux*'s musical theme, introducing the artists and DeMille, the host. Interestingly, this broadcast also introduces notable guests, a practice that went out of favor in later seasons. These "guests" later return for conversation with DeMille - again a carefully constructed conversation that ends up being an advertisement. Late in the broadcast, the conversation with Hollywood restaurant owner Robert Cobb foregrounds this by making fun of the constant "Lux Soap" conversation by joking that he serves a "Lux soap sandwich" to the film star patrons that frequent his restaurant. The conversation with the other guest, in contrast, is with "Princess Der-Ling, noted author and member of an old family of China," who discusses with DeMille about how the performance reminds her of her childhood spent in Japan while her father Yu Keng served as a political appointee in Tokyo. Though one

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[91] "Madame Butterfly," *Lux Radio Theatre*, March 8, 1937

hopes her childhood memories don't include suicide, she does describe experiences with Japanese geishas, who taught her traditional dance and the "Japanese art of decorating flowers." Though Der Ling's identity had, and continues to, created some speculation, coding her as a Chinese woman representative of all Chinese women – and further too, all East Asian women - is full of contradictions and ironies. Her appearance here however contributes to a coding "authenticity" within the performance.[92] Yet, this is complexly implied, marketing in authenticity, while exploiting and exposing the western orientalist tradition to negotiate the broadcast around the needs of the sponsors, the performers, and the medium.

Inevitably, the conversation steers towards Lux Soap, as Der Ling's appearance on the broadcast is an advertisement for the sponsoring brand. As she continues discussing geishas she met as a child, commenting "I was greatly impressed by the loveliness of the Japanese women. What beauty care they used; I frankly do not recall." Continuing, she also recalls the regimen of her later employer, saying "I do remember that the empress Dowager of China, the last of the Man-cru rulers, was exceedingly particular about her personal appearance." Using these influences as credentials, she goes on to discuss her own personal use of Lux Soap. While *Lux*, in these ads, is always vaguely sold to draw nearer to Hollywood its stars by using the same soap

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[92] As Grant Hayter-Menzies points out in his *Imperial Masquerade: The Legend of Princess Der Ling,* Der Ling's identity, even as a princess is debatable, as it seems she adopted that title herself. Described as a chameleon, Der Ling's western-style education, her mother's European origin, and her own feelings as a foreigner in China were downplayed upon her marriage to an American and subsequent move to the US In her new adopted home, she is said to have seen herself as a spokesperson for Chinese women and an expert on Chinese culture and politics.

that they supposedly do, here the ad takes on an orientalist tint, selling the soap to consume the other.[93]

While advertisements always come across as constructed, it is important to remember that *Lux* Ads appear multiple times in every *Lux Radio Theatre* broadcast – it's even in the title. While the advertisement is always there, Der Ling's appearance in the studio is not. She offers a different kind of guest appearance than usually featured on *Lux*. Der Ling does not provide intimacy with stardom, but with the exotic east-Asian other through the consumption, as always, of Lux Soap. Yet, while Der Ling's appearance codes the show as authentic in a way, Grace Moore's performance seemingly threatens to undermine it with a vaguely Asian accent that exemplifies an aural version of yellowface – yellow-voice. Just as with black voice, this term isn't meant to imply that this performance practice borrows from any real essential "yellow" foundations, but rather asserts that "the essence… [that] was found in dominant ideologies of racial difference, not in any of the Asian or Asian American people who encountered so many white Americans' unwelcome mapping of that wholly imagined but still efficacious essence onto people of Asian birth or heritage."[94] In other words, the yellow voice practice, in which Grace

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[93] Edhem Eldem, *Consuming the Orient*, Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Archive and Research Centre, 2007,
He defines orientalism as western representation of the east through objects and images.
[94] Robert Lancefield, "Hearing Orientality in (White) America, 1900 - 1930." Dissertation, Wesleyan University, 2004, 54-55.

Moore is definitely taking part, constructs orientality in a ways that are perceptible to the ear through representational modes constructed by dominant ideologies of racial difference.

Yet, this is not Moore's first performance as Puccini's Butterfly. In her film debut, the opera singer she plays performs in *Madame Butterfly*, with the aria "Un Bel Di" serving as the climax to the film. So, though Moore's performance is one of "yellow voice," she is also building on her previous performances of Puccini's score again performing two arias. The second is a lullaby sung to soothe Butterfly and Pinkerton's son after a long night waiting for him to return. The first, "Un bel di vedremo" (One Fine Day We Shall See), where Butterfly yearns for the return of United States military ships, and the return of B.F. Pinkerton.

Un bel dì, vedremo	*One fine day we'll see*
levarsi un fil di fumo sull'estremo	*A thread of smoke arising*
confin del mare.	*On the far horizon of the sea,*
E poi la nave appare.	*And then the ship appears.*
Poi la nave Bianca	*Then the white ship*
entra nel porto, romba il suo saluto.	*Enters the harbour, thunders her salute.*
Vedi? È venuto!	*See you? He has come![95]*

One of the most famous Puccini arias, in the Act II "Un bel di vedremo," the character of Butterfly dreams of her future. Unlike much of the rest of the opera, the music of "Un bel di"

[95] Libretto, *Madama Butterfly*, Teatro a La Scalla, originally performed 17 Feb 1904, reconstructed by Julian Smith, 7 Nov 2016.

contains little orientalism or Japanese-derived music.[96] This, Jennifer Williams claims, "erases an eastern identity and in its absence allows for western identification," though it remains unfulfilled. Thus, the singing Moore is not framed by exotic music – the exotic orientalist style is left to the incidental music that is heard between scenes.[97]

Through performing in a role that she performed on screen, Moore is not only reminding audiences doubly of her character in full "Butterfly costume, but also of her performance out of that costume cementing her in audience perception not as an Asian woman, but as a white woman in costume, fitting into Moore's star persona, and building on what audiences already knew of her. Thus, there is no doubt in the listener's mind the entire time that it is Moore performing on the radio. Here she not playing a Japanese geisha, as much as she is playing an American woman *playing* a geisha – any desire on the part of the producers to code this performance as authentic through performing bodies, ironically rests on the shoulders of the Chinese Der Ling. In contrast to the Screen Guild Theater production, this broadcast is an adaptation, though again, not based on a Hollywood Musical production. This adaptation has its

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[96] Lots of orientalism, but Puccini made some kind of effort – he researched Japanese music before beginning to write the opera. Motivic and timbral influences can be seen throughout. See. Ping-hui Liao, "Of Writing Words for Music Which is Already Made: 'Madama Butterfly,' 'Turandot,' and Orientalism." *Cultrual Critique,* No. 16 (Autumn, 1990) pp. 31 – 59.

[97] As far as I can tell, the rest of the music is not sourced from Puccini's score, bar a successful Shazam-ing, there is no real way to track it down. The script offers no info as to music, the arias were only marked by handwritten notes, and even then it just said "Butterfly sings" and "lullaby." My best guess is that this music is from the Lux library of music which included short – medium length bits with titles like "hurry," "love," and "clown." This music probably just came out of a file marked "Japanese" or "exotic" or "oriental," was used that day, and then put back.

roots in straight plays and opera, re-envisioned to take advantage of the talent present on the broadcast that night.[98]

By the 1940s, the symbiotic relationship of radio and film resulted in shows like *Lux Radio Theatre*, "an explicit illustration of explicit illustration of this growing partnership between the film and broadcasting industries, and a 'process of conflict, compromise and accommodation.'"[99] Radio's ability to reach audiences in their homes, combined with the film industry's entertainment values and money-making abilities, meant that the movie adaption, by the early 1940s was a "prominent production trend."[100] Here, radio and film become mutual advertisements, where radio shows glorify the film industry, and the films draw the audience to the radio. At the intersection of technology, culture and entertainment, mass-mediated musicals are an ideal example of the ways that art was impacted by the transformation of circulation in the early 20th century.

Conclusion

The specificity of radio's purpose and function in the circulatory landscape of mass-mediated musicals can be seen in constructed stylistic choices and engendered heteroglossic contexts.

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[98] Other radio musical productions also featured operatic performances by the leading ladies. In 1952, "Strictly Dishonorable," featuring Janet Leigh and "Grounds for Marriage," featuring Kathryn Grayson also included opera performances. In both, these arias were diegetic, as the characters were opera singers.
[99] Krutnik, "'Be Moviedom's Guest In Your Own Easy Chair!' Hollywood, Radio and The Movie Adaptation Series," 26.
[100] Krutnik, "'Be Moviedom's Guest In Your Own Easy Chair!' Hollywood, Radio and The Movie Adaptation Series," 32.

Attending to the ways that material from Hollywood radio musicals implicitly and explicitly address the audience – producing material that reflects how audiences were perceived – shows how performers and producers navigated the contemporary media landscape. The concept of remediation illustrates this circulatory web of meaning and intention as a live and ever-evolving phenomenon, accounting for the ways that popular musical film properties are reimagined by contemporaneous radio adaptations.[101] While contemporaneous radio dramas can often be approached as discrete objects – throughout this time radio drama series were quite common and often, if not mostly, produced without these explicit and direct links to other media forms – musical performances were consistently reliant on the material they reproduced. Mass-mediated musical broadcasts in context with the multilayered and heteroglossic conditions of the moment, show how cultural and medial literacy would have adjusted, informed, and shaped radio-listeners perception, reception, and shared listening behaviors. Film versions are commonly studied, to the neglect of all the other Hollywood-produced mass-mediated musical objects. "Hollywood Musical" generally refers to the filmed performances upon which everything else is made – all other appearances of the musical actors are supporting the aims of the film production.[102]

A full understanding of the influence and function of these films requires careful attention to the ways that these film properties also circulated outside of the movie house in print, recordings,

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[101] Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation,* 15.
[102] e.g. Feurer, Altman, Cohan, Lawson-Peebles, etc.

and particularly through radio. Though they did amass the primary portion of the studios' revenue, audiences also engaged – perhaps even more frequently – with other iterations of the film. To be part of the audience for these films, people had to set aside the time, find the appropriate movie theatre and screening, travel (a greater challenge for rural audiences), spend the money for the ticket, etc.[103] So, while films are perhaps the most memorable and financially lucrative part of the transmedial circulation of Hollywood stars and their work, they were only a slice of the material with which people engaged.

Still regularly overlooked, however, were radio performances featuring Hollywood film's stars, music, performances, and stories. Radio performances provided an appealing frame for advertisers, a marketing opportunity to studios, and an opportunity for audiences to intimately engagement with popular stars. Like the films, these radio performances were significant, but the spectacle of the musical was essentially founded and ultimately relied on multimedial circulation, and a shared set of behaviors and modes of engagement learned through repeated attention to the many forms musicals took at the time.[104] Because musicals are often described as "spectacle" and because so much of what performers do in them is physical and visual,

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[103] See Richard Butsch, "American Movie Audiences of the 1930s," *International Labor and Working Class History.* No. 59, (Spring 2001) pp. 106-120. and Douglas Gomery, "Film and Business History: The Development of an American Mass Entertainment Industry." *Journal of Contemporary History.* Vol. 19 (1984) pp. 89 – 103.

[104] By this I mean radio musicals don't seem make much sense without the tapestry supporting audience understanding. You need know musicals to get a radio musical. Perhaps here I can insert B & G's idea of "justification:" "Since the electronic version justifies itself by granting access to the older media, it wants to be transparent… [it] is still offered as an improvement, although the new is still justified by the old and seeks to remain faithful to the older medium's character." Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation,* 45-6.

musicals offer a unique opportunity to ask questions about the ways that these remediations operate. In some ways, musicals seem very well suited to the radio. Music transmission, of course, is an incredibly popular way to use the medium. However, when portraying the dancing of Gene Kelly or the musical sequences of Busby Berkley a non-visual medium seems less than ideal. Still these popular radio productions – with a seemingly endless array of narrative options – continued to feature radio musicals.

Chapter 2 – Kinesthetic Theatre: A Third Audioposition

It's easy, very easy,
if you watch every twist, every turn.
Keep your eyes upon me and surprise! You will be
at the dancing you have yet to learn.[105]

Near the beginning of the October 19, 1942, broadcast of the *Screen Guild Theatre* radio production, listeners were invited to "watch" an actor dance onstage and learn to dance from him. The performance was the premiere of new sponsorship by Lady Esther Cosmetics and was a shortened and adapted version of the new Warner Brothers' movie *Yankee Doodle Dandy (1942)* starring the very popular James Cagney as George Cohan. The half-hour show is filled with music and "highlights" from the film, pasted together to make a flimsy version of the movie's plot. This song introduces the character of Jerry Cohan, George's father, and a member of the performing group "the Irish darlings." Here, Jerry's Irish character is a dancing master, who can teach dance very well and, it seems, very quickly.[106] During a musical interlude, we hear this dancing, immediately identifiable as tap shoes – and to a knowledgeable listener, the movements of his body are clear though he is not seen.

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[105] "Yankee Doodle Dandy," Screen Guild Theatre, (Los Angeles, California: CBS. October 19, 1942).
[106] "Yankee Doodle Dandy," *Screen Guild Theatre,* (Los Angeles, California: CBS. October 19, 1942).

For even the lay listener, it is clear what we hear are the sounds of tap, a form of dance audiences were accustomed to during the early forties. However, these sounds communicate more than just a general idea of "tap dance" – the specific choreography performed by Jerry is communicated too. For a knowing listener, even the slight alterations between each shoe hit indicates different bodily movement. As a listener familiar with musicals tunes in, you can imagine their bodies moving along to each of the changes in the imaginary Jerry's movements: as his weight shifts, the listener's weight shifts; he lands after a big jump and one can feel the impact in their own knees.[107] Though the experience is limited to only one sense, the affective impact on the listener is heightened. Through radio dance, and the complex intersection of semiotics, affect and bodily reactions to imaginings within our own mind one can almost experience dance themselves.

Radio listening is also a participatory act achieved through *kinesthetic listening*. Not just the timbre of the sound, but also its organization within other signs play a role as to why we understand what we hear on the radio as tap. The movie musical, George Cohan's performance practice, and the music itself all point to a way of interpreting the tapping sounds as dance. Neil Verma's work on audioposition within classic American radio dramas identifies two audioposition formulas – poles on either end of a continuum – that describe the overall sound of the period: the intimate and kaleidosonic styles.[108] Like dramas, these styles appear in musicals, but because of the added spectacle of musical performances, another formula of audio position

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[107] This reading, admittedly, comes from my own listening experience. As a fan of musicals, as well as a person who has some tap experience, my own corporeal experience here is standing in for a listener of the time, one who has seen a musical or two and probably – as I argue later – have some dance experience. I recognize the different shades of meaning this might take. People with more, less, or even different dance training and viewing experiences will have a different interpretation of the movements. That I don't argue. What I do believe is though, that *something* happens in the body of the listener, however nuanced that response may or may not be.

[108] Verma, 57.

requires addressing. Here, I identify another continuum that appears when also considering musicals within the soundscape of the time. In musicals, a kinesthetic style merges acoustic signals and informed listening.

Several practices common in the genre create a formula that encourages a kinesthetic response from listeners. Like Verma's kaleidosonic/intimate continuum, kinesthetic listening can also be seen on a continuum. The examples I outline below invite kinesthetic listening – the other end of the continuum being a kind of informational style that doesn't encourage sympathetic kinesthetic listening, but rather simple consumption of information. The two performers I detail below – Judy Garland and Fred Astaire – were both prolific performers on the screen and the radio. Analysis of their media persona clarify the ways that radio created opportunities - created through clear references of their filmic performances, gestures toward popular dance traditions, and in-studio audience participation – for kinesthetic listening by building upon audience knowledge of the time.[109]

Producing Musicals: Visuality in the Recording Theatre

In his frequent appearances dancing on the radio, Astaire served as an icon of dance – dance performance accompanied his presence so often that it became expected. He appeared on the radio dancing in radio dramas, variety shows, and even featurettes for his films. Yet, as both he and critics have observed, his technique on the air is different than his on-screen technique. Astaire biographer Joseph Epstein describes his on-air technique as "machine-gun like,"

[109] Adorno, *Current of Music,* 65. "We hinted at this when we discussed the prospective differences between the radio phenomena of a symphony previously known and that of a symphony unknown to the listener. A known symphony »sounds different« to him; the knowledge and relations beyond the immediate present experience migrate, so to speak, into this present experience."

illustrating the quickness of the steps.[110] Though he retains his unique syncopated musicality, Astaire is confined to a smaller space unable to spin, turn, or jump. Yet, his taps remain remarkable as a consequence of their speed and precision. Astaire himself even identified the ways the radio changed his technique, recognizing the way he condensed his rhythms in the small space.[111]

In looking at Astaire's performances, Epstein observes something unique about radio dance – due to the constraints of the medium, tap technique changed on the air, altering the way well-known performers sounded. Astaire tapped facing forward in a four-by-four square, only adding a "studio wow number" when he saw it was time to signal for applause.[112] Though audiences would have recognized Astaire's familiar speaking and singing voice, they also were said to recognize individual performers through their tap rhythms. Yet this example shows that that must not be the case – it is not Astaire's traditional taps that we hear, but an altered radio-specific version. Why the radio producers chose to have Astaire perform is unclear. Yet, though he was not dancing for listeners' eyes, even the sounds of dance were important enough to translate. A marker of dance performance is more than a semiotic marker here – it continues to communicate, entertain, and interest in the same way as a performance for all senses.

William Reddy argues against an understanding of meaning-making through signs alone. Adding to that, he offers a theory of translation, which he argues "is something that goes on, not just between languages and between individuals, but among sensory modalities, procedural habits, and linguistic structures."[113] This understanding breaks down Cartesian dualism, and

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[110] Epstein, *Fred Astaire*, 177.
[111] Astaire, *Steps in Time*, 223.
[112] Astaire, *Steps in Time*, "Gingerless," 227.
[113] Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, 80.

allows us to understand our world, not just through our minds, but also through our bodies. Reddy even takes up dance as a case for interesting translation work. He claims, "a dancer cannot draw a picture of, or write out in words, what a dance allows him or her to express. He or she may try; the attempt may be interesting, illuminating; but it is not exhaustive of what dance does."[114] On the radio, this is taken one step further. In performance on the radio, the sound of dance serves as an attempt to communicate the non-linguistically communicable.

Reddy's concept of translation is useful because something more complicated is happening than simply understanding dance on the radio through Peircean semiotics. Within the structure set up by Peirce, the sounds of tap act simply as icons of tap dance itself. In addition, signifiers such as music and musical performers act as indexes. However, this approach doesn't consider the full experience of listening to dance on the radio. Rather than an experience of thought, it is an experience of affect – the impact is not just on the mind, but on the body. It is an experience of senses rather than linguistic structures. The concept of translation layered over a semiotic understanding shows how this deeper understanding of a performance could come about – an understanding that offers a logic to the decision to perform on the radio. Translation is the means to enjoying a performance of dance on the radio.

