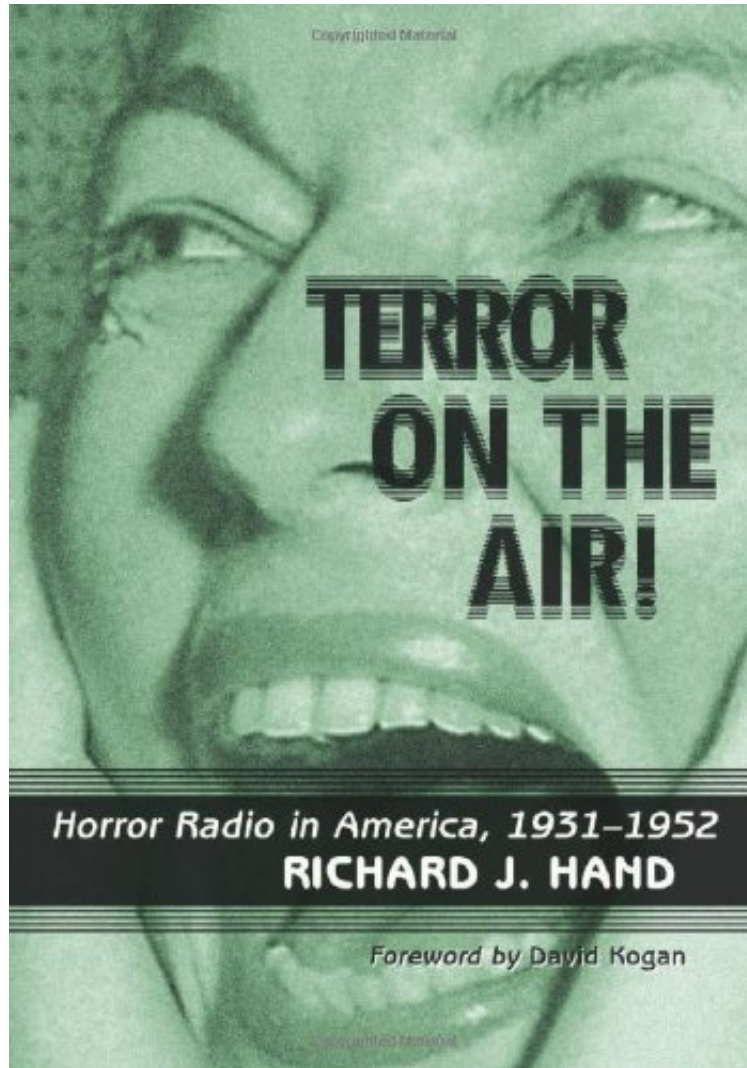


Terror on the Air!: Horror Radio in America, 1931-1952

Richard J. Hand

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Richard J. Hand : Terror on the Air!: Horror Radio in America, 1931-1952 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Terror on the Air!: Horror Radio in America, 1931-1952:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Valuable Guide to the Golden Age of American RadioBy Dr. Laurence RawTERROR IN THE AIR offers a comprehensive account of American radio drama during its so-called "Golden Age" when it captivated audiences, drew huge ratings, and attracted sponsors and star actors in equal quantities.Although many of the series were formulaic, Hand argues that the creative talents involved managed to create work of outstanding originality within that formula, making use of all aspects of the sonic landscape including music, sound-effects and dialogue. In a series of introductory chapters, he shows how each contributed to the overall

mise-en-scene, illustrated with copious examples from such epoch-making series as **SUSPENSE** and **LIGHTS OUT**. The second half of the book comprises a series of detailed case-studies of individual series, which perhaps might be of only specialized interest to radio drama enthusiasts, but which show the sheer virtuosity of many of those talents involved in radio. Radio drama died out in the mid-Fifties, the victim of technological change as well as a change of interest by the sponsors, who turned their attention towards television instead. Nonetheless the legacy remains in the form of recordings, most of which are now readily available to listen on the internet. Programs made over half a century ago can now attract new listeners; and Hand's book offers a valuable guide as to what they should expect from their experience.

The macabre world of monsters, killers on the loose and revenge from beyond the grave existed not only in the movies, but also on the radio before television's dominance in American homes. One of many distinct genres born of early broadcasting, horror radio thrilled millions. Creeping out of the speaker night after night came stories that chilled the listening public--everything from creature features to sophisticated noir suspense. So eager were Americans to be scared that nearly 80 horror programs aired every week in the late 1940s. This first full-length study of golden age horror radio focuses on six representative programs, starting with *The Witch's Tale* in 1931 and ending with *The Mysterious Traveler* in 1952. Each chapter provides the reader with a critically and historically informed study of one series. The book ends with a look at the demise of horror radio and its influence. Photographs are a delightful revelation, revealing the previously unseen (but much heard) work of stars like Agnes Moorehead and Orson Welles as they broadcast famous tales of terror.

"covers the genre well" --Big Reel"long awaited and thoroughly researched...the illustrations are splendid...recommended" --OTR Digest"excellent" --Gothic Studies
About the Author
Richard J. Hand works in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Glamorgan in Wales.