

# Diversity of FM-Radio Attracts Listeners

By C. J. SKREEN

FM radio, for years a distressed area in broadcasting, is well on the way to prosperity. This reversal in the form chart has come about due to any number of reasons, but primarily because of the wide diversity of programs available on the frequency-modulation band.

Nowhere in broadcasting—and this includes the sister mediums of television and AM radio—do listeners have the choice of varied programs that are offered by FM stations.

Coupled with FM's distortion-and-static-free broadcasting system and the soft-sell commercials that are carefully regulated on most stations, there is little wonder why FM has enjoyed a phenomenal growth in the past few years.

As for commercials—the scourge of many an AM listener—most FM stations here adhere to a policy of no more than five minutes of commercial breaks in an hour. This is in contrast to the 15 minutes or more out of every hour that many AM stations reserve for advertising. To the classical-music lover, the opportunity to listen to a half-hour symphonic concert without interruption for advertisements represents FM's best advertisement.

The advent of stereo broadcasting in the next few months is expected to add further impetus to the growing FM movement.

An unusual aspect of the FM story is that surveys show the peak listening time is about 8:30 o'clock in the evening. This would seem to indicate

that television—which prides itself on prime-time saturation—is missing out on a big share of the evening audience among the estimated 30 percent of Seattle homes having FM sets.

PERHAPS THE best indicator of the rapid strides made by the aristocrat of the radio spectrum is provided by FM-set manufacturers.

In 1959, American factories turned out 540,000 sets; last year the figure was 905,000 and this year it is expected to top the 2,000,000 mark.

With FM invading the automobile market, predictions that FM will replace AM radio within a decade—following the trend in Europe—do not seem far wrong.

What is available to Seattle set-owners?

Listeners here have a choice of nine local stations, with two others—KZAN and KOL-FM—expected to be on the air later this year.

DESPITE THE "highbrow" reputation of FM broadcasting in its early years, these stations provide entertainment that ranges from the classics to Broadway musicals, jazz, folk music, conversation shows and top dramatic productions.

The oldest Seattle FM outlet is KISW, the city's most solidly "classical" station. Devotees of symphonies, operas and chamber groups provide the station with a highly loyal following.

KGMJ also relies primarily on classical music, with the exception of a half-hour of jazz each day. A part of the Heritage chain of stations, it

is the city's only fully automated station, with programs originating from Heritage's headquarters in Bellingham.

KUOW, the University of Washington's noncommercial station, offers perhaps the widest range of programs, with talk shows, documentaries, literature series and campus programs predominating.

KLSN PRESENTS a balanced broadcasting schedule divided between serious music, jazz, light classics, show tunes and pop standards. The station, incidentally, is the only noncommercial outlet to publish its own monthly program guide, which is available to listeners at a nominal fee.

KCMS broadcasting is aimed primarily at supermarkets,

providing background music for store personnel and shoppers. The station also provides another unusual service—the broadcasting of "bad-check" bulletins, with the cooperation of Seattle police.

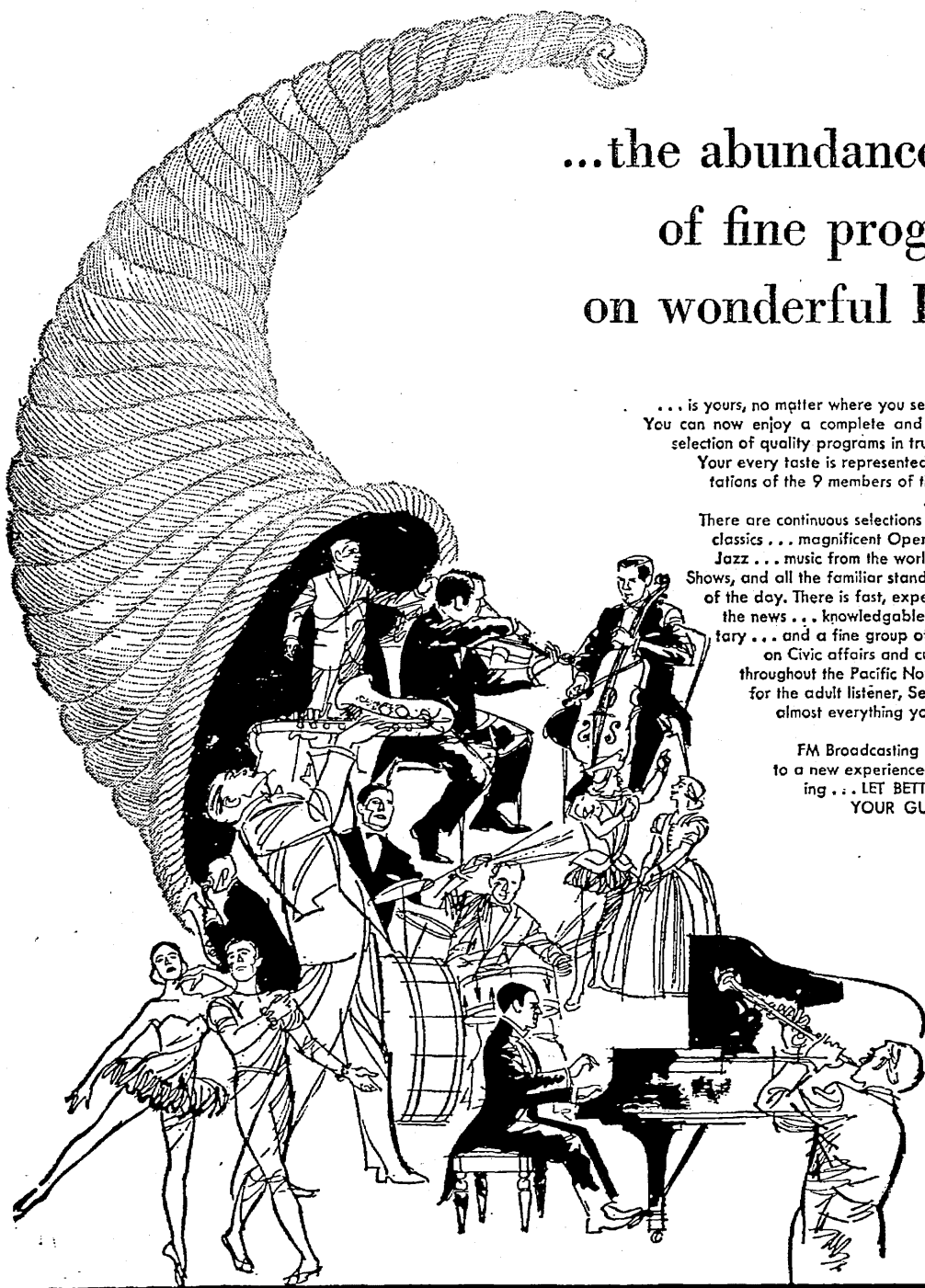
KGFM is the only FM station in the city whose service is devoted primarily to religious programs, although classical and semiclassical offerings are frequently featured.

At KETO, the accent is on popular-album recordings.

KING-FM presents a simulcast of its AM schedule until 6 o'clock each evening, then switches to an independent schedule.

KIRO-FM holds to a solid simulcast of its AM programs.

In SEATTLE it's THE TIMES.



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FM Broadcasting opens the door to a new experience in radio listening ... LET BETTER SOUND BE YOUR GUIDE ... LISTEN TO FM!

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