Astaire's frequent performances on the radio are cited in a newspaper article announcing NBC's plan to regularly broadcast their films on the air for listeners. In a photo accompanying the article, Astaire is framed as a knowing veteran of radio performances. The photo's title "How It's Done," and the accompanying caption points out the technical elements of Astaire's radio

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[114] Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, 86.

performances, mainly his use of a second microphone at his feet – as if all of NBC's musicals will include tap dancing.

BY PHILIP K. SCHEUER

Launched appropriately with a formal premiere last night at Hollywood Pantages, "Top Hat," starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, sweeps into the first flight of the season's musical comedies. A veritable 1935 replica of this fascinating couple's successful "The Gay Divorcee," the latest film represents in many ways an even more tasteful job.

The supporting cast is, with a single exception, the same and so is the director, Mark Sandrich. The exception is Helen Broderick, who replaces Alice Brady in the soubrette role. The others—Edward Everett Horton, Eric Blore and Erik Rhodes—by their mere presences give ample assurance that life's brighter side will be taken care of. And it is.

OF INFINITE CHARM

Not that Astaire needs much help. That he is a fellow of charm and infinite grace, that his two expressive feet are possessed of such skill and agility as to make ordinary mortals look down at their own with a new discouragement, is no longer news. But too little has been said of his talent as a farceur. By a look, a word, he demonstrates again and again a gratifying sense of timing.

Irving Berlin's score is both melodious and catchy without being quite as memorable as one has the right to expect of America's most consistent hit-maker.

"Cheek to Cheek," smoothest tune, is interpreted with a beauty and a finesse comparable to those in the earlier pictures "Night and Day" sequence. "Top Hat, White Tie and Tails," which Astairs taps out with the aid of a cane, is novel and strikingly effective. The sandman finish to "No Strings," a kind of soft-shoe routine, rates tops for sheer delicacy. And then there is "Isn't This a Lovely Day," besides the finale, "Piccolino"—this year's "Continental."

FINALE SIGHTED

It comes, this "Piccolino," too late for real appreciation, whatever its intrinsic merit. The story has already ended. One senses that the producers, too, were fairly cognizant of this, for the number is reduced to a series of little more than cursory dissolves.

A capital spirit of nonsense pervades the whole, although there are short stretches which seem a bit labored, if only in contrast with the spontaneity and movement of the dances. The story is of no consequence: A confusion of identities, a locale that shifts from London to a set designer's idea of the Lido, a blonde Circe swept off her feet at last by a demi-god in top hat, white tie and tails.

CREDIT ASSIGNED

Direction by Sandrich, ensembles by Hermes Pan, art by Van Nest Polglase and Carroll Clark, script by Dwight Taylor and Allan Scott—these must share generously in the distribution of credits. Pandro S. Berman produced for Radio Pictures.

Today "Top Hat" begins its regular run at the Hillstreet, as well as Pantages.

SECTION I 31

1767 Coming Events -:- RADIO -:- Star Gossip

Radio and Filmdom Form New Alliance in Entertainment World

Advance Sketches on Air in Nature of Film Previews Win Hearty Response; Another Series of Hollywood Programs May Be Started on Coast

By Ray De O'Fan
(Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.)

Motion picture previews no longer are restricted to sudden, unexpected showings at outlying theaters, for radio has moved into that Hollywood field with a bang.

The new trend has been coming for some time, and NBC now announces consideration of advance radio sketches of major films as a regular feature. Two such programs are now in the process of development.

First attempt in this field brought an air preview of "Broadway Melody." This was followed recently by "The Big Broadcast of 1936," and, if plans develop, "Thanks a Million," with Fred Allen, and Warner Brothers' "A Midsummer Night's Dream" will go on parade via radio in the near future.

Reasons for this movement:

1. Great public interest in motion pictures.
2. Ideal opportunity to present stars to radio audiences.
3. Many stars of the air also are stars of motion pictures.
4. Ready-made script material, coupled with the fact that almost all the players are centered in Hollywood.

If NBC's plans materialize, it will mean another major series of coast to coast programs originating from Hollywood, and a closer tie-up than before of film and radio industries.

Pioneer in the preview field is the CBS "Hollywood Hotel," although this feature presents a full hour show, in addition to guest appearances of stars in excerpts from coming pictures. In this case, the idea took so well we find "Hollywood Hotel" extended another year.

* * *

Cleo Brown, the feminine "Fats" Waller, is in our city to fill an engagement at a night club. While she's here, the torrid piano tempos and staccato singing for which she is famous will be sent to the nation. KFI carires a quarter hour at 1:30 p. m. today.

* * *

One more week and Phil Baker, with the ever-faithful Beetle and Bottle, will be with us again. Baker, as the great American tourist, starts a new series via CBS from 3:30 to 4 p. m. next Sunday, and will be heard locally through KHJ, a change in time, station, network and day over his last series.

BEST BETS TODAY

8:15 a. m., KFWB — Gus, Examiner Funny Paper Man (SCN).
10:15 a. m., KFI—Light Opera (NBC).
1 p. m., KFI—Kansas City Symphony (NBC).
2:30 p. m., KFI—Grand Hotel (NBC).
3:30 p. m., KHJ—"Below the Rio Grande" (CBS).
4 p. m., KFI—Major Bowes' Amateur Hour (NBC).
5 p. m., KFI — Manhattan Merry-Go-Round (NBC). KHJ—America's Hour (CBS).
6 p. m., KHJ—Wayne King's Orch. (CBS).
6:30 p. m., KHJ—Senator William E. Borah.
7:30 p. m., KFI—Lanny Ross' Concert (NBC).
8 p. m., KFWB—Amateur Hi Jinks.
8:30 p. m., KFI—"One Man's Family" (NBC).

HOW IT'S DONE—Fred Astaire, shown in this candid cameragraph, is caught in action on the NBC "Hit Parade." Note the setup of microphones, designed to catch the clacking of dancing feet as well as voice. Astaire stands on a special floor, microphone at lower right picking up taps.

Satire on Gloom to Be Sung Again

"RUDIGORE," the Gilbert and Sullivan satire on the gloomy melodramas of the late eighties, will be sung again by the National Light Opera Company today over an NBC transcontinental network at 10:30 a. m. (KFI).

The story tells of a curse put upon Sir Rupert Murgatroyd, the first baronet of Ruddigore, who spent his odd moments

Reception Reported Improved

South American Stations Come In Better, Say Dial Cruisers

The first touch of fall weather has brought many reports from Dial Cruisers of good reception from South American stations. Mexico City's XEBT on 6.0 meg. has improved a great deal over its condition during July and August.

CEC in Santiago, Chile, continues to cause most favorable comment from short wavers. This station is heard with good volume on Thursday and Sunday from 5:30 to 6 p. m. The frequency is 10.67 meg.

* * *

Word from Walter S. Lemmon, president of the World-Wide Broadcasting Corporation, to the All-Wave Club states that W1XAL in Boston (11.79 meg.) has been granted an increase in power from 5 to 10 kw.

This station is on the air Sunday from 12:45 to 2:15 p. m. It specializes in educational programs and plans to use more time beginning next month for some of the features which aroused the interest of radio listeners.

W1XAL is unusual in that it is the only short wave broadcasting station in America that is not affiliated with a long-wave station. Last Sunday it broadcast a description of the start of the maiden voyage of the new Polish liner Pilsudski.

The week before it carried a peace appeal to both Italy and Abyssinia. One of the regular features of W1XAL at 2 p. m. is "Keeping Up With Science." So popular was this feature last winter that the Yankee network of broadcast stations in New England asked the short-wave station for permission to pick-up the short-wave

Figure 4

Though seen here as a teacher of sorts, Astaire was not the only dancer to perform on the radio, nor was he the only one who's radio performance was said to be unique. A member of the comedy group the "Douglas Shoemakers" known a "Singin'Feet" performed on CBS stations on Thursday evenings starting on March 13, 1930. The newspaper *The Chicago Defender* described how "Singin' Feet" performed in a way that provided "radio listeners with a sparkling sound

picture of new dances from the stage." What the author calls "radio rhythm" gets listeners so involved that they get out of their seats: "… the tap tap tap comes on and tantalizes the resin board with a trick break-time shuffle while the boys all close in on the dancer, urging him on to a breakneck finish."[115]

"Singin' Feet" to Do His Stuff as Radio Artist

(Photo on Picture Page)

Sizzling tap dances by "Singin' Feet," the high-brown comedian of the Douglas Shoemakers, will bring to listeners of 35 stations of the Columbia Broadcasting system shades of Bert Williams, Billy B. Van and George Primrose, show stars of yesterday, who coached this Douglas entertainer when he was a young dancer in their performances.

"Singin' Feet" will be heard every Thursday evening, beginning March 13, at 8:30 (7:30 Central time). His jokes and shuffles build up the high and merry pace of Douglas Shoemakers' party and provide radio listeners with a sparkling sound picture of new dances from the stage.

The most famous dance of "Singin' Feet" is his interpretations of the race craze—mule chewin'. With the Douglas Shoemakers playing that fascinating new tune, the tap tap tap comes on and tantalizes the resin board with a trick break-time shuffle while the boys all close in on the dancer, urging him on to a breakneck finish.

"Singin' Feet's" enthusiasm and skill have brought him success everywhere during his long stage career. The way in which he takes his enthusiasm felt to the listener while working in a studio has already identified him as a radio "find" and a comedian with an enviable air future.

ALBION, Mich., March 14—The Melody Four broadcast over WKBI March 10. The group, who have been together for 10 years, are M. Union, Richard Tate, John Wood and Percy James.

ON RADIO—"Singin' Feet," who is featured by the Douglas Shoe company, broadcasts every Thursday evening at 7:30 Central time over the Columbia system's chain of 35 stations.

Figure 5. "'Singin' Feet' to Do His Stuff as Radio Artist." The Chicago Defender. March 15, 1930, National edition. 6.

Astaire didn't believe that dancing would become popular on the radio. In 1933, he told an interviewer that he thought dancing would be ignored by the radio – that television, though it would be two decades before T.V.s found their way into many Americans' homes, would be dancing's "salvation." Two years later, however, the Los Angeles Examiner described an upcoming performance, saying that Astaire's "tapping feet" will "enliven" the hour. "Every

[115] "'Singin' Feet To Do His Stuff as Radio Artist." *The Chicago Defender.* March 15, 1930, National edition. 6.

effort will be made," writes the author, "to convey by sound the rhythmic picture that is Astaire in Action."

Some of these efforts included the engagement of the in-studio audience. "At first I hesitated about accepting because I figured I could not be too valuable without dancing and dancing meant nothing over the radio."[116] In contrast, the other type of audience cue used commonly in these types of programs comes from a more traditional theatrical practice. On stage action - though invisible to the at-home audience - cues the audience when it is time to clap, here performers incorporate impressive moments as a kind of flashing applause sign.

> There wasn't much I could do in the way of steps, especially, because my regular style was to cover ground and also get up in the air a lot. Here I found that the only effective steps for radio were those with a lot of taps close together – a string of ricky-ticky-ticky-tacky-ticky-tacky taps. If you got off the floor there was just nothing, but nothing coming over the air. I didn't have time to routine a new set of ticky-tacky taps each week so I would ad lib each dance and hop into a finish step when I knew I was about 12 bars or so from home. I had about a dozen of these sustaining exhibition tap steps to choose from which were designed to please our live studio audience as well as the multitudes out in space. One was a spinning tapping affair, another was just a tapping and arm waving gem, and another might b e a half-falling half standing up flash that sounded like a riveting machine – and so on. Any one of these would be bound to kill the customers. I had them numbered in my mind, and at rehearsals, when we came to the part where the man signaled for the applause, I would say, "All right boys, and here's where I go into studio wow number seven," or some other number.[117]

Rather than perform in his regular style – covering lots of ground in leaps and spins through the air, which would sound as silence in the broadcast – Astaire performed quick, improvisatory, and stationary taps before a finishing "exhibition" step. These steps – the only ones really aimed toward a visual audience – summoned applause from the in-studio audience to finish of the

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[116] Astaire, *Steps in Time*, "On Lucky Strike Hit Parade, 211 bb
[117] Astaire, *Steps in Time*, "Gingerless," 227.

number.

RADIO DIAL LOG

By JO RANSON

Dancing Profession Ignored by Radio—Television Will Be Its Salvation, According to Fred Astaire

Radio has been kind to almost every sort of variety entertainer but the dancer and the acrobat. These poor fellows have had to step aside or wait in the wings while their fellow entertainers, the comics and the warblers, have marched right through microphones into loudspeakers day in and day out.

The dancer and the acrobat are still waiting in the wings, waiting patiently for the time when they, too, will get a crack at fame and fortune, particularly fortune—the devil with fame, they tell you in no uncertain terms.

The majority of these boys and girls are looking forward to television, which we have been assured for so long is just around the corner. With the advent of sight and sound, acrobats and dancers will come into their own.

In the new era of entertainment, instead of opening and closing the show, as has been their wont in vaudeville, they will occupy the next-to-closing spot—considered the page one of vaudeville.

* * *

"To date, the dancing profession has not been able to utilize radio in any marked extent as a means of entertainment," said Fred Astaire recently when interviewed regarding his coming series of guest appearances on the "Hit Parade" over WEAF beginning Saturday, Aug. 10, at 8 p.m. "There have been remote cases in which a tap dancer has been featured on a radio program but these have been few and far between, as so much is lost to the audience in not being able to see the movements of the dancer's feet as well as hear the rhythmic beats of the heels and toes as they strike the floor. And, of course, ballroom dancers, adagio and other forms of dancing have been completely out of it as the entertainment there is entirely visual and not at all audible."

* * *

With the assurance from engineers that television is almost here, Astaire is anxious to be a step ahead of the field and try out the audible end of broadcasting, and in this way be a bit better prepared to entertain the audio-visual audience when television becomes a fact rather than a myth.

"The techniqus of picking up the sounds of the taps for radio is quite different from that of recording the same sounds in the movies, for in broadcasting they do not have to keep the dancing area clear of microphones for camera shots, which is a distinct advantage," pointed out Astaire. "However, one must remember that unlike the motion picture field, in broadcasting there are no such things as 'retakes.' The dance must be done perfectly the first time. In some ways I feel that this is one to be an asset, as any one experienced in the motion picture field knows that 'retakes' are the bane of the motion picture star's life."

FRED ASTAIRE'S TAPPING FEET ENLIVEN HOUR

FROM TIME TO TIME radio has brought the click of tap-dancing feet to the loudspeaker, but not until today has a famous dancer been signed for a series of appearances on a major coast to coast program.

Fred Astaire, dancing star of "Gay Divorcee" and other screen successes, will be the guest star of "Hit Parade" in four consecutive performances, the first on the air in today's hour at 4 p. m. (KFI). With the rapping of his flying feet will be interspersed occasional songs.

Special microphones are to be used for the dance routines, and every effort will be made to convey purely by sound the rhythmic picture that is Astaire in action.

Figure 6 Ranson, Jo. "Radio Dial Log," Brooklyn Daily Eagle, Aug. 5, 1935. Original in the Howard Gottleib Archival Research Center. *and* "Fred Astaire's Feet Enliven Hour," Los Angeles Examiner, August 10, 1935. Original in the Howard Gottleib Archival Research Center.

Verma suggests that in the 1930s, radio broadcasts, specifically radio plays were what he calls "dramas of space and time." Here, the creation of these shows was "rooted in techniques for the use of volume, acoustics, sound effects to draw pictures in the mind."[118] "Audioposition" was used to indicate for the listener an idea of place, which was created by coding foregrounds and backgrounds.[119] This helped listeners decode dramas that were ornate, or that had the necessity to

[118] Neil Verma, *Theater of the Mind: Imagination, Aesthetics, and American Radio Drama*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 2012). 35
[119] Verma, *Theater of the Mind*, 35.

indicate space within the show. "The challenge in radio," he observes, "is to create sound in four dimensions and translate into a two-dimensional signal that can suggest a quadrilateral world."[120] In early radio this would be achieved through blocking within the recording studio, but later through mixing at the soundboard. Either way, these four-dimensional worlds that the show would portray were not those of the recording studio, but only existed in the imagination and minds of listeners.

By bridging the gap between the signified and the "pure and intense," radio dance is affective on multiple levels. Through audiopostition and acoustic spacialization, radio broadcasts create intimacy with the performers and dancers that we hear, encouraging us to empathize with them. In the "theatre of our mind" a visual image is created using timbre to indicate bodily movements that are semiotically connected to the movements common in popular film musicals of the time. Finally, the complicated ways that acousmatic sound, and particularly acousmatic dance works within radio fills those semantic signs with intensity, encouraging an *energetic interpretant* that has a physical reaction in the listener.[121]

For mid-century audiences of mass-mediated musicals, the enjoyment of Hollywood's films did not stop at the doors of a movie house. Audiences in the 1930s, 40s and 50s interacted with their favorite plots, songs, dances, and actors through many forms of media. As shown in the introduction, the wide circulation of Hollywood film performances included the films

[120] Verma, *Theater of the Mind*, 39.
[121] Peirce, *Philosophical Writings*, 277.

themselves, but also other iterations of the films' content, including images, music scores and recordings, live performances, and – most importantly to this study – radio adaptations.[122]

By focusing attention on specific points within those networks, the ways that radio audiences engaged with and made meaning out of musicals can be considered. Attending to radio musicals, shows that through their experience of diverse media materials, audiences could accumulate knowledge that allowed them to construct meaning out of each individual broadcast. The trans-medial nature of the 1930s and 40s musicals encouraged audiences to access their knowledge from previous engagements with them to understand radio performances. As it has been shown, these films were predictable and familiar to audiences: a formulaic narrative reinforced by song and dance numbers.[123]

Dance Instruction

Dance instruction, illustration, and conversation was the subject of mass-mediated musicals, circulating within multiple media. For example, *The Photoplayer and Talkies* March 31, 1934 issue included instructions along with photos and illustrations on how to do the steps of the Carioca, the new dance introduced by film stars Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers a few months earlier in their film, *Flying Down to Rio* (1933). Astaire and Rodgers continued this trend, introducing new dances into their films, and the multimedial instruction continued as well. The *Sunday News* Coverage of the "Piccolino," introduced in Top Hat, features a full two page spread of Fred and Ginger in various poses along with detailed descriptions of the dance. (see Figure 7

[122] Noah Isenberg, *We'll Always Have Casablanca: The Legend and Afterlife of Hollywood's Most Beloved Film*. United States: W. W. Norton, 2017. An in-depth study of the trans-medial nature of the 1943 film, this book follows one film property in many media forms.
[123] Altman, *The Hollywood Musical*, and Feuer, *The Film Musical*

below) Magazine advertisements like these remediate in print the film performance, describing the steps as a spectator and filling in gaps left by the still photos.

Figure 7 "The Piccolino," *Sunday News*. 1935. Original in the Howard Gottleib Archival Research Center.

