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DECEMBER 3RD, 1999 • ISSUE NUMBER 30

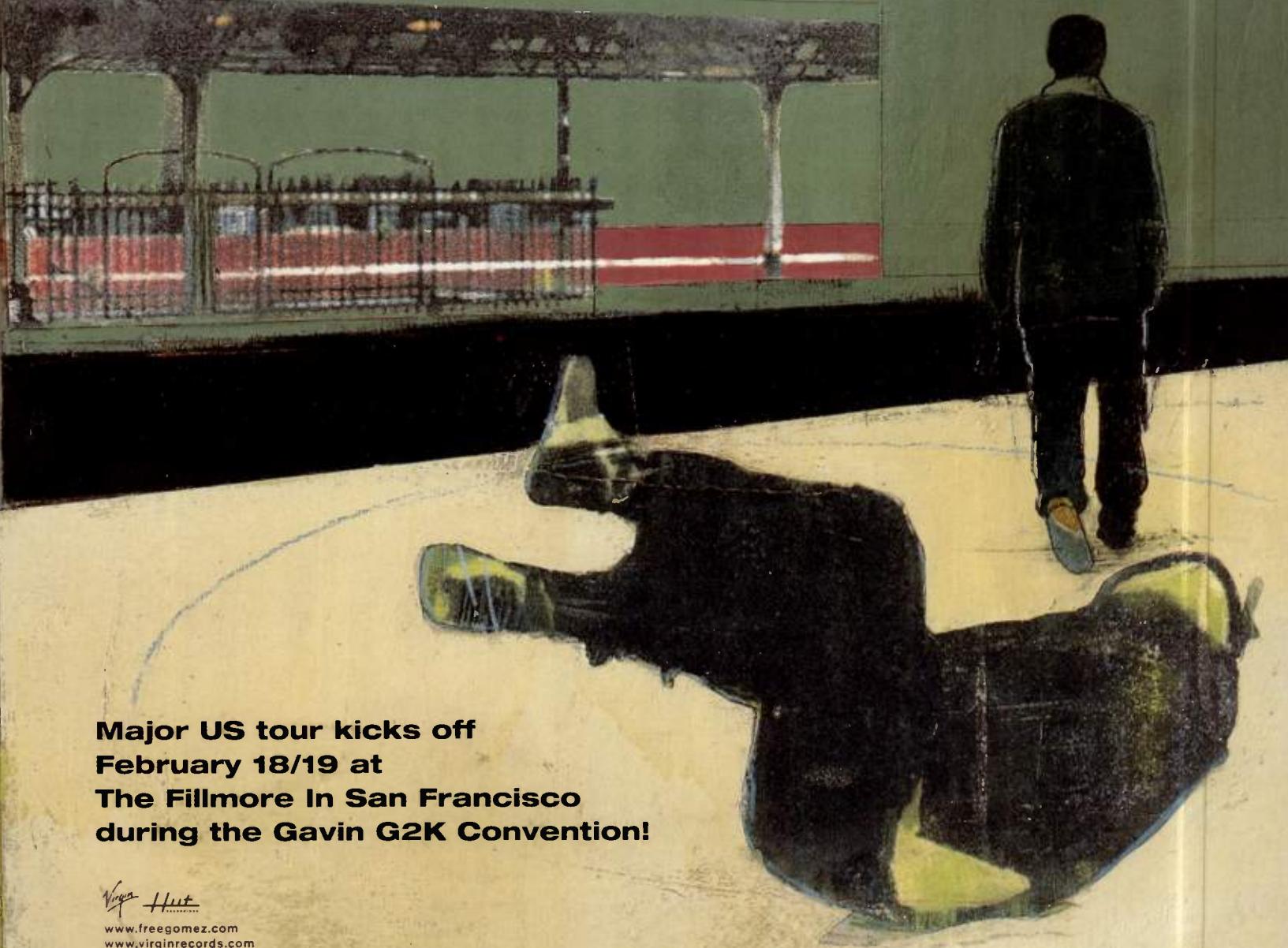
# Gomez

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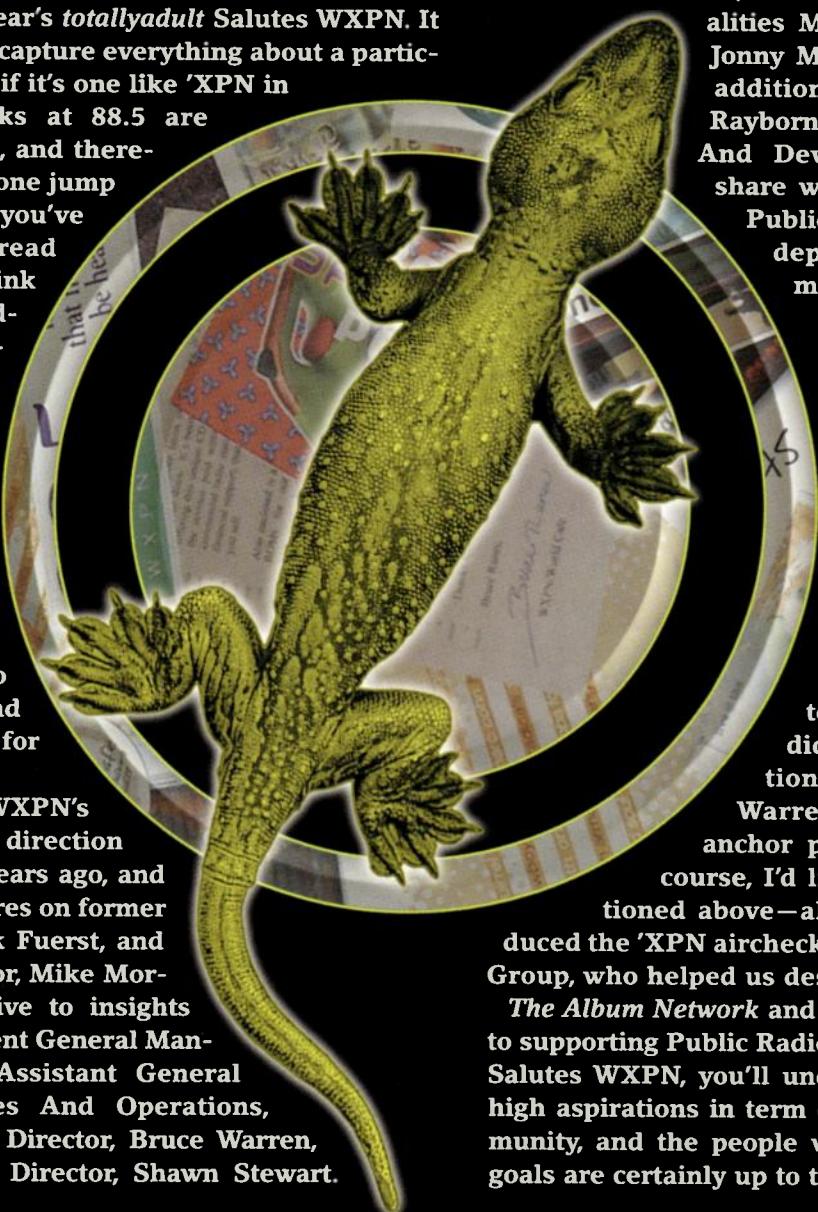
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# letter from the e d i t o r

After already having done a tribute issue last year with WXRT, Matthew Lawton and I knew what we were in for putting together this year's *totallyadult* Salutes WXPN. It is nearly impossible to capture everything about a particular station, especially if it's one like 'XPN in Philadelphia: the folks at 88.5 are always planning ahead, and therefore, they were always one jump in front of us. But after you've had a chance to read through the issue, I think you'll agree we succeeded in capturing the pioneer spirit virtually everyone at 'XPN (both past and present) embodies. In every way imaginable, WXPN not only represents what's best in the realm of Public Radio, but it's also one of the finest examples of radio programming (any kind of radio) being done for the right reasons.

As you'll discover, WXPN's current programming direction began a little over 10 years ago, and so we've included features on former General Manager, Mark Fuerst, and former Program Director, Mike Morrison, to add perspective to insights we've gained from current General Manager, Vinnie Curren, Assistant General Manager/New Ventures And Operations, Bruce Ranes, Program Director, Bruce Warren, and just-exiting Music Director, Shawn Stewart.



You'll also find in-depth features on World Cafe and its host, David Dye, as well as on-air personalities Michaela Majoun, Helen Leicht, Jonny Meister and Kathy O'Connell. In addition, Events Coordinator, Larry Rayborn, and Assistant GM/Marketing And Development, Quyen Shanahan, share with us the inner workings of a Public Radio station, which largely depends on the support of its members.

At this time I'd like to thank our roving reporter, Jon "Petey" Peterson, who went to Philadelphia and hung out for a few days—he has written the bulk of the features in this issue. Peterson also gathered together much of the memorabilia and photographs you'll see throughout this magazine. I'd also like to thank Kevin Stapleford, who did the interview with the station's Program Director, Bruce Warren, and penned one of the anchor pieces for the tribute. And, of course, I'd like to thank all of those mentioned above—along with Jim Gotta, who produced the 'XPN aircheck and the folks at the Weighman Group, who helped us design the cover.

*The Album Network* and *totallyadult* are fully committed to supporting Public Radio, and once you read *totallyadult* Salutes WXPN, you'll understand why. This station has high aspirations in term of its importance in their community, and the people who are working toward those goals are certainly up to the challenge.

John Schoenberger  
[totallyjs@sfxnet.com](mailto:totallyjs@sfxnet.com)

# totallyadult

## 2000

### Magazine & TuneUp Schedule

#### configuration

totallyadult #31 & tuneup #42

street date

february 4

dat/ad deadline

january 20/january

#### configuration

totallyadult #32 & tuneup #43

street date

march 17

dat/ad deadline

march 2/march 9

#### configuration

totallyadult #33 & tuneup #44

street date

april 28

dat/ad deadline

april 13/april 20

#### configuration

totallyadult #34 & tuneup #45

street date

june 9

dat/ad deadline

may 26/june 1

#### configuration

totallyadult #35 & tuneup #46

street date

july 14

dat/ad deadline

june 29/july 6

#### configuration

totallyadult #36 Special 5th Anniversary Issue!  
& tuneup #47

street date

august 25

dat/ad deadline

august 10/august 17

#### configuration

totallyadult #37 & tuneup #48

street date

october 6

dat/ad deadline

september 21/september 28

#### configuration

totallyadult #38 Special Tribute Issue  
& tuneup #49

street date

december 1

dat/ad deadline

november 16/november 17

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Not only does WXPN want to build a listener membership pool, they also want to create a sense of community between each member. Its yearly events help to accomplish this.



# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF **WXPN**

BY JON PETERSON

At 3905 Spruce Street in Philadelphia, there stands an old red-brick building. Surrounded by more modern looking towers of academe, the vine-covered building looks reminiscent of an era gone by...a turn-of-the-century campus dormitory. But this building is just a shell, an antiquated structure that houses a crack team of new radio residents. Just as portions of this building have been modified with a labyrinth of mazes leading to digital studios, offices and broadcast booths, so have the inhabitants of Wayne Hall modernized and transformed the mission of a broadcast facility originally operated by returning WWII "GI Bill" vets. Combining elements of its student and volunteer past with a tremendous vision for its future, this new "radio army"—through their selfless dedication and teamwork—has inspired radio broadcasters across the entire Triple-A landscape for the last decade.

As with most radio stations, there is no one "typical day." David Dye, Shawn Stewart and the two Bruces (Ranes and Warren)—and everyone else—are always juggling an array of short- and long-term projects that vary greatly from department to department. Calling it multi-tasking is a gross understatement; their days are constantly interrupted by intercoms and phone calls, but the staff somehow manages to prioritize, focus and get their work done. They do this, not by everyone doing their own thing or marching to the beat of their own agendas, but through teamwork. Incredible teamwork!

Before we take a peek at some of the specific things that happened on October 21, 1999, the first day of my station visit, let's look at the bigger picture—the teamwork ethic that makes this group really tick. Some of the faces have changed over the past 10 years, and they'll probably continue to recruit new staff members. That's because the whole at 'XPN is greater than the sum of its parts. Even an individual accomplishment is not for any one superstar player—it's a victory for the entire team and their fans.

Asking David Dye about the current team's dynamic, I mentioned the sign above the studio from the famous 1980s "We Are The World" superstar recording sessions that read "Check your ego at the door" as, perhaps, an analogous starting point of reference. Dye looked confused, thought a second and said, "Check your ego? No, it's not like that at all. Everybody knows they play a role for the greater good and gives 110% to the group effort—and this station *by far* has the best team spirit of any place I've ever worked. Nonetheless, you must have somebody who has the last say—someone who is out in front scouting the territory and coming up with the big ideas—and that's Bruce Warren. On the day-to-day stuff, the center of which is the music and myself, you never feel like Bruce is the big bad boss. If he has a crummy idea, we tell him right away, but we usually defer to Bruce, as we should! He's got the best *first-listen* ears of anyone I've ever met and it's his butt that's on the line for any kind of final decision. It's more like, 'You're the boss, I'll gladly go along with whatever you say. But I'm going to debate and argue with you from time to time.'"

Talking to Shawn Stewart (who was still the active Music Director at the station during my visit), a similar sentiment was decidedly loud and proud about Warren, but she also wanted to make sure that people knew about the contributions of the team. "There are other people on the team, not just me; there's David Dye, Bruce Ranes and now Helen Leicht. Michaela Majoun doesn't get to go to national conventions, but people should certainly know about her incredible contributions. Bruce is definitely the icon—the face of the station that sums up what 'XPN is all about in one easily identifiable image. Look at your magazine

CONTINUED

WXPN  
STUFF



# WXPN Studios

3905 Spruce Street



88.5  
WXPN



[referring to previous issues of *totallyadult*]: when you promoted the WXPN feature issue, it was a picture of Bruce Warren with his hands over his head, and that's okay, because he's the first one to say that this is a team effort. We're all so lucky to have him as our team leader!"

Sitting down with Bruce Warren, the first thing he wanted to discuss was not his own accomplishments, but rather, about crediting his colleagues. "I work with some amazingly talented people. Even though I'm their boss, I don't think of myself as a manager with a capital 'M'; I see myself as a facilitator of ideas and the point person in assessing their needs. I want people to feel that I will always listen, and know that they can have tremendous input in the process.

"But for me to do my job well, I must also mandate certain things and not get into the group process to such a degree that it's paralyzing. Public Radio has traditionally been a social-democracy kind of thing, and I try to nurture that as much as possible. But at some point a decision must be made. Mark Fuerst had a funny line at the recent Public Radio Program Director's Conference, where he referred to the CBS/Viacom merger as two huge corporations with incredible shit to work out. He said that they worked out that deal in just a month, where it takes most Public Radio PDs six months to change a one-hour weekend specialty show!"

Warren also made the point about how past leadership at the station was willing to accept his input and the positive results that came from it. "I'm passionate, I'm driven, I'm committed and I'm very creative. I try to take those four qualities in myself and instill them in the staff. I'm action-oriented and attempt to give them that same sense of empowerment that allowed me to come up through the ranks. Part of my job as a leader is to make other people into leaders and I try to make everyone responsible for their own ideas. I started a new policy: if you want to complain, then be responsible enough to present options or alternative ideas to help solve what you see as a problem. So, to a great extent, I always try to nurture and help facilitate their ideas—being an advocate for their needs. They're not always going to get what they want, but at least they know that they always have an opportunity to express their ideas, needs and concerns in a constructive manner."

Another long-time veteran and unsung hero of the team effort is Bruce Ranes. Currently the Assistant General Manager/New Ventures & Operations, Ranes sat down with me to discuss the early days of World Cafe and get a sense of the station's history and evolution. And although that conversation was extremely informative and enlightened my sense of their transition period, Ranes was too much of a gentleman and team player to take

**"PUBLIC RADIO HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN A SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY KIND OF THING, AND I TRY TO NURTURE THAT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE."**

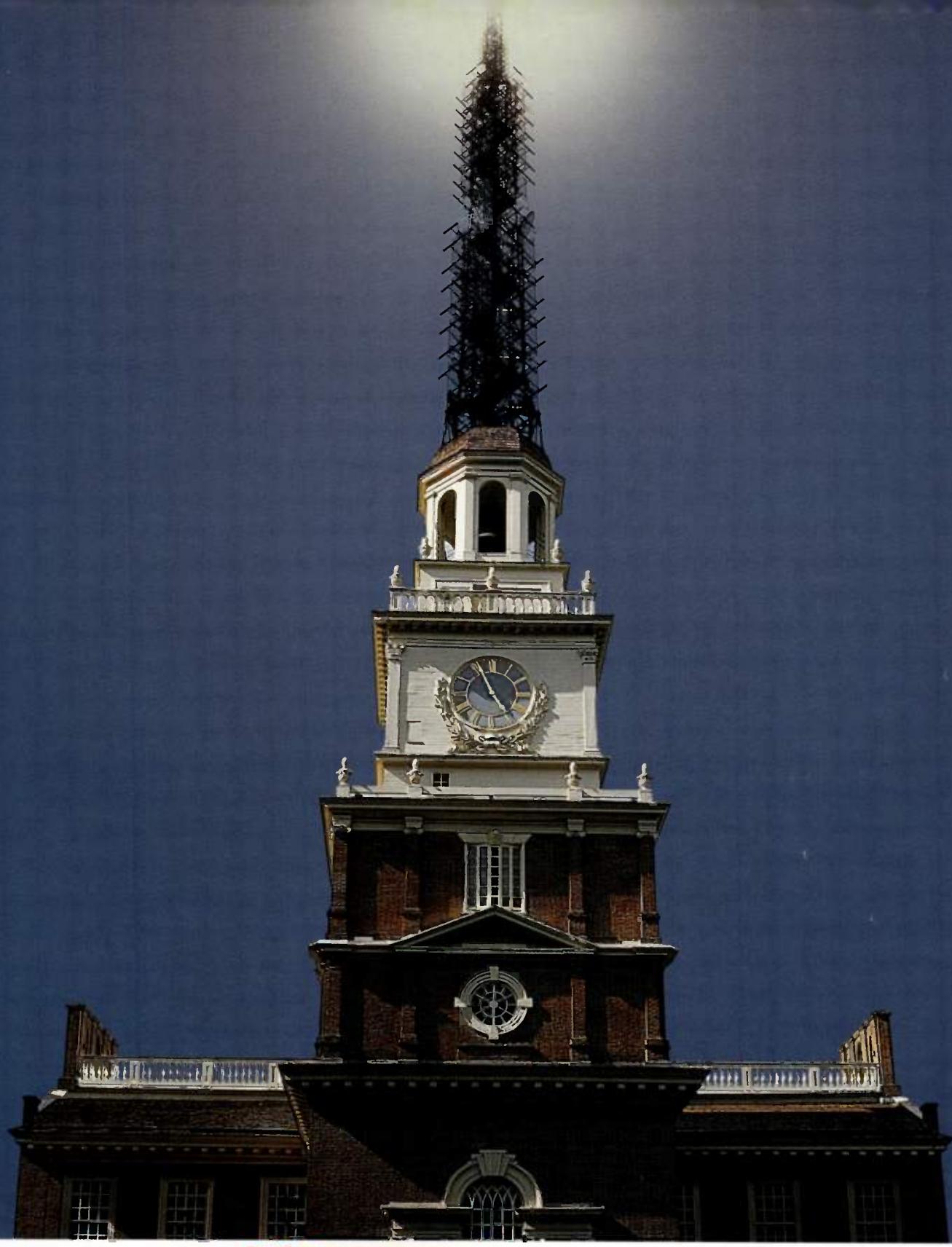
**-BRUCE WARREN**

much credit for the success and tremendous achievement in getting World Cafe off the ground.

Ranes' contributions were best summed up by former station Program Director Mike Morrison: "Bruce Ranes is probably the most tenacious person I know—he'll plow through a mountain to get the job done! Because he didn't know music quite to the ridiculous level that David Dye, Bruce Warren and I did, we were reluctant to let him into our little 'music guy' club. I would sometimes moan and groan about his ideas, too, without offering any alternate scenarios myself. He came from a different place than we did and that was a tremendous contribution because, more often than not, he was right and we were wrong. He had the background and abilities to get World Cafe onto the air every day at 10am, and that was by no means an easy task. We certainly didn't have the ability to do that without him."

Another person who was more interested in touting her teammates' contributions more than her own was Kid's Corner host Kathy O'Connell. O'Connell was so impressed by the talents and contributions of her producer, Robert Drake, that she believes without him, she'd be lost. "You really must sit down and talk to him about the show. He originally started as a volunteer to answer phones during the call-in segments and we quickly promoted him to producer, a job that he did for the first year and a half without a dime of compensation! That's how dedicated he was and still is—I literally couldn't do it without him."

CONTINUED



# we salute WXPN's **INDEPENDENCE**

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Here are some of my “fly on the wall” notes from some of the other day’s happenings and meetings. They will reveal much about the team dynamic and multi-tasking work amongst the interns, volunteers and professional staffers.

## 09:00 PRODUCTION MEETING

Bruce Warren meets with production team leaders Joe Taylor, Jr., and Chris Williams. They are gearing up for David Dye’s vacation and there’s a need for some additional tech support to get about 15 World Cafe shows in the can before he leaves. Warren asks Taylor and Williams in what specific areas the assistance is most needed and who do they recommend from their part-time pool to fill those needs? Because of the tight time line, they need someone who could “ramp up” quickly. All three kept saying “ramp up, ramp up!” Talk about speaking a common language!

## 10:00 MUSIC MEETING

The meeting I attended was somewhat unusual, as Warren did not attend; he had an emergency meeting with GM Vinnie Curren to secure funds and “ramp up” for the new temporary production hire. The music meeting was still perfectly planned by Shawn Stewart, with all relevant homework and research prepared in advance. Attended by Dye and Helen Leicht, Leicht kept running back and forth to the studio, as the first hour of her show was on automation and needed a tad of sprucing. Yet the three still managed to listen to 13 songs in a little over an hour. And the variety they listened to in a single meeting included Genesis, The Mavericks, Jewel,

Leftover Salmon, Bob Marley & Lauryn Hill, Guy Clark and Slo Leak, to name a few! It’s so amazing how everyone got along, making their own insights and feelings known, without the least amount of tension or having to insult someone else to make their own points of view stronger. Not once were people yelling or talking over each other—David Dye even raised his hand to signal he wanted to make the next point!

