

Milton John Cross

(April 16, 1897 – January 3, 1975)



was an American radio announcer famous for his work on the [NBC](#) and [ABC](#) radio networks.

He was best known as the voice of the [Metropolitan Opera](#), hosting its [Saturday afternoon radio broadcasts](#) for 43 years, from the time of their inception in 1931 until his death in 1975.^[1]

Biography

Born in [New York City](#), Cross started his career just as network radio itself was in its earliest stages. He joined the New Jersey station [WJZ](#) in 1921, not just as an announcer but also as a singer, often enaging in recitals with the station's staff pianist, [Keith McLeod](#).^[2] By 1927, WJZ had moved to Manhattan and had become the flagship station of the [Blue Network](#) of NBC's new national radio network. Cross' voice became familiar as he not only delivered announcements for the Blue Network but also hosted a number of popular programs. Cross was the announcer for the quiz program [Information Please](#) and the musical humor show [The Chamber Music Society of Lower Basin Street](#), among others.

Metropolitan Opera broadcasts

It is as the host of the Metropolitan Opera's broadcasts that Cross will be most remembered. His distinctive voice conveyed the excitement of live performances "from the stage of the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City" for generations of radio listeners. Initially, he broadcast from a seat in "Box 44" at the old [Metropolitan Opera House](#) at Broadway and 40th Street. In 1966, he introduced the radio audience to the Met's new [home](#) at Lincoln Center as he hosted a special broadcast of the opening night performance from a modern radio booth in the new house.

In 43 seasons he missed only two broadcasts, due to the death of his wife. Cross never retired but died in New York from a [heart attack](#) during the Met season of 1974-75. He was succeeded by [Peter Allen](#), who had been his standby announcer.

A native New Yorker, Cross died in New York City where he had lived all his life. He is interred at [Kensico Cemetery](#) in [Valhalla, NY](#).

Books

Cross edited several popular editions of opera synopses, published in conjunction with the Met broadcasts. He also co-authored (with David Ewen) *Milton Cross' Encyclopedia of the Great Composers and their Music* — a set of biographies of 78 composers, published in 1953 by Doubleday & Co.
