



Location: Manchester M15 5EU [www.hulmehippodrome.org](http://www.hulmehippodrome.org)

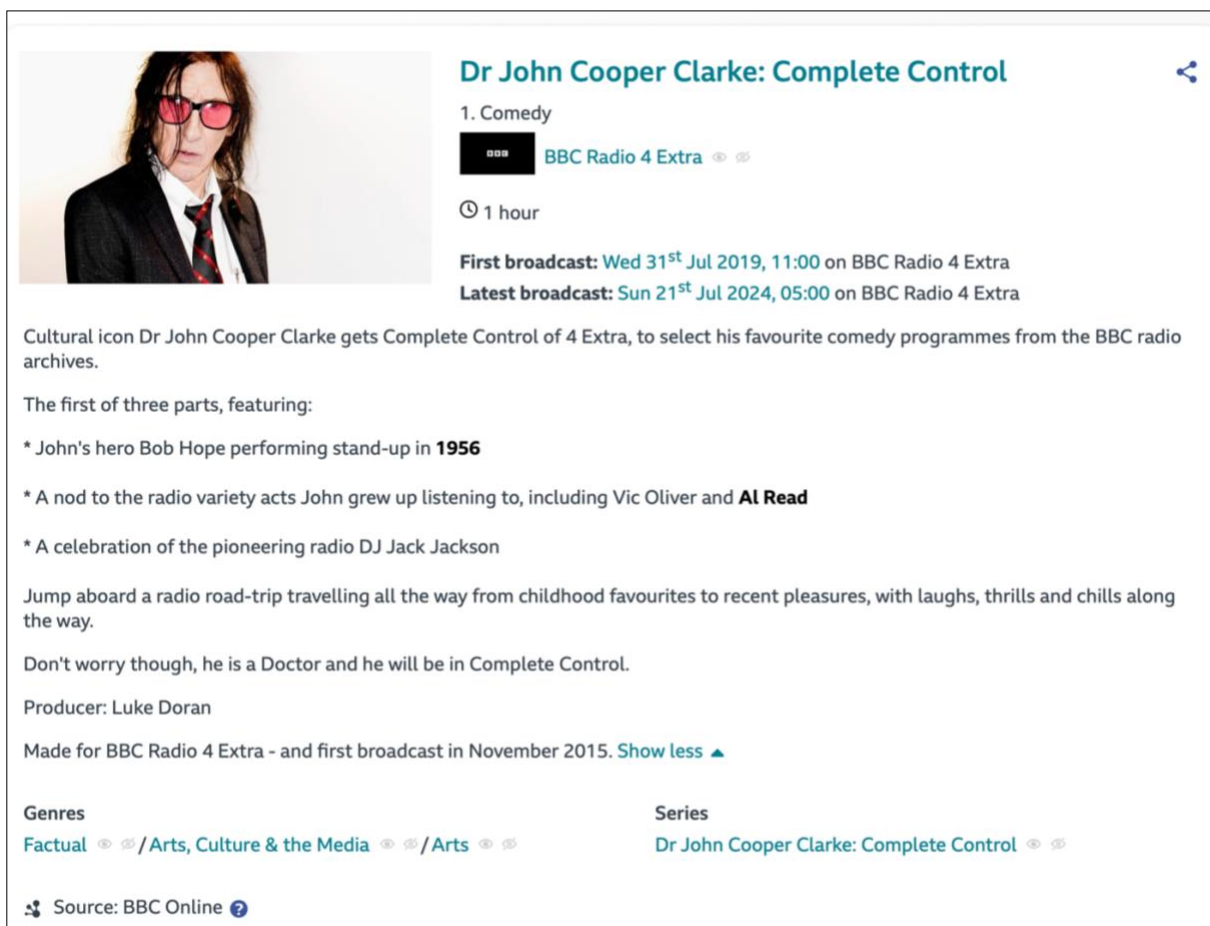
## Research Visit to the Ronnie Taylor Archive, V&A, July 2025

This report summarises the research visit undertaken at the Study Centre in the V&A East Storehouse building on 8 July 2025. The V&A holds this archive of papers and the reference is: Theatre & Performance, AU.T&P.2737, THM/16. The extent of the archive is c.50 uncatalogued boxes and this research accessed boxes 17, 19, and 20.

