

KSJN: Giant Step for Public Broadcasting?

By MIKE STEELE
Minneapolis Tribune Staff Writer

Ever so quietly late last month, KSJN-FM began regular broadcasts from a new, almost primitive, basement studio in the St. Paul Arts and Sciences Center.

The beginning of a two-hour, daily, news-and-public-affairs broadcast wasn't exactly big news and, indeed, few in the state knew or cared. But this small step for KSJN might very well be a giant step for Minnesota Educational Radio.

KSJN, until that broadcast, had been used solely as a re-transmitting station, directing the 19-hour daily programming of KSJR-FM from its Collegeville, Minn., studios to the Twin Cities. It's been doing that for almost four years, since KSJR began as an extension of St. John's University.

But last year, the two stations decided to creep out from under St. John's financial umbrella and go it alone, keeping their

non-commercial status and depending on grants and listener support to pay the way. The stations incorporated as Minnesota Educational Radio, Inc. (MER).

In Collegeville, the sta-

tion lacked visibility and increasingly felt isolated from the Twin Cities. The station also had an identity crisis. Its image was that of an old lady, merrily spinning Beethoven between soft, but ever so earnest, appeals for con-

tributions to "Minnesota's only listener-supported station."

But the station was also playing things like Lutoslavsky's Second Symphony, Afro-American folk music and the works of

Wilhelm Stenhammar.

Garrison Keillor's morning program became a provocative, much-talked-about and chuckled-over addition to early-morning listening, especially when he did his political satires

or switched to Jack's Auto Repair where Jack, worried about a right-wing takeover, was offering humanities night courses

Radio

Continued on Page Four

It's Definite: Newman Is Guthrie's Star Rumor

By MIKE STEELE
Minneapolis Tribune Staff Writer

Michael Langham, since arriving in Minneapolis as artistic director at the Guthrie, has made it clear he has nothing against using stars in his productions, as long as they're stars because of their acting ability.

But, to put a stop to some rumors, he will not bring in Diana Dors to play Clytemnestra, Dean Martin to do King Lear or Jim Nabors to portray Cyrano.

However, Langham, when asked politely, will not deny the fact that he knows Paul Newman and Christopher Plummer quite well, or that Julie Harris, who once played Juliet for him at Stratford, might be available next season.

"Of course, there's nothing definite yet," he will say, with something quite like a pixyish glimmer in his eyes.

The Newman rumor is nothing new around here. First, it is known that Newman loves the stage and would like another crack at it. He indeed has shown an interest in the Guthrie but, in the past, could not commit himself for a long season. Langham's idea for next year is to break the long season into short parts with several actors coming just for one of the parts. It sounds like Newman's cup of tea.



Newman

The Minnesota Theatre Company is also getting into films next year and New-

man, conveniently, has a film company.

"Oh," said Langham, not at all surprised. "We're dealing with a different film company next year, but we must remember that for the future."

Donald Schoenbaum, Guthrie managing director, who is no stranger to rumors, would say only that "this is the type of actor we certainly hope will want to join the company. This is the first time, with Michael here and a flexible schedule, that we're in a position to talk to them. But, oh no, certainly nothing definite."

So, just for the record and to stop those rumors, Paul Newman, Julie Harris and Christopher Plummer emphatically would be welcome at the Guthrie, and will indeed be here — unless they decide not to come. And that's definite.

RADIO: Studio Space Found at Arts Center

Continued From Page One

with his tuneups. The station was also running tapes from Pacifica stations, an interview with Huey Newton, conversations with Arabs about the Middle East and regular jaunts with Studs Terkel.

The station picked up a new station manager last May in Michael Obler and, almost immediately, he began looking around the Twin Cities for studio space, preferably with room for expansion.

At that time, KSJR was already taping and broadcasting performances by the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. Marlow Burt, chairman of the St. Paul Council of Arts and Sciences, was interested in making better use of the

Arts Center's resources. The basement of the center was not being used, and an arrangement was worked out.

Three full-time staff members were hired for the station, thus meeting the minimum requirements of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which made the station eligible for government support.

The Hill Foundation put money behind the St. Paul venture and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting itself gave KSJN a \$15,000 grant to upgrade itself and meet the corporation's requirements.

What KSJN now has is a very minimal facility. It can't even broadcast music from St. Paul, yet. But Obler feels it's an important first step. The station operates on 16.5 kilowatts, not enough for stereo, so it has applied for the right to increase power to 100,000 watts.

With some visibility in the Twin Cities, Obler believes support will come in. Last year, the station had a budget of nearly \$140,000, which was made up from small grants and \$18 subscriptions to the station's magazine *Preview*, now with more than 1,500 subscribers. The budget this year will top

\$165,000. Obler has applied to Federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare for a grant of \$125,000 for new equipment, and other grant applications are in the mill.