The "Swing Time Waltz," from the film *Swing Time* (1936), yet again is covered using a spread of illustrated pictures and descriptions. Lucille Marsh, the director of the National Dance League's description of the Swing Time Waltz. Here, Marsh goes into close detail referencing the photos about how the dance should be performed, here, unlike in the coverage of the Piccolino, she uses language of instruction, rather than description. Going into detail about various steps,

rhythmic variations, and potential additions to the dance, Marsh concludes with instructions for choreography for the "Swing Time Waltz," set to "Brunswick record No. 7716 played by Johnny Green and band."[124] Through this detailed description it becomes clear that Lucille Marsh expects her reader to be able to use her article to the dance, seemingly assuming that these "students" will have foundational knowledge from which to work.

Accepted ballroom adaptation of Swing Time Waltz, created by Fred Astaire and featured by Mr. Astaire and Ginger Rogers in "Swing Time."

Music "Waltz in Swing Time" published by Chappell & Co., Inc.

Arranged by Lucile Marsh, Director of National Dance League

I—THE SWING TIME STEP | II—THE SWING PROMENADE | III—THE TRAVEL SWING | IV—THE HOP SWING TURN | V—THE TAP SWING | VI—THE TAP SWING TURN

Figure 8. Lucille Marsh, "Accepted ballroom adaptation of Swing Time Waltz," Original in the Howard Gottleib Archival Research Center.

Imagining movement to sound would not have been a surprising notion in the early 1940s United States. Donna Halper dates exercise instruction by radio and records as early as 1922.

[124] Lucille Marsh, "Accepted ballroom adaptation of Swing Time Waltz," Original in the Howard Gottleib Archival Research Center.

However, she also recognizes that the public was also learning on the radio everything from foreign languages to the latest dance steps.[125] An example of this type of dance instruction is the 1941 broadcast of "tap dance expert" Cecil D'Costa who teaches listeners how to tap, step and shuffle over the radio airwaves.[126] The broadcast opens with the sounds of tap, again encouraging the listener to participate, and perhaps suggesting that "they too" will learn to do this. Starting "slowly," D'Costa explains a few simple steps, describing them along with a demonstration of their sound each time. A section from around 3 ½ minutes introduces the concept of a shuffle. Not long after, the at-home student is expected to tap along to a musical number incorporating all the new steps they've just learned, along with an arguably complex rhythmic structure including syncopation and pick-ups. In less than ten minutes, listeners become fully-fledged tap dancers.

Building on audiences' familiarity with popular musical films and performers, along with printed material, radio programs like this would give audiences even more context to understand the movements of the dancers through sound. However, the technique of performance was called into question by some. In one radio column, the author, William Moyes responds to a complaint made in The Radio Review published by the Women's National Radio Committee. In it, he claims that the committee "bleats" against tap dancing on the radio, for reasons that it could be easily re-produced by a sound effects man. Moyes, however, asserts,

> It seems to us that any good sound effects man could imitate the sounds made by the dancers,' say the dames. Even the eight-year-old mind the dames say all radio listeners possess should know no sound can come near it. Anyone who thinks he can imitate Bill Robinson with a couple of sticks slapped on a hunk of linoleum probably thinks also he could imitate Lily Pons on a 10-cent kazoo. In other words, some meddlers are goofier than goofy.[127]

[125] Donna L. Halper, "Exercise and Expertise: Radio Broadcasting Promotes Health Education" *Moments.* 2009. 9
[126] Cecil D'Costa. "Tap Dancing on the Radio." *Fireside Fun*. Radio Canada, CBC Digital Archives. 1941
[127] Moyes, William "Women's Radio 'Bleats: The Radio Review." *The Morning Oregonian*, n.d.

In other words, Moyes believed that a listener could tell the difference between hearing real-life tap dancers and sound-effects men, even if they couldn't see them. This idea seems to become the consensus among both radio listeners and practitioners alike, as dance on the radio continued throughout the use of the medium.

Translating Performing Bodies: Garland on the Radio

To understand performing bodies on the radio, audiences would have engaged in the work of translation – the act of taking what they hear and mapping it onto what they know to better understand the performance they are engaging with. Phenomenal and ecological understandings guide scholars like Kate Heidemann in analyzing how listeners can understand performances through vocal performances. In this way, she "address[es] the creation of meaning that arises as part of individual human perception of vocal timbre."[128] By understanding the ways that "vocal timbre telegraphs the inner state of a moving body, presenting the listener with blueprints for ways of being and feeling."[129] According to Heidemann, "in listening to vocal music, we may involuntarily mirror the actions we imagine the performer undertaking thereby "catching" the feeling of a performance."[130] In other words, audiences use timbral information from the voice to understand the bodies of the performers.

Well-known film star Judy Garland – a performer who seems to reveal her true self with every performance – is a great example of Heidemann's analysis of timbral experiences. Not

[128] Kate Heidemann, "A System for Describing Vocal Timbre in Popular Song," *Music Theory Online.* Volume 22, Number 1, March 2016. 1.3
[129] Heidemann, "A System for Describing Vocal Timbre in Popular Song," 1.1
[130] Heidemann, "A System for Describing Vocal Timbre in Popular Song," 1.1

only is her voice well-known, but throughout her career, Garland's body was a consistent source of both spectacle and critique. As her career progressed, public issues with both her self-image and drugs resulted in a constant fluctuation of her weight, only adding to the constant conversation and critiques surrounding her body. Keeping this in mind, I analyze several performances from the latter half of her career. First, her full-body performance style became codified in the later part of her career and becomes more and more noticeable over time. This has been analyzed by many scholars through lenses of suffering and deteriorating mental health.[131] Here, rather than analyzing the performance for signs of Garland's personal health struggles, I am to re-read them as examples of "embodied performance style," pulling out the ways that Garland's onscreen performance style remains embodied on the air, and her intertextual and multimedial star persona is reiterated once again on the air.

Summer Stock (1950), one of Judy's later films, features one of her most lauded performances – one that Richard Dyer recognizes is one of the most often reproduced images of Garland. Though he claims that Judy's performance style "incorporated signs (not hard to find) of what we are pleased to label neurosis," it is importantly her movement (and not the costume) which communicates what is so magnetic about the scene.[132] The scene in question in which Garland performs the song "Get Happy," is particularly lauded as being an example of Garland's best performances. The performance begins with a stage full of men who literally fall at Garland's feet, revealing the star in a black jacket, fedora, and heels. As she begins singing, she stands casually with her legs and arms crossed. Yet even though she stands in a relaxed position; her

[131] Dyer, McLean…etc.
[132] Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies,* 168.

whole body is part of the performance. Elegantly, she shrugs her shoulders, pops her hip, and turns her head to look at the men in time with the music. She begins stepping forward, and her arms extend form the elbows, fingers spread as the brass comes in with a blasting downbeat.

As the dance progresses, every moment is carefully portrayed through small, but intense, bodily movement. In one section, Garland stands in the middle of a ring made by the men, who reach up towards her in time with the music. Close attention reveals that not only does her entire body remain engaged while the men do most of the movement, but with each reach, she reacts on a micro level, flinching ever so slightly with each beat. As the dance continues, the music gets louder, more energetic, and Garland reacts with larger movements. Her arms rarely come all the way down to her sides, but her elbows seem to be suspended out, giving herself even more room to breathe.

In the context of the film, Garland's body is on display. Throughout the film, her body is shrouded by overalls, large costumes, and baggy (read "manly") clothing. While retaining a hint of that masculinity, Judy appears in a men's suit jacket, though styled as a mini dress. Here, her long, not much slimmer, legs are the focus of the scene. As Adrienne L. McLean notes, Garland's body is not simply a simple object of thought, but a complex, corporeal source that has many manifestations of meaning.[133] Garland's body here can be seen, to just as a visual marker of glamour, suffering, or redemption, but also as a lived experience one that is re-mapped onto the viewer.

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[133] Adrienne McLean, "Feeling and the Filmed Body: Judy Garland and the Kinesics of Suffering." *Film Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (Spring 2002): 5.

Self-described as a girl who “really sings,” Judy Garland puts her entire body behind her performances.[134] In MGM films, especially when dancing with Fred Astaire or Gene Kelly, her whole body is privileged by the camera, shooting in long shots that pro ledge oddly movement over camera movement. Though she lacks a traditional "dancer's body," Garlands work on stage and on camera is notably. Unlike her partners, Garland's performance style wouldn't be described as "easy," but rather "energetic," with every single part of her body always engaged. When watching her perform, this is apparent, you can see the tenseness in her arms, hands, legs, and feet. Her energy radiates outward in a very visceral way.

Her vocal performance is likewise energetic, and though the song begins against a quiet accompaniment, Garland’s vocal performance is strong. Never *sotto voce*, she begins with a well-supported technique – “really singing” her way through the entire song. This type of performance invites audiences to imagine her embodied vocal technique, because “how we make sense of and ascribe meaning to another person’s vocal performance is by reference to our own vocal experience… we can make our interpretations of timbre more detailed and intelligible to others by focusing on the specifics of this embodied engagement with sound.”[135] In other words, audiences recognize the ways that Garland’s style of singing come not from her throat, but her whole body.

As McLean notes, "Garland's filmed body produces meaning that my own body seems to feel and understand.”[136] She points out how Garland’s performance style encourages a kind of

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[134] “The Judy Garland Show Episode 9” *YouTube*, posted by JC Mo June 28, 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9Rx7HH7BkA accessed November 8, 2020.
[135] Heidemann, “A System for Describing Vocal Timbre in Popular Song,” 2.10
[136] McLean, “Feeling and the Filmed Body,”6.

reciprocal engagement with the star's body. This reciprocity is not limited to Garland's films, but also her acousmatic performances on radio and other recorded media. Garland's embodied performance practice becomes multi-sensorial, not only in the visualized imaginary, but also through what Peirce describes as reciprocal *energetic interpretant* – or the physical effort produced by a sign.

Though Dyer claims that Judy's performance style "incorporated signs (not hard to find) of what we are pleased to label neurosis," it is importantly her movement (and not the costume) which communicates what is so magnetic about the scene.[137] A prolific performer, Judy performed often in film and radio and on the air, this embodiment is just as clear. Through sound created by both the voice and the body, Garland can reenact and develop these kinds of bodily movements through sound. Analysis of radio performances have generally upheld the mind-body distinction that (some) phenomenology works to break down. Denning describes the way "radio has worked most powerfully inside our heads, helping us create internal maps of the worlds and our place in it, urging us to construct imagined communities to which we do, or do not, belong."[138] However, in a translating an embodied performance such as Garland's onto the air, the idea that radio works *only* inside our heads breaks down. Foster observes that a body performs in time and space, calling into existence the discursive frameworks in which performances make sense. Garland's performances magnify radio production. Through musical performances on the radio, where an emphasis is on the bodies of these stars, listening bodies

[137] Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies*, 147.
[138] Denning, *Noise Uprising*, 5.

participate in radio attention, perhaps arguing for re-thinking "theatre of the mind" as "theatre of the whole self."

Also in 1950, in a Christmas broadcast of *Lux Radio Theatre*, Garland reprised her 1939 *Wizard of Oz* performance. Over a decade later, Judy performs the same role that made her famous as a teenager. Broadcast the same year as *Summer Stock* premiered, a listener would likely have known Garland's more grow-up performance style and been aware of the discussion and critique that surrounded her body. This knowledge of their own experience, and of Garland's voice in other contexts would have shaped what they expected and their understanding of what they heard on the radio.[139] While *Wizard of Oz* is one of her most famous performances, here she performs it no longer as a teenager, but as a grown woman with all the baggage and history that accompanied her in that moment. Still, the *Lux* performance offers an interesting look into how radio seemingly allowed for a "suspension of disbelief" in some areas, but not in the musical performances themselves. In a way, during musical performances, Garland returns to the "Judy" of the moment, returning to the star herself and acknowledging that, while engaging in a musical performance, her body – as it is "today" always present.[140]

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[139] Heidemann, "A System for Describing Vocal Timbre in Popular Song." 4.4

[140] Where Garland's performative engagement with her body is a temporal one, later examples will address how stars return to their star identity is racial terms.

Figure 9 Judy Garland in a promotional photo for CBS

At Dorothy's entrance, upset by her neighbor's treatment of her dog, Judy's character enters breathless, indicating not just how upset she is, but also the feeling that creates in her character's body. This element of performance invites a *kinesthetic listening* response, encouraging audiences to engage with Dorothy empathetically, as "we get a sense of the movements undertaken in the production of a timbre through conscious and unconscious imitation, or mimetic engagement."[141]

[141] Heidemann, "A System for Describing Vocal Timbre in Popular Song." 2.10

As she launches into "Somewhere over the Rainbow," Garland's put-on young girl voice disappears. After the first line, the in her vocal production are clear. Unlike when she was 16, Garland's voice is richer, deeper, full of vibrato. It is as if, in song, Garland can't deny her true body, inviting a full, embodied performance, even if the young girl she once (or never really) was is preferred. In speech, she can deny her current body, but the timbre of her voice in song resembles that of *Summer Stock*- 1950s-Judy. After the opening song, Garland's Dorothy resumes the story as she and Toto survive a Tornado and end up "over the rainbow." Her voice returns to its youthful lilt, again using her voice to shield the audience from her age. Still, however, Garland's embodied performance is notable, using noises made by her body, such as gasps, breaths, and groans, to indicate her performance.

Much of the action relies on Garland describing what's going on out loud to Toto. The sight gags in the film – many of the characters in Oz have parallels in Dorothy's real-world life and are both played by the same actors – are made explicit in Garland's dialogue. Upon seeing the Wicked Witch of the West, she exclaims "It's Miss Gulch, I tell you! Miss Gulch!" making the double casting clear. Other added dialogue explains events that in the film are clear through the images – "Look out! It's a ball of fire!," "Toto sees something behind that bush." In addition, audience reaction, though sparse, contributes to the "filling out" of characters and situations. At the introduction of the Lion, his roar is quickly followed by the audience's laughter, making clear that though he might try, this lion is not one to be afraid of. This type of "audio-embodiment" – the explicit explanation of what is going on ("It's a ball of fire!" "It's Miss Gulch!" Etc.) and the more implicit assumptions created by sounds such as audience laughter are

on the other end of the kinesthetic listening experience, providing audiences with information and knowledge more that any empathetic or energetic engagement.

Garland's performance as Dorothy many years after the initial performance is just one of several performances. Indeed, one of her most beloved films from the later part of her career, A *Star is Born* (1954), stemmed from an earlier performance on the radio, where a young Garland portrayed the aspiring young actor in a radio adaptation of the 1937 Janet Gaynor version of the film. As McLean notes, on film, "Garland's filmed body produces meaning that my own body seems to feel and understand." She points out how Garland's performance style encourages a kind of reciprocal engagement with the star's body. I argue that this reciprocity is not limited to Garland's films, but also her acousmatic performances on radio and other recorded media. Garland's embodied performance practice becomes multi-sensorial, not only in the visualized imaginary, but also through a reciprocal energetic interpretant.[142]

Conclusion

In these ways, radio musicals were multisensory experiences for audiences. Knowing listeners of the 1930s and 1940s would have participated in and attended to the circulatory web of mass-mediated musical properties and continued to develop in their knowledge an understanding. These properties entertained, but also informed audiences, giving them a deeper understanding to use during their next engagement. Audeinces were encouraged by the material to use that knowledge to develop their listening experiences into muti-sensorial experiences, imagining the visual, and physical efforts of performers.

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[142] "The Wizard of Oz." *Lux Radio Theatre*. Vine Street Theatre, Hollywood: CBS, December 25, 1950.

Chapter 3 - Fidelity and Liveness

"Yessir, looks like the old Kelly, Gene."[143]

In a 1947 appearance on *Lux Radio Theatre*, Gene Kelly reprised his character from *Anchors Aweigh* (1945), along with Frank Sinatra and Kathryn Grayson. The hour-long presentation, which has little dance, includes standard commercial interludes by the actors, where they describe their appreciation for "Lux Flakes," a laundry soap. Noticeably, however, near the end the broadcast also includes an advertisement for Kelly's upcoming film, *The Pirate* (1948). Kelly had recently – and publicly – broken his leg during a backyard volleyball game, causing Kelly to drop out of MGM's *Easter Parade* (1947). He was replaced by Anchors Aweigh co-star Fred Astaire. Producer and host William Keighley, who replaced DeMille in 1945, asks Kelly how he is, urged on by Frank Sinatra, who says, "Yeah, after all those broken legs, I'm sure Gene's fan are anxious to know if he'll ever dance for them again." Instead of simply answering in the affirmative, Kelly says, "Well here's my answer Frank," and breaks out into a tap dance. After a round of applause Sinatra confirms for the audience that it "is indeed" Kelly, saying "Yessir, looks like the old Kelly, Gene," reassuring listeners that Kelly's performance is of the same caliber that they are accustomed to from his star persona.

Rather than the at-home audience simply taking his word for it that he is healthy, dancing in the studio communicates even more trustworthiness – the at home audience can "see" that he is back to dancing shape as they listen. While the audience is invited to believe that what they are hearing – what is "under their nose" - is what is live, truthful, and actually happening at they

[143] "Anchors Aweigh." *Lux Radio Theatre*. Vine Street Theatre, Hollywood: CBS, December 29, 1947.

listen, what at-home audiences hear is also certified by first, the sounds of in-studio applause, and second by Frank Sinatra's conformation that Gene is "back to the old Kelly." [144] This performance suggests an implied understanding between the audience and the broadcasters that was continuously reinforced – even while the existence of effects men and their work were common knowledge. As he dances, Kelly "shows" his health and seems to imply that his short tap dance was an even more reliable attestation than simply saying that he was back to dancing.[145]

In this chapter, I investigate the ways that radio musicals used the idea of fidelity – how they created a sense of truthfulness that was related to a feeling of liveness, intimacy, participation, and reciprocity. Radio programs used in studio audiences to serve as cyphers for at home audiences and built on the knowledge that at home audiences had to create a "live and authentic" experience for at home audiences. Fleeting moments, an in-studio audience laugh, a quick reference to a star's home life, or a "riot" of applause work together to create this impression for the listening audience.

Fidelity

As adaptations, programs *could* be simply compared and seen as faithful or unfaithful to the source: radio adaptations of films would be compared to their original material, performance experiences could be compared to the "live" experience, and performers on air could be compared to their onscreen personas. Yet in adaptations, the importance of fidelity – how close the recreation is to the original - is a debated topic. In this chapter, I follow the lead of Thomas

[144] Adorno, *Current of Music*. 65
[145] "Anchors Aweigh." *Lux Radio Theatre*. Vine Street Theatre, Hollywood: CBS, December 29, 1947.