## 11:30 TRINA TOMBRINK ARRIVES WITH WOOD

The music meeting breaks up and Stewart starts compiling the picks to provide a short list of favorites from the meeting for Warren. She just gets back to her computer and begins some data entry when the intercom buzzes. She stops what she’s doing to run out and greet Columbia’s Trina Tombrink and James



Maddock (from the band Wood) in the hallway. Warren greets Tombrink and says a quick hello with Maddock, and then he’s off. Leicht is scurrying about to put Maddock and his guitar player in the news studio. They’d already taped a World Cafe several months prior and were coming on to the “Leicht Lunch” show to promote their retail in-store that evening.

## 13:00 LUNCH

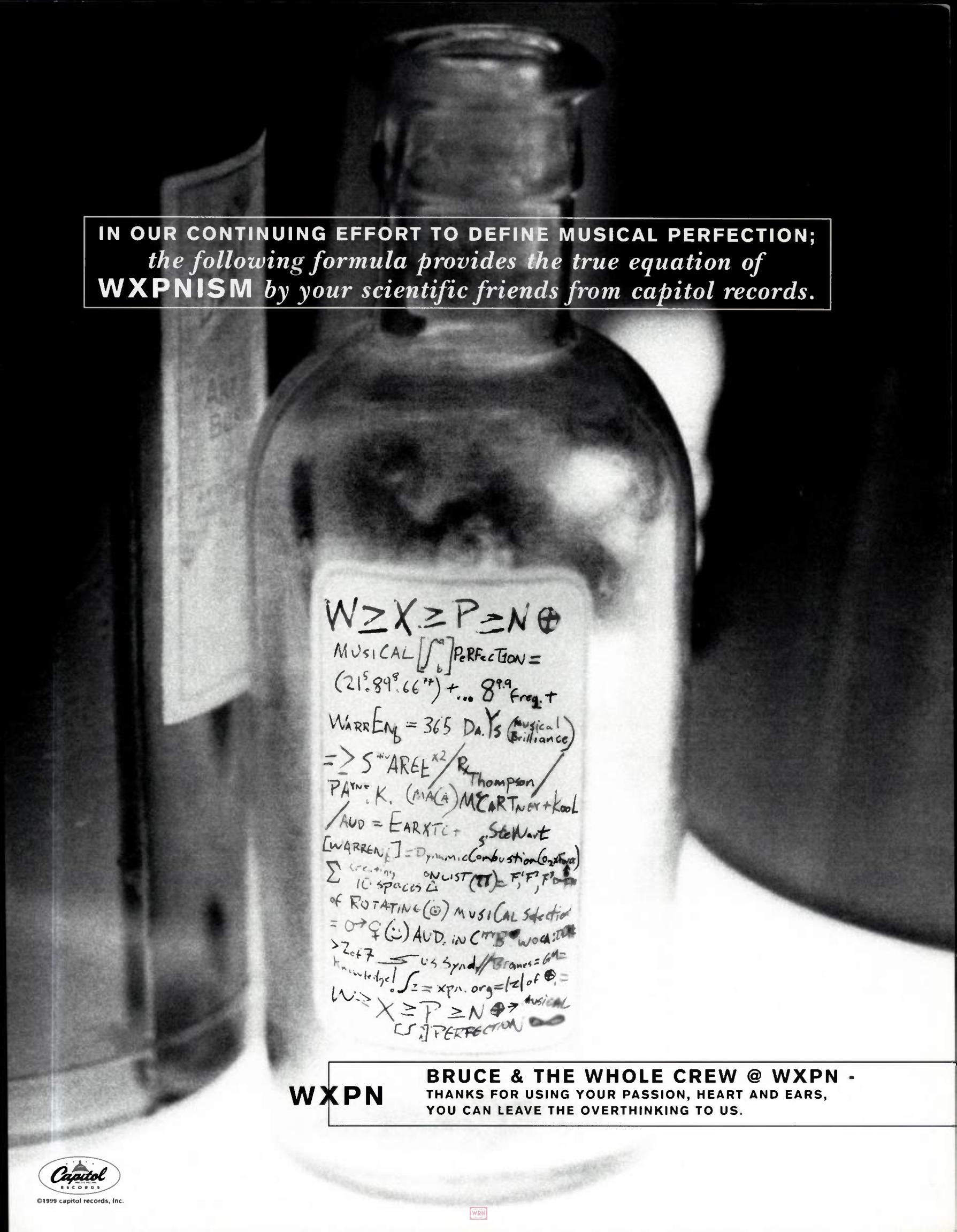
Dye and an intern run out to a street vendor to bring back some healthy Oriental food. Stewart, of course, orders the vegetarian curry and Dye goes into his cubical to eat and prepares for the Shannon Curfman taping in a few hours. I yell out and offer my recent *totallyadult* article on Curfman for prep. Turning the corner, he’s already reading it!

## 13:15 SHANNON CURFMAN ARRIVES

A massive load-in, complete with Hammond B3 and Leslie speakers. Some interns assist the road crew, helping them carry equipment up three winding flights of steps. Arista’s Tom Gates arrives with

Curfman and Stewart is again pulled away from Selector. She and Gates turn each other on to their new favorite “underground music picks,” a few photos are taken and Gates is off to assist with the World Cafe setup—one so elaborate that both Taylor and Williams assist in mike placement and soundchecking. During slow points, Gates picks up Curfman’s guitar and plays a Metallica song. Everyone cracks up.

CONTINUED



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## 13:40

### MICHAELA MAJOUN INTERVIEW

Discussions with Majoun about the fine points and evolution of the morning show. Arts Producer Tracy Tanenbaum shares her office, and Majoun insists that she share the spotlight and be part of the interview. We discuss Tanenbaum's new role as short-form producer and the new features they are developing for the morning show.

## 14:45

### WORLD CAFE TAPING

After a massive setup, the Shannon Curfman taping begins—Taylor and Williams get incredible sound quality out of the room. Most people don't realize that the World Cafe tapings are not done in a professionally designed studio, but in an LP record library room about 20x10! You'd never know!

## 18:30

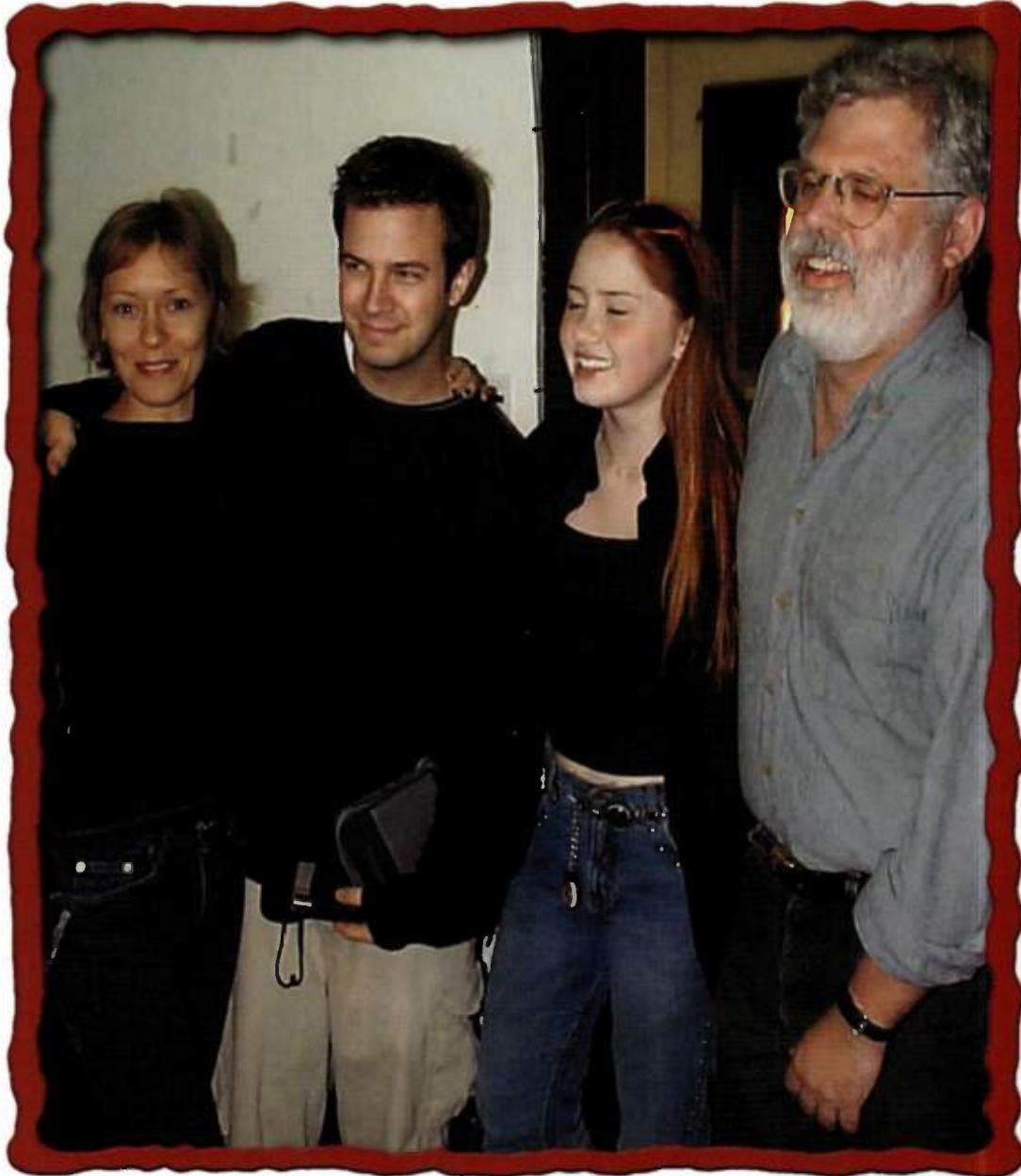
### RENDEZVOUS AT MAIN STREET MUSIC

Events Coordinator Larry Rayborn arrives first to set up a WXPN banner and cover details for the Wood appearance with store managers. Warren, Stewart, Tombrink and the members of Wood arrive shortly thereafter. About 100 people pack into a store in Manayunk that shouldn't hold more than 50. Stewart brings on the band and Wood plays a great 20-minute set; Warren is happy with the listener turnout and Tombrink is happy with the sales of 62 SoundScanned units! "It's all about artist development," they say proudly.

## 20:30

### RETURN TO THE STATION

I return to the station to get my bags and meet up with Taylor—we're going to check out Curfman's club show. Dye is typing away in his office, turning out scripts. Indeed, everyone is "ramping up!"

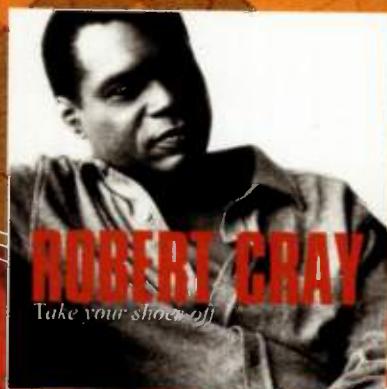
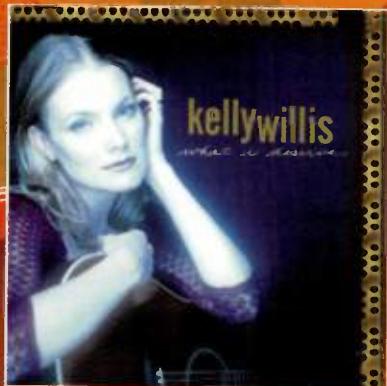
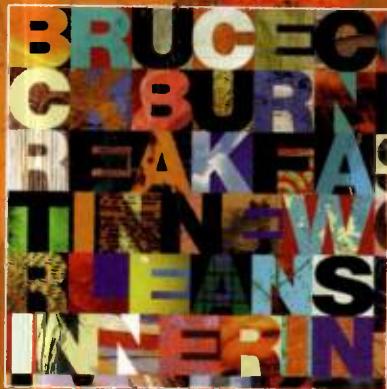


While every day is filled with different tasks and creative challenges, there are certain constants in the current WXPN radio universe. This is definitely a team that genuinely likes each other and is creatively fueled by each other's energy and input. Their collective dedication to the betterment of the station is a labor of love—there are certainly no clock-punchers on this team.

Yet a great radio station is one that is also in flux, changing as market and member needs dictate: fine-tuning the music rotations, helping each player perform at the peak of their game and recruiting great new members to the team, all the while constantly looking a few steps ahead of the technological curve to better serve their local (and national, via syndication and CD Radio) audience in a rapidly evolving media world.

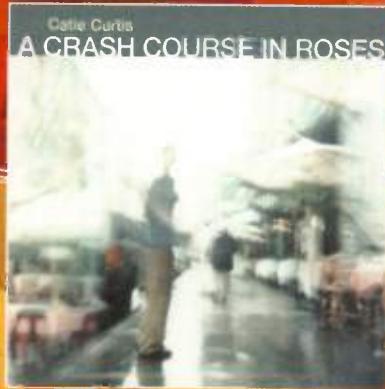
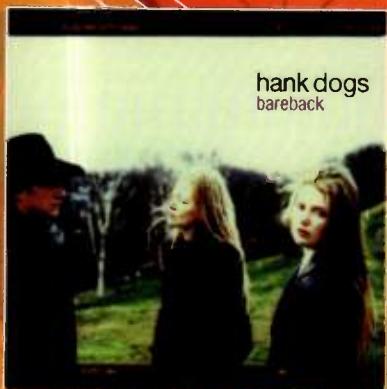
Once a team of ex-military students learning about radio broadcasting in the 1940s, the current inhabitants at 3905 Spruce Street are now more akin to a baseball team analogy. Bruce Warren would be what beloved coach Joe Torre is to his team. And as The Yankees are the baseball dynasty team of the 1990s, perhaps the same can be said about the 'XPN gang and their skipper in the Triple-A world.

Now, if only The Phillies were so lucky!



# WXPN

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# WHO IS BRUCE WARREN AND WHAT DOES HE WANT!?

By Kevin Stapleford

"I will never work for a Commercial Radio station. Ever."

Bruce Warren is adamant.

"I just don't see myself working for one," he continues with conviction. "There's something about Public Radio and its ability to touch people's lives that is a very special thing. I'm a Public Radio person. I grew up with it. I have certain values and a lifestyle that is simply not in sync with Commercial Radio. I don't think that Commercial Radio is about serving people's interests, it's about making money. It has nothing whatsoever to do with cultural significance anymore."

He pauses. As the Program Director of WXPN, Philadelphia's eclectic, innovative and very Public Radio power-



house. Warren is the programming guru behind one of the most intriguing radio outlets on the planet. Like the station itself, he is clearly focused and he is intensely passionate.

"Okay," he laughs. "I probably shouldn't generalize, because there are some really great Triple-A stations out there—and there are some great stations in other formats, too—but they're few and far between. I just think that radio as a whole has sold out. Cultural significance is really an important part of an effective medium, you know, and Commercial Radio has lost it."

So there you go. Bruce Warren is a man with a mission. He is busy mixing art with commerce and leading a team of like-minded people in creating a self-liquidating cultural icon for the City Of Brotherly Love. This isn't about ratings or revenue. This is about serving the city he loves. This is about expanding the musical horizons of the nation's fourth largest market, mister; this is serious stuff.

nitely caught the new wave fever for about five minutes in the '70s. Then, they lost the vision and they decided to play Journey instead. To this day, I think they could have been 'XRT, but they just fucking blew it."

Luckily, Philadelphia again provided Warren with a radio entity that pleased his ever-expanding musical palette. Just as Boss Radio served his needs as a child and

## "I WILL NEVER WORK FOR A COMMERCIAL RADIO STATION. EVER."

"I was born in Philadelphia," Warren explains, "I grew up here and I will probably die here. I love this city, and I was always into music when I was a little kid. My dad was a Frank Sinatra fan, my mom loved Elvis and I have all those early memories of falling asleep with the little AM radio under my pillow.

"When I realized that I was all about music and music was me," he continues, quickly segueing to the veritable roots of his mission, "it was the first time I heard a song by a Philadelphia band called The Delfonics, 'La La Means I Love You.' At the same time, there was a DJ in town called Jerry Blavat. He was this classic, old-school Boss Radio guy—one of those real engaging, mesmerizing radio personalities—and I used to listen to him every night. When I was six or seven years old, I remember being totally blown away by this guy and how he was able to transport me to this whole other world. It was magic, and that idea has stuck with me ever since. Personalities using music to take listeners to a special place...that's the attraction to radio for me."

Luckily, little Brucie grew up in an historically solvent radio and music town, which allowed him to evolve from Boss Radio and the "Sound Of Philadelphia," to the progressive rock & roll of such legendary FM trailblazers as WMMR. "Yeah, 'MMR was a great station," he says with more conviction, "but there was another one called WDAS, which is now the Adult Urban station in town. I always dug 'MMR, but they didn't play enough black music. Growing up in Philly, and listening to AM radio, I'm an old R&B guy. Those are my roots. I wasn't into rock & roll until I got into high school, but Motown and Stax and the 'Sound Of Philadelphia,' man, I would just eat that up. WDAS was the place you could hear Santana into Gil Scott-Heron into Miles Davis. That was the stuff."

Then, along came The Clash, effectively bringing to a sudden end Warren's brief flirtation with the Commercial FM Radio. "I was transfixed by The Clash. And Elvis Costello... and Neil Young...and Springsteen. Commercial Radio wasn't playing any of this amazing stuff, so I just bought records and read *Trouser Press*. Looking back, WMMR could have been like WXRT, because they defi-

Progressive FM satisfied him for a moment as a teenager, WXPN entered his life as he became an adult. "I discovered a show on WXPN hosted by Mike Morrison called 'Yesterday's Now Music Today' and I listened to it non-stop. The station itself was so bad—they never told you what they played—but the music was amazing; Mike would play Hüsker Dü and Black Flag and all these bands that knocked me out...but he would also play The Byrds and Richard Thompson...what a concept!"

About this same time, Warren was in the midst of a career transition, moving from the restaurant business to the world of freelance music journalism. In the mid-'80s he was the Music Editor for the *Philadelphia Weekly*, and he befriended the previously mentioned Mike Morrison, who also played guitar for one of Warren's favorite local bands, The Johnsons. "This was where the 'XPN thing started to happen," he says excitedly. "Mike and I became friends; he was the PD and the station was still a pretty traditional patchwork-quilt, eclectic college station. They went from the polka hour to the punk rock hour to the folk-nazi hour to the obscure blues hour. Now, there was a point where 'XPN was not on the air full-time, and one night I saw Mike at a club and he said, 'Hey dude, we're going 24 hours a day, do you want to do an overnight shift?' I said, 'Wow, I don't know anything about radio,' and he said that I didn't need to, and that I could play anything I wanted!"

Warren chuckles at the memory. "I could play anything I wanted," he repeats. "That was it for me."

The year was 1988, and Bruce Warren opened his first overnight shift on WXPN with Steve Winwood's "Time Is Running Out" into Ornette Coleman's "Singing In The Shower." "The fever just hit me!" he says with typical Warren excitement. "There I was, on the radio, trying to do all the things that drew me to radio; trying to give that experience to the listener and make it special...but I sucked as a DJ. I readily admit that I'm still not very good, despite all the help I get from the smart folks I work with. What I was good at, though, was programming and putting a creative fire into the mix of music. It was an amazing experience for me."

CONTINUED

Just as Warren was sinking his teeth into the glamorous life of an overnight "volunteer" DJ (which means, of course, that he wasn't being paid), serious changes were afoot at WXPN. Although Warren didn't know it at the time, moves were being made to fashion a more accessible position for the Public Radio stalwart. Right after Warren started, General Manager Mark Fuerst was brought in to professionalize the station, its sound and its airstaff...and it wasn't always pretty.

"One day, all these people just walked off the air because the move to streamline the station had started. WXPN management was coming in and cleaning up the house—it really wasn't that much different than the whole KPFK thing that happened in Berkeley earlier this year. I was still a volunteer at the time, but I was safe because I don't think they really cared what happened at night yet. They were focused on the day and I was on from 11pm to 5am. They knew that I would show up on time and that I wouldn't curse, so I was okay."



"Then, one night I was on the air, and I had just played the Gang Of Four, when I got a call from Mark Fuerst. I was thinking, 'Oh my god, the boss is calling, what did I do?' and he goes, 'Bruce, what are you doing tomorrow? Can you come in and talk to me?' Naturally, I thought that I was going to be fired, and then he says, 'You don't have to worry about anything, I just wanted to tell you that I like your music programming. What time can you come in?'"

At 2pm the next day, Warren went into the 'XPN business offices and was shown the blueprint for what would eventually be known as the World Cafe. Fuerst had developed a concept to provide a new stream of contemporary music programming to the Public Radio world. His idea was to get funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (the arm of the FCC that oversees Public Radio), hire legendary Philadelphia music maven David Dye and develop a nation-

ally syndicated show that would represent the next wave of Public Radio music programming. Warren was offered the job of the project's Associate Producer.

"I couldn't believe what I was hearing," Warren remembers. "I said, 'Sign me up, I'm there!' Then, I just ran out of the building, I was so excited...a national show, wow, how cool! I was going to be working with David Dye...it was like a dream come true."

Boom, WXPN got the grant in 1988 and the World Cafe was born. While the program was in its development stages, Warren was brought aboard full-time and handed the responsibilities of the business manager. "I had a business background because I ran a chain of restaurants in town," he shrugs, "so I knew how to do accounting and I had some business sense. Meanwhile, slowly but surely, we started to develop this Public Radio/Triple-A mix for the World Cafe. As time went by, the concept for the show was also seeping

into the overall framework of 'XPN. We would do things like play Peter Gabriel in the world music show—we would piss off a few people here and there, but we were making many more people happy. More of us started buying into this programming philosophy of weaving in different types of music rather than partitioning it. Instead of block programming, we segued into a really cool, eclectic mix of music. We called it 'The Weave' and a center lane started to evolve, which consisted of singer-songwriters like John Hiatt, Richard Thompson, Shawn Colvin and Jackson Browne. Our audience grew from there, and our fund-raising grew with it.

"Mike Morrison led the charge," Warren continues. "He was the cheerleader who encouraged us all to make the break from purist radio. You would hear Shawn Colvin into Otis Redding, plus we were really into sup-

porting new music. As PD, Mike took all the right steps; he started slow and initially made suggestions on records for our morning show to play. He would audition the records, make notes on all the vinyl about which tracks to play and started to guide the sound of the radio station. He also made sure that we had the right jocks. We had David Dye, Michaela Majoun and Jonny Meister, who hosts our evening show and is our blues master, and it was all about the segue and breaking down the boxes. We started playing more of the music that our listeners wanted to hear, it was as simple as that."

