

# Radio-TV: Night Man

## Jean Shepherd Returns to WOR, Proving One Good Nocturne Deserves Another

By JACK GOULD

**J**EAN SHEPHERD, nursemaid to the night people, has returned to WOR radio after his astutely publicized sabbatical of a few days. With two sponsors in hand he held forth until 1 o'clock yesterday morning, having begun his new weekly stint at 9 P. M. Sunday.

Mr. Shepherd was appropriately appreciative of the efforts of his post-meridian admirers in restoring him to the air waves, though he was hardly very generous in acknowledging the role played by the most ardent of day people, press agents. Anyway, the master of stream-of-consciousness doubletalk is back, often amusing and often incredibly dull and sophomoric.



The best Shepherd is the one painting such a delightful image as 8,000 night people repairing to Jones Beach and forming a human pyramid; the police of the day world could not be expected to comprehend the relaxed smiles on the faces of the pyramiders. In such moments there is almost a Thurberish quality about Mr. Shepherd's off-beat musings; then he is a stimulating antidote to the dreary world of cliché-ridden conformity.

But particularly in his new assignment—in early evening a listener's resistance is considerably higher than during the lonely hours of the dawn patrol—Mr. Shepherd needs to learn the gentle art of shutting up. He talks so much that he fritters away his effect; as they say in show business, he passes his blackout line. His is a wonderful suggestion, for example, that every crowd on a bus or subway train contains the seed of imminent violence. But when he tries to detail

what he has in mind, he only behaves like a disappointing day person.

Mr. Shepherd's sponsors are an organization that provides instruction in foreign languages and, of course, that soap company which benefited from the allegedly unauthorized commercial delivered in its behalf. WOR's unpredictable philosopher tried earnestly to leaven the plugs with humor but before he gave up his whimsey was showing. A little Shepherd goes a long way.

### Story of Jazz Musician

"Matinee Theatre," the attraction in color at 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon over Channel 4, presented an interesting mood play—the story of a young jazz musician.

—The narrative of the work, "Are You Listening?," was on the sticky and emotional side, involving a trombonist who wanted to emulate his father. But the author, Jack Laird, knew the problems of the jazz world and many of his incidental observations and characterizations rang altogether true; he also can turn a phrase and avoid the hackneyed expression. The jazz combination recruited especially for the play helped materially in establishing the proper atmosphere.

Conrad Janis, trombonist, played the lead and did very acceptably, as did his wife, Vicki Janis. The couple were making their dramatic debut together. The actor portraying the retired blind trumpeter should have received screen credit; he was extraordinarily good in his small part. "Matinee Theatre" need not apologize to any of the current evening dramatic presentations.

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