

Radio's Pioneers Air 'Columbia Workshop'

WBBM Originates Novel Program Today for Ultramodern Ears

By Wauhilla La Hay
Photos by Marjorie Parsons, Sun Staff

For quite a few years Columbia Broadcasting System has given Columbia Workshop producers and writers carte blanche. Some of the most interesting experiments ever conducted on the air have featured the program. The premise of the half hour is simply this: radio is a comparatively new and exciting medium and its potentialities haven't begun to be explored. Let this program experiment and lead the way.

Norman Corwin, Max Wylie, Irving Reis and countless others have gone to the big-name, big money class through the Workshop.

winter he played a program with Dr. Stock at the University of Chicago which rocked a lot of people back on their heels. You see, John is experimenting with sounds—sounds and rhythms and percussion. He writes compositions for sound—not music, although he believes (and I'm not the person to say he's wrong) that sound is music. Yes, even an alarm clock buzzing away at 6 a.m. He calls his compositions "organizations of sound." And John believes their medium is radio.

A brilliant young writer named Kenneth Patchen has written the script for today's Workshop. He calls it "The City Wears a Slouch Hat." I dropped in on a rehearsal of the program—that is, a rehearsal of the sound.

Mrs. Cage, who was Xenia Kashevaroff, daughter of a Russian priest, is one of her husband's players. She was playing on five ordinary tin cans. Cilia Amidon, a piano teacher here in Chicago, was playing a variety of sound instruments such as a tom-tom, a wooden box hit with wooden mallets, sandpaper brushes and a fire gong.

Stuart Lloyd, a young man majoring in physics at the University of Chicago and tympanist with the university's orchestra, was

It has led the way and it has, thanks to CBS powers, retained its freshness.

This afternoon at 2 o'clock, WBBM will originate the program for the network and it's a program well worth hearing, believe me. You may not like it, but you'll have to admit it is something new and strikingly different.

John Cage an Innovation.

Many of you have heard of John Cage. John is an amazing young man. He came to Chicago as a guest lecturer at the School of Design. This

beating brass gongs and a water gong. Ruth Hartman and Claire Oppenheim, both violinists with the university orchestra, were getting strange effects from recordings.

Fitting Sounds to Script.

John Cage was directing the group. As I listened, they were fitting the composition of sounds to the words of the script—an eerie bit about a holdup on a city street. At first it was a chaos of sounds and then, suddenly, it took form. It WAS the sort of sound that should go with the action.

Les Mitchell, producer of many network script shows, is directing today's Workshop. Local actors who will be heard in the experimental drama are Madelon Grayson, Les Tremayne, Forrest Lewis, Jonathan Hole, Frank Dane and John Larkin.

John Cage has written music for piano, for voice and for wind instruments. But his interest is in percussion and electrical sound. Listen to the Workshop today. As I said before, you may not like it, but you'll have to admit it is interesting—and baffling. Very definitely, it will open new doors to radio sound.