Once the World Cafe was officially launched, its flagship station used it as a starting point. The influence of Morrison, Fuerst and Dye overlapped into every daypart, creating a consistent "weave" of sound for WXPN. The program grew, the station grew and everybody was happy. "That's pretty

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much what has gotten us where we are now. While this happened, I just naturally got more and more involved with the overall sound of the station. Like any new business that grows, there's not a lot of cash that suddenly comes in the door in the beginning, so the people that were already there started to wear a lot of different hats. I started making more contributions to the 'XPN music plan, and I became the MD after Mike took off for KSCA in Los Angeles in 1995. You can see how the World Cafe kept infiltrating the overall mission of the station. I was MD. Bruce Ranes, who was the producer of World Cafe, was named PD, and David Dye did two hours on the air on 'XPN in addition to the three-hour syndicated show."

Like a sprawling beast—albeit a dignified and eclectic one—the World Cafe continued to grow at a rapid pace. By 1998, Bruce Ranes had become the Assistant GM/New Ventures And Operations, leaving the program directorship squarely in the lap of our friend Bruce Warren. Suddenly, the music-crazed boy from Philly had the opportunity to create the same radio magic that had so moved him as a child. "Radio has always been about meaningful communication to me," he points out, "something that's valued by the person who is listening to it. Radio is about creating an experience for its listeners, and about reflecting certain cultural and artistic goals and philosophies. That's how I interpret radio, because that's how it reached out to me way back in the beginning. When I became PD, I tried to bring all of that to the table."

With WXPN's musical mission solidly in place, Bruce sought ways to expand the station's community involve-

ment. Earlier this year, for example, he hired a full-time arts and cultural producer in an effort to create a stronger bond between the city's cultural community and the station. "I

guess it would be possible to write WXPN off as another pop music station. Sometimes we actually sound like a commercial station—a very hip and intelligent one. So I thought that from the Philadelphia arts community perspective, we really needed to put our feet more in that water. With that in mind, we're developing some pretty interesting short-form programming; we're in the early part of it, but it's going to be a big part of 'XPN in the future.

"When I was growing up listening to the great stations of Philadelphia, I felt that I was part of something," Warren reminds us. "I felt that I was part of a community of listeners that *involved* people. As Commercial Radio has gotten away from that, one of my major goals has been to create an entity that has a huge community of active listeners—they're called members—and that's a really important thing to me. That's what I'm trying to build here. It's hard for a radio station to be culturally significant. When people think of significant institutions, they think of museums and buildings with four walls, so a good part of my stint here has been to fur-

ther the idea that we need to become more of a cultural institution in Philadelphia. We want to reflect the city's music, art, culture—and society. That's what we're all about here, man; this isn't Commercial Radio...this is special!" 

If you'd like to talk with Bruce Warren,  
he can be reached at 215.898.6677, or [brucew@xpnonline.net](mailto:brucew@xpnonline.net)

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## A CONVERSATION WITH WXPN'S GENERAL MANAGER

# Vincent Curren

BY JOHN SCHOENBERGER

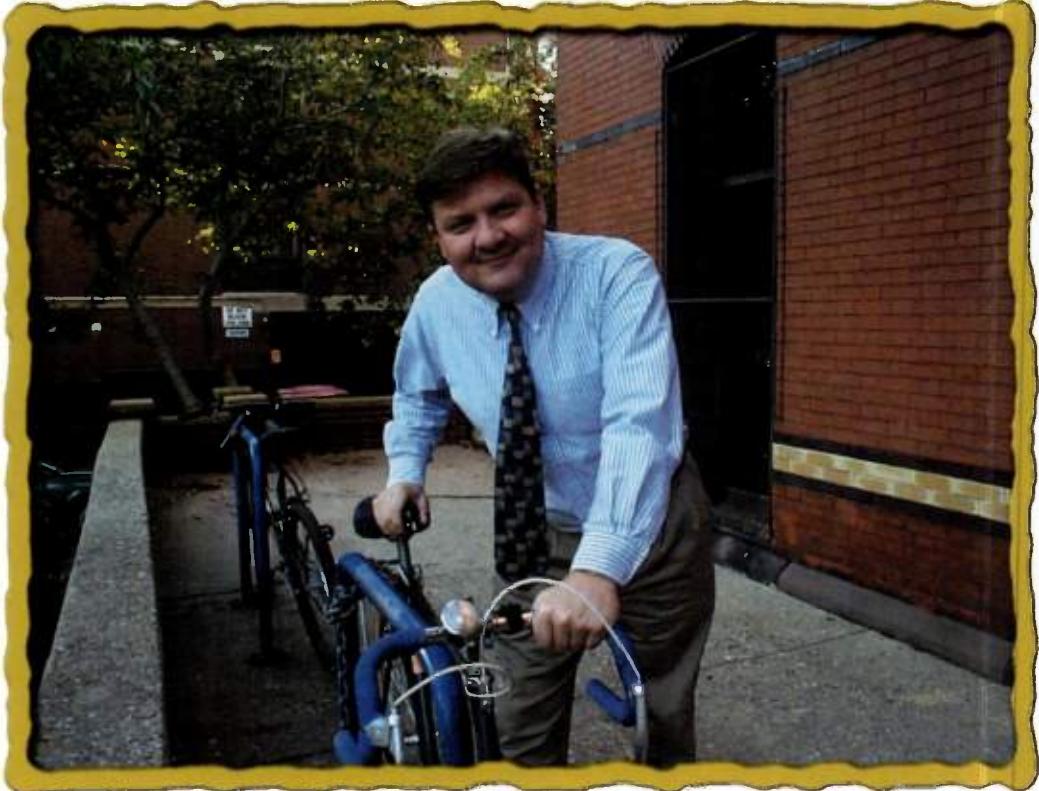
There has to be a visionary heading up any operation, and WXPN General Manager Vincent Curren certainly fits that bill. He joined WXPN to run programming and technical development in 1987, right at the time the then-GM, Mark Fuerst, was literally revolutionizing the way Public Radio should think of itself.

Back then there were only six paid employees at the station. Times have certainly changed since. Now over 35 people work full-time at the station, and under the guidance of Curren, WXPN is boldly going where no Public Radio station has gone before.

Join me as he reveals to us how WXPN already has one foot in the future.

### WXPN has a 50-year history. Give us a rundown on some of that past.

"The station was started as an AM carrier run by World War II vets returning to Penn [The University Of Pennsylvania] on the GI bill. Some of those vets had experience with radio equipment, so they used their skills to get the station up and running. From 1945 until the late '60s, it was programmed by students and



it had a very eclectic schedule. Hal Prince, the Broadway producer, began his career by producing radio dramas on WXPN with student actors. There were some students here who were interested in folk music, so every vacation they'd pile into cars, head for the South and make field recordings, bring them back and play them on the station. The station was filled with that kind of history: very eclectic programming, guided by the interests of the students who were here at the time. In the late '60s as the FM band began to develop, the station became more of a freeform, anything-goes kind of operation. Then there was a time in the mid-'70s where the students got a little bit out of control and there was an issue with the FCC; so, in the mid-'70s, the University hired a professional manager to supervise WXPN. Until the mid-'80s, the number of students at the station decreased and the number of community volunteers began to increase."

**So it moved from a College Radio station to more like a Public Radio station?**  
"No...to more like a *Community* Radio station. There were still students here, but most of the station was being run by people from the community who weren't really affiliated with the University. By around 1986 or so a series of budget deficits had built up and the University thought that WXPN was underperforming. At that same time the station manager was leaving, so in the course of hiring a new station manager, the University began to rethink what WXPN could be. And in 1987 Mark Fuerst came in as General Manager."

**And he really set the tone for what 'XPN is all about today, didn't he?**  
"That's right. 'XPN is what it is today because of Mark Fuerst. From '87 to '89 we experimented with different kinds of programming and sometime around 1989 we really began to focus on world music and what would be later termed Triple-A music."

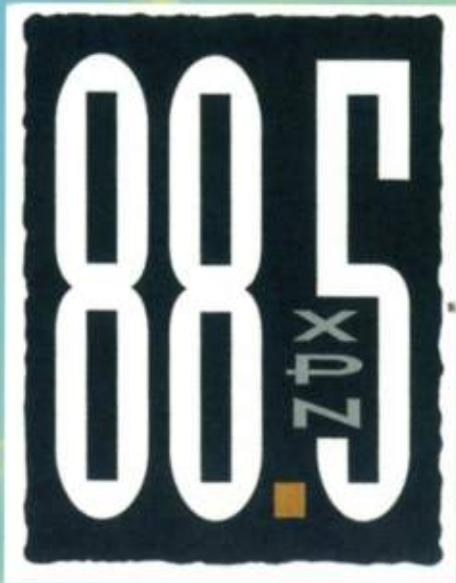
"Back in the early '90s we figured that listeners wanted distinct services, so the three Public Radio stations in Philadelphia got together and proceeded to untangle their formats. We had meetings and we traded programs—literally! We traded shows and created three distinct services. They stopped doing things that crossed over with us and we stopped doing things that crossed over with them. Although WXPN was primarily a music station, we had some news programming on, so we backed out of the news programming, and WHYY became the NPR-based News/Talk station, while WRTI evolved into the Classical and Jazz station. Listeners in Philadelphia now have a very broad range of Public Radio programming to serve them."

"But keep in mind that Philadelphia is rather unique in this situation—if you listen to Public Radio in many cities it's not unusual to hear the same programs on more than one station."

**I'm sure there are a lot of similarities to managing a Non-Commercial Radio station compared to a Commercial Radio station, but there are probably some differences, too. What differences would you say there are?**

"Well, there are a couple of big ones: one is that I have just one stockholder, The University Of Pennsylvania, and another is I'm pretty confident that the station's not going to be sold in the near future."

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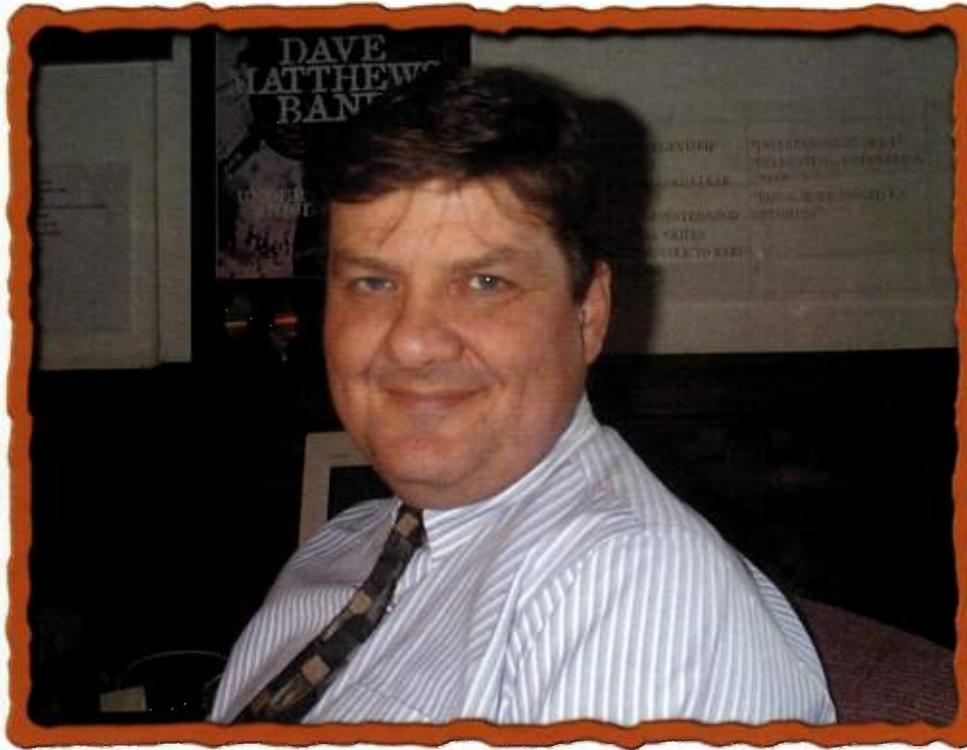
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**How does the whole ownership thing work? The University of Pennsylvania has the license from the FCC for the radio station and then they have a Board of Directors that you have to answer to?**

"Yes, that's right. There are actually two boards: there's a subcommittee of the Board of Trustees who are the actual licensee. I do a report for them about once a year. With responsibility for the whole University they don't have much time to spend on us, though. The day-to-day operation of the station has been delegated by the Trustees to the President of the University. She appoints a Board to keep track of what we're doing and advise her on issues affecting the station. It's this group that I really think of as our Board. Since it's an advisory board, the President has the last word.

"But I think what really makes us different from a Commercial station is that we're a not-for-profit operation, and we don't measure our success based on earnings. We have the freedom to do things that a for-profit wouldn't do—for example, our daily call-in program for kids. We don't receive any funding from the University and I have to run a balanced operation here; I have to raise the money to pay my own bills. And that's an overriding issue. But beyond that, there are a number of University concerns which I need to figure out how to meet, which are sometimes not consistent with listener service interests; they're not diametrically opposed, but they're not always exactly parallel either. For instance, most of our listeners don't really care whether we have



one student intern or 50 student interns—the University cares a lot! So providing significant, meaningful opportunities for students to participate in the management and operation of the station is something that's pretty important and something I spend some time on."

#### **How did World Cafe come about?**

"In the early '90s we began to move toward the station being programmed by paid, professional DJs. A year to two before that we applied for a grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to develop a new contemporary music program for Public Radio stations. The first year we were granted \$350,000, and then the second year they granted \$1.1 million for us to create the quintessential Triple-A radio program for Public Radio—which became the World Cafe. So as the World Cafe began to develop, the rest of the station moved in a similar musical direction."

#### **How difficult was it to get the Corporation For Public Broadcasting involved?**

"We presented an opportunity to CPB and they seized it. CPB is really a forward-looking organization. There were a number of stations in the Public Radio system that hadn't developed a coherent, consistent program schedule. The thinking was that those stations might take the World Cafe and use it as an anchor to build a contemporary music format and would create a significant second or third service in their markets. A lot of stations did news programming, a lot of stations did classical music and a lot of stations did jazz, but this combination of world music and contemporary music—that later became known as Triple-A—wasn't being addressed, and it could be another Public Radio format that stations may want to gravitate to. That happened a little bit, but not at the level that we were anticipating. There were some stations that

really did move to Triple-A, but by and large we learned that most stations were really using the World Cafe to fill out evening schedules."

#### **I would imagine the station probably interacts with the arts community regularly.**

"Yes, we have been doing some of that. But our goal is to go beyond linking with the arts community—we want to establish WXPN as an arts *institution* in the city in its own right. If I go to downtown to Center City and I stop a dozen people on the street and ask them to name the Top 5 cultural institutions in Philadelphia, I want WXPN to be one of those they name. That's a very difficult thing for a radio station, because when people think about institutions, they usually think about bricks and mortar—you know, a museum or something. A radio station is a very ephemeral kind of thing, and my colleagues in Commercial Radio make it harder because many people's experience with radio is...a radio station they've come to know and love today is all of a sudden gone tomorrow and returns with a different format. There's little permanence in radio broadcasting in many ways, so we need to find ways to work through that and to really get the message out that WXPN is different—WXPN is a cultural institution as permanent as the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra, as significant to their lives as the orchestra and as worthy of their support as the orchestra is.

"So we have a full-time person and her job is to not just do arts and cultural reporting, but to build relationships with institutions in the city, and to look for ways for us to work together."

#### **You can talk about it on the air and point people toward it but unless they feel you at the other end, then you haven't accomplished your goal.**

"That's absolutely right. Our listeners are highly educated and they're very affluent; the median household income for WXPN listeners is around \$100,000 a year. You can't make empty statements and maintain your appeal to that kind of a group. So we have to be very careful about hype here—understatement is the word at WXPN. We really need to deliver on what we say, so if we're going talk about ourselves as a significant cultural institution, we have to be a significant cultural institution."

#### **How much does it take to run a station like WXPN?**

"Let me give you the overview here: our annual budget is about \$4,000,000. This year, a little over \$250,000 will come from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, \$2,000,000 will come in from contributions from individual listeners and about \$1,000,000 will come in underwriting revenue, which is essentially a somewhat less commercial form of advertising. The other \$750,000 we'll scramble for!"

#### **Were you forced into having to do the underwriting thing, or has that been part of WXPN for a long time?**

"It's been a part of 'XPN for a long time. You see, our listeners don't like on-air fund drives, and we don't like doing them, because when we're asking for money on the air, we're not providing the music service that listeners come to us for. So underwriting is a strategy that allows us to reduce our reliance on on-air fundraising so that we can be more of what we are, more of the time. At the same time, people that own businesses were asking how they can

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make contributions in their business' name. Underwriting is a way for that to happen. We've been pretty successful. We do less fundraising on-air than many Public Radio stations; we have two five-day fund drives and one three-day fund drive each year and that's all. It's very common for Public Radio stations to have three drives a year that run from seven to 10 days each."

**Or as long as it takes to reach the goal. Now let's delve into that \$750,000 shortfall you scramble for.**

"As part of that, we're looking for ways to take the appreciation that our listeners have of the World Cafe name—as representative of quality music presented in an intelligent way—and looking for ways to expand that into other areas. We're talking about things like possibly creating a *physical* World Cafe—a World Cafe Cabaret—where people could come and see some of the people in performance that they hear on the program. We've also been working on developing a World Cafe TV show for a while and we may create a World Cafe online CD store. You know, different ways that we can provide World Cafe-quality music while using the respected World Cafe name.

"And with that in mind, we also have some brand equity in the WXPN name. We were recently approached by a core listener of WXPN who represented an Internet Service Provider—a turnkey ISP service. So we looked at the numbers and they were pretty favorable. There was no real initial investment required for this other than staff time and some on-air promotion and marketing. So what we set up was essentially a WXPN ISP—XPNonline. We contract with the outside company for all the technical background, all the dial-in numbers, all the billing, and we get monthly revenue for every subscriber. We figured if people were going to be spending \$21 to buy Internet service from America Online and have their money go to a faceless corporation, we thought many of our listeners would just as soon spend the money and have it go to WXPN."

**How does it differ from the WXPN Web site?**

"The 'XPN Web site is a separate entity. You can't tell by looking at it now 'cause we're not very far down the road in developing it, but it will become the vehicle for us to build a community of WXPN listeners with the station at the middle and listeners all around interacting with us and with each other."

"I would urge anyone that's in radio to go to the Edison Research web site, [www.edisonresearch.com] and look at the Arbitron statistics that document listening to radio on the Internet. It's frightening. That's why we're in the process of building an Internet service, so that as our listeners' media use migrates from over-the-air radio to Internet-delivered audio entertainment, we want to be there to provide the service."

**So you're talking multiple musical channels, not necessarily just streaming the radio station.**

"That's right. There could be multiple music channels and a lot more. The Internet is a multimedia thing, yet we in the radio business only deal with sound. So I imagine we'll be involved with some kind of pictures—some kind of graphics. I mean, how all of this stuff is going to develop, no one really knows—it's wide open. The Internet is about community, and in the traditional radio business, we have a one-way communication with our

listeners. We talk to them. It's very difficult for them to talk back to us. But on the Internet it's different. On the Internet we have the possibility to talk to listeners. Listeners have the opportunity to respond immediately back to us and listeners also have the opportunity to interact with other listeners. So we're moving from a one-dimensional operation over the air to really a three-dimensional operation over the Internet. And if you think about WXPN as a magnet that attracts listeners with certain demographic and psychographic characteristics—certain age, certain income, certain musical interests—as we move the service to Internet, we're going to attract people with those same kinds of interests. It's going to take money to develop these services. But the down side of being a Public Radio station is that it can be hard to find investment dollars. We don't have access to the capital markets that an equity corporation has. So developing these things can be very difficult."

**You can't walk into your president-appointed board and say, "Listen, I need about \$15,000,000 to develop this Internet site!"**

"Yeah, right. That's not gonna happen. But I have pretty extensive power to make whatever investments I want, as long as they pay off this fiscal year. And I have a big advantage compared to most commercial stations—I don't have debt service."

"What I'm trying to do is build some diversity into our fundraising vehicles so that if our listeners are unable to give quite as much as they've given in the past, then I have other sources of revenue that might make up for that. The last over-the-air fund drive we did, the average pledge was over \$150, the *average* contribution. That's a lot of money. That means a lot of people are giving more than that. Okay, times are pretty good right now, unemployment is low, people have good jobs, but what if we go into a recession? If people have to cut back their contributions by 20% from \$150 to \$120 bucks for the on-air drive, that's still a lot of money they're giving us; but people *don't* have to pay to listen to us, but they *do* have to pay for groceries. So, if we're getting \$2,000,000 from listeners, and in general our listeners feel like they need to cut back by 20%, that's a \$400,000 hole that just opened up in my budget. That's a lot of money."

"So, you see, all these efforts with these new ideas is really kinda like throwing spaghetti on the wall and see what sticks!"

**What gives you the feeling you're on the right track in terms of these becoming reliable revenue sources for you?**

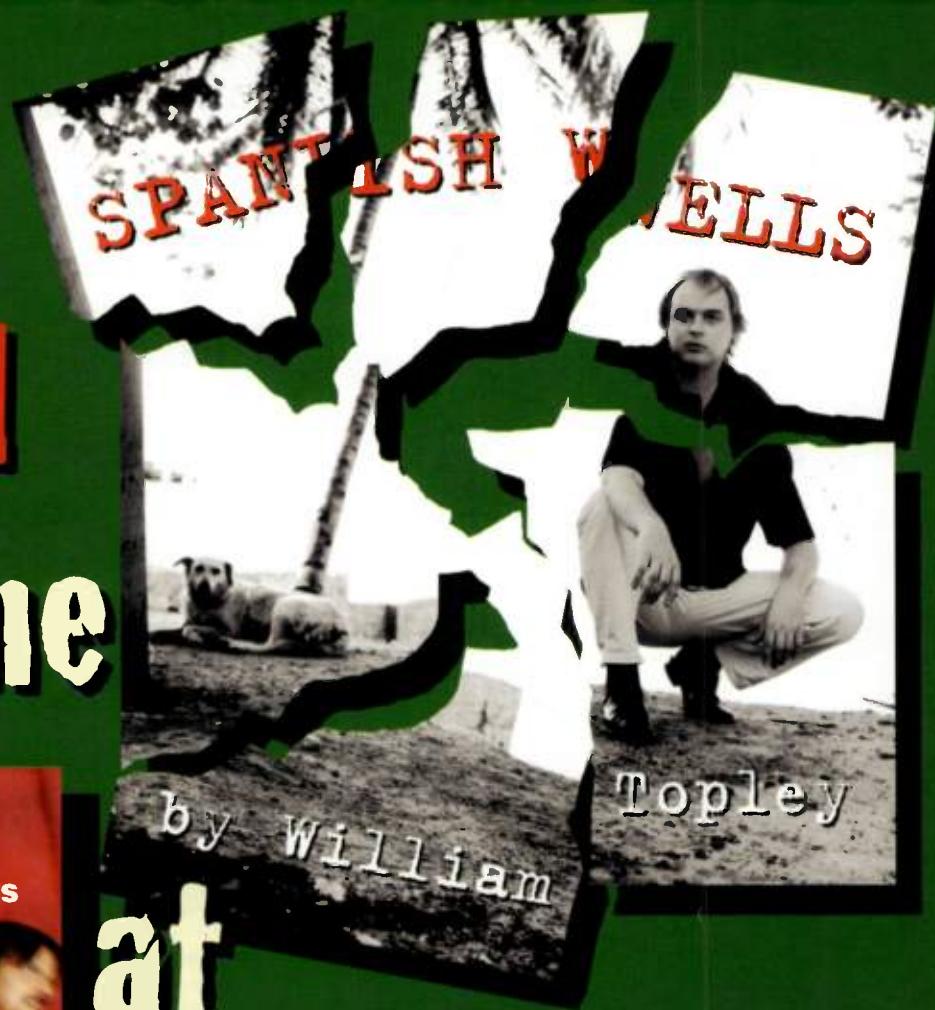
"I think one important thing that's happened to us is we've become much more confident over the years. We've had a couple of other commercial stations in the market that have had programming formats which were close to ours. There was an Alternative station that we felt very threatened by and a Modern AC that was around for a while, but they're gone and we're still here. As we've gone through these periods of increased competition, we've not only gotten through it, but we've thrived. And that's given me the confidence that we really mean something important to people, and they'll support us any way they can." 