Leitch, in his study *Film Adaptations and its Discontents*, where he treats fidelity not as "an unquestioned desideratum of all adaptions," but "as a problem variously conceived and defined by the filmmakers."[146] In this view, fidelity need not be the goal of an adaptation but can be an issue through which creators develop their material and through which audiences evaluate the results. In radio broadcasts, "fidelity" is a useful lens to consider, though broadcasts do not support the idea of fidelity in the traditional sense – of a degree of similarity to source material – but to a sense of an experience. Specifically, an experience not unsimilar to attending live theatre.

In *Lux Radio*'s "Anchors Aweigh" this moment with Kelly invited audiences to construct imagined moving bodies in their minds and bodies through the sound of dance, as well as constructing images of already-known performers. In the same way that audiences built their perception on previous experience with dance, audience's previous experiences with specific stars constructed perception and contributes to understanding. Here audiences can imagine Kelly dancing – because of the sounds of his dance and Sinatra's affirmation of the presumptions audiences make based on what they are hearing – but also because audiences know what Kelly looks like dancing. Audience knowledge, of performances, but also of specific performers, encourages audiences to imagine those specific performers in their minds.

Take, for example, *Screen Guild Theatre*'s November 9, 1941 production of *Babes in Arms*. Before even the opening sounds of the program's main theme, we hear "This is Judy Garland," "And Mickey Rooney" in the actor's own voices. The double reference of their names and their

[146] Leitch, *Film Adaptations*, 21

voices a way for the audience to put a name to the voice. The use of their real names and not their characters', suggests that this is not a way for the audience to track the plot, but instead a way to remind audiences of the star identity encompassing these voices: the images, movement vocabularies, character qualities, and appearance styles that also serve to define their star phenomenon also come to mind. This trove of shared practices and behaviors has important implications, specifying meanings of many aspects of the broadcast for audiences even as the story begins. After the main theme, the host briefly sets the scene, and Garland and Rooney are heard again, but addressing each other using the names of their characters, Patsy and Mickey.

Near the beginning of the broadcasts, Mickey and Patsy walk through the park after selling one of Mickey's first songs. He talks with her about his dreams for the future: goals of writing a musical and casting her as the lead, while a romantic lilting melody plays in the background. To the listener, the romantic background music supports Patsy's view that this casting choice is a decree of love.

Thus, because – and only because – of the context of what audiences already know from the film does the scene's sudden ending fight between the two characters about "the thing he doesn't want to say" make sense.

> Andy: Look, would you like to wear this?
> Patsy: Your music class pin? Oh, Mickey.
> A: Yea, I think it's gold. I've had it almost a year and it hasn't turned green yet. (Audience chuckle) Here, you can have it Pat.
> P: Gee… Well, is that all?
> A: Well, what do you want me to say?
> P: You know what I want you to say.
> A: Well, I won't say.
> P: Alright then don't. And you can take your old pin back. Now, I'm going home.
> A: But I, I, do Patsy, wait.
> P: Do what?

> A: I do… what you want me to say. But I won't. Very much. (Light laughter)
> P: Well then…
> A: Oh alright, (kiss). There, now are you satisfied? Come on, lets go.[147]

In the original film, the scene does not include any musical cue – only the sound of bird songs in the park where they walk. For their conversation, Patsy and Mickey stop and turn towards each other. In a close shot, the two lean in towards each other, with their faces getting closer and closer together throughout the scene. Here, their body language and the intimate frame do the same "romanticizing" work that the romantic music does on the broadcast: identifying Mickey and Patsy as the main romantic couple of the film. While the music director of the radio program pulled a pre-composed "romantic" music cue – a customary practice in various radio programs - it served as simple underscore to the scene, and they relied on the audience to build on their own knowledge, both from musicals in general, and from Garland and Rooney's many films together.

Hollywood musical's formulaic structure follows the formation of a heterosexual couple, or as Richard Altman states, "In the musical, the couple is the plot."[148] The scene necessarily sets up Mickey and Garland as the couple in question, while delaying any actual formation of their romantic relationship – an inevitability saved for the end of the film. Further, the relationship between Garland and Rooney's onscreen personae had already been featured as the central narrative in two other films – this was the third of their eight films together. In these movies – all of them musicals - Garland often plays a character suffering from unrequited love directed towards Rooney's Hardy. When Hardy offers her his pin, Patsy immediately begins to desire a

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[147] "Babes in Arms," *Screen Guild Theatre*, November 9, 1941.
[148] Altman, *The American Film Musical*, 35.

clearer expression of love – she wants him to tell her that he is fond of her. Though the dialogue could seem unclear, the frustrated reaction from Patsy is a source of humor for a knowing audience, as neither character ever says what "it" is. In addition, the light laughter of the in-studio audience guides an at-home listener's reaction. Their laughter at the "correct" moments informs the audience as to the meaning. Audience reaction continues to play a part as the broadcast goes on.

Later, a shared understanding of in-studio audiences informs the at-home listener, not about character intention or the plot, but about the identity of the character himself and the kind of body a character is meant to inhabit. A short musical interlude, common in radio dramas of the time, indicates a transition in time and place. While the music holds no real indication as to where we are "going," the melody of the musical transition is easily identified as "My Funny Valentine," – a song written for the 1937 musical, though not featured in the film. Its context, and any extra- musical meaning that might be made of it is unclear.

As the music winds down though, we hear laughter again from the audience, inviting the listener to question the source of the humor: clearly it is not a response to the musical interlude. It can be assumed that the humor is coming from on stage – getting an at home audience ready for a new source of comedy. As the scene starts back up, a new voice is heard - a man's voice informing the two that "the banana special is *extra* special today," even though Mickey ends up ordering root beer. By their orders, we can surmise that they are at a kind of drugstore soda fountain. The waiter in the scene, through this one single line, is clearly racialized and identified – though not explicitly – as black. The laughter suggests a kind performativity, that though unclear at first is clarified – at least to the at-home listener – by a racialized performance of the

actor.[149] While innocuous, within the context of the show, the knowledge of the at-home listener, and the larger cultural background, this line takes on new meaning.

Screen Guild Theatre's "Babes in Arms" shows the ways that radio musicals built on audience knowledge –informed by both individual performers and other live performance genres - to create meaning for contemporary audiences and create the feeling of a live performance – one that can be understood as "authentic" or faithful to what is represented on the air. As a result of this understood fidelity – to performers and their performances – radio also offered a chance for intimacy these same Hollywood elites.

The Potential for Reciprocity

In radio musicals, as dance implied a sense of performance fidelity, and in the same way the appearance of stars on the air created a feel of an "authentic" experience, radio offered an opportunity for a connection to Hollywood glamour for the at home audience. In the same way that photographs, magazine articles, and advertisements could offer audiences texts provided clues as to the "real" lives of the stars, so too did radio appearances, often through the explicit discussion about the star's day to day life. These snapshots offer static glances, perhaps, into stars lives portraying an air of authenticity and intimacy. In between acts, or after a radio performance, stars would often discuss their home life, backstage stories, or their upcoming work. In the shows, these discussions work to make the stars feel more "real" to the audience. Unlike the characters they play on film, and during the "performance" parts of the radio shows, here performers are playing "themselves."

[149] For more on vocal iterations of race, see chapter four.

As radio broadcasts were reorganized and reimagined by radio writers, producers, and performers into the intimate home space, adjustments were made to build a sense of intimacy between the stars and the listening audience, a smaller performance space through acoustical framing and relational dialogue. As a part of the performance repertoire of Hollywood musicals and their stars, the intimacy of radio performance was developed in two distinct ways. First, as a way for audiences to experience the "real" stars, thus discussions with the host (a.k.a. advertisements) featured quite a bit of conversation about their personal lives.[150] Secondly, a close physical experience supplanted the usually large, lavish, and densely populated spaces of the film musical and replaced them with a renewed focus on close mics, quick steps, and solo numbers. This intimacy can be heard in a multitude of radio musicals but is especially clear in the December '36 version of the "Gold Diggers" series on *Lux Radio Theatre*.

Audiences were treated to stories, tidbits, and anecdotes from star's "private" lives. In the same way as the tabloid press later would, these stories mixed the glamour and sparkle of Hollywood with the "stars - they're just like us" perception that made the glamour even more attainable. Through the discussion of Blondell and Powell's lives, audiences gained a perspective on the stars that left them feeling closer to them - knowing them as if they might know a friend, rather than just the perfected image of the roles that they played. It is important to note that these seemingly impromptu conversations were scripted and – of course – the teleological dialogue was planned to always end at a conversation about Lux soap. Still, the frame around that

[150] This was also a function of the star advertisements. Stars would talk about their home life, eventually discussing why this soap or that detergent is just their favorite thing.

conversation was one of an intimately rendered glamour, carefully constructed for simultaneous audience identification with, and awe of, film stars.

Since radio productions adapted films that had already found success on the movie screens, the participation of stars and the cultural capital they carried with them from the movies was a huge selling point. Film stars would often reprise their roles on the air, though when they weren't available, other Hollywood stars recreated their roles. As the sponsors were really the ones paying for and producing the content, the continuation of these programs hinged on perpetuating the opinion that these performances worked to sell their product. Popular stars attracted fans to radio, but their on-air appearance also served the commercial message of the advertising agency and sponsor. As a result, the broadcasts emphasized the actors' stardom, introducing them with phrases like "straight off the silver screen," "direct from Hollywood," and "your favorite film star." Casual conversations between acts and at the end of the broadcast between stars and the host offer an intimate moment where audiences can listen in, offering again a sense of fidelity to the star persona. Furthermore, as radio scholar Michele Hilmes observes, "if Anne Shirley or Evelyn Keyes happened to endorse Lux soap casually, how much more compelling than a regular commercial."[151] A connection with Hollywood glamour – a bond that is for sale through the products advertised – was an aspect of multi-medial Hollywood not unique to radio at this time. Radio, like print advertising, records, and other aspects of the multimedial landscape invited listeners (or viewers, readers, etc.) the be involved on a deeper level with the films and stars they loved.

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[151] Hilmes, *Hollywood and Broadcasting*, 104.

In these broadcasts, audiences are routinely led out of the fictional storyline, into the frame of Hollywood and thus to the product being advertised. Consequently, actors' appearances as the movie stars remains a key component of the success of the programs.[152] Their past performances in film are constantly brought up, and the idea that an audience would have already seen the film permeates the adaptation. By utilizing glamour as not only a source of content or mode of expression, but as a mode of engagement, radio broadcasts encourage listeners to not only appreciate Hollywood glamour as an aesthetic object but partake in it as a source of an imagined reciprocal exchange.[153] Through this association, star glamour becomes a lure of desirability through the potential for reciprocity. In other words, Hollywood radio programs are constructed in a way that grounds glamour in possibility through the making of intimacy.

Liveness

While the best seat was, in many ways, an at-home listener's living room chair, DeMille encouraged at-home audiences to imagine themselves in the studio, invoking the theatricality and performativity of the production. Filmed in the aptly titled *Lux Radio Theatre* on Vine Street in Hollywood, the attendance of a large, live audience to the broadcast of the radio shows would have been known to listeners of the show for a few reasons.

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[152] Hilmes, *Hollywood and Broadcasting*, 107-108.
[153] Lloyd Whitesell, *Wonderful Design: Glamour in the Hollywood Musical* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018). Whitesell describes "glamour" music as sensuousness, restraint, elevation, and sophistication, - ideas that invite a sense of closeness and intimacy with the music. Hilmes, *Hollywood and Broadcasting.* 93 describes radio programs based on Hollywood film products as a "source of ready-made 'glamour' and attraction to draw people unwittingly into the commercial message."

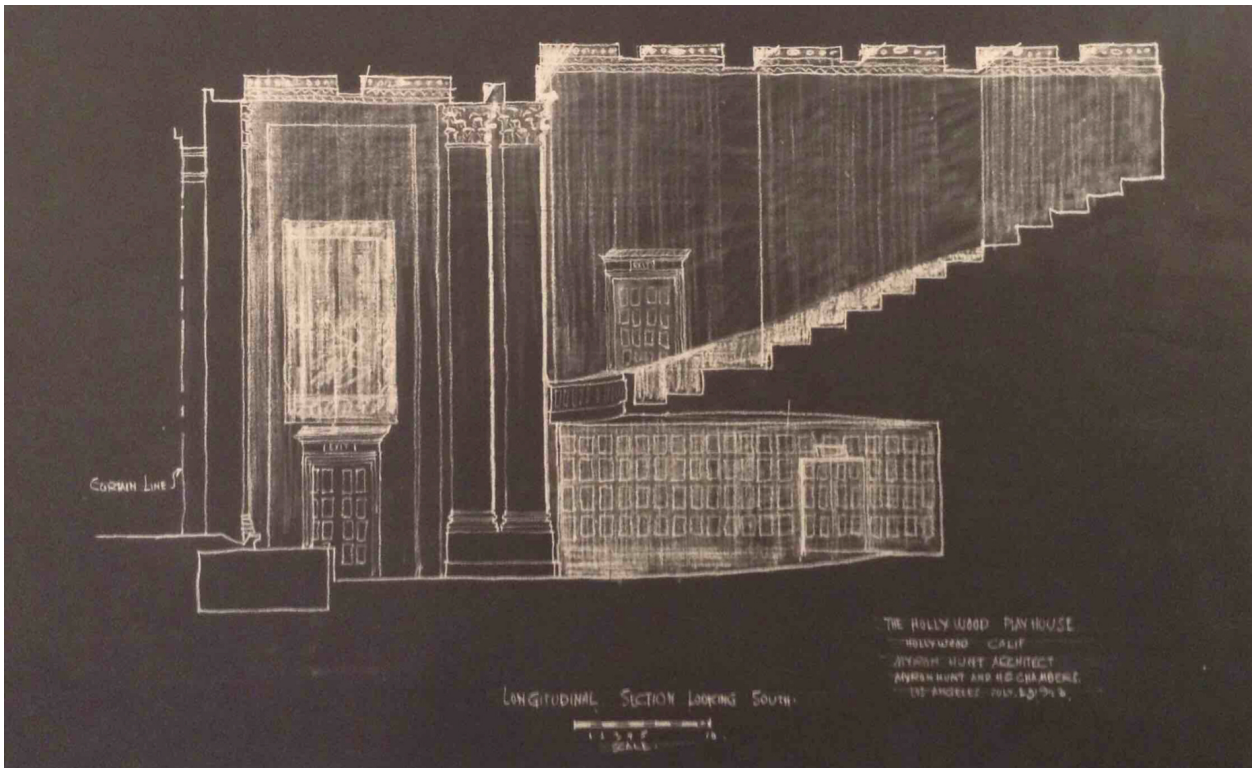

Figure 10 *Vine Street Theatre*, "Longitudinal Section Looking South" Architecture Sketch, __ Archives at University of California, Santa Barbara.

The audience was heard on the air responding to the performers with applause, cheers, laughter, and gasps. In addition, the audience was addressed directly quite often in the broadcast – early performances of *Lux* even began with a run-down of the "notable" people in the audience. Circulations of advertisements and other ephemera for the show also supported an understanding that the performances were broadcast from in front of a live audience. Finally, in introducing the performance, DeMille sets the stage of the theatre itself describing backstage business and the audience settling in before turning his attention to the opening scene of "Gold Diggers," set in the room of a boarding house occupied by three Broadway hopefuls.

> Backstage in the Lux Radio Theatre, the call boy is shouting curtain time, lights dim, the musicians pick up their instruments, and our play is on: the radio version of the Warner Brothers' picture, *Gold Diggers*. Starring Joan Blondell and Dick Powell. [musical

> interlude] Our scene is the top floor room of a theatrical boarding house, two blocks west of Broadway. It is ten o'clock in the morning, and the three charming occupants of the room, Polly, Trixie, and Carol, have just turned over for a short cat-nap.[154]

Here, the overlaid text of the musical interlude identifies two separate frames present in the radio broadcast, while glossing over a third. In setting the explanation of "our scene" after a musical interlude, DeMille highlights the theatrical setting – and thus the mediation of the filmic material.[155] Yet, there is no mediating musical frame for the explanation of the theatrical "scene" described by *Lux Radio Theatre* to listeners' radio sets. This, as Bolter and Grusin would observe, serves to "remediate by trying to absorb the older medium entirely so that the discontinuities between the two are minimized."[156]

Here, the radiophonic frame is subsumed within the theatrical one, highlighting the similarities of the in-studio and at-home audience and minimizing the discontinuity between a viewing audience and listeners alone. Listeners are encouraged to believe, not that they are in the boarding house room with Carrol and her roommates, but that they are in the theatre at the front of the house, listening closely to an intimate conversation between the simultaneously glamorous and attainable movie stars: Blondell, Powell, and DeMille.

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[154] "Gold Diggers," *Lux Radio Theatre,* December 21, 1936.
[155] Recreating the experience of a live theatre was common in discussions of remediated musical performances on radio, Robert S Stephan writes "Picture a soft, seductive setting. Ice tinkles in the glasses. Statley beauties scantily clad, parade before pop-eyed diners. There is a sudden hush as the rhythm band opens up, its stealthy beat as steady and regular as some pulse throb. Listen to N.T.G.'s wailing "a-a-a-ah" as some dazzling, creamy skinned girl displays her charms." When describing Nils Thor Granlund's new radio radio series in "The Girl Show Comes to Radio." *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*. October 6, 1935.
[156] Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation,* 47.

Figure 11 Photo of a performance of *Lux Radio Theatre* before a studio audience." Radio Mirror, MacFadden Publications, March 1948. pp. 54-54

Just as in film musicals where scholars – most notably Jane Feuer – have identified that there are two audiences – the one within the film and the one in the theatre, radio broadcasts also create a dual audience – the one on the radio and the one at home. As she explains, "Long before television invented studio audiences and canned laughter, the Hollywood Musical was putting audiences into the film for the purpose of shaping audience responses of the movie audience to the film."[157] In the same way, the at home audience is invited to identify with the in-the-frame audience. It also pans out in other media versions of Hollywood musicals. However, Feuer does not use language that works when thinking about other media within the "mass mediated musical" genre. Her definitions are defined by very theatrical notions – the demarcating feature is the proscenium – something ever-in-flux in radio musicals. In her terms, films both create

[157] Jane Feuer, *The Hollywood Musical*, 2nd ed (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993). 26

prosceniums within the films to define theatrical and performative space and blur the edges of prosceniums to invite the "spectator" to identify with the internal audience. This works, as she says, to create this constant cycle of demystification – where the spectator gains a backstage perspective – followed by a new context with which to understand the on-stage performance. A similar concept where audiences vacillate between perspectives to gain a greater understanding and deeper connection to the performance.

On the radio, audience perception places them in spaces extremely near the performers. Using close-up microphones, performers sound as if they are speaking directly from the source of the sound. They do not sound as if they are hundreds or thousands of miles away but are placed in the listeners living room – performing for them in the space of their home. For much of US audiences, Hollywood was not only a glamourous place, but also one that was far away. Though audiences could see the stars on the big screen, they rarely were in the same place as the stars – even when stars did tour, such as in the 1955 *Hollywood, USA* event, fans saw stars in the biggest spaces available, often the largest outdoor stages of state fairs. Their appearance on the radio offered a moment where audiences could experience their favorite stars "up close." This imagined spacial intimacy is encouraged using a live in-studio audience, which guides listener's reactions by suturing them into an intimate live performance or even a conversation with their favorite stars.

