

## “The Birth of National Broadcasting in Berlin” (1923)

### Abstract

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This ten-minute film merits the attention of historians for two reasons: not only does it tell the story of German radio's beginnings in the Weimar Republic, but it's also an early example of a movie produced specifically for home viewing on hand-cranked 16mm projectors, which grew in popularity among consumers during the 1920s as technological advances made them more affordable and easier to operate. This film from the late 1920s would, therefore, have appealed to film buffs and radio enthusiasts alike. The opening scenes situate radio's origins on Berlin's famous Potsdamer Platz in 1923, although the footage itself stemmed from a later year. The camera then takes viewers inside the broadcast studios of Vox House, where an orchestra, opera singers, and actors work together to create live programming, including Alfred Braun, a well-known radio personality who became program director in November 1924. Later scenes imagine the ways in which listeners enjoyed various radio programs in their homes, especially for dancing and as a background accompaniment to evening conversations. The end of the film includes some clever film-editing tricks that superimposed dancing legs over a spinning phonograph record, for instance, and a live orchestra over a radio's horn-shaped speaker. These effects replicated many of those in movie theaters at the time and sought to make the home-viewing experience as impressively cinematic as possible.

### Source

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Source: *Die Geburt des Reichsrundfunks in Berlin im Jahre 1923*, prod. Oskar Maxis, 1923. Bundesarchiv Filmarchiv Filmwerk ID: 22636. <https://digitaler-lesesaal.bundesarchiv.de/video/22636/666123>

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