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# Break Artists!

# The Evolution of Assistant General Manager Bruce Ranes

By John Schoenberger

As you talk to the folks at WXPN, it doesn't take long to realize that they are on a mission—and everyone involved has a clear picture as to what it is. For close to 10 years, the Assistant GM/New Ventures And Operations, Bruce Ranes, has been at the forefront in defining that mission, from the formulation and rollout of World Cafe to the programming of WXPN as a whole to now envisioning where the WXPN empire will be heading in the next century.

As you'll read, Ranes brought a lot of experience in studio recording, production, engineering, copy writing and even booking artists with him. It's quite clear he's proud of his accomplishments, as well he should be! Through no small effort on Ranes' part, WXPN stands as a leader in both the Non-Commercial and Commercial broadcasting worlds.

**You first started at WXPN on the producing and programming side of things, didn't you?**

"Yes. I was hired to produce World Cafe. I produced many programs at DIR Broadcasting, including King Biscuit Flower Hour. I always gravitated to 'XPN-type music; growing up in New York I listened to DJs like Pete Fornatele & Vin Scelsa on 'NEW. I heard there was a station in Philly that played this kind of music and wanted to take it national. They were looking for somebody with my kind of experience to do that, so when we met, it was a perfect match."

**It turned out that you were the right guy.**

"Yes. I'm the person who took a successful local mix to a national audience in tandem with David Dye, Mark Fuerst and Bruce Warren. We combined our ideas and created a viable national service."



**So World Cafe host David Dye was already at the station?**

"David Dye was the midday host. When we hired him to host World Cafe, he already had an amazing track record in Philadelphia radio for many years. And unlike others who resigned themselves to become Classic Rock jocks, David stayed true to his personal mission by working at WXPN. So he kept his credibility—which was an important element."

**Once you had the show developed, what kinds of hoops did you guys have to jump through to start getting affiliates to pick up the show?**

"Former GM Mark Fuerst and I were the two people most instrumental in acquiring affiliates. Mark got the first few and I helped acquire WFUV in New York while still living there. Mark and I pretty much acquired most of the major markets in the first few years. Getting more stations to carry World Cafe [over 100 at this time] is something that I continue to help do. Another thing we've done is work with various affiliates by bringing the Cafe, live and in person, to their city."

**Is the idea to make it a personal one-on-one experience for the listeners?**

"Correct. They can be part of the audience and see how the show is produced, which gives it more of a life as opposed to something that's just on the air. It's important for us to hit the streets and do things in the markets where World Cafe can be heard."

**Do you ever have a hard time convincing artists to actually come to your studios to record the show?**

"Not at all. Because World Cafe is a significant national program, managers and labels know their artists will receive extensive exposure and therefore sell records. One of the things I'm most proud of is the concept of bringing artists to WXPN on a daily basis."

**And the only reason you can keep doing that is because you deal with the artists and the labels professionally and deliver on your promise that you'll do a good job.**

"That's right. We have first-class studios and exceptional engineers in Joe Taylor and Chris Williams. We also have two of the best interviewers in David Dye and Michaela Majoun."

**When did you introduce the World Cafe CDs?**

"1993. Listeners kept asking how they could get tapes of interview segments and performances, so we thought, 'Hey, let's pull together the best performances from our archives and produce a CD."

**Now, are those only available in Philadelphia or are they available in any of the markets where an affiliate carries the show?**

"Both. The CDs are available primarily as a membership incentive during fund-drives at affiliate stations and WXPN; we make them available for host stations. It's one of the most popular premiums and helps acquire substantial financial support for Cafe stations, including 'XPN'!

"Basically, it's another way for the record industry to help support the station so we can keep playing the music that supports them. And because we're a not-for-profit organization, the revenue that's realized from the World Cafe CDs goes right to the station."

**When you started producing those live in-studio performance CDs hardly anyone was doing them. So the first time you called the labels and said, 'Hey, we want permission from your artist to put their song on this CD,' it was probably a learning process for everyone in terms of the steps you have to go through to get the clearances.**

"Absolutely. I think at that point, a couple other Triple-A stations produced CDs, and now many stations in several formats are doing it. So it's making the acquisition of licenses more challenging!"

**Once again you're ahead of the pack. It's my understanding that you've just signed an agreement with CD Radio to use your World Cafe archive tapes.**

"It's broader than that: we made a deal with CD Radio to consult them on Triple-A and related formats. We're going to utilize each other's studios for artist tapings and we're going to make much of our archival material available to them. Ultimately, they will broadcast World Cafe—plus another daily 'XPN' program, Kids Corner."

**So you stepped out of programming, per se, about two years ago and Bruce Warren stepped in. How do you feel he's adapted to the job?**

"He's doing an exceptional job. Bruce Warren seems to follow me [laughs]. I hired him to be my right-hand person for World Cafe, then when I became PD I hired him to be Music Director. And when I became Assistant GM/New Ventures & Ops, Bruce slid into the PD position. His exceptional reputation in the industry speaks for itself."

**Have you seen the programming philosophy of the station change dramatically since the early '90s?**

"It continues to evolve. Nothing radical has happened overnight... it's just that every person takes it to next level."

**Your area of most concern at the station is dealing with what is usually termed "non-traditional revenues." What does that entail?**

"It's planning, developing and initiating new revenue centers. For example, we recently debuted our own branded ISP called XPNonline. Instead of signing up with companies like Earthlink or AOL, our audience can subscribe to XPNonline; they get many of the same features they'd get through other ISPs, such as five E-mail addresses and access to the Internet...but with XPNonline, they also help support the station. If anyone wants more info about this turnkey venture, they should contact me at the station."

**Do you see most of the new opportunities for the station directly linked with new technology, or are there other angles you're trying to develop?**

"I'd like to develop more World Cafe and 'XPN'-branded CDs. But as we anticipate what's beyond the horizon, much of our new ventures

will be linked with emerging media or new technologies. As the Internet continues to soar, most of us are still at the base of the curve. Radio is at the same place television networks were prior to the cable explosion. The networks had to deal with the emergence of more viewing choices and it redefined their service. Once the average radio listener has hundreds of choices in each market, we will also face the same kind of significant sharing. I don't think radio's

going to go away... it's a matter of becoming part of those alternatives to traditional radio."

**Either you become part of it and ride along, or you try to fight it—one or the other.**

"Or you do nothing. We have to move forward. We need to be a radio station first and foremost, but we also need to exploit whatever we can from emerging technology and new media."

**Do you think the affluent and educated nature of the "average Public Radio listener" expects you to be doing that?**

"Yes. Public Radio and Triple-A listeners tend to be early adapters. They tend to explore and utilize new technology sooner than the average bloke. And in order to keep a presence for those people, we need to be there...we need to go along on that technological ride."

**So it almost reinforces the audience: "Yeah, this is the right place for me to be, because this station is always one step ahead of me."**

"Yes. We can't just keep pace with our listeners, we need to stay at least one step ahead. WXPN's always been a leader in the industry—not only in Non-Commercial Triple-A—but also within the entire radio community. WXPN is the place to be."

**You lucky dog, you.**

"I am! The totality of everything I've accomplished here has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career!"

**"WE NEED TO BE A RADIO STATION FIRST AND FOREMOST, BUT WE ALSO NEED TO EXPLOIT WHATEVER WE CAN FROM EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND NEW MEDIA."**

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# WARREN, RANES, DYE, CURREN? FIRST THERE WAS FUERST!

BY JON PETERSON

When you get a group of creative people like the folks at WXPN in a room, consensus is not uncommon, but 100% agreement on anything is extremely rare. Yet one statement was repeated to me by everyone...and it reverberated with reverence in the studios and hallways. Namely, Mark Fuerst, the General Manager who arrived on the scene in 1986 and totally turned things around at the station after a decade of decline, is universally praised and heralded by his coworkers as "a visionary."

Fuerst was hired in November of 1986 by the University of Pennsylvania, not because of his track record as a visionary programmer, but mainly because of his background in financial management. Fuerst, the former Business Manager at WORT-FM in Madison, Wisconsin, was tapped by then-Vice Provost Kim Morrison to keep the station out of the red. WORT had been raising \$200,000 in a relatively small market, and at the time he arrived, WXPN was only raising \$76,000 from listener support in the fourth largest market in the country.

But as the discovery process for fund-raising and fiscal responsibility unfolded, a chain of events and the choices that he championed did emerge into a programming "vision"...a vision to make WXPN one of the finest Public Radio stations in the country. Before Bruce Warren, David Dye and Bruce Ranes...the first battles to make 'XPN great were fought by Mark Fuerst.



You were brought into WXPN as an agent of change. So we can better understand what happened in those early years at WXPN, tell us about your old station, WORT.

"WORT was a terrific station! I remember having lunch with Jack Mitchell, one of the founders of NPR, and he believed that WORT was one of the best-run Public Radio stations in the country. It was Triple-A in an earlier era and I wanted a station that was as good as WORT. So I came to WXPN in an attempt to recapture what WORT did at its prime."

Even though your background was more on the business side of things, were you hired at WXPN to also mimic WORT's eclectic approach to programming?

"No, not at all. The people who hired me at Penn did not have any set notions as to what programming direction to go in. They actually thought it would be more of a traditional Public Radio station with the standard mix of news, talk, classical music and public affairs...more like [Philadelphia's NPR station] WHYY. My thoughts on programming changes were more from a strategic business point of view. Why compete with WHYY? It can be done, but it will be very expensive and take a while...alternatively, I thought, 'Why not look at developing a different format?'"

Many people in the Adult Rock world know WXPN as this professionally staffed, music-intensive radio station. That certainly wasn't the case when you arrived—community volunteers and students ran the programming. What happened?

"I didn't agree that having students on the air was the key to student participation—just as in most college coursework, students shouldn't be able

continued ►

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to just 'do what they want.' So we took the dormitory carrier-current station, WQHS, and said, 'If you want to play, go over here. But if you want to work with professional people who will teach you what broadcasting is all about and mentor you, then come to WXPN.'

"And the key was in sports. All the years I was there, we broadcast Penn football and basketball with anywhere from eight to 20 students participating each semester. We recruited Bob Bumbara, a terrific sports broadcaster and a great teacher. He got them into all the pro games, too, and taught them what sports coverage was all about in a hands-on, 'next to the big guys' kinda way. And what that did was spread the word among a small but influential group of students that the new 'XPN' was okay! So Vinnie Curren (who I brought in with me from WORT) and I developed a set of experiences and arguments that made sense to the Vice Provost's office...that there was a big difference between a quality radio station experience and just 'doing your own thing' on the air.

"Another key development was the hiring of Kathy O'Connell, whose nationally syndicated Kids America program just lost its funding at WNYC. I hired her immediately and she developed Kid's Corner for WXPN—that made a lot of sense to the University. Now, we were doing some educational programming. You know, a campaign to help 'save the kids'...you can get a lot of public support for that. So the combination of the sports internships, Kathy's children's show and the music programming run by Mike Morrison started to convince the University people that we could do things that would work and bring us prestige...and a quality to the station that wasn't there before."

**Speaking of Mike, what were the first changes that the two of you instituted in terms of music?**

"As part of a schedule change, Mike Morrison [a former student volunteer, by this time a paid employee as Music Director] developed an afternoon show called World Rhythms. Paul Simon had just put out *Graceland*, and he brought world music more into the pop culture. Sounds Of Brazil had opened in New York and Sean Barlow was about to launch Afropop Worldwide on NPR. There was folk and zydeco on the air at the station already, so Mike and I thought to blend it together with some world music...which created the first consistent horizontal musical strip across the afternoons. It played a very important role in that it got the professional staff involved in more hours of broadcasting. World Rhythms broke the ice in terms of getting at least a small part of the Philadelphia cultural elite on our side.

"And that wasn't an easy battle, because at the same time, we also put All Things Considered on the air. (By the way, we took it off two years later—it just wasn't doing us any good.) The combination of ATC, World Rhythms and Kid's Corner displaced a bunch of entrenched community volunteers. So we had writers from alternative weekly papers being displaced from their shows...and they began trashing me and WXPN in the press. It was an outlet for their creativity that had dried up."

**In 1989, you brought on board your old colleague from WORT, Michaela Majoun, to revamp the mornings. How did she play a role in changing critical and public perception?**

"She's really been responsible, as much as anyone there, for bringing on 'XPN's success story in Philadelphia. She was able to give people something different, something extremely engaging in the mornings via music and talk. But she was also willing to change what she had to do. She came onboard to do more personality-based radio, but we soon realized that we didn't have the resources to compete in the morning talk arena. So, we refocused and made music the dominant thing; she was able to shift from being the center of the mornings to being that special thing that gave the music a magical lift. Once it began to sink in that there was a woman on the air that had Michaela's intelligence and charm, the show caught fire! Our fund raising in the morning went through the roof, and it got notice in the press, too...something worthy of the *Philadelphia Magazine* 'Best DJ' kind of thing. So Michaela—and David Dye, who came on board during that period—were really the 'twin pillars' of our local programming. And their presence on the air was the thing that made the new 'XPN' succeed."

**Another thing that helped refine your music programming was the grant you got from the Corporation For Public Broadcasting to develop World Cafe.**

"In the Non-Com realm, what we now know as the Triple-A format began as an exploration of how to integrate world music into Public Radio, and we received a CPB grant based on a proposal to develop a national program based on World Rhythms. We didn't know at the time we proposed it that the show was failing in terms of Arbitron ratings and audience support. We thought it was working, because by now it was getting a lot of positive press and winning over converts in the

intelligentsia. It was a fabulously interesting show from a sophisticated point of view, but just couldn't attract a large enough audience.

"But when we started to test music for World Cafe, we threw everything on the table...literally! We went into a conference room with a huge table and made up these index cards with different genres of music, and we started to make different blends by moving the cards around. We named each blend some tricky name—the one that mixed acoustic with world beat was called 'Cheb and Shawn' [for Cheb Khaled and Shawn Colvin]. The one that became the dominant blend we called 'Adult Acoustic Alternative.'

"To develop World Cafe, we did some auditorium testing, and that really opened our eyes. The world music tapes we played people-tested horribly, with people saying stuff like 'Way too much Spanish music!' When I saw that, I learned that it's very difficult to get listeners to address something new. These were brilliant mixes of music, but the lack of familiarity would prevent most people from listening to them on a station for any length of time.

"The 'Triple-A' tapes tested a lot better than anything else. And David Dye, who was chosen as the host, understood that music. Those tapes had music on them that, for one thing, were sung in English, and from artists that people generally knew. So we used that mix as the basis for World Cafe and, later, for the 'XPN' format."

continued ▶



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When your original grant money ran out, it wasn't renewed by the CPB. From what I recall during that era, I always assumed that the CPB thought you had pulled some sort of crazy, diabolical "bait and switch"; that you were given a grant to develop programming designed to attract minority listeners to Public Radio, and then developed a syndicated program that was quite a bit different.

"I think there's truth in your assessment, although perhaps it's a bit harsh. The move to Triple-A and away from world music was a very big change, and in many ways, it marked an abandonment of our original mission—to create a new Public Radio format that could appeal to an interracial audience. We couldn't come up with something to do that, and that's why the CPB stopped funding the project. I felt that continuing in the world beat direction would have been a failure. I still feel that way. So, I made the decision to use the investment we had in research and personnel to create a format [Triple-A] and a program [World Cafe] that could survive on radio. Things that work in radio work in a lot of places at once, and as we were testing our music blends, the Triple-A direction had begun to surface simultaneously in about 20 different places. That, to me, was a sign that our modification was right. You have to depend on some level of mass acceptance to do something in a mass medium."

**Explain in some detail the sound you were shooting for. Once you went in the Adult Acoustic direction, did you still want world music as an element in the mix?**

"Sure, world beat would be a spice element, but Paul Simon, Bonnie Raitt and Shawn Colvin were the core artists, not King Sunny Ade and Ladysmith Black Mambazo. The reason why the format moved into some level of popular acceptance and radio viability was because it was based on artists with broad appeal. They were supplemented by world beat music and some other textures to create a spicy blend, but the backbone of the format was established and emerging folk rock artists.

"Now we are moving away from the development of the station to the development of the format—but they go together. You just couldn't bank on playing music for your most knowledgeable music listeners as the key to your programming success. We had to reach beyond that core to a broader group of listeners. WXPN was trying to move on and become a part of the broad cultural climate of Philadelphia, but on a much larger scale."

**By this point, you had also hired Bruce Ranes from DIR and bought in Bruce Warren to be part of the team. Tell us a little about the creative process and group dynamic.**

"I'll give credit where it's due here: Bruce Ranes, David Dye, Mike Morrison, Bruce Warren—and Vinnie Curren, who was PD for part of this period—were the people who did all the work. My assistance to World Cafe, for all practical purposes, ended with the end of the music testing...and my job was to manage the entire radio station operation in such a way that it could grow and thrive. I accepted the fact that for 'XPN to succeed, the creative control had to pass into the hands of people who were much more knowledgeable about music than I was."

**Why did you decide to leave WXPN?**

"Honestly, I didn't have as much to contribute anymore that was as important as the things I had done previously...and I think it was one of the best decisions I ever made. Vinnie Curren has done a much better job of running WXPN than I could have done. I have some severe limitations as a manager, because I don't like the personnel-management aspects of the job. The irony is that, because of our successes, I hired more staff. And the more staff I hired, the less I liked being a manager.

"The other thing is that a year and a half before I left I adopted my daughter and I wanted to spend time with her. When you run a good music-intensive radio station you go to station events and shows all the time. I didn't want to be a 50-year-old balding guy in the back of a club with people wondering, 'Whose parent is that?' I felt like I had done the things I wanted to do, so for a combination of reasons, I wanted to move on to face new challenges." 

Since leaving WXPN in 1994, Mark Fuerst has formed Public Radio Management, Inc. Their first project was developing "The Membershop," aimed at helping Public Radio stations to improve their skills in fund-raising and learn how to run their membership drives in a more efficient and consolidated way. More recently, he shifted the company's resources to strategic planning for Internet development. He just received a \$375,000 grant from the CPB to help develop the Public Radio Station Internet Alliance (PRSIA), a group currently composed of 10 stations, including WXPN and WFUV in New York City. The goal of the group is to develop online membership opportunities, transferring the techniques of on-air fund raising and direct mail to the Internet. For more information, Fuerst can be reached at 914.876.2577, or at [fuerstmc@aol.com](mailto:fuerstmc@aol.com).

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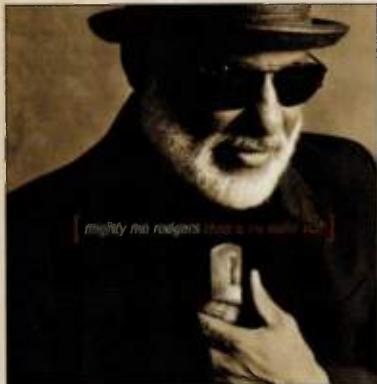
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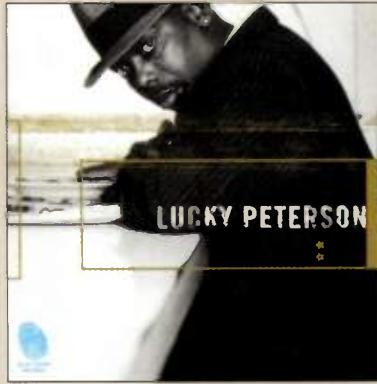
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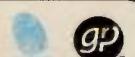
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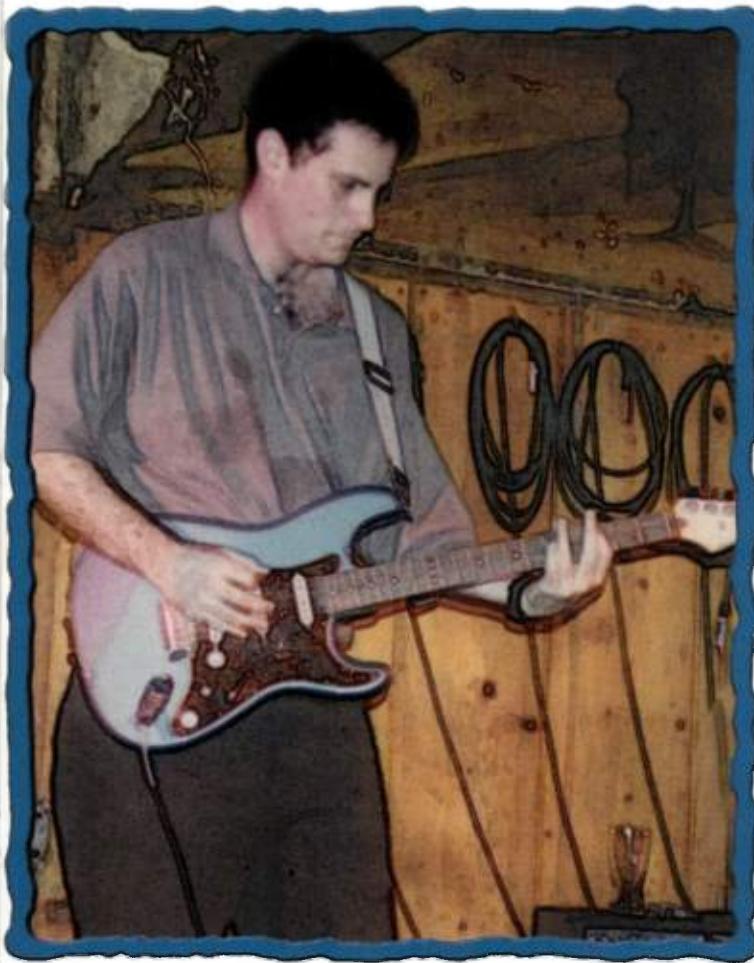
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# MEMORIES, STAND-UP PHILOSOPHY AND THE BIRTH OF TRIPLE-A

## Mike Morrison Remembers



BY  
JON  
PETERSON

Program Director. Finally, when Kimberly Haas—the “professional staff” MD then-left to start Echoes (the syndicated NPR space/new age show), Morrison jumped at the chance to fill her shoes...and has been tap-dancing ever since! Over the years, we've all gotten to know this gentle giant...although the first time you probably thought you were being introduced to Henry Rollins! More recently employed as a promo dude and earlier as PD for KSCA/Los Angeles, he was the original PD of “the new ‘XPN.’” But the Rollins reference is more than just appearances, as he's really part musician, scholar, historian and stand-up philosopher. Read on as Mike Morrison trips down his musical memory lane!

