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Reforming Radio: BBC Radio's Music Policy 1957-1967

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Introduction

- 1 A clipped page from *Le Monde* sits in an archived British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) file dated April 1964. Like all such material in the BBC's Written Archives Centre it has a repository code (R27/818/2 CAMP) starting with R for Radio, a formulary that will be used throughout this article to locate written sources held by the BBC. The *Le Monde* clip lists a week of programmes on Radio France Musique, the republic's then-reborn classical music station. The schedule was filed by a BBC official in the hope it would inspire him to compile an engaging daytime roster for a new BBC radio service he was charged to create. John Manduell (1928-2017) was the operative's name but his formal title in the music department's hierarchy was CAMP (Chief Assistant, Music Programme). CAMP was especially interested in the France Musique agendas for Sundays, as that was the day his project would occupy in the first of four incremental stages, filling the whole week in the final phase. France Musique opened each Sunday at 7am with an audience request programme (*Nos disques sont les vôtres*) and closed 17 hours later with *La Marseillaise* heralding midnight. Manduell noted sniffily that much of the music was Baroque and "*nearly all their stuff is on records*" (R27/818/2).
- 2 These were crucial matters for the BBC: in 1964 it ran five full-time orchestras devoted to standard classical repertoire and the occasional modern "*novelty*", as well as six part-time (contract) orchestras playing light music. In a stifling arrangement set up thirty years earlier by the Musicians' Union and known as the Needletime Agreement, the corporation prioritised live or recorded-as-live music from these ensembles over the commercial recordings that France Musique was more at liberty to promote, hence Manduell's note about "*stuff*". Nevertheless, it reinforced his view that a varied sequence of serious music, as he put it, could be carried across daytime airwaves into

evening ones, an imperative at the heart of his mission as CAMP. He needed this French exemplification because the project's chief official, to whom he was answerable up the corporation's bureaucratic chain, did not agree. Richard Marriott carried the senior designation ADSB (Assistant Director, Sound Broadcasting) and the Music Programme was his idea. He wanted to create a radio stream "*to please people who 'like music' but don't pretend they possess a musical education... The [eye]brow is somewhere between the best of light music and the most popular Promenade concerts*" (R34/1035 21.7.59). Staff of the Music Division, represented by CAMP, had no interest in promoting "*musical wallpaper*" as they thought it; C(M) [Controller, Music] commented, "*I didn't like the idea of a continuous stream of music, with people only half, or a quarter, listening to it*" (R4/4/21 p.251, 1960). CAMP had received a sarcastic memo from the directorate requesting that there be "*no Bartók before breakfast*"¹. This aesthetic split between the generic liberalism of the Radio directorate and the canonic elitism of the Music Division was symptomatic of internal dissensions between departments that nevertheless drove the post-war corporation to turn British radio from an outmoded communications medium in 1957 to a resurgent aural service of four numbered stations ten years later – 1 to 3 devoted to music, 4 to speech. Marriott as ADSB was the author of this momentous shift, planned out by him in *The Future of Sound Broadcasting* project of February 1957, otherwise known as the Marriott Report, preceded by the Marriott Enquiry (November 1956 - January 1957). It is this report and its dramatic impact that we shall explore.