Michael Obler

Also on tap is a legal fight with the giant resources of the University of Minnesota, which has decided it wants an FM outlet and is trying to chase KSJN off its 91.1 band to somewhere else on the dial. The Federal Communications Commission is sitting on everything now, including a request for power change.

But, undaunted, Obler is determinedly moving ahead. He is eager to discover the possibilities of his station and define the whole concept of public broadcasting.

"As a public radio station, we need to find out a lot more about the community. We need to set up a facility to get feedback from listeners and find out what they need. We've got a fairly select audience now," he said, "and to get more subscribers we're going to have to get deeper into the community. We need to become a forum for all kinds of minorities, all groups which now have no voice.

"We can't consider a mass audience. Our audience is made up of minorities, from Indians and blacks to people who like serious music. This is about the only station where one can hear it regularly."

The station so far has responded eagerly to unusual program ideas, often with pleasing results. A few weeks ago, the station went on the air at 7 a.m. with the first strains of Wagner's complete Ring cycle in the Herbert Van Karajan version. The cycle ended 19½ hours later.

They hooked up with WLOL in September for an experiment with quad-raphonic (four-speaker) programming.

They play the Library of Congress concerts, regularly showcase the Boston, Cleveland and Philadelphia orchestras, bring in "Radio Netherlands Presents" and produce a regular recital series which they tape around the state.

One of their more unusual, and successful, programs lately was produced by the KSJR's music director, Michael Barone, whom Obler describes as "an organ nut." Barone traveled around the state taping performances on Minnesota organs, many of them rare and handmade, and did a two-part series.

In a way, it's all still a voyage of discovery for the young station, trying to find out what its purpose will be, what it can do that other stations can't or don't and, finally, just how far it can go.

As the station expands, Obler hopes other stations will open (he has a construction permit for one in Fargo-Moorhead) and a statewide network can be built.

For now, Obler hopes to make it on a consistently challenging diet of excellent music, intelligent controversy and experimental radio. "It's a minimal beginning," said Obler, "but right now the future looks pretty bright."



Guest Artist

Guest artist with the Minnesota Orchestra this week will be Jacqueline DuPre, the highly acclaimed young British cellist. With Stanislaw Skrowaczewski conducting, Miss DuPre will play Lalo's *Concerto in D Minor* in concerts at 8 p.m. Thursday at O'Shaughnessy Auditorium and at 8:30 p.m. Friday at Northrop Auditorium.

NDAR

Without Really Trying, 8:30 p.m., Chanhassen Dinner Theatre, Chanhassen.

The Fantasticks, 7:30 and 10:15 p.m., Downstairs Playhouse, Chanhassen Frontier.

Jeppe of the Hills, 8 p.m., Shevlin Hall, University of Minnesota.

The Roar of the Greasepaint, the Smell of the Crowd, 8 p.m., Theatre of Involvement, 331 17th Av. SE.

Don't Drink the Water, 8:30 p.m., Old Log Theater, Excelsior.

The Glass Menagerie, 8 p.m., Edyth Bush Theatre of Hamline University, 690 Cleveland Av. S., St. Paul.

Sleep of Prisoners, 8 p.m., North Hennepin State Junior College, 7411 85th Av. N., Brooklyn Park.

Readings From and About Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, 8:30 p.m., The Other Place, 1526 Harmon Pl.

Galileo, 8 p.m., Anoka-Ramsey Junior College, 11200 Mississippi Blvd., Coon Rapids.

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? 8:30 p.m., North Suburban Theatre, 705 42nd Av. N.

China Town, 8 p.m., Drew Theatre, Hamline University, St. Paul.

The Would-Be Gentleman, 8 p.m., Wallace Fine Arts Center Theatre, Macalester College, St. Paul.

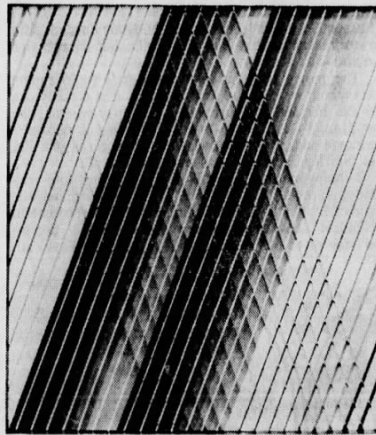
Trilogy of one-act plays: A Marriage Proposal, The Informer, The Leader, 8 p.m., St. David's Theatre, Minnetonka Mills.

We Bombed in New Haven, 8 p.m., Theatre in the Round, 245 Cedar Av.

Any Wednesday, 8 p.m., Oak Grove Junior High School, 1300 W. 106th St., Bloomington.

Music

Callist: Jacqueline DuPre



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