**Many of us in the Adult Rock world cut our chops and fell in love with both radio and music at our old college stations, but your experience was a tad different from most, in that WXPN was smack in the middle of a Top 5 Market. Recap your early experiences and the first half of the 1980s at 88.5.** “When I first got there I was amazed—it was so overwhelming to be in a place where you'd hear stuff like Philip Glass or Meredith Monk blaring out of the speakers. Looking back, I guess it was pretty much your typical, block-programmed community/

Remember those college kids who got into a student organization and it became their life? Well, Mike Morrison was that kind of dedicated and enthusiastic guy! Upon discovering WXPN on his radio dial as a freshman at The University of Pennsylvania in 1979, he was the type of dude who'd sit up all night on the dormitory stairwell with his headphones listening to the 2-6am punk rock show. Ahh, the intoxicating magic of turning a radio dial and becoming entranced in the sonic splendor!

Even though he majored in economics, the radio bug had already bitten. He joined the student training program at WXPN, which had a high attrition rate. In fact, most of his friends dropped out, but not Morrison. He took every opportunity and soaked up radio experiences like a sponge. During his four years as an undergraduate, he hosted avant-garde, jazz and new wave shows, became the student Business Manager and then student

when Kimberly Haas—the “professional staff” MD then-left to start Echoes (the syndicated NPR space/new age show), Morrison jumped at the chance to fill her shoes...and has been tap-dancing ever since!

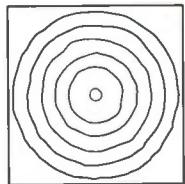
student-staffed radio station. Maybe I'm being romantic, but the first few years seemed really special; most of the shows were programmed by some phenomenal people and it seemed like we were doing some groundbreaking stuff. I joined the professional staff as MD when Kim Haas left in 1984, and did my best to help the station grow. You know, maximize record service, get us *CMJ* reporting status and basically figure out anything and everything to get the spotlight shined on the station.

CONTINUED



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"But within a very short time, it became an uphill battle and it just felt like the station had passed its prime...it was stagnating. Many of the innovative, talented volunteers who had originated their shows had left and passed them on to less-talented programmers. There were still pockets of activism around, but virtually nothing had changed from 1980 to 1986. Nothing would have changed either—it was so entrenched in the status quo. Virtually every daypart and every fund drive was getting worse and worse. Then Mark Fuerst arrived!"

**Were you nervous? How did you hear that he was coming onboard?**

"The old GM, Peter Cuozo, had left, the station was \$140,000 in the hole every year and I heard rumors of a new guy who wanted to shake things up. I met him and we talked and I was really excited about his energy. But immediately I had to ask him for a favor. My band, The Johnsons, had just been signed to Restless Records and I had to ask him for a six-week sabbatical to tour with the band. He said, 'Fine.'

"When I got back from the road, we immediately jumped into the fire. I remember sitting in a room with Vinnie Curren and Mark, and we started a philosophical discussion. Mark said, 'Let's just imagine we canceled the jazz programming.' And I said, 'What? You can't cancel jazz!' He said, 'Why not?' You see, changing programming was just such a taboo that it would have never even occurred to me.

"He was also instigating some pretty radical changes in how the station would be managed. It went from more-or-less a total democracy to a hierarchical structure. He placed some of the long-time, more respected programmers on a community advisory panel, but it was just that...non-binding advice. He was the boss and I knew I was part of his team when he asked me to develop world music programming at the station and a little later to develop the morning music mix."

**World Rhythms was the name of it. What were your thoughts on that show and how did you later make changes in the morning?**

"World Rhythms was on every day from 1 to 5pm. I hosted it two days a week and volunteers did the rest. Before this show, it was all single-genre specialty shows. You know, the British Folk show, the Blues show and so on. This was the first 'mixed bag' of reggae, world beat and some American genres such as Cajun and zydeco.

"In the end it was not a successful show, but it served its purpose in that it was a very politically correct show. This made it difficult for the folk people, or whoever, to argue that it shouldn't be on. And in that sense, it worked; it proved that we could survive change. It got us out of the stalemate.

"Crossroads was the morning show and it was a mess! You had the most untalented volunteers on in the mornings, 'cause the good ones wouldn't get up that early. The musical philosophy that was supposed to hold it all together was the notion of 'upbeat music,' but

everybody's idea of 'upbeat' was different. One day, 'upbeat' meant all Klezmer music, the next day it was Black Flag and TSOL, and the next day it was Klezmer into Black Flag...you get the idea! Mark knew mornings were prime time and that we needed to clean house in this slot. This was also the perfect opportunity to begin to centralize all music decisions."

**"I BELIEVED THAT VARIETY NEEDED TO BE DEMONSTRATED IN EVERY AVERAGE QUARTER-HOUR."**

I guess the next step was to come up with a mix that would sound good in the morning, but consistently selected by you and drawn from one musical universe.

"Yes. Somewhere around that time I took a trip to DC and heard WHFS—and I was totally blown away! This was before there was an established Alternative station style and they were just so diverse. I would hear stuff like Bruce Cockburn into R.E.M., Michelle Shocked into Poi Dog Pondering and Richard Thompson into U2. Plus it was mixed with some reggae and zydeco. It made a huge impression on me!"

**There must have been some pretty interesting segues! It seemed a lot of Public Radio stations back then liked a stylistically perfect, smooth segue. What were your thoughts on that?**

"Up until that time, the segue usually ruled. It was more about the segue than the song for most programmers. I didn't think that you needed to be as diligent as a lot of people felt you had to be in getting from one style to another. You needed to narrow the universe with some common sense, but it didn't need to be radio as 'segue über alles!' I wanted to avoid what I called 'streaking'; 20 minutes of jazz into 20 minutes of blues—back-announce—and go into 20 minutes of folk into 20 minutes of rock. I believed that variety needed to be demonstrated in every average quarter-hour.

"So that's what we did. I programmed it by hand for Michaela Majoun, who was hired to do the mornings, and we expanded it out to middays when David Dye arrived. Shortly after his arrival, thank God, we got Selector."

**Tell me about expanding that musical idea into more dayparts. Was there a decision early on to become an all-music Public Radio station?**

"Not originally. We tried providing a news

block for listeners in the afternoon, because we knew our audience was intelligent and thought that they wanted some news. Sometime around the turn of the decade, we joined NPR and put All Things Considered on—at the exact same time of day as WHYY, the city's heritage NPR station, was airing it. Well, from a fund-raising point of view it was a disaster. But what it accomplished for us was to put us on the map in the major-market world of NPR. We went from being perceived as just another little NFCB station to being this major market NPR station doing something radically different with music. We were at the forefront in the development of the so-called 'fourth stream' of Public Radio programming. News/Talk, Classical and Jazz being the first three—and now we were considered the pioneers of this eclectic mix.

"So, over time the point of the exercise became clearer. Every daypart we professionalized and replaced with a thoughtful music mix, our fund-raising would explode. It was through trial and error that we realized we needed to get out of the news business and develop a reliable format that was there all the time."

**And that format, of course, was Triple-A. Mark Fuerst told the story of how you guys went into a room with index cards and started mixing and matching, creating different blends. What are your recollections of developing a name for the format?**

"Well, we wanted to develop a broad-appeal sound based on established artists such as, say, Jackson Browne, along with newcomers like Tracy Chapman and 10,000 Maniacs...as well as critically acclaimed people like Richard Thompson and John Gorka. I know that I wanted no part of calling it folk or folk-rock, so we came up with this title—Adult Acoustic Alternative."

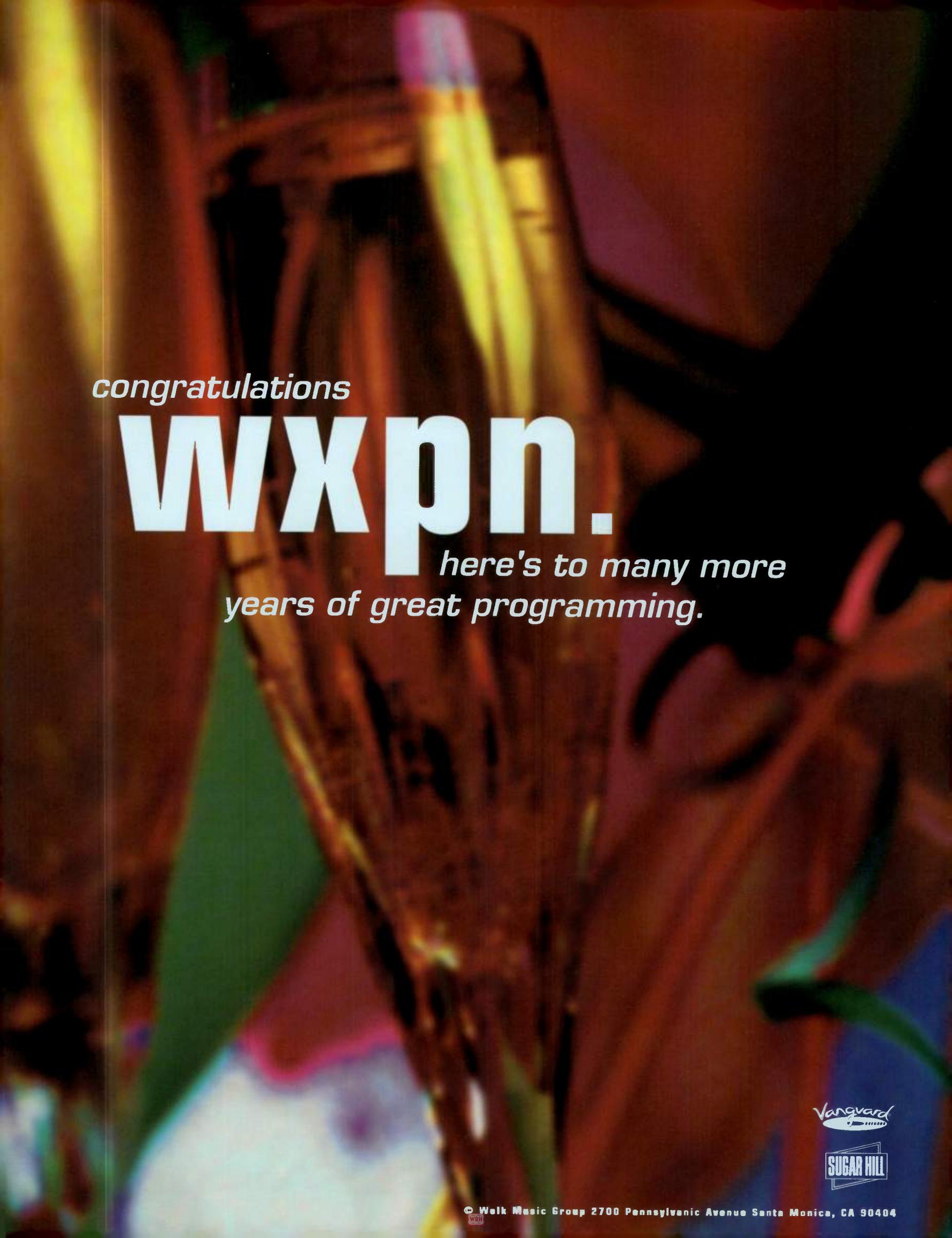
**Which is slightly different from what it later became known as—Adult Album Alternative.**

"Well, that's just it. We didn't have anybody to compare ourselves to—any benchmarks, really—so we came up with our own title for it. Funny thing is, at the exact same time we were going through this process, Bill Hard had just started a new chart—and without any knowledge by either party—he was calling it Triple-A, too. So I called him up and it was, like, 'Fuckin' A, Bill, can I report?' And he's, like, 'Damn straight!' And that's when I found out about stations like KBCO in Denver and WXRT in Chicago. It was nice to know that there were other people out there thinking along similar lines."

**So if you could sum up your time and experiences at WXPN in a sentence or two, what would you say?**

"Format is good!" \*

Mike Morrison's career has come full circle. When KSCA/Los Angeles flipped to Spanish, he was approached by KCRW to develop a new program for them. And while he still hasn't quit his weekday promo gig at E Pluribus Unum, he keeps himself busy as host of their Weekend Becomes Eclectic show. You can reach Mike at [mike@epluribus.com](mailto:mike@epluribus.com)



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# THE AMAZING STORY OF SHAWN STEWART

## Achieving Balance

BY JON PETERSON



Shawn Stewart is a maverick. A renaissance woman. With low-key charm, native intelligence, an ear for music and the aid of some great mentoring, she has become one of the most important figures in Triple-A in just a few years. Equally impressive is the fact that the world of radio broadcasting is relatively new to her. Six years ago she was a photo stylist for Dayton Hudson. And up until recently, she was the busiest woman in Philadelphia radio. When I finally got a half-hour alone to interview this out-of-the-box thinker, we were interrupted no fewer than 15 times! "Oh, this is just my life," she said with Zen-like calm during her final days at WXPN. This is her amazing story.

Kevin Cole (now at Amazon.com) was Stewart's mentor and on again/off again/on again boyfriend. In 1993, he was MD at Alternative outlet KJ104 in Minneapolis. Knowing that

Stewart was very unhappy at her corporate day job, he gave her a creative outlet, having her ghostwrite record reviews and press releases for the station. An incredible talent scout and believer in her interpersonal skills, he decided it was time for her to start talking on the airwaves. Either sadist or genius, his assignment was the radio equivalent to getting a home run off a big league pitcher the first time you picked up a baseball bat—to transport Jonathan Richman from the airport and interview him live on-air.

Knowing Richman absolutely hates talking about his music, Cole figured that a station visit might work best if hosted by a "non-professional." No one told Stewart this or how impossible he can be, but because of her supreme savvy and some simpatico with Jo Jo, everything somehow worked out fine. They talked about everything from safety belts to "The Simpsons" in the car...and it put him at ease. Her choice of an on-air topic? Vegetarian etiquette at a dinner party when the host doesn't know you don't eat meat. Richman's advice? "Well, you have to eat it!"

"Even veal?" Stewart protested. "Well...yeah!" And in that humble moment, a new Twin Cities broadcasting legend was born. To this day people in Minneapolis still say, "Even veal?!"

Jim Cargill entered Stewart's life in 1993. He was an incredibly wealthy Midwest entrepreneur who thought it would be cool to own a radio station, and approached Cole about helping him find one. They couldn't find one immediately, but Cargill's enthusiasm did lure Cole on board (KJ104 had just flipped to Country), and together they started the National Alternative Network. The company became the syndicator of The *Spin* Radio Network (for College stations) and Revolution Radio (for Alternatives). Stewart quit her photo stylist job and quickly became the producer of very complicated programs that had to contain "all exclusive music." Writing, editing and scheduling, it was not uncommon for her to attend The *CMJ* Convention and have over 100 bands play into two mics and a DAT machine in her hotel room. "During that period, I got to know every manager, publicist and baby band now on a major label," states Stewart.

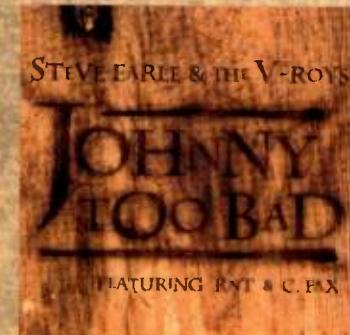
In 1994, Cargill finally bought a station and founded REV105, with Kevin Cole as PD. According to Stewart, "Kevin and Jim had a dream of making a 'real radio station'... something in line with the community. There was a very savvy audience that was not being

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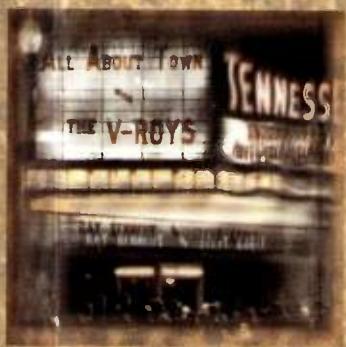
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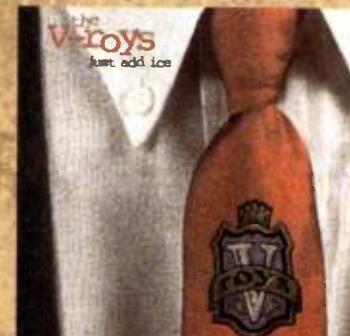
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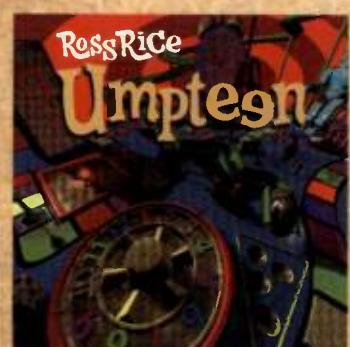


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served, and they wanted to create a station that would appeal to Paul Westerberg and Dave Pirner, as much as your neighbors and drinking buddies. Kevin had an incredible way of balancing the playlist, championing the likes of G. Love and Ani DiFranco before anyone else. He had this saying, 'It takes a little bit of Pearl Jam to make the Yum Yum go down.' This was the kind of station that would segue Beck into James Brown, Stone Temple Pilots into Jimi Hendrix—he had no fear of so-called format boundaries and I learned so much about balance."

Although she was still working for the syndication side of the company during the week, Stewart eventually landed a weekend spot on The Rev as host of "Moonlight Meditations," a Sunday night specialty show of ambient space music, indie rock and poetry. In February of 1996, Shelly Miller went to WDRE/New York City, leaving open the music director position and mid-day slot. Because of her industry relationships with the syndicated show and the growing popularity of her specialty program, it was the perfect opportunity for Stewart to move over to The Rev full time. "We always had a stormy relationship with *Spin*—even from the beginning—with control passing back and forth between them in New York and us, and these type of shows in general were on the decline at Alternative Radio, so this was a perfect opportunity to fight the good fight on a local level," she explains.

And what battles there were to try to win! By this time, an "Edge" station had arrived in Minneapolis. For Cole, Stewart and the team at The Rev, it became less of a radio station and more of a "cause." "We were a privately owned station that was successful—our sales staff knew how to sell the concept of what we were about—but we were up against a Goliath; a Disney-funded radio station with a vengeance to make us fail, and when they couldn't make us fail, they bought us!"

Knowing that she was looking for a new gig, some friends (and Moonlight Meditation fans) at Minnesota Public Radio saw a posting for a job opening at WXPN. "Originally, I had applied for the job in 1997, when it was just for midday host, and for one reason or another I didn't get it. Not too many months later it was available again, this time with AMD duties, and Bill Carroll, Head Of Promotion at London, called up Bruce Warren and said, 'You must hire this girl!'"

What appealed to Warren were the many parallels between 'XPN and The Rev. "Even though REV105 was a Commercial station, they both were very renegade in their musical mission, and both were incredibly 'core' driven. We were almost like the 'younger, with a nose ring' sister station of 'XPN and I

had syndication experience, too! So I was asked to come in for an interview and on-air audition."

Warren had the foresight to see past what Stewart admits was apparently a less-than-perfect audition on the 'XPN airwaves. "Oh, my God, it was horrible! Fortunately, he had some great skims of me from The Rev, and everything worked out great. Within six months, I was Music Director and Associate Producer of the World Cafe."

Stewart is confident in her overall abilities, and secure enough to admit there were some differences in her background and the need for a certain amount of on-the-job training. "There was a learning curve. I knew

And time was one thing that Stewart had precious little of. In addition to her MD duties, she also acted as "booking agent" for the World Cafe and was the perennial on-air pinch hitter for the regular airstaff. In addition, she hosted two specialty shows: First Impressions and Live At The Writer's House. Her day was one of constant interruptions and distractions; start editing on Selector, take a World Cafe booking call, start to work again on the logs and then stop to take a national rep on a station tour when their band arrives for load-in.

But somehow she managed to get the job done, and it was largely due to her love of her co-workers. "I had the best boss in the world in Bruce Warren...everyone at 'XPN is so lucky to have him. And I just love the rest of the people I worked with—David [Dye], Bruce Ranes, Michaela and now Helen Leicht. Working with folks I *really* liked helped me focus on the music."

Stewart's musical focus and role on that team was one of balance. "Bruce Warren is 'Mr. Passion!'—that's his job, but I had to bring something different to the table—a certain levelheadedness and aesthetic distance. I scheduled the music on Selector and I trusted my sense of stylistic and genre balance—there's not enough of this, there's too much of that. I guess I learned a lot about that from Kevin Cole. I have a good sense of what is great for the core, but what is also important to the cume. The station's mission is about the music and reaching as many people as possible. I wanted to help make 'XPN a culturally significant organization entrenched in the community the same way as the Philadelphia Museum of Art, or even the Phillies for that matter."

While most people might have thought her place on the team was to help protect 'XPN's younger demos and champion Alternative bands, Stewart had the maturity not to necessarily play the 'advocate' role. "I didn't feel I had to try to get Pavement or Live played on 'XPN. I was able to stand back a little from my own personal agenda. I felt like I really needed to leave my ego outside, and my ego wasn't attached to getting certain things played on the air. It was more about making a great radio station and giving it balance. I didn't want to hammer our listeners over the head with records that, at the end of the day, weren't meaningful to them."