ADSB

- 3 Richard D'Arcy Marriott (1911-85) had a long and distinguished career at the BBC (1932-42, 1946-69), but one with a dent in it that may have harmed his chances of reaching the highest position. He was a divorcee, which negatively affected promotion in the BBC at the time. Educated at Cambridge University, where he gained a first in French and German, he joined the BBC in 1932 at the age of twenty-one, becoming the Foreign Liaison Officer. He championed the idea of the BBC Monitoring Service which he devised in order to keep the Allies informed of enemy radio output. By February 1940 the unit had become a separate department based in Worcestershire. Marriott, having been endorsed by the Deputy Director-General as "*one of our ablest young men*", took charge of the department on his escape from Paris in June, where he was said to be the last BBC correspondent to report from the city before its invasion. But in January 1942 Marriott resigned from the BBC in protest at Director-General Ogilvie's summary decision to move the Monitoring Service from Evesham to Caversham in Berkshire. Marriott joined the RAF, rose to the rank of Wing Commander, and was awarded the DFC and Bar for bravery in action. At the end of the War he was seconded from the RAF and put in charge of the German Broadcasting Service in the British Zone (Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk).
- 4 Both of the Director-Generals who succeeded Ogilvie, Foot (1942-3) and Haley (1944-53), believed that Marriott's resignation from the BBC had been on his part a principled and justified action. He was invited to return to the Corporation and was made Head of Section, European Liaison Office (1947-51). From 1951-2 Marriott was appointed Head of the Monitoring Service, and in that role he became spokesman for the BBC at the 1953 Brussels conference to re-start the European Broadcasting Union. Soon after the appointment of Ian Jacob as Director-General (1952-60) Marriott was moved into the

domestic service and given the post of Controller, Northern Ireland. It was from there that he became Chief Assistant (CASB) to Sir Lindsay Wellington, Director of Sound Broadcasting, later ADSB in the same position².

- 5 His obituary in *The Times* ends with the claim, “Marriott was a man who disliked the limelight. But he was a powerful background presence”. Certainly there are very few photographs of Marriott, but when a colleague said “he towered over us” this was perhaps meant literally, as Sir John Manduell (knighted 1989), reminiscing of his own time as CAMP, concurred that Marriott was “tall and quite spare”, adding notably that he could not be sure how tall, as he nearly always saw ADSB sat at a desk, an image of bureaucratic rectitude. As Marriott was a senior administrator in a public corporation writing a detailed report in order to internally direct a momentous democratisation of broadcasting policy, it is not so surprising that, along with other critics, a *Daily Telegraph* editorial (9.4.57) derided *The Future of Sound Broadcasting* as “bureaucratic double-talk”. The term “bureaucrat”, borrowed from the French, grew in meaning from the baize of a desk, then the desk, then the office where the desk sat, to the official who sat at it. The BBC was indeed a bureaucratic institution and ADSB a bureaucrat in it, sat at his desk at Broadcasting House in London, writing policies on paper that maintained, amended or generated measures in order to sustain and improve the public service of sound broadcasting across Britain. Under the objective terms established by the sociologist Max Weber, the corporation was the inevitable national product of a rational-legal state, reflecting a number of traits in its institutional structure and mode of operation: rule-bound conduct, a sphere of obligations, regulative rules recorded in writing, a system of super- and sub-ordination, and so forth³. Yet although the orderly ADSB followed correct procedures and recognised deadlines, the fact that he faced formidable external and internal bureaucratic hurdles allows another interrogative model to enter the frame and explain these hindrances, that of sociologist Michel Crozier, in particular his debut book *Le Phénomène bureaucratique* (1963), *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon* (1964). In this “pathology of organisations”, in particular dysfunctional ones, Crozier considers what he calls “the paradox”: that the progress of standardisation and predictability is accompanied by reliance on humans who maintain their autonomy with regard to the goals of the organization. Ponderousness can be interpreted as aspects of the resistance of human means to the organizational goals⁴. Anne Corbett writes in this regard of “overlapping circles that block the system”⁵. We will examine these circles and see how far ADSB ran rings around them.