By utilizing the intimacy with Hollywood glamour afforded by a live – though widely broadcast – performance, radio productions like *Lux Radio Theatre's* "Gold Diggers" worked as a source of content, a mode of expression, but as a mode of engagement, encouraging listeners to appreciate Hollywood glamour as an aesthetic object, and engage with it as a source of

aspirational desire, to be obtained through the purchase of Lux Soap. By engaging intimately with the glamour of Hollywood stars, listeners are exposed to that possibility themselves. Through this reciprocal engagement, star glamour becomes a tool of attraction through the desirable production of reciprocity.

On-Air Audiences as a Part of the Performance

During its golden age, radio performances were broadcast as they happened. Like theatre, broadcasts were carefully choreographed and timed for on-air performance. Less forgiving than film, radio did not allow for cuts or multiple takes. Yet, radio brought to its audiences what films could not – the intimate and immediate performances of some of their favorite stars. Further, what all broadcasts share with theatre is the liveness of the experience. That is, the fact that every listener – at home, in the studio, or in a club – is experiencing the production at the exact same time. Describing the positive effect of live performances, Eric Bogosian explains the formation of community through the fleeting nature of live performance.[158] Philip Auslander recognizes the cultural capital accompanied by a live performance, though the presence of a "live performance" hinge on the existence of recording technologies. Recognizing how it was radio that first allowed for this type of live performance – a kind of cultural capital used by televised musical theatre performances today[159] – Kate Lacey states, "the term 'listening public' really came into its own when radio technology found it social application as broadcasting; when, in other words, there was a congregation of listeners separated by distance, but united by speech, sound, and

[158] Quoted in Auslander, *Liveness,* 4
[159] Auslander, *Liveness,* 4

music."[160] Here, radio productions create a kind of social experience through a performance that encourages understanding them as a unifying "live" experience.

Though by the 1930s and 40s, in-studio audiences of non-musical radio programs were often replaced by a canned laugh track, performers and material known within the genre of mass-mediated Hollywood musicals still typically performed in front of a "live" studio audience, whose responses to the performance were heard on air. Audience noises, like applause, gasps, and particularly laughter, guide the at-home listener's responses and accords them a feeling of participation, allowing them to associate with the communal live experience. While attending to a broadcast that included the sounds of a live audience, a listener in their living room can identify and align their experience with the in-studio audience, giving the experience of listening to the radio a flavor of a live event. Performing audiences, or the audiences *within* the frame of the media, are a staple of the mass-mediated musical, and in radio performances giving aural audiences clues and insight to the characteristic of the mass mediated musical.[161] Astaire's in-studio audience was kept quiet through production design - the transparent glass "curtain" ensures that audiences would not be heard until the correct moment.

> Night and Day is the song hit of the year. I broadcasted it on Rudy Vallee's hour the other night and got all sorts of letters and comments. It was amusing because we did it at the studio atop the New Amsterdam where there is a theatre, and the audience watches the whole works through a big glass curtain. An enormous crowd and at the finish of the number they lift the curtain, and the applause is heard on the air. I got a riot of applause and it seemed so funny to get it just for my lousy voice singing a song.[162]

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[160] Kate Lacey, *Listening Publics: The Politics and Experience of Listening in the Media Age.* (Cambridge, UK ; Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2013), .
[161] Paddy Scannell, *Radio, Television, and Modern Life: A Phenomenological Approach* (Oxford, UK ; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell, 1996). *And* Jacob Smith, *Vocal Tracks: Performance and Sound Media* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).
[162] Astaire, "Letter from Fred Astaire to Adele Astaire," February 5, 1933.

Here too, the raising of the curtain cues the audience that "now" is the time for applause - inciting their passionate response. Astaire's opinion of the response as overblown might have to do more with his tendency towards modesty than with the actual reaction of the audience. Yet, one can imagine the moment of excitement when the glass curtain raises, and it is time for your "line." In this circumstance, many factors outside of Astaire's vocal performance are contributing the "riot of applause" - the rising of a massive glass curtain, the popular new song performed live by a movie star, and the excitement of participating in the performance yourself.

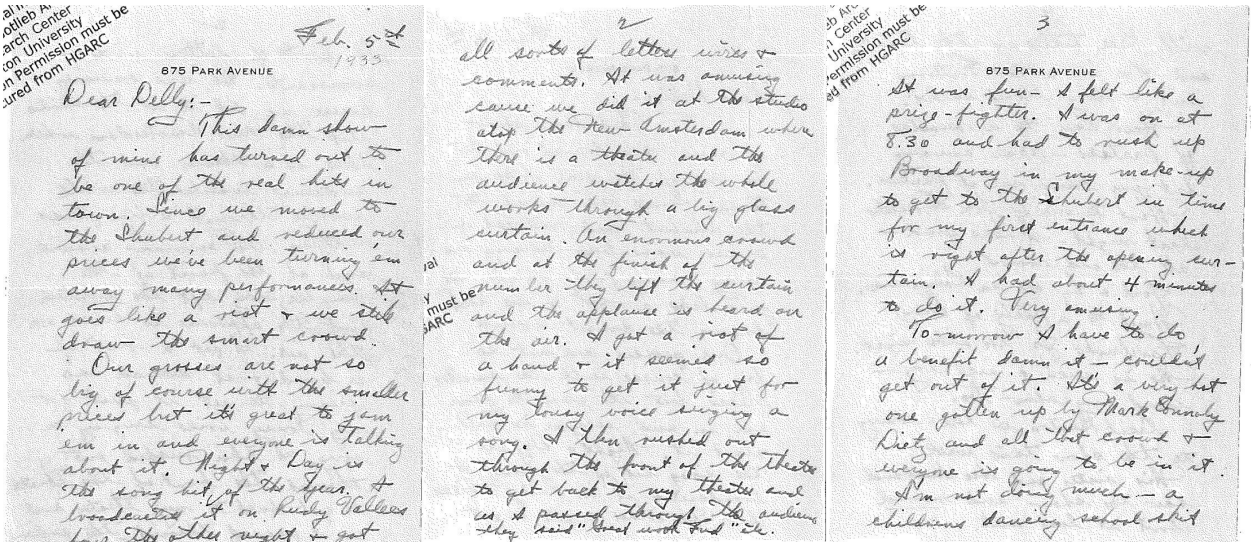

Figure 12 Astaire, Fred. Original. "Letter to Adele." Original, February 5, 1933. Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center.

Radio musicals' on-screen counterpart, the Hollywood musical, also makes use of two audiences serving different purposes – described as the 'internal audience' and the 'spectator audience.'[163] Implications of visuality aside, the 'spectator audience' can be viewed as parallel to the at-home audience - the people for whom the musical is aimed. Likewise, the film musical's

[163] Feuer, *The Hollywood Musical, 26*.

'internal audience' can be seen as parallel to the on-air audience, put into the film "for the purposes of shaping audience responses of the movie [or radio] audience to the film."[164] The internal audience serves a particular purpose, that of a "celluloid embodiment of the film audience's subjectivity."[165] On-screen audiences in film musicals - no doubt actors and actresses cast, paid, and given specific instructions if not scripts - are clearly part of the film itself, though serving as a sort of cypher through which audiences can identify. On radio however, those relationships are blurred,

In the past, scholarship of radio productions has focused on specific audience sounds including a production aspect included in non-musical radio productions. In-studio audience laughter served as a frame for the at-home audience, serving to guide listener understanding and control reaction and reception. Jacob Smith describes mediated laughter as "is a kind of suture between the rigid and the flexible, the social and the individual and the mechanical and the human."[166] Further, he argues that laughter helps the phonographic record (or the radio) transmit a sense of authentic presence and humanity.

Audience participation was used nearly universally throughout the mass-mediated musical radio broadcasts, often providing an audible audience response to the story and dance, in a way not seen in film musicals of the time. They played a significant role "in the introduction of recorded sound, guiding the audiences to the correct response and fitting them into the fame that governed the radio event."[167] In addition, the audience reaction helps the listening audience

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[164] Feuer, *The Hollywood Musical,* 26.
[165] Feuer, *The Hollywood Musical,* 27.
[166] Jacob Smith, *Vocal Tracks: Performance and Sound Media,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 22.
[167] Smith, *Vocal Tracks*, 22.

understand what is going on in the story. However, Smith observes that in-studio audiences were often quickly replaced with "laugh track." Producers felt anxious about the implications and risks of a live audience.[168] Yet, radio productions of mass-mediated musicals retained these in-studio audiences for much of their time on air. The in-studio audience was a feature of *Lux* – the longest running film adaptation program - all the way through to its moment on television in 1956.

In describing his time on the Packard Hour with John Green, Astaire detailed his amusement at the ready-made applause. "That which," he clarified, "came when one of the assistants signaled the audience to crash through with an ovation."[169] However, in film musicals, these audiences were also filling in for what Feuer argues film-going audiences viewed as a lack - that of the live experience. Radio productions, though having a tenuous relationship with live performance, were often seen as lacking in another specific element - that of the visual. In radio, audience reaction serves a similar double purpose. So, the radio broadcast' internal audiences serve a double purpose, both "mak[ing] of the movie audience a live audience," and shaping audience reaction in the tradition of radio production.[170]

Live audiences, within studio radio production, worked as another radio performer. Though still enjoying the performance as spectators, the group also provided a curated and specific audience track during the live radio production. However, these in-studio productions were not the only productions that contained mass-mediated musical performance. A weekly broadcast live from the Cotton Club, often featured the Nicholas Brothers, and Bill Robinson. Here, stars seen in many Hollywood musicals performed for a live theatre/ club audience, bringing their

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[168] Smith, *Vocal Tracks*, 43.
[169] Astaire, *Steps in Time*, 220.
[170] Feuer, *The Hollywood Musical*, 26.

performances to the airwaves. Just as in studio performances, the Cotton Club performances were heard by both an in-person and at-home audience. Yet, the hierarchies apparent in the broadcast are very different. While live studio broadcasts privileged the at-home audience – Astaire tapped facing forward in a four-by-four square, only adding a "studio wow number" when he saw it was time to signal for applause –broadcasts from theaters or clubs like the Cotton Club positioned the at-home listener as an eavesdropper, listening into a glamorous night out from the comfort of their own living room.

Conclusion

To a modern audience, listening to radio adaptations of mass-mediated musicals might be an unusual experience. Today, we listen to non-fiction podcasts, radio news broadcasts, and talk radio, but musical performances are limited to recordings of discrete musical objects like a pop song or an aria. Classical radio stations often play operas, but even then, the sound objects aren't created be solely listened to – they are the audible aspect of a live performance event that is intended to be watched as well. Still, in the era considered here, these broadcasts – made primarily for the listening audience - were routine. *Lux Radio Theatre* alone broadcast 11 musicals in 1940, with CBS Silver Theatre and Gulf Oil's Screen Guild Theatre also contributing a number of programs, keeping up with film's ratio of musicals to non-musical films.

I looked at the ways that these broadcasts were constructed to discover the regime of meaning that rendered these objects comprehensible to audiences. Here, the broadcasts themselves are a pedagogical tool that teach audiences how to listen to them. I examine what is – and is not – adapted onto the radio, reflecting on the choices and decisions that would have been behind what we both do and do not hear.

By adapting musicals onto the radio, visuality gets projected onto other domains and the spectacle of the musical is translated through the radio. These translations build on a common aural vocabulary and depend upon a mutual understanding between producers and listeners. In this adaptation process though, choices were made that both cut the film products down in time – to either a half hour or a full hour depending on the program – and resulted in a specific translation unique to that broadcast. By looking at the choices that were made, and the aesthetic effects – both audible and silent – of those choices, we can begin to develop a working knowledge of the types of choices that people doing these broadcasts needed to make and begin to unravel the ramifications of those choices.

Chapter 4 - Shifting Hues of Blackface

Investigating Racialized Performances in Radio Adaptations of Mass-Mediated Musicals

> *"I always have envied the negro his mastery of music and rhythm, but I had to wait until radio brought them into my home before I could devote real attention to them." - Radio Listener*

The long history of white superiority, racism, and slavery in the US unbalanced and complicated any type of racial representation during the mid-century. Cultural constructions and power structures of the time shaped and prescribed the way that performers and their bodies and voices were heard and understood. The circulation of the American minstrel tradition through Hollywood structured how audiences heard and understood performers during the heyday of Hollywood musicals. In radio versions of mass-mediated musicals, the ways that the property was adapted to fit into a new medium reveals the cultural constructions of race in relation to Hollywood star identity. Tellingly, the shape of these radio performances communicated the priorities of the star system changing the resulting visualizations of the actors heard on the radio.

In Chapter 2, I explained the ways that the mid-century circulatory practice of Hollywood musical shaped dance into a multimedia performance. Audiences experienced dance through audio performances, static imagery, and participatory practices, in addition to live theatrical and filmic performances. Here, I continue to investigate the ways that bodies were portrayed within the context of mid-century mass-mediated musicals. On the radio, racial color lines were a source of anxiety. Unlike film or theatrical performances, bodies could not be seen – a particularly troubling issue in Jim Crow-era United States. During this time, aural cues were used

to define the types of bodies on the air.[171] Yet, these types of cues were limited in radio drama and mass-mediated musical performances, because narratives limited the opportunity of their deployment. Furthermore, the Hollywood star system created necessities that complicated the ways that film stars in particular performed race on the radio.

In what follows, I dissect the adaptation process, clarifying the complexities of this film-to-radio reimagining. Through this example, I also show the ways that the genre of the musical can, itself navigate that complexity. Through musical tropes and genres, Hollywood adaptations dealt with and made sense of radio performances of race and identity.

One such production was the MGM property, *Holiday Inn* (1942) which was reimagined as a radio broadcast multiple times in the following decade. Starring Bing Crosby, Marjorie Reynolds, and Fred Astaire, the film used blackface performance, racialized vocal timbre, and altered pronunciation as both a source of comedy and a plot device. Though only a small fragment of the film, this element was explicitly retained on the radio. First, in January 1943, Lady Esther-sponsored *Screen Guild Theatre* broadcast an hour-long version following the film's premiere by just a few months. Crosby reprises his role as Jim Hardy, while *Screen Guild Theatre* regular Dinah Shore replaces Marjorie Reynolds as Linda Mason. A decade later, National Railroad's *Railroad Hour,* a program that produced adaptations of stage musicals, film musicals, and light operetta and starred Gordon McRae produced a twenty-minute version of "Holiday Inn" in December of 1952.

[171] Jennifer Stoever, *The Sonic Color Line*, 36.

This example is particularly interesting in a few ways. First, it exemplifies Jennifer Stoever's "sonic color line," where visual cues of racial difference – particularly skin color - were replaced or exacerbated by sonic cues used to stereotype against and segregate American people of color. Second, it illustrates the ways that film stars – here, Bing Crosby – navigate the mass-mediated musical performance and its transition between media, working within the boundaries of the star system and its requirements. Finally, it illustrates how music became a tool for navigating the complicated implications of adaptation and remediation in the mid-century used by performers and producers, during upheaval and change in the history of jazz and race in the US As an investigation into this film property will illustrate, the ways contemporaneous audiences understood and interacted aurally with voices and bodies was reflected in the navigation of the sonic color line on the radio.

In this chapter, I investigate the ways that blackface performances were portrayed within the context of mid-century mass-mediated musicals, within the 'star system,' and through strictly audio performances. I dissect the results of this adaptation process through close listening, description, and using IPA transcriptions. In addition, I compare Crosby and McRae's vocality with other popular radio shows of the time, including *Amos'n'Andy,* a radio program whose critical dialogue reveals anxieties surrounding race, performance, and 'passing' on the radio. These broadcasts, taken together, are salient in a few ways. First, they illustrate how, in the mid-century, visual cues of racial difference – particularly skin color – were replaced or exacerbated by sonic cues that stereotyped and segregated people of color in the US Second, they expose the ways that film stars – here, Bing Crosby – navigated that color line in mass-mediated musical performances, exposing tensions caused by the constraints of media and the requirements of the

star system. Finally, they demonstrate music's use as a tool to navigate adaptation and remediation by performers, producers, and listeners. Through this example, I also show the ways that the genre of the musical can use music to navigate that complexity.

Musicologist Todd Decker suggests *Holiday Inn*'s blackface performance has a more restrained tone: "Not all blackface numbers are alike; not all African American stereotypes are played the same way; and even minor parts and players can mark shifts in the possible. . .The archives demonstrate that the representation of African American characters and blackness in *Holiday Inn* was not the product of a monolithic, knee-jerk racism, but rather a weighing of options and an art of the possible." Expanding analysis of to reflect the multimedia reality of the time reveals the ways that this "weighing of options" was sustained beyond the film – the presence of blackface and the implications therein endured throughout repeated adaptations. Through musical tropes and genres that give context and depth to narratives, Hollywood adaptations included musical information that informed audiences of a character's race, identity, or characterization. Focusing on the ways that a Hollywood film property was adapted to fit into a new medium reveals cultural constructions of race and the pressures of performance traditions that were in tension with Hollywood star identities. Tellingly, the sounds of these radio performances – and the ways that music is modified to stand in for blackface performances – communicated the priorities of the star system which privileged perpetual construction of the Hollywood star identity.

MGM's *Holiday Inn*

In the movie, Crosby and Reynolds are a romantic duo, having met at the beginning of the film. Crosby's character, Jim, has opened an inn that attracts visitors throughout the year with

musical revues celebrating popular holidays. He hires Linda, played by Marjorie Reynolds, to perform in the shows opposite him. [172] Songs written by Irving Berlin celebrate a number of American and Christian holidays, including Valentine's Day with "Be Careful, It's My Heart," Easter, with "Easter Parade," US Independence Day with "Song of Freedom," and "Let's Say it With Firecrackers," Thanksgiving with "I've got Plenty to be Thankful For," and the holiday that both begins and ends the film: Christmas, allowing for two performances of the film's biggest hit, "White Christmas."

Their first holiday performance on New Year's Eve celebrates the opening of the Inn with a performance of "Come to Holiday Inn." (Figure 1.) The morning after the Inn's inaugural New Year's performance, Ted shares with Jim the story of his partner Lila's abandonment – the same partner that shares a romantic past with Jim. Ted plans to come back to the hotel on the next holiday – the February 12 celebration of Lincoln's Birthday. The performance of "Abraham," a number centering on celebrating the work of Abraham Lincoln, furthers the plot: Crosby's Jim conceals Linda from his old performing partner, Ted – played by Fred Astaire – who is a dancer who has shown interest in Linda. To Jim, Ted's presence is worrisome – he has a history of stealing Jim's partners, both professional and romantic. This leads Jim to decide to conceal Linda with blackface, and to don it as well.