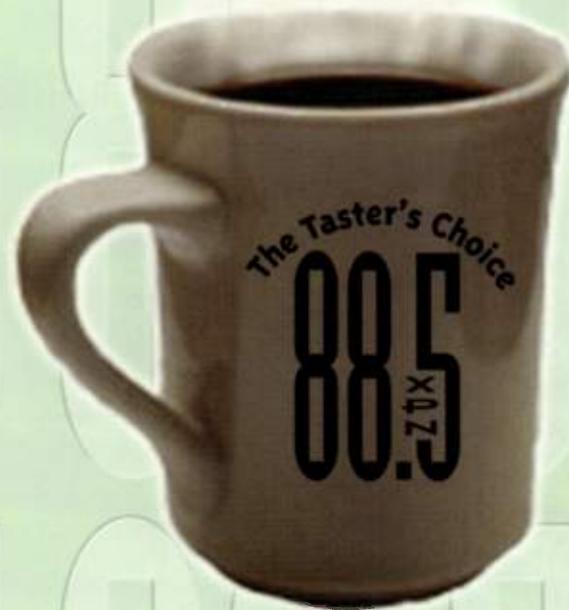
Shawn Stewart knows a lot about balance and is extremely well-centered in every way—professionally, she is gifted beyond belief, and personally, she knows how to follow her heart. Recently, her relationship with Kevin Cole was rekindled, and right about the time you're reading this, she's on her way to Seattle to start a new chapter in her life. 

**"I FELT LIKE I REALLY  
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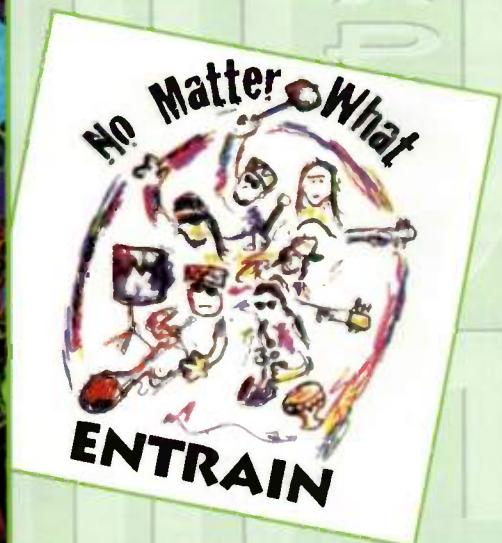
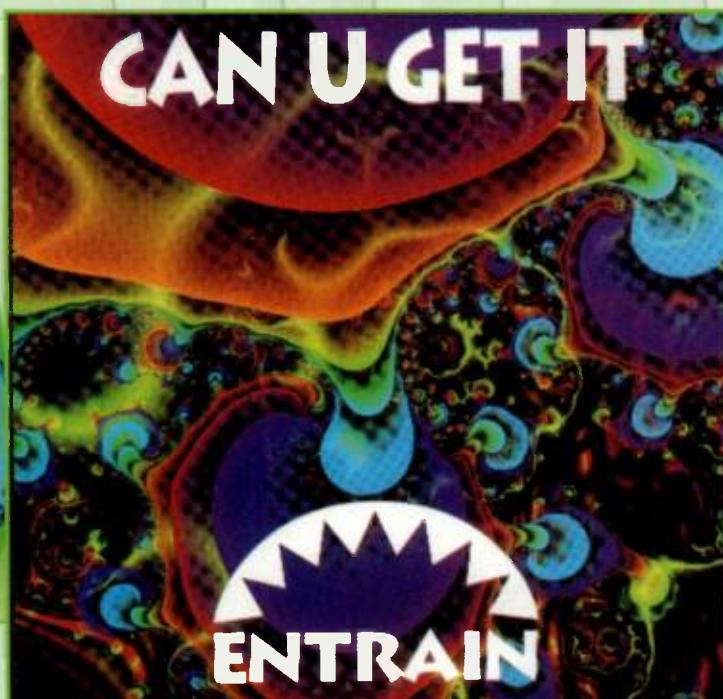
more about the 'Morrisseys' of music than Bill Morrissey, but there were specialty shows on The Rev that gave me some background in folk-rock and singer/songwriters, so I picked it up fairly quickly. Nonetheless, I still had to put a manager on hold every now and then and say, 'Hey David, do we wanna book some guy named Freebo?' Or 'Who is John Hall?' A lot of this stuff was off my radar screen before I came to 'XPN.'

Recalling her early transition from the Alternative world to Triple-A, Stewart remembered that period with an earnest smile. Despite some initial awkwardness, her soft-spoken manner eventually charmed the Triple-A community. "It was hard—it took a little while. I was really well-known in Alternative Radio, and then when I went to 'XPN I was no one to nobody. It was like, 'Take my friggin' phone call, I know my shit, dude!' After a while, of course, there was none of that. It just took a little time."

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- "Dancin' In The Light" Tops WXPN's Playlist And Phones During Summer 1999
- Entrain Appears At WXPN's Singer/Songwriter Weekend
- Entrain Appears On World Cafe In September 1999



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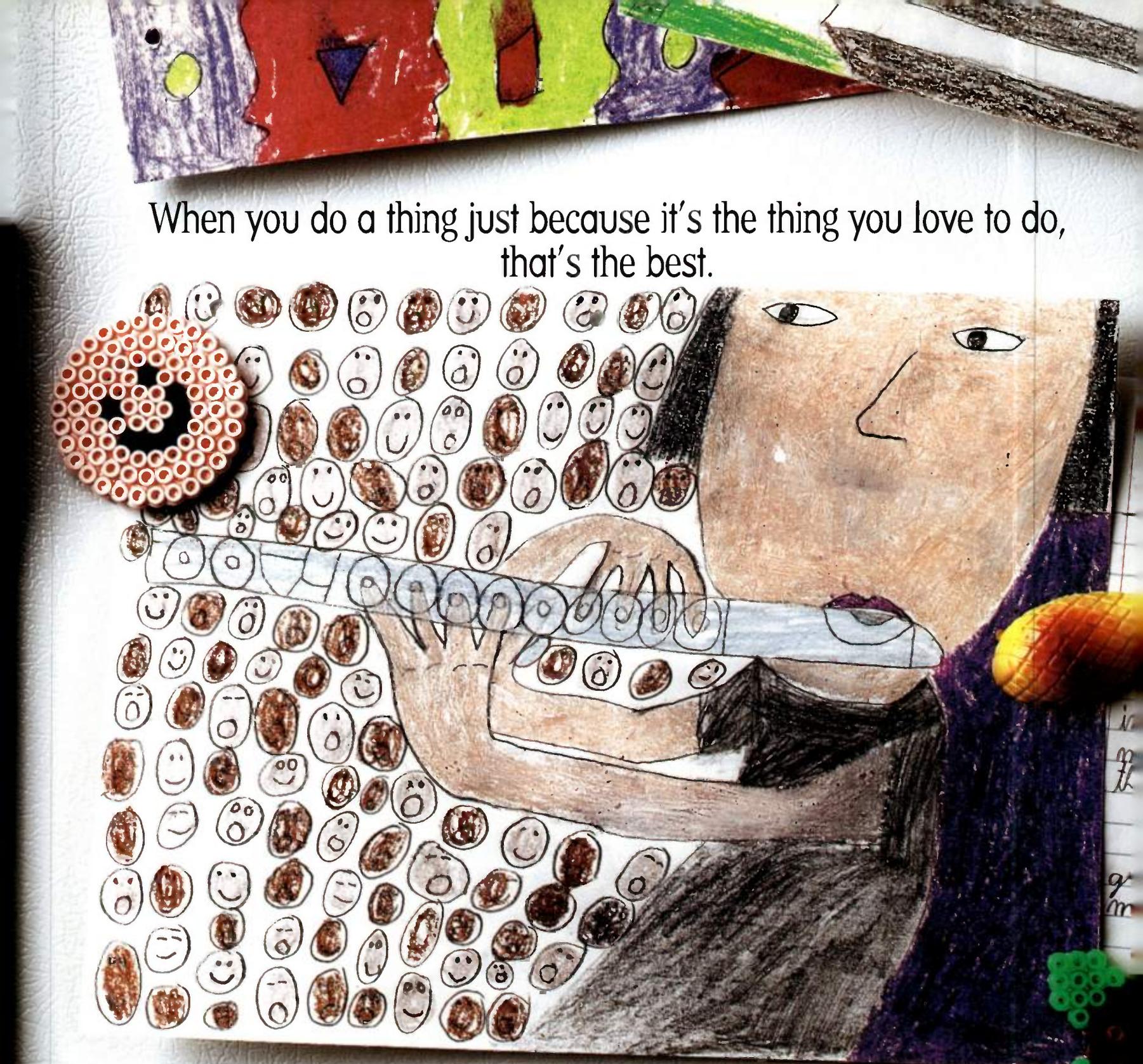
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# On-air Hosts



## The WXPN Daily Schedule

MON.	TUE.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.	SUN.
5am-10am <u>Morning Show</u> w/ Michaela Majoun Fri 9-10 <u>Women's Music Hour</u>					6am-10am <u>Sleepy Hollow</u> w/ Chuck Elliott	6am-11am <u>Sleepy Hollow</u> w/ Samantha Sullivan and Keith Brand
10am-2pm <u>Middays</u> w/ Helen Leicht				10am-2pm <u>World Cafe</u> w/ David Dye	11am-4pm <u>Sundays</u> w/ Helen Leicht	
2pm-7pm <u>World Cafe</u> w/ David Dye				2pm-6pm <u>Saturdays on XPN</u>	4pm-8pm <u>The Gene Show</u> Show w/ Gene Shay	
7pm-8pm <u>Kid's Corner</u> w/ Kathy O'Connell				6pm-8pm <u>Mountain Stage</u> (PRI)	8pm-9pm <u>Grateful Dead Hour</u>	
8pm-11pm <u>Evenings</u> w/ Jonny Meister	8pm-9pm <u>First Impression</u>	8pm-11pm <u>Evenings</u> w/ Jonny Meister		8pm-1am <u>The Blues Show</u> w/ Jonny Meister	9pm-10pm <u>Amazon Country</u> w/Debra D'Alessandro	
11pm-1am <u>Echoes</u> w/ John Diliberto (PRI)	9pm-11pm <u>Evenings</u> w/ Jonny Meister				10pm-11pm <u>O'zine</u> w/Robert Drake	11:00pm-11:30pm <u>Public Access</u>
1am-5am <u>World Cafe</u> w/ David Dye				1am-6am <u>Stars End</u> w/ Chuck Van Zyl	11:30pm-5am <u>Echoes</u> w/ John Diliberto (PRI)	

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# DAVID DYE

(Weekdays 2-7pm, World Cafe)



Upon graduation, he was offered a full-time job at WMMR, where Dye worked afternoons and evenings at different points for the next five years. Being a hippy and wanting to get in touch with his inner-hairy man, he moved to Lewiston, Maine, where he quickly found work at freeform WBLM. But after four years our natureboy wanted a cheesesteak and returned to the City Of Brotherly Love—this time for good!

Dye was hired again at WMMR in 1979, but he grew increasingly frustrated by the station's conservative playlist and approach. Alex DeMers made him an offer to join crosstown WIOQ, and Dye jumped at the opportunity to be a freeform programmer again. "WIOQ had

David Dye got into major market radio on a bet. An "I dare you!" A sophomore at Swarthmore College in suburban Philadelphia in 1970, one of his buddies from the campus station dared him to send a tape to WMMR in Philadelphia. Six months later, it looked like Dye's pal had won the bet—until he got a call from Jerry Stevens at the station offering him the Sunday morning slot. A humble start for a humble man whose friendly, laid-back style and warm voice have made him a permanent fixture in Philly radio.

been heavily into Yes, Genesis and the whole prog-rock thing before I got there, but when I arrived they had shifted focus to new wave and I loved it! Talking Heads, Elvis Costello, The Records—it was great to be breaking bands and, on that level, it was very similar to what we do here at WXPN."

By the end of the 1980s, the freeform days were over and the station morphed into an AOR/AC hybrid. "It was really weird, we played a lot of Philip Bailey and stuff like that, but somehow it worked. We managed to be fairly successful because of Harvey In The Morning, but eventually the numbers eroded and the owners pulled the plug and flipped it to Oldies in 1989."

*continued*



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"I'm going to fight  
burning out at all costs.  
I can't imagine doing any  
other radio job!"

Dye stayed on as Oldies PD for three months before hanging it up. He had hosted a hugely popular frat party-style Oldies show on 'IOQ for years and took the concept to WYSP for a few months until they decided to go in a different direction. A 'freeformer' at heart, he missed that creativity and wondered whether or not his approach was an artifact from another era.

"When the job fell apart, I waddled around for a while and got divorced—I really didn't know what I was going to do." He kicked around Philly doing assorted odd jobs until 1990, when he ran into Mike Morrison at a T Bone Burnette show. "Mike approached me with all this reverence—apparently he had been a big fan of mine over the years, and it picked up my spirits. He then said, 'Hey, how'd you like to volunteer and become a host for the weekend show, Sleepy Hollow?' and I said, 'Sure!' It was pretty funny, 'cuz everybody else at the station got really worried. They were afraid that a big, bad 'Commercial DJ' was gonna come in and ruin the station. But they actually *liked* the way I did the show, as it turned out."

Dye came on board full-time when Mark Fuerst offered him a job as CPB Grant Administrator for what was originally called The Music Channel. "We changed the title to World Cafe when we thought that world music was going to be at the center of the show, but the research didn't pan out that way. Mark Fuerst and I were listening to airchecks, looking for a potential host for the show, but no one was satisfied with the people we were auditioning. I eventually raised my hand and said, 'I'd like to try.'" That was 1991, and he's been hosting World Cafe ever since.

After almost 30 years in Philly radio, David Dye is perhaps now more popular than ever. Last year he won the *City Paper's* Reader's Choice Award for Best Radio Person and Best Radio Show, with the World Cafe, and he still maintains the spirit of freeform in a slightly adapted way. "At the center of what I do is sit down at a computer and put together a show that makes sense to me. It gives me an informed base, knowing that I'm still rotating records and not going too far off the deep end, while still being able to do some cool segues with the feel of freeform."

When asked whether or not he ever gets exhausted from the long hours and the demands of the job, Dye chuckles. "Come on, it's a great job! Other radio options aren't particularly inviting, and I'm going to fight burning out at all costs. I can't imagine myself doing any other radio job!"

Neither can we. \*

## Producing The World Cafe

The World Cafe was originally produced live in the studio. At 9:30am, Michaela Majoun crossed over the morning show to a small production booth and Bruce Ranes ran into the control room with an armful of DATs, carts and reel tapes, lining up all the production elements to go up live on the bird. At 10am straight up, he would hit a switch and play the theme. It was an incredibly complicated mix-down of elements—and it was live via satellite across the nation.

According to David Dye, "We had this vision that the show would lose its charm or something if it wasn't live—but we were idiots! We went through a slew of board-ops. It was nuts. You couldn't make a mistake."

When their satellite feed time in Ames, Iowa, got moved to 2am, by necessity the production was moved to tape. Dye sat in a booth listening to the music and voicing the show in real time, with an engineer going live to DAT. But that was a tricky proposition, too. Instead of having to go two hours live without error, you could at least break it down to four separate 29-minute segments. Because of the difficulty in editing digital tapes, any mistake internal to a segment had to be scrapped and started over.

When the computer technology to digitally store large amounts of audio information was developed, the show became much easier to produce. With multi-tracking and networking, the program now can be produced in a nonlinear manner and in a much shorter amount of time.

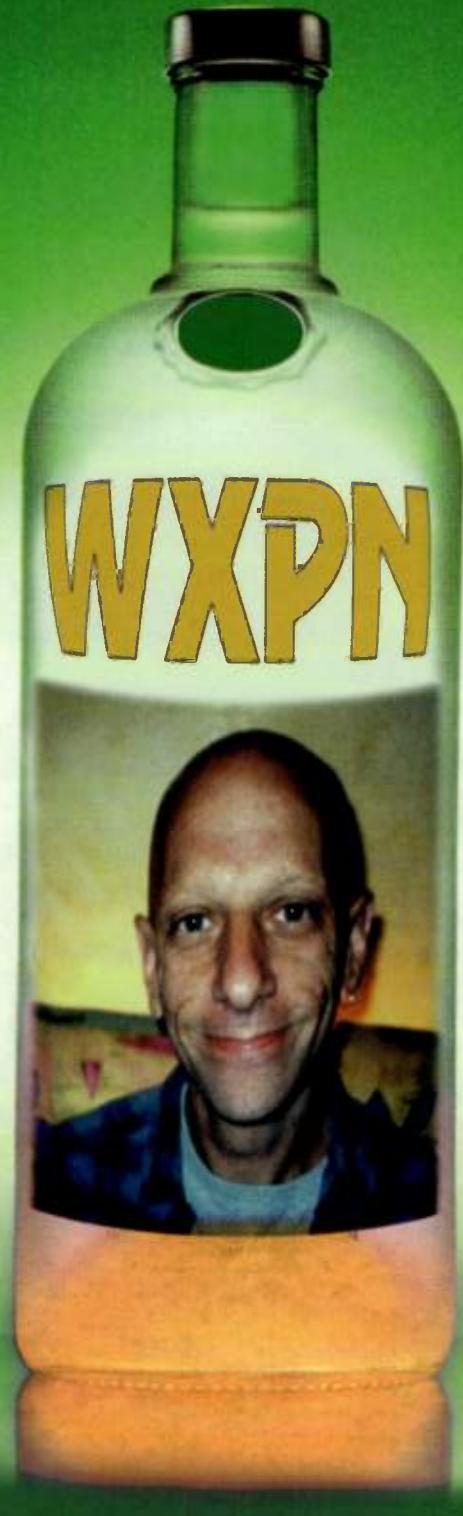
- The process begins with Dye, the evening before a taping, doing his interview prep by creating a list of questions and a semi-scripted situation. When the band arrives, they meet with one of the show's two recording engineers—either Joe Taylor, Jr., or Chris Williams. The engineer lets the band warm up while drum baffles are placed and instrument miking is finalized. Because of the tiny studio, volume must be as low as possible to prevent mike bleeding and time smear. After a short soundcheck, Dye takes a stool in the middle of the room and the taping begins.

- The interview and performances unfold sequentially. Board presets allow for the effects processing and mike levels to be changed quickly between the music and Q&A. Musicians are encouraged to talk freely and take as much time as they want answering a question. If a certain response doesn't pan out or goes on too long, Dye scribbles quick notes while the band performs its next song.

- Following the taping, Dye has a post-mortem meeting with the session engineer, where he maps out his thoughts on content editing. A session DAT is then assigned to a team of interns or part-time assistants, who transfer the tape into the digital domain, follow his instructions on content and tighten up the section in general.

- At that point, Dye returns to his office. The music for the World Cafe exists in a separate Selector "universe." He typically is working several weeks ahead and chooses songs from the database to complement the live-performance section. After finalizing his song selection, he then merges his music back into the 'XPN music database. When Shawn Stewart eventually creates music logs for that day, Dye's advance selections will determine what titles are most rested, with adequate artist separation for the remaining dayparts.

- Dye then creates a show script for the selected material, providing intros, outros, song continuity and performance section 'set-up.' He schedules time with Chris Williams to record voice-overs. While recording his voice-overs, Williams keeps a running log of Dye's false starts and second takes on the continuity. All the separate show elements have been multi-tracked and computer commands are executed to merge the voice continuity with music on the hard drive and with the live performance section.



**ABSOLUT PHILLY.**



# Michaela Majoun

## (5-10am weekdays)

You know the phrase, that so-and-so is a "people person"? Not in some lame, sappy sense, but in a real way, connecting with people and sharing their lifestyles, artistic interests and political world views. Well, that's Michaela Majoun—a fascinating woman with an exotic name and a common touch. Everybody thinks they know her! With her warm voice cooing over their alarm clock as "trustworthy friend" and champion of great music and arts, she has just celebrated her 10th anniversary as 'XPN listeners' weekday wake-up companion.

Majoun's passion for great radio, film, television and comedy is reflected not just in her words, but also in her credentials. Part of her ability to talk the talk and walk the walk comes from her Humanities background at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, and working at campus radio WYSO.

After college, she moved to Madison, Wisconsin, to work at WHA-TV as host of the "Marquee Theater," a weekly classic film program with her providing the continuity and historical tidbits. From there, she got back into radio at WORT-FM in Madison as host of Smokey Joe's Cafe, an R&B show, and as a member of Earjob, their radio comedy troupe. When Michael Feldman moved on to produce the NPR quiz show *What's Happening?*, Majoun moved into his slot as host of *The Breakfast Special*, a morning show

produced live at Dolly's—a legendary greasy-spoon eatery. There, she back-announced music and interviewed guests and customers above the clank and chatter of the local hoi polloi. Talk about getting close to an audience!

After several years at WORT, she decided to try her luck on the Left Coast, studying screenwriting in Los Angeles and landing a job with Harry Thomason and Linda Bloodworth-Thomason. As Assistant To The Producers on TV's "Designing Women," she helped with everything from script reading to writing ad copy and even organizing their lavish parties.

But when a casting call came from WORT-alum Mark Fuerst in 1989 to star in her own music and arts magazine-style show in the City Of Brotherly Love, Majoun couldn't resist—and she's had a love affair with the 'XPN audience ever since. "The most important thing about working at the station is how our listeners relate to me, not as a personality, but as a real friend," mentions Majoun. "It's extraordinary when the on-air hosts and I go out into the community or when they come in to help during pledge drives. There's this sense of interactivity, a link with the listeners; the people on staff are just like the people who listen...educated, artistic, with so many common interests and



"There's this sense of interactivity, a link with the listeners; the people on staff are just like the people who listen."

a love of great music. It's this kind of sharing and one-to-one bonding that means the world to me." That relationship must also mean a lot to her listeners, because Majoun has won awards in *Philadelphia Magazine* twice—in 1998 as Best DJ and in 1990 as Best Morning Show Host. She is not just aware of her listerner's lifestyles, but feels a commitment to the greater, global community as well: she coordinates the station's public service announcements, and is also active with the Philadelphia AIDS Walk, Project H.O.M.E. (for the homeless) and the Philadelphia Festival Of World Cinema.

As the alliteration of her name and those magical *M* sounds roll from her mouth, it is obvious that Michaela Majoun has a love affair with language. Having grown up in a scholarly Scrabble-playing family, she became a chatterbox at six months. She keeps her listeners intrigued with the English language with her feature, The Word Of The Day, playfully offering linguistic insight into words like *mukluk* and *snollygoster*.

As an on-air host, she gushes nonstop about the music of her real life buddies Jonatha Brooke, Richard Thompson and Chris Smither. As an interviewer, she can equally ease and please everyone from John Waters to Jackie Mason and ask Laurie Anderson about "art-school aesthetics" as well as talk cooking tips with Koko Taylor. And when Johnny Lydon from the Sex Pistols came in looking and acting like Bart Simpson, who else would be capable of hand-to-hand combat, going *mano a mano* with him, eventually taming the punk-rock tiger into a teddy bear?

Keep talking, Michaela. Every weekday morning, your friends in Philly are hanging on your every word! 