Context: Administration

- 6 At first the British Broadcasting Company (1922-6) was a commercial operation based in London which ran ten separate radio stations in cities around the country. As contributing artists such as local musicians had to be paid fees, a central finance system was set up at the Head Office in 1923, and from that point an Administrative Department increasingly asserted organisational authority at the BBC, so that by 1927 when the private Company was changed by government to a public Corporation constituted by royal charter, the operation ran a “central unifying apparatus” of policy control answerable to the highest staff position, that of the Director-General (DG)⁶. Of particular note was the use of the roles Director and Controller, through which managerial castes developed. A Director administered policy by determining for it a

direction along hierarchical routes, while a Controller managed policy through a focused departmental remit, hence C(M) (Controller, Music). A Director applied policy that could operate as generally as possible, because consistency of action was vital for success. In contrast, a Controller advised on the policy's formation from the perspective of a specialist. Through this arrangement emerged a class of officials who were not concerned directly with production, presentation, engineering, publicity or administration, but with the regulation of processes in each of these domains; ADSB was an example of this figure at the highest level.

Context: Music

- 7 From its inception in 1922 the BBC employed music directors at the ten urban stations, who were usually conductors adept at the piano. They were hired to locate, play and develop classical and light music suitable for live broadcast. When it became a public body in 1927 the corporation developed ambitious plans for classical music, firstly by taking over the Queen's Hall summer Promenade Concerts (now the BBC Proms) then in 1930 creating the London-based BBC Symphony Orchestra, comprising 114 salaried players. In 1935 the corporation developed a regional orchestra scheme employing 160 musicians. In total, 428 musicians were employed across the country in 12 ensembles. World War Two created a change in pattern, with reductions enforced by the Ministry of Labour, but also the introduction of new ensembles specialising in light and popular music which, post-war, became the property of the Variety department (1933-63), the Light Music department (1952-80) and the Popular Music department (1963-80). The Music department retained use of the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the BBC Northern, Welsh and Scottish Orchestras. That one department devoted to classical music could retain the title "*Music*" while the others took conditional titles, is an indication of how far management valued its production of that genre.

Context: stations

- 8 Until the Second World War, the corporation ran two domestic stations, called National and Regional. At the start of war the dual network was retained, but as Home and Forces, the latter a service that constituted the BBC's attempt to address working-class preferences; it was acknowledged that not only the serving forces listened but domestic civilians also tuned into it. At the end of the war the Forces Programme continued and developed as the Light Programme, and to the new dual system was added the more elitist Third Programme in 1946⁷. DG William Haley outlined his conception of this tripartite arrangement in his Lewis Fry Lectures of 1948. He claimed that from 1945, when the tripartite scheme was planned as a practical entity, the "*Programme policy rested on the conception of the community as a broadly-based cultural pyramid slowly aspiring upwards*" (R34/1021 Policy – Report). The cultural pyramid was formed of the following dimensions:

Haley's pyramid structure of the three post-war domestic stations. The percentages relate to listeners.

- 9 Representing 100% of the national listenership, the pyramid scale embodied the case that while 60% might listen mainly to the Light Programme, the items on offer there might stimulate and lead some of them to move 'slowly' upwards to the Home Service, and likewise further aloft. In this lecture Haley specifically used the example of classical music to explain how someone might hear a waltz from Richard Strauss's opera *Der Rosenkavalier* on the Light Programme, then hear an act of it on the Home Service, and finally receive the whole opera by tuning in to the Third Programme. Thus, in time, the percentage aspect would shift in favour of the Third. In fact, audience research discovered that, far from a 10% listenership, the average share of the Third Programme would settle at around 0.2%-0.5%, a sum that would generally be rounded up to 1%. Nevertheless, until the Marriott Report of 1957, it was generally felt inside the BBC that a noble aspiration was paraded through the image of Haley's pyramid.