As well as sheets of business correspondence, publicity photographs etc these boxes included the following nine scripts (one incomplete) for *The Al Read Show* for the following recording dates:

5 Aug 1951	13 Jul 1952	24 Oct 1954	13 Feb 1955
	19 Oct 1952	21 Nov 1954	21 Aug 1955
	23 Nov 1925		
	14 Dec 1952		

It appears from subsequent listings in the Radio Times, archived online, that the tapes for first broadcasts on 25 November 1954 and 15 November 1955 have survived and been used in subsequent compilation shows, including by Barry Cryer in January 2007, by Eric Sykes in October 2007, and by Dr John Cooper Clarke in November 2015.



**Dr John Cooper Clarke: Complete Control**

1. Comedy

BBC Radio 4 Extra

1 hour

First broadcast: Wed 31<sup>st</sup> Jul 2019, 11:00 on BBC Radio 4 Extra  
 Latest broadcast: Sun 21<sup>st</sup> Jul 2024, 05:00 on BBC Radio 4 Extra

Cultural icon Dr John Cooper Clarke gets Complete Control of 4 Extra, to select his favourite comedy programmes from the BBC radio archives.

The first of three parts, featuring:

- \* John's hero Bob Hope performing stand-up in **1956**
- \* A nod to the radio variety acts John grew up listening to, including Vic Oliver and **Al Read**
- \* A celebration of the pioneering radio DJ Jack Jackson

Jump aboard a radio road-trip travelling all the way from childhood favourites to recent pleasures, with laughs, thrills and chills along the way.

Don't worry though, he is a Doctor and he will be in Complete Control.

Producer: Luke Doran

Made for BBC Radio 4 Extra - and first broadcast in November 2015. [Show less](#)

Genres: Factual / Arts, Culture & the Media / Arts

Series: Dr John Cooper Clarke: Complete Control

Source: BBC Online

## Background

Save [Hulme Hippodrome](#) Ltd is a community campaign to reverse the decline of this Grade 2 listed shuttered theatre in Manchester, built in 1901 and originally seating 3,300 people. We plan to revive it as a working-class community cultural centre for employment, performances and events. The current owners have expressed their wish to get planning permission to build apartments. It is an unusual old theatre as it is conjoined with its smaller sister within the same walls, [The Playhouse](#), built in 1902.



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|------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Image (page 1)               | BBC Online (Radio Times, genome website) |
| Image (page 2)               | Len Grant, photographer                  |
| Images (pages 4 to 21)       | By kind permission of the Taylor family  |
| Text (not within the images) | Save Hulme Hippodrome campaign           |

## Ronnie Taylor

[Ronnie Taylor](#) (1921–1979) was an English comedy scriptwriter, producer and television director. Beginning at BBC Manchester, he wrote for variety radio stars like Norman Evans, Old Mother Riley and Gracie Fields. From 1950 to 1952 he co-created and produced *Variety Fanfare*—recorded at Hulme Hippodrome—where he worked with rising talents including Al Read, Morecambe and Wise, and Ken Dodd. Promoted to BBC North producer in 1951, Taylor moved into television in the early 1950s, directing shows like *Home James* and *Club Night*. In 1959 he founded Taylor-Vision, producing *Candid Camera*. In the 1960s, he joined ABC’s light entertainment team (including in 1966, at ABC studios on Parrs Wood Road, Didsbury, Manchester), working on *Blackpool Night Out* and *Comedy Bandbox*. He later consulted for ATV and produced several sitcoms. He was still writing scripts for Al Read for BBC Radio 2 broadcasting in 1974. His archive was donated to the V&A in 2014.

## Al Read

[Al Read](#) (1909–1987) was a pioneering British radio comedian. After a career running his family’s sausage making business, he took up comedy in the late 1940s. His big break came when BBC producer Bowker Andrews heard him entertaining a small group and invited him to perform in *Variety Fanfare* in February 1950, recorded at Hulme Hippodrome. Ronnie Taylor became the producer following the death of Bowker Andrews. With Read’s **observational humour rooted in Northern working-class life**, his popular *Al Read Show* on BBC radio attracted up to 35 million listeners in the 1950s, more listeners than the FA Cup Final. He became famous for routines like *The Driving Instructor*, and catchphrases such as “Right, Monkey!” and “You’ll be lucky!”

