

Larry Thor Biography

8/27/16 – 3/15/76

Larry Thor was born 27 August 1916, in a small village of Icelandic immigrants in Manitoba, Canada. He began in radio because he couldn't get work at the local mine. He worked on various stations in Canada before moving to the States in 1946. He starred as Detective Danny Clover on "Broadway Is My Beat" from 1949 to 1954. He was also the announcer for "The Green Lama" and for "Rocky Jordan."

He appeared as a supporting actor in many movies, including "The Pride of St. Louis" as an un-credited baseball announcer, and the cult sci-fi classic "The Amazing Colossal Man" as the army doctor. He also appeared on many TV series, like "Gilligan's Island", "I-Spy", "Perry Mason", and "The Munsters."

In addition to his radio & movie work, he wrote and recorded an album of children's songs called Galloping On My Dinosaur.

Date of Death: 15 March 1976, Santa Monica, California, USA. (Heart attack)

Spouse - Jean Howell (11/21/27 – 7/23/96)

Jobs with CBS:

- Announcer on CBS Radio's "The Adventures of Rocky Jordan" (1948-1953).
- Starred as detective Danny Clover on CBS Radio's "Broadway is My Beat" (1949-1954).
- Announcer for CBS Radio's "The Green Lama" (1949).

When asked for his biography, Larry Thor submitted the following:

"Born August 27, 1916 in the first completed room of a new frame house (they'd just moved up from the log cabin) on grandfather's farm, eight miles from Lundar, Manitoba, Canada, an Icelandic village in the sense that Icelandic was the only language spoken by the immigrant citizens.

I was married when I was 21 and have four children by that marriage. I started in radio after unsuccessfully trying to get work in a mine at Flin Flon, Manitoba, in 1937. I tacked across eastern Canada on various radio stations until 1946 when I came to Los Angeles.

I've been announcing and acting since, have an un-purchased novel I wrote two years ago which keeps me company on cold days, have tried to interest producers in a couple of TV series ideas, am now married to [Jean Howell](#) (Thor), an actress, and we have three children, Kristina, 6; [Cameron](#), 4; and Leifur Hayden, 2 1/2 months.

Once, when Larry Thor wasn't singing, or acting in a film, or narrating on the radio, he said that talking about his own work made him think of Gulley Jimson, the artist-hero of Joyce Cary's novel "The Horse's Mouth," who said to his acolyte Nosey: "Nosey, paint a picture - all talk is lies." Not quite all talk, for Larry Thor knows the talk to make children laugh. He knows the goodness of kids, and he knows their squinchy orneriness, grumpiness and silliness's. With the sensitive assistance of guitarist Al Hendrickson, Thor presents twelve songs that most kids should find absolutely captivating.

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Most of the ideas for the songs in this album have come from practical experience; it seems to me that kids and adults are really the same, but in different uniforms. [Sad Day](#), [Lonely Day](#) is perhaps the most accurate song about kids in the entire album. Kids are torn between what they want to do and what they know they have to do to keep people around. It's not a sad song; it's matter-of-fact, like kids. [The Gimme Pig?](#) Every child has it, is it? You almost have to forbid it. You have to stop the momentum of 'gimme' - they really need help when they're in the 'gimme' chant.

"I think feelings can be re-arranged; that's what [When You Hurt](#) is about. I see people pick up a child who has been hurt and tell him to be brave. They should say, and mean; that they know it hurts and that crying may help - the kid's better off if he can hurt.

[Picnic](#) is a mischief song; I tried to poke fun at the idea that kids on a picnic will be what we want them to be - that is, as little irritation as possible. [Answer Every Question](#) came right from my son, Cameron. We woke up early one cool morning and as he sat on the air vent, catching the heat, I asked him what he wanted to be when he grew up. 'You'll see,' he said. And that's really a multi-barreled proposition: innocent, yet loaded.

"[Matinee Lullaby](#) was a musical inspiration; it came out of the lovely chord progressions. I put it into a lullaby for the midday nap - that's when it's really tough to get them to sleep.

[Scary Song](#) is for Cameron and my daughter Kristina - there are verses for each of them. It starts out innocently and then the music and the story develop an ominous feel.

[Since You Went Away](#) is like so many children's conversations. If one child meets another they cheer the other up by talking of violence, of bad conditions.

[Worry Time](#) is about what kids worry most about - what they're not caught at; it's very difficult for them to deal with guilt.

"One of the chief functions of television is to give mother a rest. The kid is doing her a service when he watches; that's what [T.V. Song](#) is about.

[Gallop on My Dinosaur](#) has a different attitude than the others. It's just a rollicking old song about a kid with a non-existent pal. I think we'll always be fascinated with dinosaurs and a little sorry we weren't around to ride them.

[Lullaby](#) is a piece of mischief. If you tell kids not to think about something, that's exactly what they're going to think about. I think it's easier for them to go to bed if they ramble around among things like crocodiles."

Broadway's My Beat influence:

"In autumn sunlight the September day trots out its promises for Broadway's consideration, displays them in doorways, in push carts, in gutters, decorates them with price tags, invites you to browse - don't touch", "buy - don't squeeze", and at cut rates of secondhand delights, the prices slashed down to any man's purse, the bold end of dreams. The vendors simper, the hawkers wink. Buy kid. That's a winter sun on your shoulder and the day is short, so buy. And that's watchya' do, kid, because on Broadway there's no other choice."

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So begins one episode of "Broadway Is My Beat", radio's detective equivalent of beat poetry. Classy, lyrical prose backed up by trumpet & piano instead of bongo drums. The composer, Alexander Courage was later famous for the Star Trek theme. The writing was by Morton Fine and David Friedkin. Fine & Friedkin were one of radio's busiest writing teams. Besides Broadway, they did "Bold Venture", "Crime Classics", and several Suspense shows. They even wrote the radio pilot for "Gunsmoke".

New York City Homicide Detective Danny Clover narrated the stories, ably assisted in his investigations by leg-man Muggavan. Sgt. Gino Tartaglia did the research and office part of the cases, while he wasn't talking about his family or plying Danny with food from Mrs. T. Gino clearly tried Danny's patience, and although frequently met with brusqueness, never stopped trying to soften him up.

Danny never accepted Tartaglia's invitations or his proffered treats, and seemed to have no life outside of his job, but he was no Joe Friday. He clearly empathized with the victims and their families.

The show was heard over CBS from 02/27/49 through 08/01/54. From 02/27/49 until 05/29/49, the character of Danny Clover was played by Anthony Ross and was broadcast from New York. Beginning on 07/07/49 the program was moved to Hollywood and a lead change had the audience listening to Larry Thor. Ben Wright, Edgar Barrier, Sheldon Leonard, Herb Ellis, Barney Phillips, Hy Averbach, Byron Kane, Paula Winslow were among those heard on a regular basis.

Cue street sounds. "There's a time on Broadway when the crowd gives up, goes home. The lights buzz fitfully - die. Then it's a street of dim moonlight and dark whispers, and the wind of the autumn night, the wind that scatters everything. Yesterday's headline, yesterday's dreams, yesterday's people. It's Broadway. The gaudiest, the most violent, the loneliest mile in the world. Broadway - my beat."

And so, the end of the day on Broadway's My Beat, Thor's most significant impact on radio.

Internet References to Larry Thor:

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0861158/>

Larry Thor has no reference in Wikipedia as of 12/9/2007