Context: Television

- 10 Between 1925 and 1933 the BBC was engaged at a modest level with the technical development of television and then for 12 years (1936-9, 1946-55) the corporation enjoyed a monopoly in the production and dissemination of television programmes in Britain. For technical reasons in transmission and reception the service was restricted mainly to the bourgeoisie of North London. Two government committees (1945, 1952) examined the post-war development of television in terms of regionalisation, sponsorship and advertising, and speculated on it as a commercial service providing competition with the BBC. The 1952 report was begun in 1949 under a Labour government but, after the general election of 1951, it was published under the conservative one of Sir Winston Churchill. A summary declared that:
- The right of access to the domestic sound and television receivers of millions of people carries with it so much great propaganda power that it cannot be trusted to any person or bodies other than a public corporation (Broadcasting Committee 1949, para.21).
- 11 Churchill agreed, but his younger free-market conservatives sought wider consumer choice. Wishing to retain its monopoly across broadcasting, the corporation introduced

“internal competition” by developing - all too slowly - a second television channel (BBC2, 1964-) and dispersing the principles of competition to the three radio channels so that they thought vertically - in terms of the distinct character of their own station or supply department - how to attract and retain listeners. Although sound broadcasting was precluded at this time from commercialisation, the 1952 debates about television would help to clarify the issues on consumerist patterns of reception around which the Marriott Enquiry would deliberate four years later.

- 12 A parliamentary campaign began in 1953 to make commercial television a reality, leading to the successful passage of the Television Act in July 1954 and the creation of 17 independent stations (ITV) in urban centres around the country between 1955 (London area) and 1962 (North Wales). Audience research showed that from the earliest days public support strongly favoured ITV⁸. BBC Radio felt the negative impact of television both externally (ITV) and internally (BBCTV). It was predicted that by 1962 the only people listening to radio would be the blind. DSB suggested that ADSB set up a weekly Sound Liaison Committee to deal with developments, but Marriott as ADSB wished to dig deeper and shortly after he took up his new job, in October 1956, he wrote a draft statement to invoke a working party that would write the report of 1957. In this way he re-aligned the management process from one of monitoring and assessment to one of formulating strategic action.

The Marriott Enquiry and Report

- 13 In a directive that set up the Enquiry, DSB gave the working party a goal: to reduce sound broadcasting's revenue expenditure by 5%. In order to meet this, Marriott commissioned statistics and sociological information that provided the BBC with a novel methodology. Three particular discoveries of Marriott surprised staff:
- 14 (i) Television was not the main cause of listenership reductions. Shrinkage had taken place across the three stations since 1948 (R34/1022):

	1948		1956	
BBC Station:	No. of adults: (million)	% of adult population:	No. of adults:	% of adult population:
Home	3.6m	10.2	1.6m	4.2
Light	6.0m	16.5	2.85m	7.6
Third	0.1m	0.3	0.05m	0.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>9.7m</i>	<i>27.0</i>	<i>4.5m</i>	<i>11.9</i>

- 15 In short, BBC audiences in 1956 were half as big as they were in 1948, and the relative positions of the stations had been largely unaffected.
- 16 (ii) Marriott claimed that for most of the time two of the three stations were catering for 10% of the population, leaving a single programme to serve the remaining 90%. As

evidence he selected four examples from the recent schedules, the first showing that Dvorák's *Stabat Mater* on the Home Service played against an Edinburgh Festival recital on the Third Programme, leaving the Light to cater for the rest of the audience. He asked, "*Can it be right that we devote twice as much attention to the educated audience as we do to the great majority of our audience?*" (R34/1022/2).

- 17 (iii) By the time of the Enquiry, television had not shown itself to represent music well. In 1955 the commercial TV company Associated Rediffusion made a deal with the Hallé Orchestra which it soon dropped, its programme controller explaining:

The public likes girls, wrestling, bright musicals, quiz shows and real-life drama. We gave them the Hallé Orchestra... Well, we've learned. From now on, what the public wants it's going to get."⁹

- 18 Nevertheless, Marriott saw that, while television sound was monophonic and curbed, BBC radio was expanding into stereophony and very high frequency radio waves (VHF). Furthermore it was through music that the three stations could be most distinctly identified (R34/1022/2). It was at this time that he tried objectifying them on paper, first with colours (blue, green, red) and later with numbers, although Radio 1 was then the Home Service.

