

# 20min. OF GRACIE ISN'T ENOUGH!

**GRACIE FIELDS** — Britain's greatest music hall star—will be heard on Monday week in her first B.B.C. Variety broadcast since her return to Britain last month.

You might expect Gracie to be featured at some length in her own programme.

But no, this great star gets only a twenty-minute spot as one of the artists in Henry Hall's Guest Night. After that she'll be off the B.B.C. till Christmas.

Why are the B.B.C. treating our most popular variety star in this manner? Why not her own programme or a proper series that we can all enjoy?

Certainly Henry Hall has done everything he can to get Gracie her biggest listening audience. He has even lifted his long standing rule that the identity of his guests should not be disclosed in advance.

"Gracie must be the exception," he told me. "She is a wonderful artist and I'm proud to have her with me. I've told the B.B.C. to go ahead and tell everyone she will be in my programme."

**BUT TWENTY MINUTES OF GRACIE FIELDS IN THREE MONTHS ISN'T ENOUGH**

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I ASKED the B.B.C.: "Why can't you give Gracie Fields more broadcasts?"

"Miss Fields is a great star," they said. "We feel our best policy is to have her broadcast from time to time so as to keep her on this pinnacle of stardom. We had the same policy with Harry Lauder."

This is all very smooth, of course, but not satisfactory. Eighty minutes a year won't



... says **CLIFFORD DAVIS**, 'Daily Mirror'

**Radio Correspondent**

prop up any pinnacles. As far as listeners' appreciation is concerned, it's more likely to send them all tumbling.

If the B.B.C. are right in their attitude, how is it that shrewd U.S. showmen are frequently featuring Gracie Fields in television? And why does Radio Luxembourg put her on the air every Sunday afternoon?

If any pinnacles of stardom were to be shattered these people would be the first to get hot under the collar—and so would Gracie.

Everyone knows—including the B.B.C.—that Gracie can be heard every Sunday on a Continental station—if you can manage to get the wavelength.

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**GRACIE** is too good a trouper to complain but I bet this is what keeps her off the B.B.C.

"I know nothing about my commercial show upsetting the B.B.C.," she tells me. "I am always ready to broadcast for the B.B.C. whenever they want me."

Now I'm always ready for healthy rivalry between the B.B.C. and commercial radio. What's more I'm

willing to back shows put on by the oft-maligned variety producers against anything offered by outsiders.

Daily the list grows of artists signing for commercial shows.

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**THE B.B.C.** are hitting back by re-modelling Sunday afternoon shows.

From November 5 two highspot shows—"Take it from Here" and the new Bebe Daniels-Ben Lyon series—will be broadcast live. They're on the list with Billy Cotton, "Educating Archie," "Ray's a Laugh," and a new Lester Ferguson programme.

This is the spirit we want from Broadcasting House.

It's no use penalising people like Gracie Fields for accepting commercial radio dates.

**LET'S HAVE BIGGER AND BETTER SHOWS—BY ANYONE WHO CAN GIVE THEM TO US**

## Gracie Fields Programme

IN reporting the Gracie Fields radio series we announced that it was possible that maestro Billy Ternent would possibly accompany Gracie on the piano. Readers have since telephoned these offices asking if Jimmy Bailey, her regular accompanist, had left her. This, of course, is no so. Jimmy Bailey played the last 26 weeks with Gracie on Luxembourg and will play the new 26 weeks series and will be with her on her Palladium engagement as usual. Bailey has been with Gracie for a long time now. He toured Canada and America with her.

Gracie Fields has joined the B.B.C. immortals, an honour reserved for few. Her Christmas Party broadcast is to be preserved for all time in "The Archives," a kind of Poets' Corner at Broadcasting House, always mentioned in hushed and revered tones, with hat over heart.

**8.30 GRACIE FIELDS** with the Keynotes and Billy Ternent and his Orchestra.

The Woodpecker Song (Gracie Fields), Ukelele Lady (Keynotes), My Buddy (Orchestra), Ebenezer's Adams Apple (Gracie Fields), It Had To Be You (Orchestra), Whispering (Orchestra), I'll See You In My Dreams (Orchestra), Down in the Glen (Gracie Fields), We All Have a Song in Our Hearts (Gracie Fields), Five Minutes More (Keynotes), Rudolph Friml Medley (Gracie Fields).

Compère: Bernard Braden.

2-9-50

