

Radio Comedy Featuring Max Heye and Grete Wiedecke (c. 1929)

Abstract

In this 1929 comedy sketch, Max Heye and Grete Wiedecke, two central figures of the German stage in the early 1900s, showcase their vocal-performance skills to gently mock the fickleness of contemporary radio listeners. Focusing on a character named “Otto” who constantly fiddles with the radio dial, the segment suggests that, already by 1929 (just six years after the advent of German public broadcasting), listeners had a distractingly wide choice of stations and found it difficult to settle on just one.

In fact, since the very earliest days of radio, broadcasters tried to offer as diverse a range of programming as possible, and they often employed singers, actors, and even entire orchestras to provide it throughout the day and deep into the evening. Two such performers, Heye and Wiedecke, played particularly important roles in shaping that content. Heye, whom many consider one of the most influential voices in these early years, directed and acted in a number of radio plays starting in 1925, just months into the era of regular broadcasting. Wiedecke, a successful comedian, performer, and singer throughout the early twentieth century, had a close working relationship with Heye, having produced parody records with him in the early 1920s. Wiedecke made the transition to radio by 1926 and continued to collaborate regularly with Heye on a number of productions in that new medium.

Source

Source: "Achtung! Achtung! Sie hören Max Kreye," Voices: Max Heye and Grete Wiedecke, c. 1929.
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