- 19 ADSB's positive assessment of radio married to music was supported by four further factors:

- a. the purchase of licence fees, which the public bought in order to legally hear and see the BBC, continued to increase. Around five million more sound licences than combined licences (television and radio) were acquired in 1955; it was only in 1958 that the acquisition of combined licences started to exceed that of sound-only licences. The combined licence covered the consumption of radio, and so its purchase could not be considered a sign of the decline of radio listening;
- b. the extent of television transmission hours was constrained by the Post Office, and so there was a point in the day and late at night where viewers might need to become listeners again; there was a practical reason why people would still rely in some way on the radio;
- c. Britain's first battery-operated portable transistor radio, the PAM 710, was launched in March 1956. It cost 30 guineas, but rivals soon made cheaper versions allowing for a new freedom of location and setting – and relative miniaturisation – that the television set lacked;
- d. In order to get the Television Act supported by a divided Conservative party, a closet deal was made by the party's chairman to set the notion of commercial radio to one side. This left the BBC with an advantage in national media provision that it could exploit. Marriott above all was the BBC executive to comprehend this and in consequence provide a policy for expansion.

- 20 Marriott found a solution to the problem of the three stations fixed in competition, ignoring each other. A horizontal, integrated approach to programming would replace the vertical, addressing audiences – as opposed to "*the audience*" – in three groups: "*the serious minded... interested in Shakespeare to Sartre*", "*the great middle section... finding their pleasure in light music generally*", and the "*simpler, less educated section, containing many young people... who seek from the radio relaxation and entertainment*" (R34/1020). From this the working group created "*Synthetic Weeks*" of horizontally-framed schedules that met the aural needs of all three groups at any one time (R34/1022/2). Turning to economics, production costs were worked out. They estimated that programmes on the Light cost £1.97 a minute, those on Home £1.92 a minute, while on the Third they cost £3.09 per minute (that is, a third more than the Light). Two possibilities emerged to provide the

5% reduction: firstly, presenting the same programme on two stations at the same time (synchronisation) or at different times (diagonalisation); secondly, reducing the hours of transmission on the nightly Third Programme. Diagonalisation would help Light to open earlier at 7am in order to develop a breakfast audience, while the Third Programme hours could be reduced nightly from 8pm to 11pm, a reduction of 40% of its airtime. Furthermore, the working party had been impressed by an internal report on further education via radio. The Third Programme transmission time from 6pm to 8pm was handed over to a new strand called Network Three, devoted to classes in foreign languages and pastimes such as astronomy. Derided by critics as the “*Fretwork Network*”, it was not a success, but became the first radio spark of what would emerge as the Open University (R34/1022/2). It was here, though, that Marriott noticed a gap in the schedules that could prove a problem. Following commercial television’s arrival, it was suspected that commercial radio would follow. Marriott made sure that there were no spare wavelengths that other companies could use. Unfortunately here was a wavelength sitting in his lap, that of the Third Programme and Network Three, which was empty all day until teatime. Thus his invention of the Music Programme, and the toils of CAMP to fill it with classical music against ADSB’s desire for a station that would meet the tastes of “*the great middle section*”. This frustration arose because Marriott was a Director, not a Controller: the former handled policy, the latter dealt with content.

The Marriott Report: Impact

- 21 The Report’s recommendations were submitted to the Board of Governors, approved in January 1957 and announced officially in April but unofficially two months earlier, leading to a hostile campaign against the adjustments. This was the first of four major hurdles of opposition that ADSB and his colleagues faced in their objective to regenerate radio, which was fully achieved in 1967. The four hurdles were as follows:

