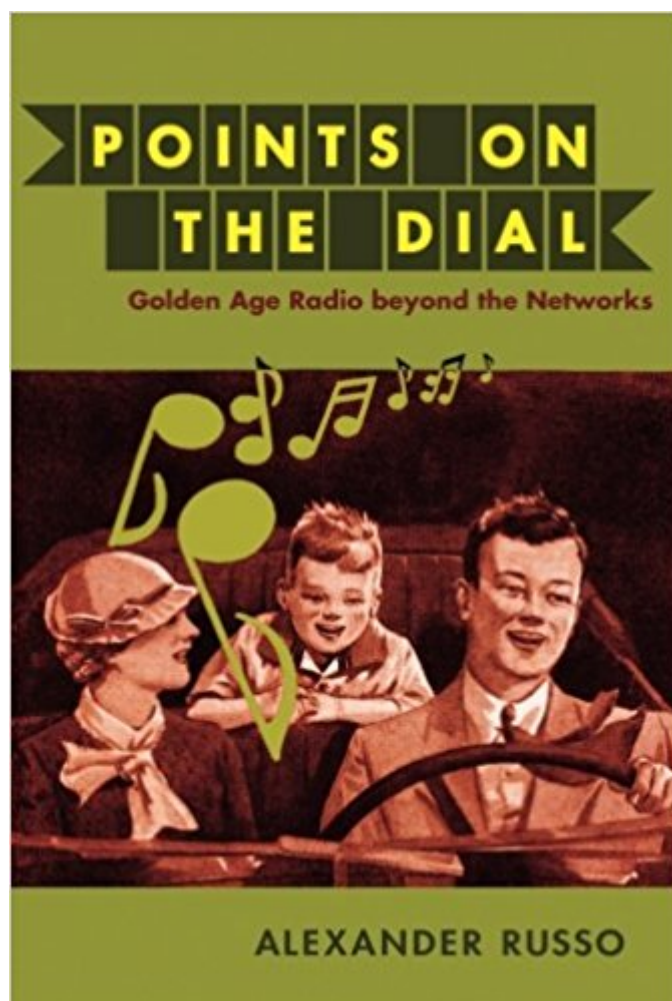


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Points On The Dial: Golden Age Radio Beyond The Networks



Synopsis

The golden age of radio is often recalled as a time when the medium unified the nation, when families gathered around the radios in homes across the country to listen to live, commercially sponsored network broadcasts. In *Points on the Dial*, Alexander Russo revises our understanding of radio's past by revealing the hidden histories of production, distribution, and reception practices during this era, which extended from the 1920s into the 1950s. Russo brings to light a tiered broadcasting system with intermingling but distinct national, regional, and local programming forms, sponsorship patterns, and methods of program distribution. Examining a wide range of practices, including regional networking, sound-on-disc transcription, the use of station representatives, spot advertising, and programming aimed at homes with several radios, he not only recasts our understanding of the relationship between national networks and local stations but also charts the development of new ways of listening—often distractedly rather than attentively—that set the stage for radio in the second half of the twentieth century.

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“Points on the Dial: Golden Age Radio beyond the Networks is not only interesting but also informative. If Russo's read on radio is right, history may help inform the nature of radio as it proceeds into a digital era where geographies of consumption and listening are drastically altered by the technologies of production and distribution.” — John F. Barber, Leonardo

Reviews “Russo . . . challenges some of the assumptions embedded within the standard

narrative of radio's evolution in this well-researched and persuasively argued book. . . . [A]nyone interested in media history, current changes in the media industries, or the growth of American consumer culture will no doubt find something of value in this work. - Noah Arceneaux, J-History, H-Net Reviews

"The book's forty-eight pages of notes contain gems as interesting as the main text, and the fourteen-page bibliography offers the reader the opportunity to explore in detail particular aspects of the history. Thus, *Points on the Dial* delivers a fresh perspective on the network era of radio broadcasting. - Don Bishop, *Journalism History*

"The real strength of this work is Russo's relentless documentation of industry practices that have rarely been given even cursory attention by historians. - Joy Elizabeth Hayes, *Journal of American History*

"This is an exceptionally well-referenced book. . . . [I]ts examination of the interplay of ownership and control of radio at a local and regional level, and the impact of competing production, distribution and consumption practices, suggests that the history of broadcasting in other countries would respond to similar analysis and benefit our understanding of the business, technology, and politics of the media of mass communication. - Vincent O'Donnell, *Cultural Studies Review*

"Points on the Dial is an important book, smart and forcefully argued. Alexander Russo makes a fresh and distinctive contribution to radio studies and to media history and analysis by challenging the network-centered history of radio and bringing the role of regional radio to the fore. His discussion of regional programming gambits is new and fascinating, as is his account of the rise of spot advertising. - Susan J. Douglas, author of *Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination*

"Offering fascinating arguments based on a wealth of excellent research, Alexander Russo fills in the history of radio broadcasting in the United States. He reveals the diversity of practices obscured until now by scholars' focus on the national networks. - Michele Hilmes, author of *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922-1952*

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