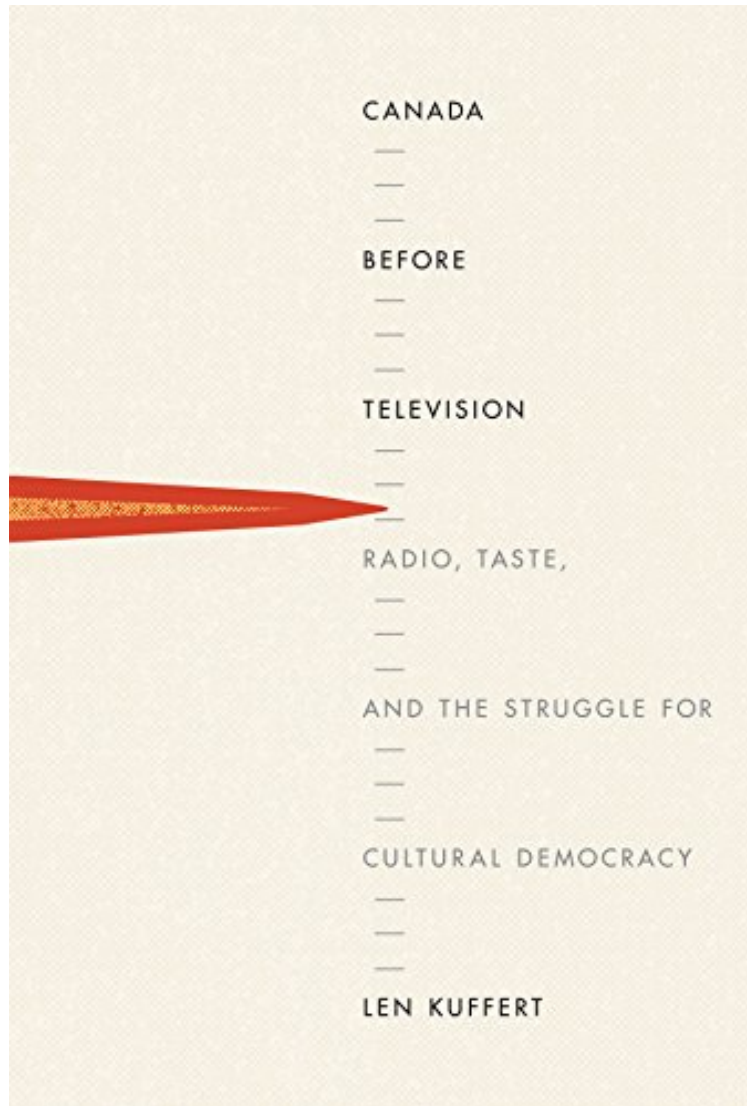


# Canada before Television: Radio, Taste, and the Struggle for Cultural Democracy

*Len Kuffert*

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**Len Kuffert : Canada before Television: Radio, Taste, and the Struggle for Cultural Democracy** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Canada before Television: Radio, Taste, and the Struggle for Cultural Democracy:

Before screens could be stared at, listeners lent their ears to radio, and Canadian listeners were as avid as any. In *Canada before Television*, Len Kuffert takes us back to the earliest days of broadcasting, paying particular attention to how programs were imagined and made, loved and hated, regulated and tolerated. At a time when democracy stood out as a foundational value in the West, Canadas private stations and the CBC often had conflicting ideas about what should or could be broadcast. While historians have documented the nationalist and culturally aspirational motives of some broadcasters, the story behind the production of programs for both broad and specialized audiences has not been as effectively told. By interweaving archival evidence with insights drawn from secondary literature, *Canada before Television* offers perspectives on radios intimate power, the promise and challenge of US programming and British influences, the regulation of taste on the air, shifting and varied musical appetites, and the difficulties of knowing what listeners wanted. While this mixed system divided Canadians then and now, the presence of more than one vision for the emerging medium made the early years of broadcasting in Canada more culturally democratic for listeners who stood a better chance of getting both what they already liked and what they might come to like. *Canada before Television* offers an insightful look at the place of radio and debates about programming in the development of a cultural democracy.

Kuffert makes a compelling case that the story here is one of the broadcaster trying to discern listeners taste, and attempting to appeal to as well as shape it a provocative book, rich in its methodology and scholarship. Jeff A. Webb, Memorial University of Newfoundland