He had stage fright throughout his career. For radio recordings the invited audience at Hulme Hippodrome was limited to the ground-floor stalls only, but larger audiences in live theatre and TV studios were more of a problem for him and he didn’t transition to TV as well as his comedy contemporaries Morecambe and Wise, and Ken Dodd.

Ronald Taylor, Esq.,  
14 Hawthorne Drive,  
Pendlebury,  
Nr. Manchester.

AUTHORITY TO BROADCAST SPECIALLY WRITTEN MATERIAL

(Original Performance in Service for the United Kingdom)

6th October, 1950.

Form: U.K.(C)

Reference: 03/CT/ DLR

IN CONSIDERATION of the payment to me/us of a fee of ~~ten guineas~~ <sup>per programme</sup> (£10..10..00) (half of which sum shall be payable on the signing of this authority and the remaining half on acceptance by the B.B.C. of the undermentioned material as suitable for broadcasting) I/WE HEREBY AUTHORISE the B.B.C. to give one broadcast performance, either live or by means of recordings made by the B.B.C., in its service for the United Kingdom, including if desired simultaneous broadcasting in the B.B.C.'s Overseas Services and in its services from Singapore, and Radio Ceylon, of my/~~the~~ <sup>six</sup> ~~series of variety programmes written in collaboration with~~ <sup>Rex Diamond and Dave Morris</sup> entitled ~~CLUB NIGHT~~.....  
..... <sup>beginning</sup>..... provisionally scheduled for the ~~North of England Home Service~~.. /on 7th November.....

I/WE ALSO AUTHORISE THE B.B.C.:

- (a) to give broadcast performances (either live or recorded) of the above mentioned material IN ENGLISH in its OVERSEAS SERVICES and in its services from Singapore and Radio Ceylon SUBJECT to payment of ONE HALF of the initial fee to cover not more than seven broadcasts and SUBJECT to a further payment of 10% of the initial fee for each broadcast in excess of seven, all such broadcasts to be given within a period of one year from the first broadcast in the Overseas Services.
- (b) to give broadcast performances (either live or recorded) of the above mentioned material IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES in its OVERSEAS SERVICES and in its services from Singapore and Radio Ceylon SUBJECT to payment of ONE QUARTER of the initial fee payable PER LANGUAGE for every two broadcasts in that language, all such broadcasts to be given within a period of one year from the first broadcast in the Overseas Services.
- (c) to give REPEAT PERFORMANCES (either live or recorded) of the above mentioned material in its SERVICE FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM including if desired simultaneous broadcasting in the B.B.C.'s Overseas Services and in its services from Singapore and Radio Ceylon SUBJECT to payment of ONE HALF of the initial fee for each broadcast given within seven days of the first United Kingdom broadcast and SUBJECT to payment of the FULL initial fee for each broadcast given after that period.
- (d) to translate the above mentioned material for broadcasting purposes.
- (e) to permit the relay of any of the performances referred to above by any system of wire broadcasting.

P/728/D  
17-1-50

Signed .....  
Date .....

Contract for "Club Night" scriptwriting, 1950

THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Head Office: Broadcasting House, London, W.1

Broadcasting House, Piccadilly, Manchester 1

TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAMS: CENTRAL 2931

16th October, 1950.

R. Taylor, Esq.,  
14 Hawthorne Drive,  
Pendlebury,  
Swinton.

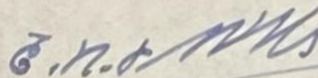
Dear Mr. Taylor,

We understand from our Variety Department that you have been asked to carry out special auditions from Monday, 11th September, 1950, and each week until the end of October.

We should like to offer you a weekly fee of £4. 4. 0d. for this work.

If you accept this fee, will you please sign and return the enclosed copy of this letter, when a cheque will be sent to you at the end of each week.

Yours sincerely,



E.H.F. Mills,  
Programme Executive, North Region.

AWB

THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Broadcasting House, London, W.1

LANgham 4411  
TELEPHONE ~~WENTWICK 4408~~ CABLES BROADCASTS, LONDON  
INLAND TELEGRAMS BROADCASTS, TELEX, LONDON

OS/CT/DLR

8th December, 1950.

