

BROADCASTING

Another Page for History

At 12 a.m., EDT, on June 1, station WGFM in Schenectady added another historic first to the long list of pioneering achievements drawn up by General Electric's broadcasting operations in Schenectady. WGFM kept pace with sister stations WGY (one of the nation's first ten radio stations), and WRGB (one of the earliest broadcasters of regularly-scheduled television shows), by becoming the first station in the nation to send out an FM stereocast under FCC-approved standards.

Unlike former stereo broadcasts (or simulcasts), the new system—developed by General Electric and adopted as the industry standard by the Federal Communications Commission in April (*The Monogram*, May 1961, p. 8)—uses a single radio frequency which is picked up by a single FM receiver. It superimposes one signal in a "piggyback" fashion over another, allowing for two-channel audio reproduction. FM stereo may alter the future of radio broadcasting, and give FM programming the boost it's been looking for for 20 years.

On FM stereo's memorable midnight debut, WGY staff announcer Pat Ryan opened the show by introducing jazz buff Dave Kidd (an accountant at Pittsfield's Distribution Transformer Department, and regular host on his own WGFM show), who selected an instrumental arrangement of "All or Nothing at All" for the historic opening number.

Tribute: In a broadcast interview, Radio and Television Division General Manager Hershner Cross said the event was a tribute to free enterprise, noting that "a man forced to flee his homeland by Communist oppression . . . led the way to the technical

breakthrough that made possible the program." It was Hungarian-born Antal Csicsatka of Radio Receiver Department, who headed up the engineering effort.

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