1. The Third Programme Defence Society/Sound Broadcasting Society 1957-8

- 22 Some of the staff mis-heard or mis-read of Marriott’s plans and rumours spread that the Third Programme was to be cancelled or acutely dismembered. At a gathering of intellectuals and fellow travellers, a Third Programme Defence Society was formed. Soon changing its name to the Sound Broadcasting Society (SBS) once Marriott’s policy was made clearer to them, the assembly found itself to be an uneasy alliance of the culturally conservative such as poet T.S.Eliot and those of the Left such as composer Michael Tippett. Throughout April *The Times* published 31 letters of protest against cuts, including one apparently signed by Albert Camus, Jean Cocteau, André Malraux, and Jacques Maritain¹⁰. In an elegant retort the Secretary-General of the Arts Council defended Marriott’s changes, mentioning the French men of letters “whose radio sets must be as exceptionally good as their English if they can hear the Third in Paris”¹¹. Points were raised in parliament on the “*abandonment*” of the Third. At an SBS meeting with the DG, Eliot feared that the BBC was “*lowering the standards of culture at home and lowering the prestige of Britain abroad*”¹². Marriott’s resilient response, in a later memo, was twofold: that “*a smaller quantity of broadcasting will enable us to maintain the high quality*”, and that:

We absolutely reject the elevation of the Third Programme into a symbol as if it alone represented what we were doing in the cultural field. It is on our total output that we intend to be judged. (R34/1639/1 5/6/57).

- 23 BBC senior staff thought it best to leave the SBS to fulminate as it would soon dissolve, as the single-theme protest groups tend to do, and indeed it did. From the Autumn of 1957 ADSB's plans were carried out in full.

2. Pilkington Report 1960-2

- 24 It was customary, and customary still, that governments of the time order a committee of enquiry to suggest any changes to the BBC in advance of each ten-year renewal of the royal charter. In 1960 a very mixed committee of this kind was formed under the chairmanship of Sir Harry Pilkington (1905-83), a glass magnate and a former Bank of England director. One of the members was the Leftist writer and academic Richard Hoggart (1918-2014) who dominated the meetings and strongly influenced policy. Hoggart wanted the corporation to return to its "pyramid" days when instruction and education were manifest in each of the three stations. Marriott had not anticipated this retrogressive step, which pressured him to restore as policy the presence of classical music in Home and Light. But he had found a solution in yielding extra time for the Third Programme at weekends which distracted and placated Hoggart, as did his plans for the Music Programme. The panel was ultimately satisfied that nothing had truly been unsettled by the reforms. It reported to parliament in 1962 that the BBC "*was to be left completely unchanged*"¹³.

3. Needletime

- 25 As already mentioned, the BBC had an agreement - imposed indirectly but effectively by the Musicians' Union (MU) from 1935 onwards - to limit the amount of airtime the corporation could devote to recordings of music. By 1958 the BBC was allowed three hours a day to play records across all three stations (22 hours of needletime a week). At that point Home was open 16 hours daily, Light 14 hours, Third 3 hours. Other music had to be broadcast or recorded as though live by musicians paid by the corporation on salary or by the session; the BBC estimated that it employed 3,000 musicians during the course of a week¹⁴. In order to provide the Music Programme and the Light's breakfast extension, Marriott calculated in 1959 that he needed 47 more hours a week of needletime. It took four years to negotiate a deal with an intransigent MU (R27/847/1). The extraordinary solution to the problem was found in a campaign by an MU executive committee member to create a training orchestra for graduate musicians. The corporation cannily picked it up and formed the New BBC Orchestra of 65 players (1966-77). In return Marriott gained some, but not all, of his needletime hours. He used them to help to form Radio 1 and Radio 2 out of the Light Programme in 1967, and run from October 1964 the Music Programme which, when fused with the Third, became Radio 3 in 1970. The Home Service, now all speech, was turned into Radio 4.