**The Liberty Bell isn't the only thing  
in Philadelphia that's cracked!**



**But we love them anyway!**

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# Helen Leicht

(Weekdays, 10am-2pm &  
The Sunday Mix, 11am-4pm)

When Mark Fuerst—former GM of WXPN—referred to David Dye (afternoons) and Michaela Majoun (mornings) as the “twin pillars” of ‘XPN, it was not just because of their obvious talent, but also because the midday slot had been a rotating door. Over the years, people who’ve hosted that daypart included Karen Begin, Kim Alexander, Abby Goldstein, Marilyn Russell and Shawn Stewart. And if Majoun was off in the morning, then it was the midday person’s job to sub for her, leaving middays in a constant state of flux. The first thing that Bruce Warren did when he was promoted to Program Director was bring stability to this key daytime slot. He got that and much more with Helen Leicht.

Helen hosted that very same time slot at WIOQ in Philly from 1976 to 1988; WIOQ was a legendary eclectic album station that played progressive rock from Gentle Giant to Renaissance, but was also first to champion modern bands like Talking Heads and Elvis Costello in an otherwise conservative Rock Radio market. She was later the host of Acoustic Sunday on WMMR from 1991 to 1997, where she mixed the lighter side of Zeppelin and Springsteen with emerging artists like Tori Amos, Paula Cole, Shawn Colvin and October Project. Add to that her market heritage with the specialty show, Breakfast With The Beatles, which she produced for over 20 years on various stations, and it’s rather obvious you have an incredible new staffer and air talent on your team.

“DAVID DYE ALREADY KNEW I WAS A HARD WORKER AND A TEAM PLAYER, SO IT WAS REAL EASY TO FIT INTO THE EXISTING CHEMISTRY.”

Actually Leicht was already a part-timer on WXPN doing a weekend shift, The Saturday Mix, from 1990 to 1993. According to Bruce Warren, “It just seemed so obvious to me to bring Helen back full-time. She not only has incredible market heritage coming from WIOQ—the same station as David Dye—but she also had been introduced to ‘XPN listeners on weekends. Add to that the fact that Shawn Stewart’s duties as MD had become overwhelming—and Shawn became the permanent ‘floater’ for on-air substitutions—and we finally have the perfect daytime team. Midday ratings have skyrocketed since Helen has stabilized that slot.”

“Bruce’s vote of confidence means the world to me,” says Leicht. “David Dye already knew I was a hard worker and a team player, so it was real easy to fit into the existing chemistry. I’m Assistant Music Director now as well, and I think that the mix of all of our tastes in the music meetings is really important to the sound of the station.”

Part of that station sound is The Leicht Lunch, Leicht’s ‘show within a show’ from noon to 1pm. “It’s a request show largely, and a way to connect with listeners by having them suggest songs via fax and E-mail on a given theme. For example, the Philadelphia AIDS Walk was last week and listeners suggested ‘walking’ songs, such as ‘25 Miles’ by Edwin Starr and Widespread Panic’s ‘Walking (For Your Love).’ But the show also has the flexibility to accommodate other things, too. Tonight we’re doing this retail in-store appearance with Wood, so the whole hour today was James Maddock performing a few songs and playing guest DJ, picking songs by his biggest influences: Van Morrison, Neil Young and Bob Dylan.”

Even though this is Leicht’s first job in Non-Commercial Radio, it wasn’t a difficult transition. “At WIOQ, we were very conversational, and of course, my weekend morning specialty shows on WMMR required a laid-back style, too,” she reveals. “So there was really nothing different to learn as far as on-air presentation is concerned. It’s just such a joy being back in radio full-time at a station that believes in great artists, that develops their careers and plays such great music.”

With Leicht now onboard full-time, it’s no longer the “twin pillars” of on-air presence, market heritage and daypart stability—it’s now the “three pillars!” Majoun, Dye and Leicht. Welcome aboard! \*

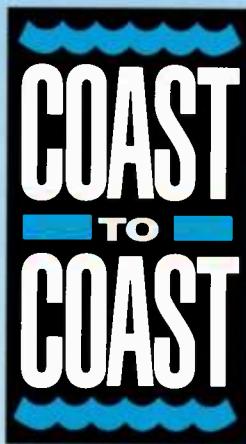


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# JONNY MEISTER

(8-11pm weekdays &  
The Blues Show, Saturdays, 8-11pm)

All around utility infielder and radio jack-of-all-trades, Jonny Meister has been at WXPN since 1977 in countless capacities: over the years he's held the titles of News Director, Production Director, Assistant Music Director—he even produced a children's program hosted by kids before the arrival of Kathy O'Connell in 1988. Currently, he's systems administrator for WXPN's computer operations, satellite downlinks and RCS Mastercontrol. Meister is also one of the two main production "voices" of the station. But his real passion and true expertise is music—especially blues music!



"WHAT'S FAMILIAR ABOUT THE BLUES IS THE QUALITY OF THE FORM ITSELF AS OPPOSED TO THE PARTICULAR ARTISTS."

Meister is a blues aficionado, a walking, talking blues encyclopedia and champion of it in its purest form. "Blues is a special kind of music based in the African-American experience," explains Meister. "With very few exceptions, I have heard very few Caucasians who can really sing the blues the way a Johnny Temple, Muddy Waters or Howling Wolf can. It's ultimately at the vocal level where a lot of more contemporary musicians have a hard time matching. And it never ceases to amaze me that the African-Americans who created it, who play it with the most verve and who have the deepest feeling for it continue to be the second-stringers. Jonny Lang is a headliner while James Cotton, Koko Taylor and Buddy Guy are the openers?! It's my goal to set the record straight!"

Every Saturday night, Meister champions new releases and testifies to the greatness of artists like Jimmy Burns, Aaron Moore, Willie Kent, Little Al Thomas and Alberta Adams. And although you probably never heard of most of these people, Meister has methods to help bring you into the fold and learn more about the art form. "What's familiar about the blues is the quality of the form itself as opposed to the particular artists. Songs like 'The Thrill Is Gone,' 'Stormy Monday' or 'Hoochie Coochie Man' are library cuts that just about everybody knows, and they provide a familiarity to the program for listeners wanting to learn more about the blues."

Another one of Meister's tricks to attract more listeners to his show is to trace the evolution of a song back in time. Many times he'll play songs that you know, but didn't realize the circumstances of the song's origin. For example, Canned Heat's "Going Up The Country." According to Meister, "That was stolen from Henry Thomas, who recorded it in 1928. And every time I play it, the phones light up. Or Boz Scaggs with 'Somebody Loan Me A Dime,' where he was listed as writer, when actually it was by Fenton Robinson. So when people hear them back to back, or when I point out similarities in certain passages, it does tend to expand a listener's knowledge and interest in the blues."

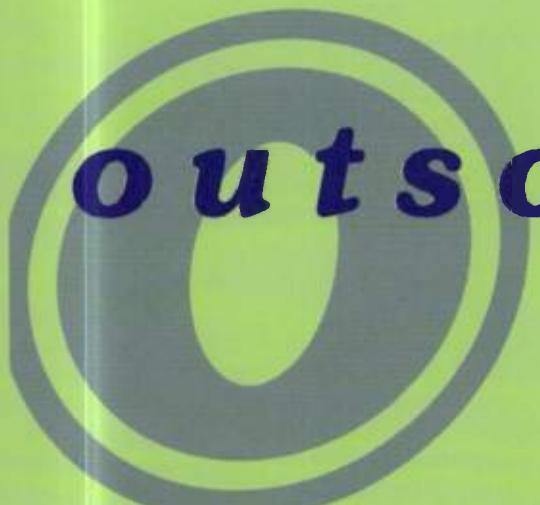
In addition to his Blues Show, Meister also hosts evenings from 8-11pm with a Triple-A mix that tends to be more roots-oriented and deeper than the rest of the day. "There are some songs that you wouldn't hear in the daytime that I do play, like Jethro Tull's new one called 'Dot Com,' which features this wonderful Indian singer Najma Akhtar. I schedule my music on Selector and edit it, then put in songs that are not in the database that reflect new releases or events that are going on. And in the 10 o'clock hour, I'll play some new-age stuff such as Michael Hedges or Liz Story to better segue into the syndicated show, Echoes, which comes on at 11pm."

For the past 22 years, Jonny Meister has been a stabilizing force, a maestro of music and a thread of continuity for 'XPN—both on-air and off. Leaving the station after 11pm, he still even acts as a substitute morning news man sometimes. Every station should have an all-around talented player like Jonny Meister on their team! \*

# "We add all of their records!"\* —Bruce Warren, WXPN/Philadelphia

\*Note: We have no factual evidence that Bruce ever said this. He's said a lot of things over the years, but this just doesn't happen to be one of them. If he were here right now, he'd tell you that. If he was here, he'd tell you all about the history of 'XPN and all the great people that have worked there and played there in the last quarter of a century. He'd explain the excitement of finding a diamond in the rough in that pile of discs on his desk and helping to create a star out of them in his market. He'd throw out obscure music trivia about bands like Poco that you thought no one in the world would ever have stored in their long-term memory. He'd relay stories of his kids. He'd tell you a lot of things. He might even, with a smirk, tell you how much he loves working with Michael and Jesse. Yeah, we're pretty confident that, if pressed, he'd admit that. If he does, please let us know so that in 25 years, we don't have to put some bullshit quote and long, drawn out explanation in our congratulatory ad.

We'd appreciate that.



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# The Add Is Just The Beginning.

# 88.5 DAILY FEATURES

WRH

Keeping It Interesting

★ Word Of The Day:

**MORNING SHOW FEATURES**

Michaela Majoun's on-going love affair with the English language, designed to increase your vocabulary as well as give you a chuckle. Repeated throughout the morning.

★ Featured Album Of The Week:

Bruce Warren comes on air every Monday in the 9 o'clock hour to introduce the new "Featured Album Of The Week." Selected by the programming staff, Warren discusses the artist's career with Majoun and plays three songs. Different tracks are then rotated three times daily and the featured CD is used as a premium to get new members to join WXPN between pledge drives. A unique collaboration between the membership department and programming staff, recent CDs featured include new releases from Matthew Sweet, Buddy Miller, Fiona Apple and Joe Strummer.

★ New Release Tuesday:

Majoun selects eight songs from new CDs (usually on the retail release date), allowing listeners to sample some new sounds and artists. Also, a way for the programming staff to test songs on the air for rotation consideration. It airs in the 9 o'clock hour.

★ The Shuffle:

A five-song set highlighting artists coming to Philadelphia or tied together by some other conceptual thread. It airs Wednesdays in the 9 o'clock hour.

★ Dinner And A Movie:

This brand-new segment features film and food critic, Erica Pinella, from the *Philadelphia Weekly*. For example: Pinella discusses the film, *Bringing Out The Dead*, where, apparently, Nicholas Cage grabs his fast food on the run and slams down a White Castle 'slider' with the peddle to the metal. Then freelance travel and food writer Holly Moore compares and contrasts famous hamburgers. Her verdict? The Big Mac has the poorest "meat-to-bun" ratio. It airs Thursdays in the 9 o'clock hour.

★ Friday Morning Arts Crawl:

A "what's happening" guide to the weekend's music, arts, cultural and family events. Partial listings are featured hourly between 6am and 9am.

★ Women's Music Hour:

New releases and library cuts from female artists, spanning diverse genres and styles. Also focuses on female artists appearing locally that weekend. It airs Fridays, 9-10am.

★ Whirly Reel:

**WEEKDAY FEATURES**

A one-song selection that's ethereal, textured and trippy-usually with a Celtic twist. Everything from Jethro Tull and Steeleye Span to Ashley MacIsaac and Loreena McKennitt. It airs at 10:40am.

★ The Leicht Lunch:

A listener-driven show of requests and suggestions, usually on a theme or conceptually related to a topical event. Anything from playing Elvis Costello's *Get Happy!* CD to mark his visit to town, to playing all smoking songs on The Great American Smoke-Out Day. It airs from noon-1pm.

★ Philly Local Pick Of The Day:

Within The Leicht Lunch, a regional artist is featured daily at 12:10. Recent artists, both signed and unsigned, include Eric Bazilian, Marah and Matt Pond.

★ What's New?:

Bruce Warren opens that day's mail, comes on the air and plays a song from a new CD...literally! It floats in the 4 o'clock hour.

★ Forgotten Favorite:

A classic from rock history that, for some reason, doesn't get a lot of continuous airplay (on any format). Designed to elicit an "Oh wow!" response. For example, David Dye might play Argent's "Hold Your Head Up," Jaggerz' "The Rapper" or The Buoys' "Timothy." It floats in the 5 o'clock hour.

★ A Month Of...:

For the entire month, David Dye shines the spotlight on a prolific artist, featuring a single song daily, along with trivia and tidbits. A month of Van Morrison, Joni Mitchell or even Townes Van Zandt. It floats in the 6 o'clock hour.

★ Blues Break:

Every weeknight at 9pm, Jonny Meister provides a two-song respite from the regular mix to highlight the blues. It could be a bluesman's birthday, a new release or an artist coming to town.

## SPECIALTY PROGRAMS

★ **First Impression:** Bruce Warren got the idea from the *Gavin A3 Summit*—the fun and excitement of the music griddle on the radio. Hosted by Michaela Majoun, the program features panelist Tom Moon, pop music critic for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. They play 90 seconds of a song, and then talk off the cuff about what was heard and the genre of music. In the second half-hour, the song is played again, this time in its entirety. The program also contains a segment called *Unwrapping A Classic*, where the panelists discuss what makes a certain record a classic. Also, there's *Overrated/Underrated*, where they look at the career of, say, Queen, Melissa Etheridge, Fleetwood Mac or Peter Gabriel and decide whether the hoopla is too much or too little. It's a new feature with syndication potential. It airs Thursdays, 8-9pm.

★ **Funky Friday:** David Dye blows the whistle on the work week by throwing down the funk. Motown, Stax/Volt, soul, funk and disco. They segue Parliament, The Chairmen Of The Board and Rufus to new stuff with a groove, such as R.L. Burnside. It's bad, ya know...and it's the true sound of Philadelphia. This hour during fund drives raises an astronomical \$10,000! It airs Fridays from 5pm until 6pm during the World Cafe.

★ **Sleepy Hollow:** Now in its 26th year, this program is the audio songtrack to your weekend morning. While you're drinking your gourmet coffee, eating Kiwi fruit and reading the newspaper, wake up gently to the soft sounds of Air, Frank Sinatra, Kronos Quartet and Tony Bennett. According to Warren, it's more than a show—"It's a mood, it's a vibe." It airs Saturdays, 6-10am, and Sundays, 6-11am.

★ **The Blues Show:** Jonny "Mr. Blues" Meister has kept the house party a rockin' in Billy Penn's town since 1977. The program focuses on new releases, airing Saturdays from 8pm-1am.

★ **Stars End:** Avant-garde, experimental and space-like sounds—where, in the back-announce, the phrase "piece" is more accurate than "song." Hosted by Chuck Van Zyl. It airs Sunday mornings from 1-6am.

★ **The Folk Show:** Everything from contemporary singer/songwriters like John Gorka and Patty Larkin to traditional folks like Tom Paxton, Odetta and Dave Van Ronk, along with Doc Watson and 'old-timey' stuff, too. Hosted by the legendary Gene Shay, founder of the Philadelphia Folk Festival. It airs Sundays, 4-8pm.

★ **Amazon Country:** Now in its 25th year, this program focuses on lesbian issues and events, both local and national. Debra D'Alessandro recently inherited the hosting slot after several years as a frequent guest. "Learning how to host is almost like an oral tradition. We're a subset of the station and I love the idea of each woman training the other," she says. It airs Sundays, 8-9pm..

★ **Q'Zine:** Also celebrating its Silver Anniversary, Q'Zine is short for queer arts and cultural magazine. Hosted by Robert Drake, the program tends to be focused on "getting past the issues of coming to terms with sexuality and living more openly as a gay or lesbian human being." It airs Sundays 9-10pm.

★ **Public Access:** A forum for the University of Pennsylvania community. The topics vary. It airs Sundays, 10-11pm.

★ **Live From The Writer's House:** This show is a collaboration with Penn's English Department. A poetry slam featuring local and national poets, frequently with accompanying musicians providing the atmospheric textures. Until recently, hosted by Shawn Stewart. It airs monthly on Sunday nights.

# Kid's Corner

WXPN ... 88.5 FM



# Kathy O'Connell's Kid's Corner (7-8pm weekdays)

Kathy O'Connell is an "adult child"—an educated, socially conscious individual who's never forgotten what it's like to be a kid. During summer vacations as an adolescent she went to WNEW-TV in New York City and sat in the audience for "The Soupy Sales Show" broadcasts. She studied his every move, not really knowing why nor aspiring to be a children's host. At dinner parties kids would always surround her, but she didn't understand that interpersonal quality as a "gift." Like many broadcasters in the right place at the right time, there was a serendipitous situation and a "eureka" moment.

She began her radio career in 1978 at WBAI/New York City, first as a phone volunteer and eventually landing her own overnight talk show. She went to California for a few years and worked at the legendary KFAT/Monterey (precursor to KPIG), and did "boss-jock" style rock & roll at KBOS/Fresno. She returned to New York City and, needing a paying gig, agreed to be a board-op at WNYC for a program called Senior Edition. One day the host of Small Things Considered, the children's show, flipped out and quit, walking out minutes before showtime. Fortunately, O'Connell was walking down the hallway when the GM cornered her. "Hey, how'd you like to do me a favor?" he asked. Halfway through the show, something clicked. Such is fate, and Kathy O'Connell had found her calling.

With O'Connell as host, Small Things Considered became so successful that it received Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) funding and went national with 27 affiliates as Kids America from 1985 to 1987. When the CPB pulled the funding plug and WNYC announced the cancellation, then-WXPN GM Mark Fuerst called her the very next day. "I've heard the program and I think you are the show," he said. "Come down to Philly and do it here!" On January 4, 1988, Kid's Corner debuted on WXPN.

Recalling those early influences, O'Connell believes that "watching Soupy Sales taught me how to work live, how to run with confidence—even when I had no idea where it was going," she reveals. "You have time you need to fill, so why not explore the creative possibilities in an entertaining way? He taught me how to talk to kids with a real hipness."

But unlike a TV show or theatrical piece, O'Connell thinks Kid's Corner works best in the realm of radio sound, and has no plans to turn it into a stage show. "There's a certain intimacy that might not translate visually. What I do isn't built around visual gags, it's built around the process of learning through words and music."

In the 1980s, before Raffi revolutionized the children's music industry, O'Connell relied heavily on pop songs from people like Madonna and

**"If we frame a topic to make it understandable for kids, it's the parent's job to follow through and be there for them."**



Cyndi Lauper to "give them something familiar and hook them in for the educational and entertainment stuff." Today, the music still sets the tone, and co-listening by 'XPN parents is made easier by the fact that many of her music selections come from Triple-A artists like NRBQ, Peter Himmelman, The Roches and Trout Fishing In America, which have all recorded children's CDs.

Two of the more popular educational components are the Brainbusters Quiz and a segment called Mystery History, in which an actor plays the part of a historical figure and O'Connell interviews the character in a manner similar to how Walter Cronkite did in the 1950s program, "You Are There." She believes her program supplements what children are learning in school. In fact, she frequently asks them to E-mail the show and let her know what they're learning in school. According to O'Connell, learning is "a kid's full-time job. They read billboards, they add up numbers on license plates; they're sponges for information. What Kid's Corner does is provide a forum to discuss their lives and what's happening in the world around them."

The program frequently gives children the chance to grapple with complex issues such as AIDS, prejudice, even the recent spree of school shootings. "When the shootings started to happen last year, it wasn't until the third one before we started talking about it, because you couldn't avoid it anymore. Kids were just so scared, and hopefully we provided a constructive outlet for them to understand their feelings. And before that, after the Oklahoma City bombing, kids were afraid to let their parents go to work the next day. The show works best when parents and children listen together. Kids should ask them questions! Discuss the topics. If we frame a topic to make it understandable for kids, it's the parent's job to follow through and be there for them."

Kathy O'Connell believes that everybody in society has a responsibility to help create a better world for the next generation. "Hopefully, each of us as individuals can help build a place where none of this *bad stuff* has to happen." With Kid's Corner and the intimacy of radio, she's doing more than her fair share—and encouraging 'XPN parents, along with their children, to do the same. \*







# JOIN THE CLUB!

On paper, it's a pretty crazy concept. Why would anyone in their right mind pay for something that is already free? There, my friends, lies the beauty of Public Radio and WXPN. The people really *do* have the power. If a local community isn't into what its Non-Commercial station is providing, that station will figure it out pretty quickly. Well, WXPN in Philadelphia must be doing something right. It's a non-commercial and not-for-profit organization that continues to grow, year after year. Not only has business support in the form of underwriting increased 72% from five years ago, but membership support has increased 92% in five years and is currently up 8,000% from 10 years ago! Like most Public stations, WXPN is *member*-supported radio and most of their budget comes from the members themselves through fund-raising pledges. Ten years ago, WXPN would have been happy to make \$25,000 in a fund drive—these days they shoot for \$400,000 per fund drive. As you can see, a lot has changed in the last decade.

## WXPN MEMBERSHIP

by Matthew Lawton

First off, that's when Quyen Shanahan first walked through the WXPN doors—in fact, Shanahan's been at WXPN her entire adult life! She began as a receptionist in 1989, then moved over to the promotions side of things, helped out with the World Cafe and finally segued over to the development department, where she soon became the Assistant GM/Marketing and Development. Shanahan oversees the membership department, sales department, promotions, special events and a little bit of the Web site. She can now be found spending her days attracting new business and searching for better ways to cater to the needs of the WXPN supporters.

WXPN has an audience that's becoming more difficult to reach through conventional media. Ninety-six percent of WXPN listeners have attended college, 86% have household incomes above \$50,000, 73% own their own homes and they are all extremely loyal to WXPN. The average listener tunes into the station for around



16 hours a week! These people are educated, they have disposable income and they love everything that the streets of Philadelphia have to offer. These are listeners that businesses reach via their sponsorship messages that run on WXPN.

WXPN currently has over 17,000 members. Their goal for this fiscal year, ending June 30, 2000, is to raise a little over \$2,000,000 from membership, \$1,000,000 from business support, a little over \$250,000 from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and around \$750,000 from other in-house ways.

That's a grand total of \$4,000,000, with about half of that coming directly from the listeners themselves! That's a lot of people giving a lot of money. Here are some of the ways that those listeners help support WXPN by becoming "members." Not only do they continually receive some of the most creative and entertaining radio around, they also enjoy some very special "thank you" gifts.