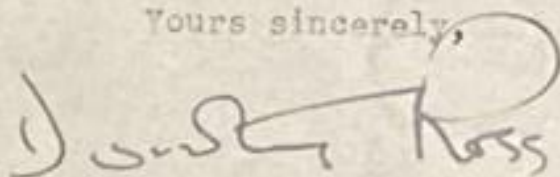
Dear Mr. Taylor,

I understand that you are writing approximately 7 minutes' material for the Norman Evans programme which North Region hope to broadcast on the 15th December.

I should be glad to have your formal agreement to undertake this work and would suggest a fee of 12 guineas to cover one broadcast to a home audience. I am attaching an agreement form and shall hope to receive back from you one signed copy.

I hope that all goes well with you.

Yours sincerely,



D. L. Ross.  
Copyright Department.

Ronald Taylor, Esq.,  
14 Hawthorne Drive,  
Pendlebury,  
Swinton,  
Mr. Manchester.

JL

THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Broadcasting House, London, W.1

TELEPHONE: LANGHAM <sup>4411</sup>~~4408~~ TELEGRAMS AND CABLES : BROADCASTS, TELEX, LONDON

OS/CT/DLR

20th December, 1950.

Dear Mr. Taylor,

North Region tell me that you are writing approximately seven to eight minutes' material for four programmes in a new VARIETY FANFARE series and that these broadcasts are scheduled for the Light Programme on the following dates:-

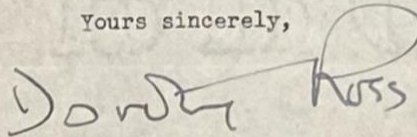
|             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1st January | 15th January |
| 8th January | 22nd January |

I should be glad to have your agreement to undertake this work and would suggest payment of twelve guineas per script. I am attaching an agreement form and shall hope to receive back from you one signed copy.

Incidentally, I have not had a reply from you to my letter of the 8th December regarding terms for the Norman Evans broadcast on the 15th December last. Perhaps you could let me know about this also when you reply.

With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Yours sincerely,



D. L. Ross.  
Copyright Department.

Ronnie Taylor, Esq.,  
14 Hawthorne Drive,  
Pendlebury,  
Swinton,  
Manchester.

JL

File up 1951

24

Jan 1951  
at Read Show

THE AL READ SHOW.

RECORDING:

Sunday, 5th August, 1951, between 8.30 - 9.15 p.m.  
at the Hulme Hippodrome, Manchester.  
Disk No. SMR 5893.

TRANSMISSION:

LIGHT PROGRAMME: Tuesday, 18th September, 1951.  
9.0 - 9.30 p.m.  
NEHS: Monday, 1st October 7.45 - 8.15 p.m.  
GOS: Sunday, 30th September 3.30 - 4.0 p.m. (GMT)  
" Wednesday, 3rd October 1.30-2.0 p.m. (GMT)  
" Friday, 5th October 8.15 - 8.45 p.m. (GMT)

H.A.R. 1952  
Porttana Place,  
London

'THE AL READ SHOW'

19 AUG 1952

Check.

TRANSMISSION: NEHS: Tuesday, 19th August, 1952. 7.0 - 7.30 p.m.

LIGHT: Sunday, 21st Sept., 1952. 5.30 - 6.0 p.m.

DISK NO: SMR 7559 and ~~SMR 7720~~.

(Recorded at the Hulme Hippodrome, Manchester on  
Sunday, 13th July, 1952)

1952

NUMBER TWO

22

Vw met.  
ae Read.  
show.

Check

THE AL READ SHOW

TRANSMISSION: Wednesday, 22nd October 9.30 - 10.0 p.m.  
LIGHT PROGRAMME

NEWS: Thursday, 30th October 8.0 - 8.30 p.m.

DISK NO: SMR 7945

(Recorded at the Hulme Hippodrome,  
Manchester 19th October, 1952)

NUMBER THREE:

*File*

*Check*

*1st run  
at Read  
show.*

THE AL READ SHOW.

with

AL READ  
THE RADIO REVELLERS  
KEN FRITH & HIS MAGIC PIANOS  
THE KORDITES

and

THE AUGMENTED NORTHERN VARIETY  
ORCHESTRA

CONDUCTED BY VILEM TAUSKY

REHEARSAL: 23rd November 1952. 2 pm. (Hulme Hippodrome)

RECORDING: 23rd November 1952. 8.30 pm.

