## Broadcast manifesto – 1931

**Notes**

1) The British broadcast legend Dave Lee Travis was an ardent campaigner for and supporter of the Broadcast manifesto. His impeccable style and professionalism was a result of a diligent study of and adherence to the principles. Ironically, he fell foul of the manifesto by defending it on air with the words: "there are changes being made at the station that go against my principles". By "my principles" he was, of course, referring to the principles of the manifesto. With that one sentence Travis unfortunately flouted principle 2.8.

(2) The one time virgin broadcaster, Chris Evans is the most recent casualty of un-disciplined broadcast. Among the many principles he ignored, ultimately it was a disregard for Principle 3.5 that brought him down.

(3) The great archivist, Harry Smith, "re-discovered" the Broadcast manifesto in 1948 whilst carrying out research into acetate recordings of early US radio broadcasts. He was largely responsible for the revived interest in Fitzgerald's principles and indeed, his Anthology of American Music to this day remains one of the most important works catalogued and presented strictly according to the principles of the manifesto.

(4) This principle was famously ignored by Orson Wells in his broadcast of the War of the Worlds on October 30 1938. The Broadcast resulted in mass nation-wide panic and a resulting national scandal. No example serves better to illustrate the perils of blatantly ignoring the principles of the manifesto.

(5) London Broadcast Maverick, Danny Baker, has fallen foul of the manifesto on many occasions. Most famously he was sacked from Radio Five having verbally attacked his producer on-air after his producer had suddenly patched through a call to a footling referee Baker had been taking issue with. In addition to flouting principle 2.8 (admittedly a common occurrence amongst contemporary broadcasters) he went on to ignore Principle 3.4.

(6) Satirist Chris Morris, released helium into a studio during which a sport and weather broadcast was taking place. Although the manifesto has no specific reference to the use of inert gases during the course of broadcasting this act certainly does challenge principle 3.2. During his lengthy and controversial broadcasting career, Morris has flouted almost every principle with the notable exception of 3.6.

(7) Simon Dee, the 1960s BBC Radio One broadcaster ignored, to his peril, many of the principles of the manifesto. Many critics even argue that Dee deliberately set out to flout Fitzgerald principles during his days with the BBC. On one of his final shows Dee even made a joke of the fact that within the space of 90 minute of broadcast he broke or disregarded 17 independent principles (1.2,1.3,1.7,1.8,2.6,2.8,2.9,2.10,3.1,3.2,3.6,3.7,4.4,5.1,5.3). Ultimately, he was, of course, sacked and his life in broadcasting was at an end.

(8) In 1936, comedian Hector Thaxter, became the first person to say "arse" on the radio. Principle 5.1 (together with 5.2) is generally considered, by Fitzgerald aficionados, to deal with the issue of swearing on the radio. In the case of Thaxter, it is principle 2.8 that is more important. An attempt to innovate had the result of mere titillation.

**N.B.**
The irony of Fitzgerald is that whilst he was a passionate advocate and campaigner of innovation it is a sad that he never fully came to terms with the increasing commercialisation and trivialisation of broadcasting that occurred in the post-war period. Increasing frustration with the developments of his medium ultimately took their toll. To this day, Fitzgerald devotees still gather at his grave to commemorate and remember that fateful Wednesday morning in 1963.