WXPN Fund Drives happen only three times a year—February, June and October. With an enormous staff of volunteers who answer phones, tally pledges and keep the coffee flowing, the WXPN On-Air Fund Drives run smoothly, and are a whopping success. In their last fund drive, the average individual gift for the station was \$150. Yes, that was the *average* gift. And these monetary gifts are coming from everyday listeners who don't even *have* to donate anything, yet they love the station so much that they gladly help out during these three fund drives—and throughout the rest of the year. Not a day goes by when a listener isn't informed of the fact that WXPN is *member-supported* radio.

\* A pledge of at least \$50 a year gives you a **WXPN Membership**, which includes the **WXPN MemberCard** (which earns members discounts to local venues and shops), a subscription to the **WXPN Newsletter, The Xpress**, and invitations to **WXPN Members-Only** events. Becoming a member of **WXPN** is more than just helping out a radio station—it's becoming part of a community. The **WXPN** community is made up of people who share a common goal of ensuring the availability of diverse programming. This community of people not only enjoys the programs and services that **WXPN** offers, but they share a personal bond with the station that has become a part of their daily lives.

\* A pledge of at least \$60 a year gives you everything that's included in the **WXPN Membership**, along with either a new music CD sampler or a current featured CD of the week.

\* A pledge of at least \$75 a year gives you everything that's included in the **WXPN Membership**, along with either a **WXPN T-Shirt**, a **Kid's Corner CD** or a **Live At The World Cafe CD**.

\* A pledge of at least \$100 a year gives you everything that's included in the **WXPN Membership**, along with two of any of the gifts listed above.

\* A pledge of at least \$240 a year gives you everything that is included in the **WXPN Membership**, along with entrance into the **Music Lovers Club**. When you join the **WXPN Music Lovers Club**, you'll automatically receive all the **WXPN**-produced CDs and cassettes, such as the **Live At The World Cafe** and **New Music Sampler CD**, that are released throughout the year. Members at this level will basically receive a CD every other month.

\* A pledge of at least \$360 a year gives you everything that is included in the **WXPN Membership**, along with entrance into the **WXPN Arts Circle**. What is the **WXPN Arts Circle**, you ask? Well, the creative minds at **WXPN** burned a few cells coming up with this one: **WXPN** has always been involved in promoting the arts and cultural activities in the Philadelphia area, so instead of just promoting these events for free, they've devised the **WXPN Arts Circle**. Members who join the **WXPN Arts Circle** will receive invitations for approximately 12 art and cultural events per year, which will include dance, theatre, fine arts, exhibits, operas and more. The art exhibitors donate the tickets to the station for on-air mentions and the station collects donations for the tickets from members who enjoy supporting the



arts, as well as their favorite radio station. And because Philadelphia has a booming art community, **WXPN** can go through all the calendars of events and pick and choose which ones are most in tune with their members. Recent Arts Circle events have included: "Moby Dick" with Laurie Anderson, "Shut Up And Dance" by the Pennsylvania Ballet and the Maxfield Parrish exhibit at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

\* A pledge of at least \$600 a year gives you everything that's included in the **WXPN Membership**, along with entrance into the **WXPN CD Of The Month Club**. **WXPN** has almost 800 members in their **CD Of The Month Club**. Every fourth week of the month, the station's tastemakers select what they consider to be one of the best new CDs of the past month and mail it off to these members. Along with these new monthly CDs, members will also receive all the special **WXPN** releases including **Live At The World Cafe** and **New Music Samplers** CDs. With the soothsayers at **WXPN** picking the monthly discs, members of this club easily remain on the musical cutting-edge.

\* A pledge of at least \$1000 a year gives you everything that's included in the **WXPN Membership**, along with entrance into the exclusive **Special Producers Circle**. When members join the **Special Producers Circle** they'll be invited to certain tapings of the **World Cafe** held throughout the year. **World Cafe** is a two-hour, pre-produced, intimate radio program in which David Dye sits down with an artist for a live interview and performance. **World Cafe** is normally recorded right at the **WXPN** studios, but for these **Special Producers Circle** recordings, they take the **World Cafe** into a fairly large recording studio, supply refreshments from local restaurants and invite their donors to sit down and be part of the taping. For \$1,000 a year, members of the **Special Producer's Circle** receive 10 passes a year to witness these select **World Cafe** tapings. Because they want this to remain intimate, space is limited and the **Special Producers Circle** quickly sells out its 100-plus seats and remains extremely popular and fairly exclusive. The list of artists who have performed at the **Cafe** over the years is like a "who's who" in music. From veterans like David Bowie to emerging artists like David Mead—**World Cafe** gets 'em all. \*





As heard live on

WBUR 88.5

# Takin' It To The Street!

## WXPN Events

By Matthew Lawton

**W**hen it comes to building a community, WXPN has created quite the Metropolis! Since 1993, WXPN Events Coordinator Larry Rayborn, along with Membership Director Deb Ashmore and Program Director Bruce Warren, has been actively involved in transforming the station from just another signal on the dial to an actual art institution. The entire heart and soul behind any WXPN promotion or event is based around thanking the members who support the station.

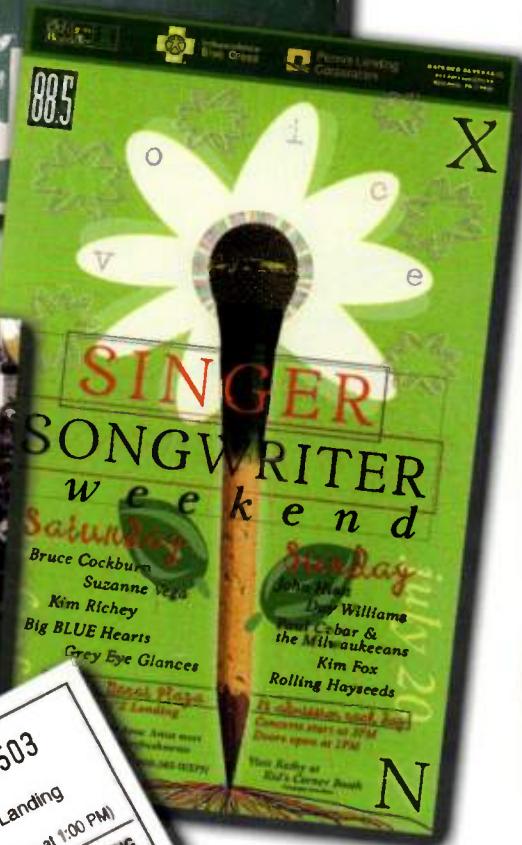


Larry Rayborn

With that in mind, all the events that WXPN does are intriguing, creative and filled with folks who you'd like to hang out with. You're not going to be asked to "get on down to the grand opening of the strip mall and see Bruce Warren in his clown suit juggling plates while David Dye tries to eat 125 hot dogs in five minutes! Woo-hoo, it'll be a hoot!" Instead, what you'll find are membership appreciation events and promotions based around a community outreach that completely jives with the programming side of things.

The financial goals of the WXPN events department are anywhere between \$75,000 and \$100,000 a year. But there is a serious desire for WXPN to make sure that they continually produce things which add value to WXPN membership as well as promote the arts and keep WXPN involved in community outreach events. On the following page are just a few examples of how WXPN continually stays involved with the Philadelphia community.

continued ►



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Support your favorite radio station by surfing the net. You get big-provider service without the big-provider hassle - and a portion of your low monthly fee benefits 88.5 XPN. Call toll-free 877-XPN-ONLINE or visit [www.XPNonline.net](http://www.XPNonline.net).

88.5 XPN

Connect with XPN this Saturday at the corner of Haddon and Redman Aves in Haddonfield (next to Three Beans Coffee), and in Cooper River Park on Sunday.



Independence Blue Cross

## Singer/Songwriter Weekend

Presented by

88.5

Penn's Landing  
July 19-20, 1997  
3:00pm-9:00pm

# Special Events And Membership Incentives

- Throughout the year, WXPN frequently has **WXPN Membership Appreciation Concerts**, which are reserved only for their membership. Most of these shows take place in one of the smaller clubs around town with tickets going for about \$10. It's sort of like having the Cowboy Junkies come to town to play just for you and your friends.
- The rare **Live At The World Cafe CDs** are given away as a membership premium "thank-you" gift. These CD samplers are primarily for members, then after the initial run, the CDs are taken into the local stores and sold to the public.
- Over the years, WXPN has been known to allocate the entire month of March as **March Member Month**! This is where WXPN creates member appreciation events everywhere in their listening community—from music events to art and culture events to free tours of wineries—all over the community, all over the map, all month long. They create an on-air calendar along with a print calendar that goes in their membership newsletter; the events cross all the different areas of the radio station, from the membership department to the programming department. March Member Month gets people out and involved and intermingling with their WXPN community. But what started off as a simple month is slowly evolving into an entire year-long event, so that every day will soon become WXPN member day!
- Why give your hard-earned cash to mega-giant America OnLine or any other Internet provider, when you could receive the same high-quality Internet service at a lower price while supporting one of America's best radio stations? **XPNonline** is an Internet service provider in which people pay a \$16.95 monthly fee for their Internet service, with part of the proceeds going to WXPN. Not only will you know that you're supporting great radio, but all your friends will know as well. When you sign up with XPNonline you'll be able to create your own E-mail address that will include the WXPN domain. So instead of spouting an address like *loser@aol.com*, you can now sport the more inventive address like *platespinner@xpnonline.net*!
- Every summer, more than 10,000 people swarm to Penn's Landing for the annual **Singer/Songwriter Weekend**. Beginning Friday afternoon and running until Sunday night, Penn's Landing becomes a mini-Woodstock—without the fires. Over the years WXPN has mixed a musical lineup with a few core 'XPN artists, such as Richard Thompson, Lucinda Williams and Bruce Cockburn, along with newer artists, like Dar Williams, Duncan Sheik,

Indigenous and Olu Dara. WXPN has a history of picking out the best new artists to play the Singer/Songwriter Weekend, as folks like Paula Cole, Shawn Colvin, Sarah McLachlan and Ani DiFranco all played this event back when they were just starting out. Larry Rayborn and Bruce Warren plan this event each year with the support of their friends at the record labels.

And best of all, tickets to this event go back to around the same prices at the *original* Woodstock—around five bucks or so—making it a real-life gift to the station's members and a goodwill generator for Philadelphia. Along with the music, there are plenty of food booths and arts & crafts—a good time is had by all. But the main focus of the event is to thank the 'XPN listeners for supporting the station and to bring the 'XPN community together by putting some faces to the names. WXPN sets up a membership booth and most the staff can be found throughout the grounds all weekend long, talking about music and telling people about WXPN and the value of 'XPN membership.

- Since 1996, WXPN has been holding a one-of-a-kind **World Cafe Music Memorabilia Benefit Auction**, with all the proceeds going to World Cafe and 'XPN. Throughout the year, artist after artist swings through the coveted WXPN doors on a daily basis for a performance at the World Cafe. And as much as these artists love performing, they also love supporting WXPN itself. Some do so with a donation of cash, while others do so in a more unusual way—they donate some of their stuff!

Imagine owning a pair of Chris Isaak's signed khakis, or perhaps a Brian Setzer-signed cigar humidor or even CD service from a record label for a full year? Well, those are only a few of the items that have been auctioned off in the past. Those who attend the auction receive a World Cafe "menu" listing everything that is up for grabs. The bidding begins at approximately 1/5 of the stated estimated value and goes up from there. Some of the more unusual items have included a pair of vintage Ziggy-like platform boots signed by David Bowie, a Neil Young-signed Lionel train set and an intimate house party performance by Jill Sobule.

So not only do folks get to walk away with some one-of-a-kind memorabilia, but they also get to support WXPN. The Music Memorabilia Benefit Auction generates between \$15,000 and \$30,000 for the station, and guess what? They are already planning for the 10th Anniversary of the World Cafe, which will commence in October of 2000. And to tie-in with that year-long celebration, WXPN has earmarked a tentative date in April 2001 for the World Cafe Music Memorabilia Benefit Auction. If all goes well, they will also integrate the spontaneity and fun of the live event with real-time Internet bidding to expand their reach.



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In honor of the new album 'Hours...', the SFX Radio Network presents David Bowie *After 'Hours...'*, a 90-minute radio event that includes a live performance from Bowie and his band (both old and new songs) recorded at NYC's Kit Kat Klub on November 11, 1999. Plus, the best moments from Bowie's conversation with WXRT/Chicago's Frank E Lee.

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—George Taylor Morris, WBOS

"It was one of the best weeks of my life!" —Jody Denberg, KGSR

"10 Bands, 1 Paradise, No Pressure." —Ira Gordon, KBAC

"This trip was the best radio/ industry trip I have ever taken."  
—Harry Reynolds, KTHX

"A great opportunity to let the music speak for itself." —Dean Kattari, KOTR

"...excellent music and a totally relaxed vibe. A truly peak experience!"  
—Jody Peterson, WNCS

"I came back to work with the scoop on 10 bands and with a deeper appreciation and fondness for many of the wonderful people that are part of the A3 format."  
—Barbara Dacey, WMVY

"Without a doubt the most flawlessly executed band showcase I've ever witnessed.  
BEST EVENT EVER!!" —Mike Mullaney, WBMX

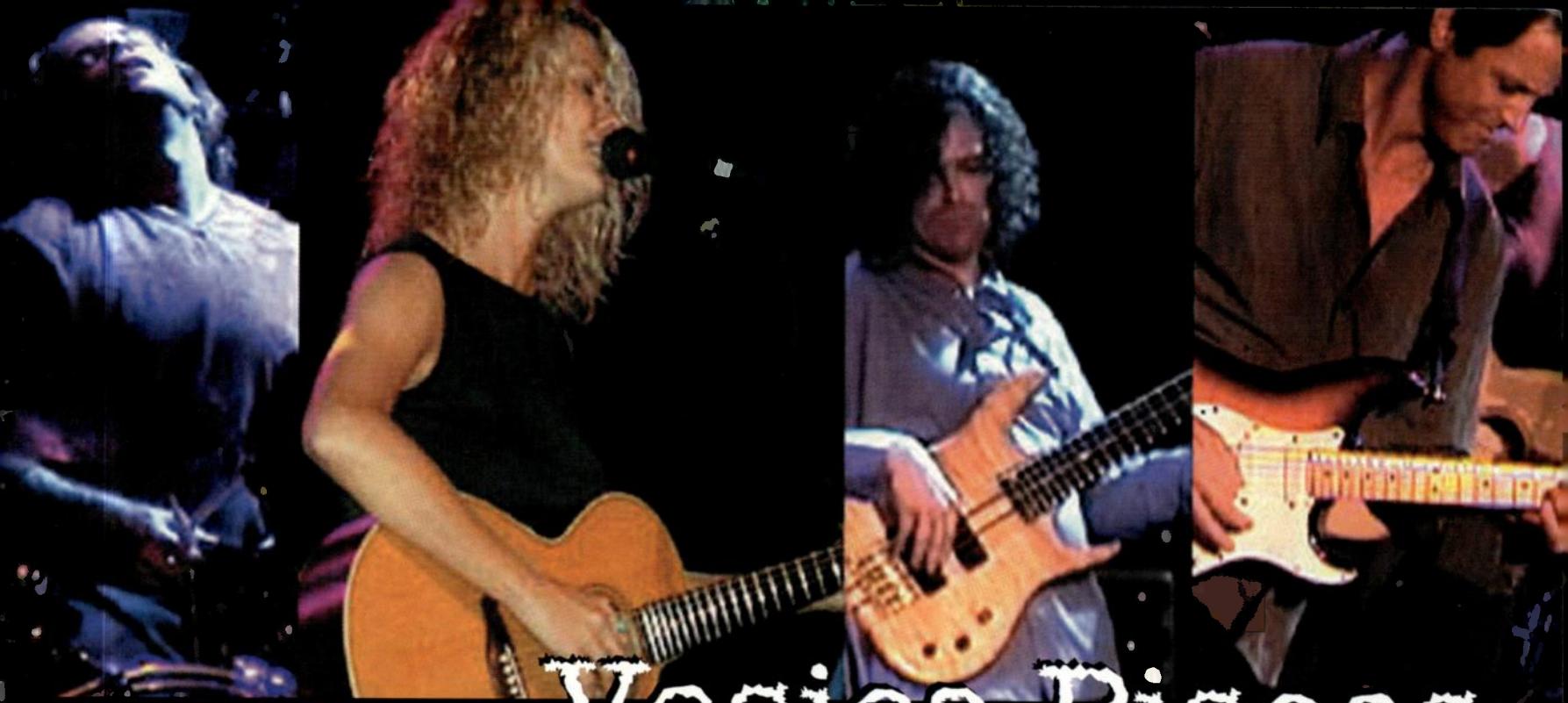
"Watching the sunset serenaded by Jonatha Brooke is an experience I'll always remember!"  
—Dennis Constantine, KINK

"The weather was perfect, the food was great, the people were really nice and the music was OUTSTANDING!" —Joanne Doody, WXRV

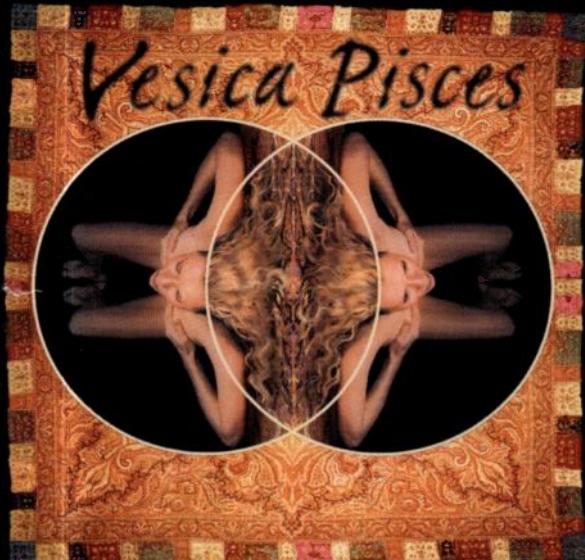
"The vibe of the weekend represented everything that's positive about our community." —John Schoenberger, AN

**SEE YOU AT THE BEACH...**

8 1 8 . 2 2 3 . 8 8 8 8



# Vesica Pisces



## Early Supporters:

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"Wow! Finally a clear, poignant woman who doesn't whine. Vesica Pisces is not only tops on our playlist, but in my personal collection as well."—Liz Man/WLPW

"Their music is honest, passionate and clearly pours directly from their hearts."—*totallyadult*

"Vesica Pisces had radio and press clamoring for interviews."

—*Midem Daily News/Cannes, France*

"This band can definitely hold their own against just about any other act in their genre."

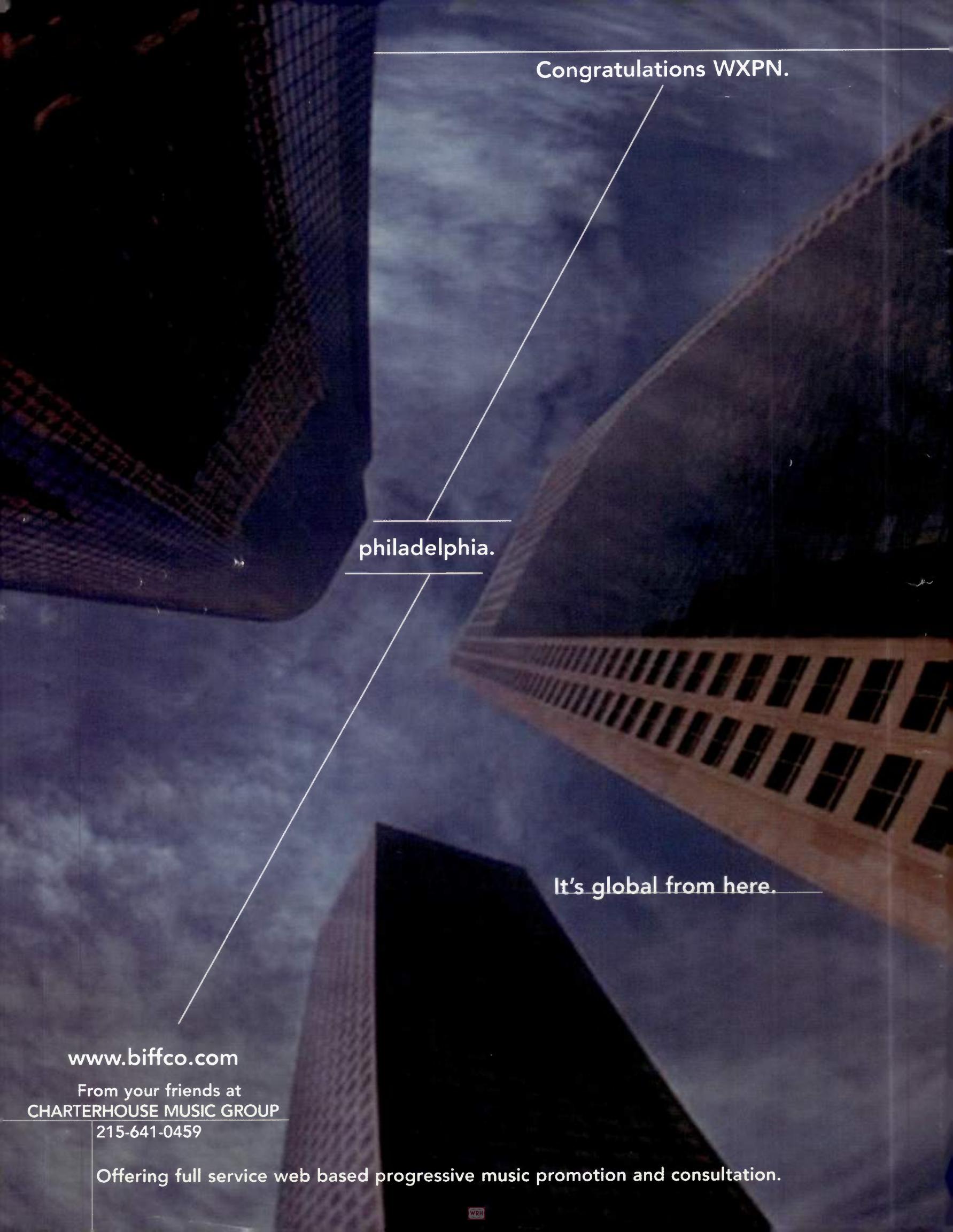
—*Music Connection/Top 20 Issue (VP #4!)*

- "Listen To You Talk" featured on *totallyadult* TuneUp #40 (track #10)
- Management: George Schmid/Progressive Artists Management 949.495.7079 or [georgeandlaura@sprintmail.com](mailto:georgeandlaura@sprintmail.com)
- Radio Promotion: David Fleischman/David Fleischman Promotions 818.981.7110 or [memphiman@aol.com](mailto:memphiman@aol.com)

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