TRANSMISSION: 4th December 1952. 8.45 - 9.15pm LIGHT.

DISK NO: SMR 8156.

1952

170

NUMBER FOUR

*Crede*

*Journal  
of Al Read  
Show.*

'THE AL READ SHOW'

with  
THE KORDITES  
KEN FRITH  
TONY FAYNE AND DAVID EVANS

The Augmented Northern Variety Orchestra  
conducted by Vilom Tausky.

PRODUCED BY RONNIE TAYLOR.

1952

LIGHT PROGRAMME: MONDAY, 29TH DECEMBER 9.30 - 10.0 p.m.

DISK NO: GMR 8363

(Recorded at the Hulme Hippodrome,  
Sunday, 14th December, 1952)

1954

NUMBER 2/LIGHT. (Third Series)

V. MSS

Al Read Show

Check Gaudin  
Dica

AL READ  
in  
"THE AL READ SHOW".

with  
RAWICZ AND LANDAUER,  
JOHN HORVELLE,  
THE TUNESMITHS  
and

The Augmented Northern Variety Orchestra  
conducted by: Alyn Ainsworth

Produced by Ronnie Taylor.

|                      |                               |                   |       |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------|
| <u>Transmission:</u> | Tuesday, 25th November, 1954. | 9.30 - 10.0 p.m.  | LIGHT |
|                      | Sunday, 28th November, 1954   | 3.30 - 4.0 p.m.   | LIGHT |
|                      | Tuesday, 30th November, 1954  | 7.00 - 7.30 p.m.  | NEWS  |
|                      | Tuesday, 7th December, 1954   | 5.30 - 6.00 GMT   | GOS   |
|                      | Wednesday, 8th December, 1954 | 6.30 - 7.00 GMT   | GOS   |
|                      | Friday, 10th December, 1954   | 13.30 - 14.00 GMT | GOS   |
|                      | " " " "                       | 23.45 - 24.15 GMT | GOS   |

Pre-recorded: Sunday, 24th October, 1954. 8.30 - 9.15 p.m.

Rehearsal: 5.30 p.m.

Studio: HULME HIPPODROME.

R.P. Ref. No: TMR 3945

1954

V MSS  
al Read  
Show.

NUMBER THREE/ (THIRD SERIES)

*Check*

AL READ

in

"THE AL READ SHOW"

with

RAWICZ and LANDAUER

THE KORDITES

The Augmented Northern Variety Orchestra

conducted by Alyn Ainsworth

Produced by Ronnie Taylor

Transmission: Tuesday, 4th January, 8.30 - 9.00 p.m. LIGHT.  
Saturday, 8th January, 10.25 - 11.05 p.m. LIGHT.  
Tuesday, 11th January, 7.00 - 7.30 p.m. NEHS.

Pre-recorded: Sunday, 21st November, 1954. 8.45 - 9.30 p.m.

Studio: HULLME HIPPODROME.

R.P. Ref. No: TMR ~~425~~. 4320 r A

1955

Var Mss  
al Read  
Shows

Read

"THE AL READ SHOW"

with

AL READ

THE RADIO REVELLERS

KEN FRITH

THE KORDITES

THE BBC AUGMENTED NORTHERN VARIETY ORCHESTRA  
CONDUCTED BY ALYN AINSWORTH

PRODUCED BY RONNIE TAYLOR

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Transmission: Tuesday, 22nd February, 1955. 8.00 - 8.30 p.m. LIGHT  
Sunday, 27th February, 1955. 3.00 - 3.30 p.m. LIGHT.  
Tuesday, 1st March, 1955. 7.00 - 7.30 p.m. NEHS s.b.  
HOME.

Pre-recorded: Sunday, 13th February, 1955. 8.45 - 9.30 p.m.

Studio: HULME HIPPODROME.