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[172] Rick Altman, *The American Film Musical,* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987). In which Altman dissects how "the film proceeds through a series of paired segments matching the male and female leads." The film continuously binds together the male and female leads through similar narrative action, identifying the couple whose marriage is the "goal" of the plot early in the film.

Figure 13. Bing Crosby and Marjorie Reynolds in "Come to Holiday Inn." Holiday Inn (1942)

The song, "Abraham," was part of the film from its inception – dating back to composer Irving Berlin's first drafts of the story – though he originally is said to have imagined it sung by black Broadway star Ethel Waters. [173] Through the production process, however, the number turned from a black performance to a black*face* one. The performance of "Abraham," is primarily used for the celebration of Lincoln's Birthday. The performance also serves as a plot device – they perform in blackface so that Crosby's Jim can "hide" Linda from Ted. The morning after the Inn's inaugural New Year's performance, Ted shares with Jim the story of his

[173] Todd Decker, "On the Scenic Route to Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn (1942)." *The Journal of Musicology* 28, no. 4 (Fall 2011): 480.

partner Lila's abandonment – the same partner that shares a romantic past with Jim. As the two talk, Ted's voice becomes more rushed and harried. He begins to remember that he danced with a girl the night before and, in just a moment or two, decides that that girl is destined to be his new partner, if only he could "remember what she looked like."[174] Jim tries to convince him otherwise, and when asked to describe her, says "she was a medium-built sort of girl with a medium face, she had a nice evening gown on with a sort of a balmacaan back." [175] His unspecific description doesn't deter Ted: determined to find her, he planned to come back to the hotel on the next Holiday – Lincoln's Birthday. This leads Jim to decide to conceal her appearance through blackface.

[174] Spoiler: It's Linda.
[175] Balmacaan is a type of menswear overcoat, with a wide cut and simple styling. Not at all an elegant dress, and also very non-descript in style. Though this word had not been a part of my own vocabulary, the line got big laughs from the in-studio audience – making it seem that the joke was universally understood at the time.

Figure 14. Jim (Crosby) applies makeup to Linda (Reynolds) in Holiday Inn (1942)

Bing Crosby and Marjorie Reynolds wear blackface, joined by the entire workforce at the Holiday Inn: the band and servers have make-up darkened faces, but none more than Crosby and Reynolds. Blackface has also overtaken their voices and bodies with caricatured performances borrowing gestures, costuming, dialect, and timbre from the American Minstrel tradition and leaning heavily into problematic stereotypes and ideas about African Americans. As the studio system was built on the curation of a star phenomenon, these actors generally play some version of themselves – blackface performances are a drastic contrast. However, it is clear throughout these performances that the star remains underneath. The blackface in "Abraham," – though loosely a plot device – is a way for Crosby to get a few laughs and serves to reinforce the "Crosby-ness" of the rest of his performances.

"Abraham" is first introduced as background music a few scenes before the performance. Ted frantically walks through the crowded ballroom full of guests, awkwardly joining up with couples to investigate whether or not the female partner was the person he had drunkenly danced with on New Year's Eve. As the Inn's all-white guests dance, "Abraham" inconspicuously plays in the background without much fanfare – though a keen audience would note the darkened faces of the waiters and waitresses – foreshadowing what is to come. The song is familiar when it is finally performed.

Jim and Linda meet in the scene proceeding the performance. As they prepare, Jim suggests playing the scene in blackface. Though Linda initially resists, after some nudging - and a marriage proposal from Jim – she consents, and they keep talking as they apply the makeup. (Figure 2) The film audience watches as Jim and Linda apply the bootblack and then appear onstage to join the rest of the performers. Quickly, it becomes clear that the band and servers have make-up darkened faces, but none more than Jim and Linda. As their characters, Crosby and Reynolds modify their voices and bodies with stereotyped gestures, costumes, dialect, and timbre borrowed from the American minstrel tradition.[176] At the top of the performance, the guests return to their seats in unison, allowing for sightlines – and camera angles – to open up to the on-stage band, in blackface and wearing straw hats, striped shirts, and suspenders. Before Crosby walks on stage, the camera frames a banjo player. Though the sounds of the banjo are not on the musical track – the instrument would be rather unusual in a light musical/ jazz song such as this one – the sight of the banjo references southern black tradition. Sitting on the floor, he is

[176] Eric Lott, "Love and Theft: The Racial Unconscious of Blackface Minstrelsy," *Representations* 39 (Summer 1992): 23–50; Yuval Taylor and Jake Austen, *Darkest America: Black Minstrelsy from Slavery to Hip-Hop* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012).

surrounded by the band and a dock scene, complete with cotton bales, an ocean-painted scrim, and a huge boat – the S.S. Lincoln.

At the outset, Crosby hunches onto the Inn's stage with an affected limp and a cane as the band plays the first few introductory phrases – a melody foregrounding the saxophone and muted trumpets with a heavy downward-stepping bass line. The intro gives way to a light vamp as Crosby takes his place and comically adjusts his bright white gloves. An amalgam of minstrel cues, Crosby is dressed in a nineteenth century-style suit, topped with a stovepipe hat, under which springs out fuzzy white mutton chops and matching trimmed eyebrows. Before singing, he comically puts a hand to his back as he stiffly walks towards the audience, then adjusts his gloves with wide eyes and pursed lips – so different from the relaxed, casual, and self-confident Crosby in most of all his other performances.

Figure 15. Bing Crosby enters during the introduction for the song "Abraham," in Holiday Inn (1942)

Figure 16. Crosby purses his lips during the song "Abraham," in Holiday Inn (1942)

As he sings, he adapts his voice with a heavy glissando that alter his pronunciation and a text setting that transforms the character's syntax.[177] As more performers emerge onto the small inn stage, the performance delves further into minstrel traditions.

Halfway through the song, Marjorie Reynolds runs onstage presenting a character Decker describes as "an uninspired Topsy," referencing a character from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.[178] Her hair is tied up in many braids that stick out all over her head and bloomers protrude from under her too-short dress. She bounces across the stage, then sits on a cotton barrel in a child-like pose - slouched with her legs spread – not at all the elegant woman seen throughout the rest of the film. Like Crosby, her gestures reproduce long-standing minstrel traditions. She portrays the blackface character as simple, childlike, and wide-eyed.

Figure 17. Marjorie Reynolds prepares to sing atop a cotton barrel during "Abraham."

Figure 18. Reynolds widens her eyes in a stereotypical gesture common in blackface.

[177] Todd R. Decker, "On the Scenic Route to Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn (1942)," 481.
[178] Decker, "On the Scenic Route to Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn (1942)." 481.

Reynolds' voice is dubbed in the film by Martha Mears, who employs heavy glissandi and uses the same pronunciation that skews towards a supposedly black dialect.[179] They are backed by a band in blackface and straw hats, and at key moments, the inn's waiters serve double duty, joining in as the chorus. While the waiters' outfits match the worn look of the band in straw hats and rough linen shirts, the waitresses are clad in elegant Civil War-era dresses and bonnets. They all stop routinely and break out into some simple dance moves. Like the banjo player, they serve a mostly visual function: they support the Inn storyline as waiters and waitresses, the performance's minstrelsy in blackface, and lay claim to historical context. Mamie and her children also contribute a verse to the song. Their appearance in this scene works to confirm and reinforce the color line: the trio does not participate in the show-within-a-show performance. Instead, they sing about their gratitude to Lincoln – a quintessential white savior – from the inn's kitchen. Their performance style is naturalistic and eschews the markers in Crosby's performance.[180]

Hot or Not: Racial Implications of American Jazz

American Jazz historiography is rightly one often tied up in questions about race. Generally, the story becomes one about cultural appropriation, where previously marginalized black musical idioms and cultural products are taken up by white artists, sanitized, and used for profit. This history comes both from object-based evidence – the first jazz musicians were black, though white musicians did gain more cultural and financial capital – and from the documented

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[179] John H. McWhorter, *Talking Back, Talking Black : Truths about America's Lingua Franca* (New York: Bellevue Literary Press, 2017).
[180] Michael Rogin, "'Democracy and Burnt Cork': The End of Blackface, the Beginning of Civil Rights," *Representations* 46 (Spring 1994): 10.

experiences of musicians at the time. Though, as Jon Panish observes, many types of jazz were surrounded by a discourse of color-blindness: "press coverage," he states, "downplays race as a distinguishing feature of either musicians' lives or the music they were creating."[181] However, in reality, jazz musicians "considered swing to be yet another white appropriation of black culture and saw almost white musicians and businessmen making money from it."[182]

The timeline of this appropriation is well documented, occurring mostly from the nineteen-teens through the nineteen-thirties. During the First World War, (mostly white) musical criticism covered the music generally through the lens of a question of definition – an analytical approach that became a thinly veiled "cover for racist propaganda," which describe the music as "savage," and linked the music "seamlessly to slavery and Africa."[183] This critical move, one that Anderson observes is about "aggression towards the recently emancipated black man,"[184] takes a turn during the nineteen twenties when "jazz" – no longer music only performed by black Americans – became a marker for many musical genre and was further broken down into many sub genres, with differing amounts of success and circulation, correlating to the race of the performers and their audiences.

Savran cites three types of jazz, only one of which received widespread circulation during the inter-war years: jazz performances by white Americans for white Americans, or "Sweet Jazz." Described by Charles Hamm as "so-called jazz," this music received the bulk of critical and

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[181] Jon Panish, *The Color of Jazz: Race and Representation in Postwar American Culture*. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1997), 8.
[182] Jon Panish, *The Color of Jazz*, 12.
[183] Maureen Anderson, "The White Reception of Jazz in America." *African American Review* 38, no. 1 (Spring 2004):136.
[184] Anderson, "The White Reception of Jazz in America," 135.

popular consideration during that time.[185] The other two types - Savran summarizes – are both comprised of music created by black musicians: the second for black audiences – also often called "hot jazz" and the third for white audiences. Notably, Savran categorizes the music, not by its elements, but by the race of the people who are making and listening to it.[186] Many other notable jazz critics describe the music in this way – this categorization is useful for thinking about the markets that were open or closed to varying performers. Yet, Savran also pushes back against these categories, warning against monolithic categories that play into stereotypes about musicians themselves. "Sweet" or "hot" are complicated terms to describe jazz – these categories are purportedly reflective of musical elements but are often thinly veiled codes to describe performers and their audiences.

In his expansive study of music of the swing era, Gunther Schuller argues that rhythmic difference, syncopation, and increased improvisation became markers of a jazz idiom coded as black. Carefully he susses out how differences in musical styles between white and black bands during this period of racial segregation were a result of commercial potential: white big bands aimed to be a viable economic success, appealing to the widest audience possible, bringing in the largest groups of listeners and, as a result, having the highest economic benefit. However, Schuller explains, this resulted in them being "bogged down in such a morass of commercialism that their demise, as a viable forward-looking creative medium was inevitable." In his words, black audiences and performers couldn't "tolerate the increasingly insipid and tame dance music

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[185] Charles Hamm, "Towards a New Reading of Gershwin," in *The Gershwin Style: New Looks at the Music of George Gershwin*, ed. Wayne Schneider (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5.
[186] David Savran, "The Search for America's Soul: Theatre in the Jazz Age," *Theatre Journal*, Hearing Theatre, 58, no. 3 (October 2006): 463.

of the white bands."[187] White bands became stuck in a dated jazz sound, repeating music that had been commercially popular without focusing on advances in the music. The diluted, simplified sound of these vocalist-led, commercially oriented white dance bands that appealed to many became a marker of white music.

Types of jazz, like "be-bop" often considered only different because of the color of the people doing it. Yet, there were specific musical differences between white and black music not just on a human level, but also on a musical one. "Popular music of the late swing era commonly understood in racial terms, so audiences and musicians knew that certain elements of swing connoted blackness and others connoted whiteness." [188] So, though it is important to remember what Savran rightly points out: it is not the inherent whiteness or blackness of the musicians that made Jazz "sound" white or black, but the social constructions that surrounded – and were encapsulated in – the music. The lack of any financial expectations for black musicians freed their music in a way – they could take more musical risks and experiment with their sound, because you can't risk what you are already denied. On the flip side, ideas surrounding the success of white musicians hinged on their commercial – and financial – success. Rather than making music that was cutting edge or extreme, white musicians focused on appealing to the largest audiences. Sweet jazz – virtually the only music written about in the 1920's and 1930's made like band leaders Paul Whiteman and Tin Pan Alley composers like Irving Berlin prominent figures in American culture.

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[187] Gunther Schuller, *The Swing Era: The Development of Jazz, 1930 – 1945*, (The History of Jazz 2. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Pr, 1990), 390.
[188] Sherrie Tucker, *Dance Floor Democracy,* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 27.

Sweet jazz features prominently throughout Irving Berlin's score for the film, as in all his music. A prominent Tin Pan Alley composer, Berlin and his contemporaries, George Gershwin, Jerome Kern, and others had been associated with a type of theatrical jazz for decades. In the mid-nineteen twenties, Berlin was regarded as the "king of Jazz" and reviewed as "the single-handed master of syncopes and jazz."[189] As with many New York's Jewish composers of his time, Berlin's relationship with black music can be complicated in several ways. In the 1920's Jewish Tin Pan Alley composers and vaudeville performers were the "primary intermediaries and populizers of a musical vernacular that arguably began as an African American form."[190] These musicians adopted jazz elements to compose in the western classical tradition, necessarily putting notation down on paper, and stifling the improvisatory practice associated with black jazz musicians.

Just as "jazz" is a complicated definition to pin down – an effort that described as "a well-traveled and frustrating path, with traps of logic, philosophy, racial ideology, and politics everywhere one treads" – so too is the relationship between composition, performer, and a particular pieces' "jazziness" (or it's racial implications.) Within Berlin's work scholars have found traces of musical borrowing that – they argue – exemplify black elements into Berlin's music rhythmically (secondary-rag rhythm), harmonically (flat 7th), structurally, (blues bass) and formally (blues chord progression).[191] In the 1920's these elements quickly became a part of a

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[189] [Jack] Lait, "Music Box Revue," *Variety* 68, no. 10 (27 October 1922): 16.
[190] David Savran, "The Search for America's Soul: Theatre in the Jazz Age." *Theatre Journal*, Hearing Theatre, 58, no. 3 (October 2006), 464.
[191] Jeffrey Magee, "'Everybody Step': Irving Berlin, Jazz, and Broadway in the 1920s." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 59, no. 3 (December 2006): 700 He goes through a number of Berlin songs, identifies these elements theoretically. Borrows from topic theory. Still grounded in cultural associations – i.e. it's jazz because everyone says it is.

broader conception of American popular music, at that time described simply as "jazz." By using elements of jazz that could be notated, it whitened it. While elements of "black topics" are heard, more important are the non-notated elements: "improvisation; subtle pitch inflections such as scoops, slides, and blue notes that lie between the flat and natural third; a variety of timbral and textural devices including growls, grunts, [shouts] and wah-wah effects, … and rhythmic flexibility."[192] These elements, particularly scoops, slides, and rhythmic flexibility are used by Crosby and Reynolds to "blacken" their voices and cross the sonic color line for comic effect during their blackface performances. Crosby and Shore then pull back on these elements when performing on the radio and they are taken up by the other musical performers in the ensemble.

Mamie/ Mammy

In the MGM production, Mamie is portrayed by Louise Beavers who doesn't lean into the tropes of a black dialect and diverges strongly from the stereotypes that so often marks the difference between black characters and white. Rather, Beavers performs the role with an elegant affect and upper-class dialect, even while she is seen during the most overt moment of minstrelsy in the film. To explain these choices, Charlene Regester observes: "Recognizing that screen roles available to African American women were limited, [Beavers] used her historic talent to elevate her roles to a level of unquestionable dignity."[193] Mamie and her children contribute a verse to the song. Though their appearance in this scene works to confirm and reinforce the color line, the trio does not participate in the show-within-a-show performance. Instead, they sing about their

[192] Magee, "Everybody Step," 728.
[193] Charlene Regester, *African American Actresses: The Struggle for Visibility, 1900 - 1960*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 72.

gratitude to Lincoln – a quintessential white savior – from the inn's kitchen. Still, their performance style is much more natural, acting without wide-eyes, pursed lips, and the scripted dialect obvious in Crosby's performance.

Figure 19. Mamie (Louise Beavers) and her children sing a verse of "Abraham" from the kitchen of the Inn.

A prominent Tin Pan Alley composer, Irving Berlin – like his contemporaries George Gershwin, Jerome Kern, and others – has often been associated with the American Jazz tradition. In the 1920's these elements quickly became a part of a broader conception of American popular music, at that time described simply as "jazz." While I do recognize these elements within Berlin's song "Abraham," here, I want to focus on the ways that Crosby and the other performers use this music as the clay with which they mold their racialized vocal performances and how these performance practices contrasted with Beavers'. In the film, non-notated elements of the

performance particularly scoops, slides, and rhythmic flexibility are used by Crosby and Reynolds to "blacken" their voices and cross the sonic color line for comic effect during their blackface performances. Crosby and Shore – who replaces Reynolds on the radio – then pull back on these elements when performing on the radio – instead they are taken up by the other musical performers in the ensemble.

While this scene is the most overt moment of minstrelsy in the Holiday Inn film, the inn's housekeeper is a character that Jody Rosen has described as "Hollywood's most infamous racist stereotypes."[194] Literally sharing a name with the stock character type, Mamie's role in the film is that of a maternal caregiver. Consistently amiable and loyal throughout the film, she serves as a caretaker, cook, and housekeeper, accompanied by her two small children. While they visually help to reinforce her role as a maternal ideal, Mamie is devoted solely to Jim throughout the film.

Crosby and Reynolds represent stereotyped blackness through more than blackface, but also their use of racialized vocal timbre and altered pronunciation; their vocal performances echo the garish effect of their makeup. Yet, these tropes were in fact, decedents of this same culture and tradition of minstrelsy.[195] For example, as it has been called, 'blackvoice' – the sonic iteration of blackface performances – is an exaggerated example of culturally constructed vocality. As Jennifer Stoever has illustrated, black actors often needed instruction to speak in this way. [196] Yet, these performances are never natural – in blackvoice performances, this imagined vocality

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[194] Jody Rosen, *White Christmas: The Story of An American Song* (New York: Scribner, 2002), 147.
[195] Nina Eidsheim, "Voice as Action: Toward a Model for Analyzing the Dynamic Construction of Racialized Voice," *Current Musicology*, no. 93 (Spring 2012): 13. Eidsheim claims the voice – a material dimension of the body - never exists in a pre-cultural state, any kind of vocal production is produced by culture.
[196] Eric Lott, "Love and Theft: The Racial Unconscious of Blackface Minstrelsy," 32; Jennifer Lynn Stoever, *The Sonic Color Line: Race and the Cultural Politics of Listening*, Postmillennial Pop (New York: New York University Press, 2016), 242.

builds on a contrast with the presumed "white vocal norm." Culturally, this depends on the idea that "black bodies are inherently different."[197] By the 1930s, this difference was marked in several ways. Through performances of Minstrelsy, like many US cultural objects, this difference was implicit in the art – bodies were marked and discussed through descriptions of performances that focused on vocality, gesture, and character.

