



## **DZRH: KZRH Before, DZRH Today - A Story of Philippine's Oldest Radio Station**

Samuel Gaches, owner of the department store H. E. Heacock Co., put up KZRH (Radio Heacock) in 1939. A year later, the firm acquired KZRC (from store owner Isaac Beck) to cover the Cebuano market. KZRH's radio broadcasts centered on music, variety shows, comedy skits and short newscasts. Jazz and ballads became standard fare. With English language, western music, and American voices dominating the airwaves, radio supplemented the educational infrastructure established by the Thomasites and became an agent for the Americanization of Uncle Sam's "little brown brother." Filipinos were in an era of "flapper" modernism, adapting more and more to American ways. Jazz music was in the air. Aggressive advertising promoted drinking, smoking and driving flashy automobiles. Women wore shorter skirts, bobbed their hair, put on more make-up, and received the right to vote. Globally, technological innovations were the order of the day. Kodak produced the flash camera. Edwin Armstrong built the first FM transmitter station. And RCA produced the first TV sets -- with NBC, CBS, and BBC publicly demonstrating the power of television. As the shadows of the second world war loomed over the horizon. radio highlighted the conflicting ideologies of the so-called "Co-Prosperity Sphere" as bannered by overt propaganda from the Japanese military, against the democratic ideals embedded in the forbidden programs aired by defiant Resistance forces on their underground stations which broadcast on different frequencies to avoid detection. As war became imminent, radio became an important source of news and information. KZRH Station Manager Bertrand Silen was appointed Chief Coordinator of Information by the American High Commissioner. Instead of destroying KZRH equipment as the USAFFE had done to the other stations to prevent their use by the Imperial forces. Silen's staff brought a shortwave transmitter to Corregidor and built a makeshift radio station, which General Douglas MacArthur christened as the Voice of Freedom. However, Japanese forces eventually found equipment hidden in the basement of the Heacock building in Escolta, and use these to continue broadcasting as KZRH. It was here that General Jonathan Wainwright eventually announced the USAFFE surrender to the Japanese Imperial Army. The call letters were changed to PIAM, and the station bombarded listeners with music, language, literature, and even calisthenics - the Nippon way. MacArthur's return and the American declaration of independence for the Philippines signalled the postwar reconstruction of Philippine radio. The Elizalde family bought KZRH from the Heacock Company, and with Silen's help, acquired equipment from the National Broadcasting Company in New York to establish operations at the Insular Life building on Plaza Cervantes. KZRH was back on the air under the auspices of Manila Broadcasting Company on July 1, 1946 - just in time to cover the inauguration of the Second Philippine Republic, with Manuel Roxas as President.

Thanks to the following:

Narrator:

Nick de Guzman

Researchers:

Kristine Javier-Jabson

Patty Tolentino

Video Editor:

Jan Yandug

Photos:

Edwin Montilla

Tiya Dely Archives

Lente Images - Kiko Calado

Videos:

Dekada Sitenta

Ang Mabuhay Para sa Masa by Pres. Erap Estrada

Universal Pictures

GMA Channel 7

Imelda: Power, Myth and Legend

US Army

Manila Broadcasting Company (MBC)

DZRH Technical Department

DZRH Newscenter

RHTelevision (RHTV)