R.P.Ref. No: TMR 5082

---

1955

✓ MSS  
al Read

Check Cinema 16.12.56

Golf 9~~8~~

N.H.  
Chassis

Show

"THE AL READ SHOW"

with

PAT BREDIN

KEN FRITH AND HIS MAGIC PIANOS

and

Les Howard  
Barbara Law  
Sheila Buxton  
Syd Lawrence

The Augmented BBC Northern Variety Orchestra  
conducted by Alyn Ainsworth

Introduced by Roger Moffat

Produced by RONNIE TAYLOR

---

Transmission: Sunday, 25th September, 1955. 1.45 - 2.15 p.m. LIGHT.  
Saturday, 1st October, 1955. 7.30 - 8.00 p.m. LIGHT.

Pre-recorded: Sunday, 21st August, 1955. 8.00 - 8.45 p.m.

Rehearsal: " " " " 4.00 p.m.

Studio: HULME HIPPODROME.

R.P.Ref. No: TMR 6561

---

# GERARD HEATH

Personal Representation

Phone: Regent  
03034/5

"PRINCES HOUSE"  
190/6 PICCADILLY  
LONDON    W.1

Cables and Grams:  
Gerheath, Piccy, London

GH/PM

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

February 6th  
1959

Jimmy Clitheroe, Esq.,  
1a, Waverley Avenue,  
BLACKPOOL.

Dear Jimmy Clitheroe,

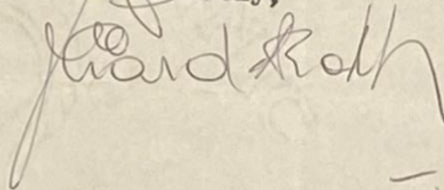
I have a further letter from Jimmy Brennan on my return to the office this morning.

It appears he is coming up to town late on Thursday evening next, the 12th instant, and wants to know if we can all meet here on Friday morning. I have suggested 12.0'clock noon.

I am finding out from him as to whether this will be convenient, and perhaps you would be good enough to let me know likewise.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely,



TELEGRAMS :  
LIMELIGHT, LESQUARE  
LONDON.

ANY OFFER CONTAINED IN THIS LETTER DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A CONTRACT  
LICENSED ANNUALLY BY THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL.  
DIRECTORS : J. W. COLLINS. E. COLLINS

TELEPHONES :  
TEMPLE BAR 7255/6/7



# Will Collins

THEATRICAL AND VAUDEVILLE EXCHANGE LTD.  
"CHANDOS HOUSE,"

45/46 . CHANDOS PLACE . LONDON . W. C. 2



JWC/BFP

17th April, 1959.

Ronnie Taylor, Esq.,  
Strad (London) Limited,  
274, Deansgate,  
Manchester, 3.

*File  
J. Clitheroe*

Dear Ronnie,

Now can you please tell me if there is going to be any chance at all of me getting JIMMY CLITHEROE for Pantomime next Christmas at Hulme. It is very important that I know this, or at least have some idea if it is likely, as I have soon got to start and set a subject and look for a star artiste, if I cannot get JIMMY CLITHEROE.

A line from you would be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

*J.C.*



Ronnie Taylor [right]



Ronnie Taylor

Photograph by :-  
**JAMES CONNOR,**  
STUDIO, 695, KNUTSFORD ROAD,  
LATCHFORD,  
WARRINGTON.  
PHONE :- 1568.

WHEN ORDERING FURTHER  
COPIES OR ENLARGEMENTS  
PLEASE REFER TO THIS  
NUMBER :- D4815



Ronnie Taylor [right]

No. 12.

*J.C.*

JIMMY CLITHEROE

in

"CALL BOY"

with

VIC OLIVER

LUCILLE MAPP

ALBERT AND LES WARD

WILLIAM ROBERTS

JACK WATSON

JUDITH CHALMERS

THE HINDLEY-TAYLOR SINGERS

The BBC Northern Dance Orchestra

Conducted by Alyn Ainsworth

Produced by James Casey

*Repeat the Dance*

REHEARSAL: Sunday, 9th March 1958 4.30-7.0 p.m.  
RECORDING: Sunday, 9th March 1958 7.45-8.30 p.m. Playhouse  
TRANSMISSION: Monday, 16th March 1958 9.0-9.30 p.m. LIGHT  
R.P.REF.NO.: TMR 4498  
EDITING: Monday, 10th March 1958 10.0-1.0 p.m.

[The Playhouse](#), 1958, is the second, smaller, theatre in the same building as [Hulme Hippodrome](#). Then owned by BBC (Hipp had been rented). Note date correction: Monday was 17 March 1958.