

2 weekly Cleveland radio shows give their regards to Broadway

TONY BROWN

Plain Dealer Theater Critic

The thing about live musical theater is, you gotta be there. Or you're not.

In Cleveland, though, we have the next-best thing: two local radio programs that feature recordings from musicals from Broadway (as well as Hollywood), allowing us to enjoy the sonic part of musicals we might not have seen live and to relive the thrill of the ones we have.

All from the comfort of one's living room sofa, driver's seat, boat deck or handyman's stepladder.

David Caban hosts "Sunday Matinee" at noon every week on WRUW FM/91.1. It lasts two hours, which gives the listener a whole hour to then make a live Sunday matinee at 3 p.m.

And when you get home, you'll have enough time to make a snack before tuning in at 7 p.m. Sunday for Bill Rudman's "Footlight Parade" on WCLV FM/104.9.

Rudman, who has won a Cleveland Arts Prize for his erudite approach, is better known for his 24-year-old show.

His show is syndicated and carried on dozens of other stations around the country, and he puts together live shows and education programming. (He'll do "An Afternoon of Cole Porter" at 2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 15, in the Louis Stokes Wing Auditorium of the Cleveland Public Library downtown.)

Caban's program, which celebrates its 22nd anniversary next month, is notable for its everyman approach and the fact that he does it as a labor of love, on a volunteer basis.

(Caban, whose day job is in the human resources department at The Plain Dealer, also volunteers as the station engineer at Case Western Reserve University's WRUW, the area's most powerful college station at 15,000 watts.)

So, does Caban do themed shows, take requests or just play his favorites?

"Yes, yes and yes," Caban said.

The themed shows often relate to the calendar.

On Mother's Day, for instance, you might hear "If Momma Was Married" from "Gypsy," "Don't Tell Mama" from "Cabaret" and "My Mother's Wedding Day" from



LYNN ISCHAY | THE PLAIN DEALER

CUE THE CURTAIN IN 5, 4, 3 . . . : David Caban has the world of Broadway, London's West End and Hollywood at his fingertips when he sits behind the WRUW microphone for his weekly "Sunday Matinee" broadcast.

ON THE DIAL

Sunday Matinee

When: Noon-2 p.m. Sundays.

Where: WRUW FM/91.1.

Host: David Caban.

Footlight Parade

When: 7-9 p.m. Sundays.

Where: WCLV FM/104.9.

Host: Bill Rudman.

"Brigadoon."

On the Sunday closest to July 4 every year, he plays the complete score from "1776," summing up the plot between numbers. (And then, for good measure, he reads the Declaration of Independence.)

Sometimes, his themes are a bit less Hallmark-related, such as a recent Sunday's "Guys and Dolls, Men and Women, Boys and Girls."

In addition to the obvious title tune, he played "Hymn to Him" from "My Fair Lady," "If I Were a Man" from "Victor/Victoria," "I'm Glad I'm Not a Man" from "The Littlest Revue," "I Enjoy Being a Girl" from "Flower Drum Song" and "He's a Tramp" from "Lady and the Tramp."

Sometimes, they're entirely personal.

After a recent cross-country vacation with his wife, Sue, Caban played songs about places they passed through, including "Gary, Indiana" from "The Music Man" and "Chicago, Illinois" from "Vic-

tor/Victoria."

And sometimes, they're historic.

When "Cats" surpassed "A Chorus Line" as the longest-running show on Broadway in 1997 ("The Phantom of the Opera" surpassed "Cats" last year), he played the entire score of "Chorus Line" the Sunday before and "Cats" the Sunday after.

Caban, now 41 and a resident of Lyndhurst, saw his first musical ("Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat") at age 12 in his hometown of Washington, D.C., in the historic Ford's Theatre. He came to Cleveland in the 1980s, when he studied engineering at Case and joined the staff of WRUW.

Public radio stations, and particularly college stations, tend to not show up in Arbitron ratings, but the popularity of "Sunday Matinee" can be measured in terms of on-air fund raising. It ranks among the top-10 money-makers at WRUW.

His favorite musical is a show about show business, one that skewers the industry and celebrates it, a lovingly sacrilegious paean to musical-theater days gone by: "The Producers."

"I just love it," Caban said.

As Max Bialystock said, "That's it, baby, when you've got it, flaunt it, flaunt it!"

Caban, with access to the public airwaves, baby, flaunts it every week.

To reach this Plain Dealer reporter:

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