4. Pirate Radio

- 26 In the 1930s Marriott and his cohort experienced commercial pirates in the form of foreign stations promoting sponsored programmes of popular music in English. Radio

Luxembourg (1932-9) was a major culprit, highly popular with British listeners, but Radios Côte-d'Azur, Normandie, Paris, Toulouse and Poste-Parisien also provided the BBC with competition around the British airwaves. Therefore, when the commercial television scheme was completed in 1962, they were not so surprised that it was followed by a campaign for commercial radio, though the shape it took was unexpected. In March 1964 a ship carrying Radio Caroline led a commercial radio flotilla that anchored themselves just outside of British territorial waters. They took in paid advertising from the mainland and, not saddled with MU restrictions, broadcast a range of chart, pop and sweet music on record, even sometimes light music – everything to which the Light Programme should be devoted to on disc had it the needletime. As Marriott told the board of management:

No one, for example, really wants to hear 'Get Me To The Church On Time' in any version but the one made famous by Stanley Holloway or 'Thank Heaven For Little Girls' in any but Maurice Chevalier's... Pop music is also the music of the gramophone record. (BM [1965] 29).

- 27 Marriott listened to the offshore stations and was attracted to the confidence and panache of the disc jockeys' (DJs) voices in contrast to the BBC's insecure presentation of popular music; the corporation's codes of practice and routines were designed to inhibit personality. He believed that the pirates had set a standard for demotic speech but that the BBC could match it and replace them (R78/3231/1). For this to happen effectively the BBC needed the government to shut down the buoyant ships. But no party would. Public support for the pirates was all too evident; Radio Caroline had a weekly average licence-free listenership of 8 million (one third of that of the Light Programme)¹⁵. Pressure to take action against the pirates came from the Musicians' Union in league with sections of the record industry. In response the Labour government undertook a cabinet reshuffle and put in place a Postmaster General who threatened the use of gunboats to get the pirates to close themselves down on 15th August 1967, ending three years of music piracy. The BBC's replacement, Radio 1, was launched a month later. To get to that notable point, ADSB had charged the staff of the newly established Popular Music Department to effect a transition plan, named the Popular Music Service, that fell into two phases. The first part (1964-6) comprised the reformation and extension of programmes most adaptable to the personality of those subjective DJs who were to be re-branded as individuals, while their programmes introduced telephone chats with listeners, interviews, quizzes and any other means to reduce the need for needletime. The second stage (1966-7) featured the adaptation of programmes into DJ-centred shows, the conditional employment of 14 former pirate DJs, use of station jingles and idents, including heavy use of trails, cross-promotions and time-checks. Marriott also applied some of these to the Music Programme in order to introduce a drivetime atmosphere, but the presenters declined to play along. On one occasion he sent a stern memo to the chief of continuity presentation (CCP) starting, "*I heard the announcer on Friday say 'the studio clock tells me that it is about 10 minutes since the last time-check, and I suppose we had better have another'*" (R34/1454 03/02/65).
- 28 One of the weaknesses the pirates had never overcome was the wayward strength and range of their transmission signals. But the BBC faced problems, too, as the frequency most available to replace the pirates with the Popular Music Service, 247 metres, served only 35% of the population and in summer nights was apt to suffer interference from an Albanian station. ADSB's solution lay, first, in splitting that signal from its long wave partner, 1500 metres, and, secondly – under pressure from the Postmaster General –

building four expensive transmitters that enabled the medium wave signal to reach 60% of the population. This bifurcation allowed Radio 1 (Popular Music Service) and Radio 2 (the Light Programme) to co-exist, though the limits of needletime constrained their autonomy (R74/2321/1). In 1988 the Monopolies and Mergers Commission judged that the needletime terms constituted a restrictive practice. It had them abolished.

- 29 Marriott retired as ADSB in 1969, alongside the DG Hugh Greene and DSB Frank Gillard. He was awarded a CBE for his work in broadcasting. The numbered stations came on-air from 29th September 1967, with a fully-formed Radio 3 following in 1970. The system remains in place five decades on. Nowadays the most popular service in terms of listenership is not Radio 1 but Radio 2, the station that ADSB had marked out for “*the great middle section... finding their pleasure in light music generally*”. There is an irony that light music today incorporates the pop music of the 1960s.