Racialized Vocality on the Radio

Without a visual element, audiences were blind to aspects of appearance that would draw clear color lines blackness could be adopted and exaggerated by performances in the minstrel tradition on the radio, resulting in the potential for the manipulation of the color line.[198] For example, Jennifer Stoever describes the ways white radio executives believed that "black actors' voices possess an undeniably recognizable tone and that, for black actors, voices must match bodies."[199]

Film stars like Crosby – who by 1942 was firmly a Hollywood "star" – did not take advantage of this white privilege.[200] As made clear in radio adaptations of Holiday Inn, Hollywood stars altered and changed their blackface – and blackvoice – performances to, I argue, avoid audiences making incorrect racial assumptions. These stars who relied on both the Hollywood Star system and their unique star identity had a different engagement with the sonic

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[197] Lisa Barg, "Black Voices/ White Sounds: Race and Representation in Virgil Thompson's Four Saints in Three Acts." *American Music* 18, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 152.
[198] Dave Laing, "A Voice without a Face: Popular Music and the Phonograph in the 1890s," *Popular Music*, The 1890s, 10, no. 1 (January 1991): 8.
[199] Stoever, *The Sonic Color Line*, 245.
[200] Crosby's career, in fact, has a complex relationship with black American music and traditions of black vocal production. He got his start making records with Paul Whiteman. Many of his early recordings included plenty of blackvoice, including "Mississippi Mud," as early as the late 1920s.

color line. While on screen, their voices could be exaggerated and altered just like their makeup. On the radio however, I argue that fear that they might be misunderstood, mis-raced, or heard to be another performer entirely meant that they crossed the sonic color line more carefully, if at all.

Daphne Brooks recognizes that at the root of this transgression of the color line is a re-marking of difference; between black and white, master and slave, superior and inferior. Difference is exemplified in an obviously black-faced body through garish and incongruous – decidedly unrealistic makeup. This, Brooks observes, leads to the possession and domination of blackness, a racialization and policing of black bodies for purposes of mass consumption and collective desire.[201] As in other minstrel performances, blackface in Holiday Inn emphasizes the difference between the Kitchen-bound childlike black Mammy with Crosby and Reynolds' kind white saviors, embodied in the omnipresent hero Lincoln.[202]

Racialized voices were not new to performances on the radio. *Amos 'n' Andy*, one of the longest running radio shows, had premiered in 1926 and continued to be a staple on American radio until 1960. While Charles Correll and Freeman Gosden, the two actors from Chicago who created, wrote and portrayed the characters, were white, their portrayal "fooled" many in their audience – both black and white – into thinking they were black.[203] Similar to blackface, though through vocal timbre and dialect, their voices brought to life the black characters they portrayed. Radio historian Melvin Patrick Ely suggests that radio audiences "knew" the pair were black because "they spoke in what anyone reared on minstrel shows, blackface vaudeville comedy, or

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[201] Daphne A. Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 25–26.
[202] Decker, "On the Scenic Route to Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn (1942)." Decker disagrees…
[203] Taylor and Austen, *Darkest America*, 149.

Uncle Remus stories – as most Americans had been – instantly recognized as 'Negro dialect": an assumed black authenticity supposedly functioned through the use of this black dialect.[204] However, Neil Verma asserts that radio activates visual imagery within our imagination through its use of acoustic "techniques for the use of volume, acoustics, sound effects to draw pictures in the mind."[205] Through these techniques I suggest that it was not only through black dialect that an imagined black performer could be heard on the radio, but rather "the sum of what we process multi-sensorially is trained, by virtue of existence in social environments, to carry out the work of corroborating socially constructed racial distinctions."[206] It is not just one thing that creates ideas of race within a voice, but a number of culturally situated cues.

In *Amos 'n' Andy*, dialect is just one of those cues. Timbre, too, is used to a great degree by Gosden and Correll to suggest black bodies – a specific timbre which many authors have connected to African American music and culture, identified as the "rasp" by Jacob Smith.[207] The rasp was just one option available to black performers that nonetheless took on a heightened significance imbuing "authenticity" in the performance of black[minstrel]ness.[208] Furthermore, *Amos 'n' Andy* also built on culturally constructed context cues and racial stereotypes inherited from minstrel shows. Like the acoustic techniques Verma identifies that create imagined spaces in radio listeners' minds, these elements create imagined performers. With the Hollywood 'star' these minstrel are the second of two overlapping imaginaries that exist simultaneously in the

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[204] Melvin Patrick Ely, *The Adventures of Amos'n'Andy: A Social History of An American Phenomenon* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001), 2.
[205] Neil Verma, *Theater of the Mind: Imagination, Aesthetics, and American Radio Drama* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 13.
[206] Eidsheim, "Voice as Action: Toward a Model for Analyzing the Dynamic Construction of Racialized Voice."
[207] Jacob Smith, *Vocal Tracks: Performance and Sound Media* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 134.
[208] Smith, *Vocal Tracks,* 135.

listener's mind, are supported by transmedial experience and remediated content, and are in tension with one another.

To navigate this tension, musical elements carefully frame the performances to situate the characters, and – most importantly – the actors within the performance of the black/white dichotomy of minstrel performance. Through instrumentation, vocalization, structure, and approaches to rhythm, improvisation, and pronunciation, each performance situates the actors differently in the spectrum between the "otherness" of blackface, and the white performers underneath. On film, the production of "Abraham" focuses the listener's auditory and visual attention on the two stars. Performing in blackface, the discontinuity between black and white is clear. The subsequent radio performances however, approached to the music of "Abraham" differently. Without a visual component, however, stars retain their whiteness on the radio. Another tactic is clear from the beginning of the song – even the different methods to the song's introduction set up how audiences will hear and understand who is making the music. On screen, Crosby and Reynolds are free to alter their vocal timbre, because even under their grotesque dark makeup, we know they are still the stars that the audience knows. The incongruity of a face full of makeup does not aim for realism, but in fact highlights the whiteness of the body underneath. Though their performance style has been altered, there is no possibility that audiences would confuse them – their star identities remain intact through the momentary farce, because the audience is always aware of the obvious makeup and the stars underneath.

Holiday Inn on the Radio

Not long after the film's premiere, *Screen Guild Theatre* broadcast a version of the film straight into listeners' living rooms. Serving as a narrator, Crosby appears on the radio in

character to tell the story of the film as if in a casual conversation with the weekly host. He reprises his role as Jim Hardy, while *Screen Guild Theatre* regular - film star Dinah Shore - replaces Marjorie Reynolds as Linda Mason. The remaining roles – of Ted, Mamie, and others, went without credit. For broadcast, the film was reimagined as a half-hour radio program, prompting many changes and transformations to the entire program, including the performance for Lincoln's birthday. In the *Screen Guild Theatre* production in 1943, Crosby's character interacts with the host, recalling the story of the Inn. When talking about preparing for the birthday celebration of Abraham Lincoln, a distinct vocal change aurally previews the performance to the audience. The phrase "we gonna work in blackface," – notably grammatically incorrect - is said in a lower register and with slurred consonants. This phrase is like his on-screen performance, where he adopts what contemporaneous social philosopher Alain Locke called the 'cornfield voice' and what scholar Barbara Savage has described "aural blackface."[209] This type of address foreshadows a blackface performance - it's a nod and a wink to the audiences of the day. The dialect he adopts comes with all the informative baggage that has been built up over the previous century in the U.S.

The 1943 *Screen Guild Theatre* performance contrasts with film version and begins with a blasting solo open-bell trumpet playing a syncopated rhythm at the top of its range. This is followed by an eighth note run down and then back up to four short splatting notes accompanied by heavy staccato beats from the rest of the on-air orchestra. Though the trumpet flubs a bit, the brassy tone and rhythmic emphasis of the short phrase introduces the song in much different way

[209] Barbara Dianne Savage, *Broadcasting Freedom: Radio, War, and the Politics of Race, 1938-1948*, John Hope Franklin Series in African American History and Culture. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 7, 74.

than the film's melodic accompaniment and Crosby's stagger onto the stage. Rather, this introduction echoes jazz elements developed and popularized by black musicians of the 1920s and 30s.[210] *Screen Guild Theatre*'s "Abraham" begins with a blasting jazz trumpet on a syncopated rhythm leading into a run that ends on four brassy, splatted quarter notes accompanied by heavy hits by the rest of the ensemble. Here, the phrase seems to be shifted; though the eighth note would usually be heard as a pick-up to the quarter on the downbeat, here it falls directly on the down beat, shifting the quarter to the "and" of one and highlighting the rhythmic improvisation and syncopation (Figure 9).

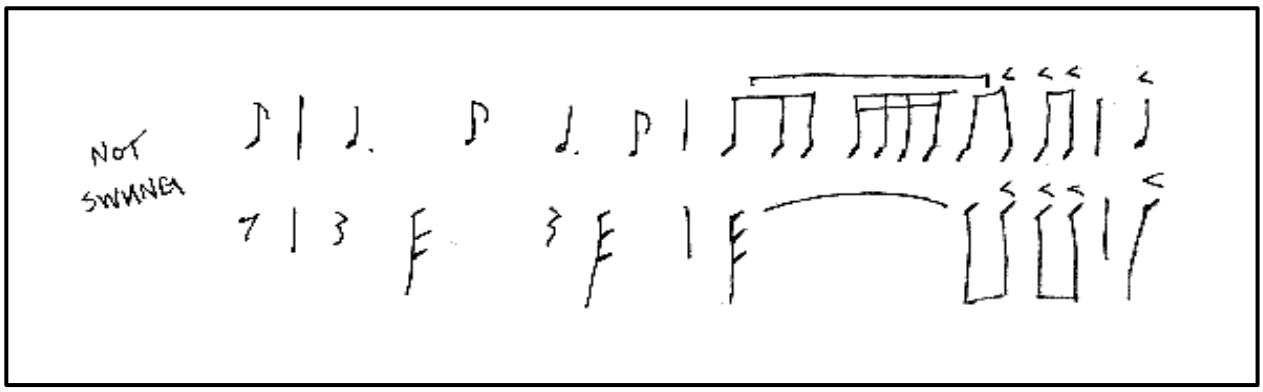

Figure 20.

[210] Gunther Schuller, *The Swing Era: The Development of Jazz, 1930 - 1945*, Repr, The History of Jazz 2 (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Pr, 1991), 305. Cites trumpeter and arranger John Nesbitt of the McKinney Cotton Pickers. He finds an introductory motive which is shifted rhythmically, creating a second-beat accent that "became a favorite device of Nesbitt's," and appears in most of his work. Popular in the 1920s and 30s, the McKinney Cotton Pickers were one of the few black bands of the time to find some, if limited success in white audience circles – including a residency at the Graystone Ballroom of Detroit and performances for the royal family of England. Though relatively forgotten today, Nesbitt's arrangements had a lasting impact on jazz, serving as inspiration for Gene Gifford, the Casa Loma orchestra, and "a host of swing era bands from Lunceford to Goodman."

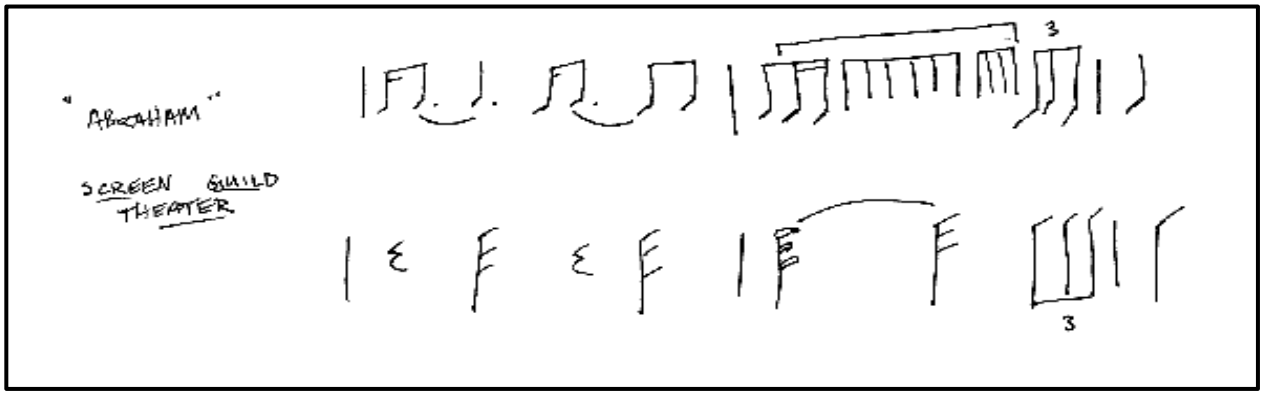

Figure 21.

The trumpet player continues throughout the song, working as the main source of a kind of call and response feel. Delayed onsets and swung rhythms lend the solo instrument and air of improvisation with the same sense of musicality and freedom as Crosby in the film. These syncopations and improvisatory rhythms are accompanied by a wind-heavy ensemble – the only string audible on the broadcast is the plucked string bass. By removing all of the strings that were so audibly and visually central to the film's recording, the ensemble more closely resembles a small jazz ensemble from a small intimate casual music venue than one from either a large dance hall or a Broadway musical pit.

Where in *Screen Guild Theatre*'s performance of the song, the solo trumpet performed improvisatory fills throughout the piece, the chorus interjects throughout the *Railroad Hour* version. In 1952, Gordon McRae performed "Abraham" as a part of the program's adaptation of *Holiday Inn*. The chorus combines with the instrumental accompaniment, and the elements come together to create a thicker texture throughout the song. MacCrae, as Jim begins the number with a shout – "Ladies and Gentleman, Holiday Inn salutes: the 12th of February." He continues to be the focus of the musical texture as the song begins, with a new a cappella introduction accompanied by the chorus singing oohs and ahhs.

> "There's a man who's the pride of this great nation:
> The man who's the cause of this celebration"

Next, the chorus joins to declare his name:

> "Abraham, Abraham, Abraham, Abraham."

The a cappella arrangement of this introductory material – along with the slow tempo, the wordless chorus, and the long sustained melodic phrases – hints not at jazz music, but another music with roots in the African diaspora in America: formal choral arrangements of traditional spirituals. Stemming from the importance of the voice, unaccompanied versions of spirituals blossomed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century during the popularity of touring groups from what later became known as historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). These groups, such as the popular Fisk Jubilee Singers from Fisk University – founded specifically for the education of freed slaves – toured throughout the United States and later internationally raising funds for their university.

The Fisk Jubilee Singers began with a diverse repertoire of choral music but found that their performances of traditional spirituals from the American slave tradition were the most popular. As the group from Fisk University began focusing their efforts on this style of music, so too did other university and professional choirs. These choirs were eventually featured on the radio throughout the 1930s and 40s: the choir from the Hampton Institute was heard on NBC in a series of half hour broadcasts in the 1930s, and the Tuskegee Institute choir was heard on the radio throughout the 1940s and 50s. Broad audiences in the mid-century would be familiar with the genre and the musical elements that were associated with it. As the blasting trumpet of *Screen Guild Theatre*'s 1943 "Holiday Inn," foregrounds a kind of jazz influence, this production builds on those connections it to also index the spiritual tradition, another musical

genre with roots in black American musical traditions, reinforcing an indexical link to American blackness.

Crosby's filmic performance is influenced by some of the idioms that had come to indicate hot jazz, and thus blackness, including interjections, shifting downbeats, delayed consonance, scoops, and slides. In his first verse, Crosby draws out both voiced and unvoiced consonants, lingering on them for just a bit too long, landing onto the pitch a hair behind the band. This improvisatory practice often places the solo line in contrast with the rhythm section continuing to build on a syncopated sound. Crosby takes advantage into the repetitive "b" sound, which serves the dual purpose of both swinging the rhythm, and bringing the audience's focus to his bright lips, clear in the closeup shot used in this moment. The consonant draws the lips forward, continuing to exaggerate the effect of the makeup.

Language in the film is noticeably exaggerated, a clear example of the vocal blackface that was popular in representations of blackness. Most often used in musical to study and apply 'proper' diction, IPA transcriptions can also be used to understand and visually clarify the sounds common in these types of performances. For example, a transcription of a verse of "Abraham" from the film reveals where Crosby often chose voiced consonants (underlined below) or omits them completely (marked with an underscore) which allow him to "swing" the rhythm and slur the words together.

In eighteen sixty, he became	*ɪn eɪtin sɪksdə hi bikeɪm*
The sixteenth president,	*ðə sɪksdin_ prezəden_*
And now he's in the hall of fame,	*æ_‿nau hiz ɪn də hal ʊʌ feɪm*
A most respected gent.	*ə maʊs_ rɪzpekdɪd d͡ʒən_*

Most noticeable is the way that Crosby's pronunciation continues through stop-plosives consonants. He chooses sounds that continue the use of the voice – "t" is pronounced "*d*," and

"s" sounds like "*z*." In common American English the word 'respected' would be pronounced *rispekted* in this example, however Crosby pronounces it *rɪzpekdɪd*. In this way, Crosby can – just as with the letter "b" in the first verse, continue to sing while lingering on these consonants. In addition, Crosby also drops consonants, particularly ending ones, which allows him to elide right into the next word ("and now" sounds as *æ_‿nau*). More often, however, these consonants are dropped from the ends of phrases, such as in the case of president (*prezəden_*) and gent (*d͡ʒən_*). By eliding his words and dropping final consonants, particularly the crisp stop-plosive 't', Crosby made use of the "cornfield" voice – and the implied "lazy pronunciation" that accompanied it.

Additionally, in the film Crosby makes strong use of interjections, shouting out frequently when not singing the main melody. The verse in which Reynolds sings the main melody, Crosby shouts a reply, either an emphatic syllable: a "yeah" or "m-hm," or a few words in reply, encouraging Reynold's next line: "Tell me!" or "Who dat?" These shouts echo improvised practices of jazz and the shouts shape the verse into a repetitive call-and-response-like structure, a common element of African American musical practice.[211]

Reynolds:	Crosby:
USA's united thanks,	(yeah!)
To one whose name was Nancy Hanks,	(tell me!)
Abraham!	(M-hm)
Abraham!	(That's what she did!)
She gave this land it's finest son,	(Who dat?)
Whoever went to Washington,	
Abraham! Abraham!	

[211] Wilson, 3. He describes black music and identifies "predilections for conceiving music," that cause a "tendency to create musical forms in which antiphonal or call-and-response musical structures abound. These antiphonal structures frequently exist simultaneously on a number of different architectonic levels."