Conclusion

- 30 Marriott as ADSB was the second-in-command of all domestic radio services (1955-69). He was responsible for consistent application of policy across the services and to advise the Director of the implications of this. His changes to music broadcasting across the domestic stations are examples of this remit in action and in result. Yet, as Crozier would point out, Marriott was placed in a space that was intermediary. From the perspective beneath him he was an executive figure who generated policy issued under a more senior name. From the perspective above him he was an associate responsible for that policy's effective implementation. His status was not restrictive but rather the intermediary ambiguity allowed him some creative latitude, some diplomatic elasticity, in pursuing his goals, which were the survival of public service radio in a time of crisis and the eventual expansion of domestic radio networks based around the provision of music. The level of policy-making at which Marriott as a director was engaged was too distant from the grades it most affected internally, who took their instructions from the controller class in terms of the required adjustment of aesthetic evaluation that drove the production of Music Programme repertoire in the way ADSB required. Marriott's imprecations and interventions did not lack authority. However, the producers of the music department – of increasing specialisation at this time – were immured from conformance by the weight and complexity of the hierarchical structure.
- 31 ADSB also had little leeway in external matters except to decline negotiations such as those sought by the Sound Broadcasting Society in 1957, or, in contrast, undertake slothful arbitration with representatives of a craft union and in consequence spend the BBC's way out of a needletime deadlock. Nevertheless, this diplomacy proved valuable when the corporation later relied on the power of the Musicians' Union to place pressure on a socialist government to close down commercial radio. However, the hostility wrought by internal and external forces explain his difficulties with the materialisation of the Music Programme, which suffered a four-year gestation and took a different form from his plan.
- 32 Here was a man who sat at a desk and wrote policies – that is, the formulation of courses of action that were administratively acted out by functionaries beneath his rank and endorsed by those above it. His rationalising actions, and the reactions they provoked, bear out the observations on the directorial grade made by Crozier in *The*

Bureaucratic Phenomenon. Crozier's theoretical analysis is helpful in understanding the oppositions encountered by Marriott in effecting his policy, both in terms of the internal and external reactions to reform in 1957, and the resistance of departmental producers to a broadly-based Music Programme. Nevertheless, despite these hurdles, ADSB accomplished a set of improvements that succeeded in democratising provision by administering a range of generically varied programmes across the networks while delineating for each a distinct taxonomic identity.

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ABSTRACTS

This article examines attempts by the centralised policy makers of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) to overcome a crisis at their radio service consequent to the launch of commercial television in 1955. It looks in particular at the work – the successes, failures and frustrations – of an assistant director, a bureaucrat, who planned to regenerate music policy, especially so in terms of pop and light music, which led to the formation of the numbered station system still in use today: Radios 1 - 4. Using primary sources from the BBC's written archives, the article will identify the oppositions he faced from external forces (the Sound Broadcasting Society, the Musicians' Union) and the internal staff (music department operatives, presenters). It will attempt to explain, through the prism of Michel Crozier's study *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon* (1964), how the assistant director overcame these hurdles across the ten years of time that it took to pummel policy into practice.

Cet article examine les tentatives par les instances décisionnelles de la BBC pour résoudre une crise de la radio à la suite des débuts de la télévision commerciale au Royaume-Uni en 1955. Il explore particulièrement les succès et les échecs d'un directeur adjoint qui projetait de renouveler la programmation musicale, avant tout en ce qui concerne la musique populaire, renouvellement qui donna naissance à la structure des stations numérotées (Radio 1 à Radio 4) encore en fonctionnement aujourd'hui. A partir de sources primaires dans les archives de la BBC, nous identifierons les oppositions externes (du syndicat des musiciens entre autres) et les oppositions internes, et nous expliquerons de quelle manière, sur dix ans, il fut possible de dépasser ces obstacles.

INDEX

Mots-clés: BBC, radio, programmation musicale, années 1950, années 1960

Keywords: BBC, radio studies, music policy, bureaucracy, popular music, pirate radio

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