On the radio, however, Crosby's performance while still musical, and in his typical crooning idiom, makes much less use of interjections, rhythmic flexibility, and the "cornfield voice." The pronunciation that is key to the performances in the film is – though not completely gone – dialed back significantly. In the radio versions, their performances are less stereotyped, and their English is standardized and less mimetic of a supposedly black dialect. For example, the phrase that is heard in the film as "when he growed up," has been re-written to "when he grew up." Further, Crosby's pronunciation is altered significantly, with 14 overall differences (marked in bold) in pronunciation between the two versions.

	MGM Film	Screen Guild Theatre
In eighteen sixty, he became	*ɪn eɪtin sɪksdə hi bikeɪm*	*ɪn eɪtin sɪksd**i** hi bikeɪm*
The sixteenth president,	*ðə sɪks**d**in_ prez**ə**den_*	*ðə sɪks**t**in**θ** pres**ɪ**den**t***
And now he's in the hall of fame,	*æ_‿nau hiz ɪn **d**ə hal ʊʌ feɪm*	*æ**n**‿nau hiz ɪn **ð**ə hal ʊʌ feɪm*
A most respected gent.	*ə maʊs_ rɪz**z**pek**d**ɪd d͡ʒən_*	*ə maʊs**t** rɪs**s**pekted d͡ʒen**t***

Ten of those were changes to consonants, generally moving back towards the standardized American English pronunciation of the words. The dropped final consonants of president (*prezəden_*) and gent (*d͡ʒən_*) are heard in the *Screen Guild* version (*presɪden**t*** and *d͡ʒen**t***). Vocalized consonants are replaced by crisper unvoiced ones. In Crosby's film performance respected is pronounced *rɪzpekdɪd*. However, on the radio, the s of respected is a true s (*rɪ**s**pekted*), replacing the voiced z (*rɪzpekdɪd*) heard in the film. In the final syllable of the same word, the 't' of respected also changes from a voiced *d* to an unvoiced *t* (*rɪ**s**pekted* to *rɪzpekdɪd*). Between the two version a few vowels are also different, with Crosby preferencing vertical vowel sounds on the radio – a marked difference to the flatness of Crosby's vowels in the MGM film.

Comparing the differences between Crosby's two early 1940's performances take on a new light when also considering the 1952 performance of Gordon MacRae on *The Railroad Hour*, a program that produced adaptations of stage musicals, film musicals, and light operetta for the radio.

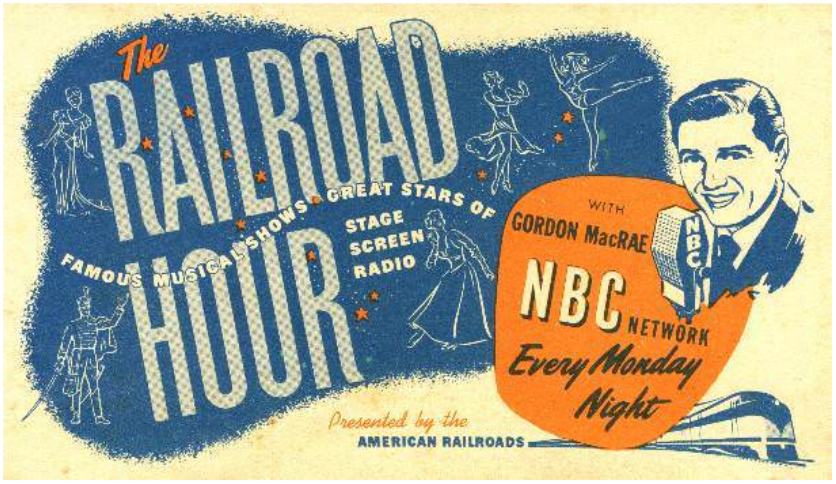

Figure 22

Interestingly, comparing these differences between Crosby's two early 1940's performances with the differences between his performance and MacCrae's emphasizes this change in performance styles. This shows that – at least in this example – performances style of blackvoice change due more to the medium than even the performer. Comparing Crosby's performance in the film with MacCrae's on the Railroad Hour – when omitting actual word changes – results in a similar number of differences: 13, 3 vowels and 10 consonants (in bold).

Text	Railroad Hour	MGM Film
In eighteen sixty, he became	*nau ɪn eɪtin sɪks**ti** hi b**ɪ**keɪm*	*ɪn eɪtin sɪks**də** hi b**i**keɪm*
The sixteenth president,	*ðə sɪks**t**in**θ** pres**ə**den**t***	*ðə sɪks**d**in_ prez**ə**den_*
And now he's in the hall of fame,	*nau hiz ɪn **ð**ə hal ʊʌ feɪm*	*æ_‿nau hiz ɪn **d**ə hal ʊʌ feɪm*
A most respected gent.	*ə maʊs**t** r**i**spek**t**ɪd d͡ʒ**ɪ**n**t***	*ə maʊs_ r**ɪz**pekdɪd d͡ʒ**ə**n_*

However, when comparing Crosby's *Screen Guild Theatre* performance with Gordon MacCrae's *The Railroad Hour* performance – both on the radio – there are only six overall changes between the two performances, five of which are vowel alterations; McRae's tendencies towards open vowel sounds reveal his operatic background.

Text	Railroad Hour	*Screen Guild Theatre*
In eighteen sixty, he became	*nau ɪn eɪtin sɪkst**i** hi b**ɪ**keɪm*	*ɪn eɪtin sɪks**d**i hi b**i**keɪm*
The sixteenth president,	*ðə sɪkstinθ presə**d**ent*	*ðə sɪkstinθ presɪ**d**ent*
And now he's in the hall of fame,	*nau hiz ɪn ðə hal ʊʌ feɪm*	*æn‿nau hiz ɪn ðə hal ʊʌ feɪm*
A most respected gent.	*ə maʊst r**i**spekt**ɪ**d d͡ʒ**ɪ**nt*	*ə maʊst r**ɪ**spekt**e**d d͡ʒ**e**nt*

This analysis supports the argument that these pronunciation choices are dependent on the medium – Crosby's radio performance shares more in common with McRae on the radio than he does with himself on film. They discuss their blackface makeup in the scene leading up to the performance in each one of the versions, making it clear to audiences and inviting them to 'see' the performers in blackface. Yet, it is not the incongruities of the imagined garish makeup or the affected pronunciations of a 'cornfield voice' that creates a minstrel-like performance on the radio, but an emphasis on blackness elsewhere in the music, marking the color line and the stars' corresponding whiteness.

The Railroad Hour's twenty-minute version – even shorter than the hour-long *Screen Guild Theatre* broadcast – of Holiday Inn was heard a decade later in December of 1952. McRae stars as Jim, though none of the other cast is credited on the air. The broadcast follows the same plot and features the same songs as the *Screen Guild* version, but some noticeable changes were made to update the story a decade later. Conspicuously, in *The Railroad Hour*'s performance of the "Abraham" sequence, the specific kind of makeup that Jim and Linda wear for Lincoln's Birthday is downplayed. They describe it simply as 'character makeup,' though the connotation

is clear. Jim's affected reading of the line, "Ain't it the truth" is spoken in a lower register, closer to the mike, and with a pronunciation unlike that used by McRae in the rest of the broadcast. The close range of the delivery – followed by audience laughter – gives the impression that the listener is 'in' on the joke. Though it's not explicitly stated, we know what's going on - the same way a wink or a head nod could clue a viewer in. This single line conveys the context of minstrel traditions clearly to a contemporaneous audience, most likely familiar with the film version of Holiday Inn. The contemporaneous audience also would have seen blackface performances in Hollywood films and stage productions – dwindling in number, though still present. So, though the text of the blackface scene has been changed, the context has not. There could be no doubt in the listener's mind that the character makeup that Jim insists Linda wear is indeed blackface.

At the start of the song MacRae as Jim begins the number with a shout – "Ladies and Gentlemen, Holiday Inn salutes: the 12th of February." He continues to be the focus of the musical texture as the song begins, with a new a cappella introduction accompanied by the chorus singing oohs and ahhs.

> There's a man who's the pride of this great nation:
> The man who's the cause of this celebration.

Next, the chorus joins to declare his name: "Abraham, Abraham, Abraham, Abraham." The acappella arrangement of this introductory material – along with the slow tempo, the mostly-wordless chorus, and the long sustained melodic phrases – hints not at jazz music, but formal choral arrangements of traditional spirituals. During the late 19th century groups, such as the popular Fisk Jubilee Singers from Fisk University – founded specifically for the education of freed slaves – toured throughout the United States and raising funds for their university The Fisk Jubilee Singers began with a diverse repertoire of choral music but found that their performances

of traditional spirituals from the American slave tradition were the most popular. As the group from Fisk University began focusing their efforts on this style of music, so too did other university and professional choirs. These choir were eventually featured on the radio throughout the 1930s and 40s: the choir from the Hampton Institute was heard on NBC in a series of half hour broadcasts in the 1930s, and the Tuskegee Institute choir was heard on the radio throughout the 1940s and 50s.[212] Broad audiences in the mid-century would be familiar with the genre and the musical elements that were associated with it.

In the past, scholars have suggested that poor grammar and poor pronunciation alone invoked what scholar Alain Locke called the 'cornfield voice.'[213] However, radio activates visual imagery within a listener's imagination through its use of multiple acoustic techniques.[214] Through these techniques, dramas came to life for the audience. Visual imagery supplemented the aural in the listener's imagination, suggesting that listeners routinely and actively augmented what they heard on the air with visual images. Because of this practice, radio listeners are encouraged to take what they hear at face value, whether it was supported by what "actually" went on in the studio.

As listeners built worlds in their minds through sound techniques on the radio, so did they too imagined bodies that populated those worlds. Multiple aural codes index the presence of black bodies on the radio waves. In the case of Holiday Inn, the remediation of a Hollywood musical in particular reveals and illuminates frictions between minstrel performance tradition,

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[212] Patricia J. Trice, "Unaccompanied Choral Arrangements of African-American Spirituals: The 'Signifying' Tradition Continues," *Choral Journal* 34, no. 7 (February 1, 1994): 10.
[213] See Taylor and Austin, Ely, etc.
[214] Verma, 13

the priorities of Hollywood, and the requirements of a broadcast. Simultaneously, these frictions are navigated through musical performance. Here, the tendency of a radio audience to accept racial presentation as fact goes against Hollywood's constant reinforcement of the star image. Radio producers navigated the concern that Crosby's identity might be misconstrued through a reframing of the contrast that is present in minstrel tradition.

Both broadcasts of Holiday Inn relied heavily on sonic cues to imbue the performance with the codes of black bodies. Yet, in these musical performances, white star bodies simultaneously remain separate. Through a single performance, an aural embodiment of the dichotomy created by minstrel performance is broadcast on the air, though it takes an altered form. Though other white performers on the radio passed as black, Crosby, Shore and McRae retain their whiteness and thus their known identity. Musical genres of black traditions, be it jazz or spirituals, serves a similar purpose to blackface. Through citations of these traditions, the chorus and instrumental accompaniment contrast with the film star's whiteness the presence of stars like Crosby and the consistency of their identity throughout the program is clearly important: they are often there to sell a new film. Yet, as understood through the reception of contemporaneous broadcasts, a precedent for misattribution of voices to bodies had been set. If Crosby had made full use of the same dialect and vocal delivery he did in the film, there would have been a chance his identity could have been confused for a moment through a medium that, as with *Amos 'n' Andy*, created the conditions for such confusion.

The radio performance of Holiday Inn approaches the divide between white and black – created by the blackface performance in the film – in a way that seems to be informed by tensions that surface between overlapping imaginaries on the radio. When the personas of the

stars are the draw, clearly portraying that identity throughout the broadcast – even during Minstrel performances – is most important. Through the remediation of musicals on the radio, ideologies of identity and race are foregrounded and clarified. Though unnoticed in film, dissonances between performance traditions – here, Minstrelsy and the star system – are brought to a light by a thorough investigation into the ways performers and producers handled the adaptation of film through broadcast technology.

Conclusion

In 2017, Two-Up Productions created a podcast – *36 Questions* – which they billed as "the world's first podcast musical—made for your ears only."[215] The podcast stars Jesse Shelton and Jonathan Groff of Hamilton-fame as a couple attempting to save their marriage through the titular 36 questions, which are supposedly designed to make strangers fall in love. The marketing for the podcast leans heavily on it being the "first of its kind." In many ways, this musical is foreign, even to those familiar with the radio musicals of the 1930s and 40s, yet it also borrows from the mass-mediated musicals which proceeded it. Staring Jonathan Groff – a veritable Broadway Star, known for *Spring Awakening*, *Hamilton*, and his screen work on *Glee* and *Frozen*, and Jessie Shelton of Broadway's *Hadestown*, and the first national tour of *Waitress*.

Like the radio musicals of the 1930s and 40s, *36 Questions* follows a conversation - mainly between two people, but sometimes three – but instead of being a conversation between the host and a character or a film star, this is framed as a conversation between two people recording themselves on an iPhone. What is heard is what is "recorded" by the characters in the story. To frame the story, the production is framed as if the audience were listening to the recording, rather than eavesdropping or listening in on a conversation that is being had at the very minute. Online, fans can view behind the scenes photos, sign up for a newsletter, and purchase *36 Questions* "merch," a deluxe album, a script, or even sheet music. Like the radio productions that came before it, *36 Questions* is meant to be consumed through a multitude of media types, with famous stars that audiences know from their other work.

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[215] "36 Questions," Two-Up Productions, https://twoupproductions.com/36-questions/podcast

Since *36 Questions*, many other "podcast musicals" have saturated the market – JunglePunks Teamed up with iHeartRadio to create the serialized *Bear and a Banjo* in the fall of 2019, and Whale Bus produced *Childish: The Podcast Musical* the following winter. The Audio Ballads produced *Citizen Paine* – a musical about American Revolutionary Thomas Paine that was no doubt inspired by the success of Hamilton! on Broadway in the summer of 2020. Most recently, *It Makes a Sound* – produced by Night Vale and Apple Podcasts – premiered in March of 2021. Like *36 Questions*, *It Makes a Sound* is framed by recording technology – listening audiences are framed as hearing something that has already happened, rather than a live event. In these productions, recording technology is one of the frames through which listeners can approach the performance. This need for a "new" type of frame – rather than the casual conversations with a host that develop into musical productions – shows how specific to time and place radio musicals were. Today, radio productions don't work the same for audiences, as they aren't participating in the same circulatory web that saturated the 1930s and 1940s. Audience experience is different, so audial musicals are also different.

This drastic change, between the framing of mass mediated musicals and the framing of podcast musicals today, supports the need to reframe our understanding of musicals of the mid-century as well. Audiences of these musicals were enmeshed in a circulatory web of meaning that effected their understanding of radio musicals of the time. It is important to rebuild these webs to understand audience education more fully and better comprehend the nuance through which audiences were engaging with these musicals. In chapters one, two, and three, I outlined the ways that mid-century musicals were a multimedial phenomenon, with radio broadcasts being a central way that audiences interacted with and consumed the Hollywood musical at this

time. This led to chapter four, where I saw this scholarship to fruition, analyzing Holiday Inn as an example of the direction this scholarship can take in the future.

Chapter one rebuilt radio productions' likely contexts, placing them within the context of contemporaneous media landscape. By offering a brief history of radio-film interaction, I looked at the ways that radio musicals – and, more broadly, Hollywood musicals – worked within a web of media. These productions were reworked, remediated, and adapted to portray the same genre on radio, in magazines, in phonograph recordings, and on the movie screen. The business of radio production intertwined increasingly deeply with the Hollywood film industry, working as part of a multimedial landscape to produce the persona of film stars, the aesthetics of the productions, and the glamour of Hollywood. As this chapter clarified, radio productions were a part – an important part, but just a part – of a larger multimedial landscape that made up "Hollywood Musicals" as contemporaneous audiences considered them.

The second chapter delved deeper into the ways that audiences interacted with radio musicals specifically and the ways that performance techniques influenced their listening. Judy Garland and Fred Astaire – two wall known performers event today – served as examples of vocal and dance performances respectively. Known for their distinct performance styles, Garland and Astaire's bodies were rendered on the radio through what I call kinesthetic listening, a term that builds on Verma's phenomena of radio drama outlined in *Theatre of the Mind.* By looking at radio performances through this lens, I clarified how radio musicals borrowed from and built on radio dramas, Hollywood Musicals, and other productions of film, radio and print of the time. Through several production and performance techniques, listeners were invited to engage physically with what they hear on the radio.

In the third chapter, I focused on production techniques and the ways that radio musicals produced a sense of fidelity and liveness. Pre-existing audience knowledge – built through experiences with theatre, Hollywood musicals, and films – was reinforced by audience education and instruction within the broadcasts themselves. In-studio audience participation, conversations and interviews between the stars and the host, as well as other elements of production worked together to create a sense of truthfulness and liveness. In this chapter, the investigation of fidelity works as a tool to understand how audiences interacted with radio musicals in a similar way to live theatre.

In the fourth and final chapter, I gave an example of what could be done by including radio musicals into the study of Hollywood Musicals. By comparing performances across Hollywood productions of Holiday Inn, I uncovered the ways that studying radio broadcasts of film properties in tandem with the film itself can open up new and unexpected venues of scholarship. In this example, a changing medium meant performers took on an altered approach to performance, shifting their musical approach to fit the needs of radio. This scholarship opens new possibilities for the study of musicals in the mid-century, possibilities that are seemingly necessary, if we are to have a full understanding of the ways that audiences of the time listened to and understood these films.

The Hollywood musical is a genre previously regarded as ultimately visual; this study of Hollywood musicals ultimately argues that – while still a very visual medium – radio productions were able to successfully translate Hollywood films onto the radio. These broadcasts were often the only way that film fans could have interacted with their favorite movies a second time, and broadcasters often relied on listeners previous knowledge to create a clear performance

on the air. I argue that without considering all the ways that listeners consumed these film properties, scholarship on the Hollywood musical is incomplete.

Viewing this genre through the circulatory web of dialogic remediation, I argue, is necessary to understand the material. Yet, this framework has the potential to be useful in a multitude of music and media studies contexts. Today's media landscape is not all that different from the landscape of Hollywood musicals in the mid-century. Not only podcasts like 36 Questions, but films of today also inhabit a circulatory web of mediation and remediation. The media landscape has expanded; magazines, radio broadcasts, and records have been joined by listicles and quizzes, social media posts, and think pieces. The Gold Diggers series has been supplanted by the Marvel Cinematic Universe. In my work, taking this dialogic remediation into account has proven to be useful and illuminative when considering radio musicals and proves the potentiality for this type of scholarship when considering any mass-mediated work. Though this project is a mere introduction to the possibilities, my hope is that it serves to open the doors to more scholarship in the future, laying out a basis and a template for possibilities and potential.

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"Mother Wore Tights." *Lux Radio Theatre*. Vine Street Theatre: CBS, November 14, 1949.

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