

Music Notes

Summer, 2002

<http://amppr.org>



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Music Notes

Association of Music Personnel in Public Radio

Summer 2002



President's Corner



Welcome to our Summer edition of *Music Notes*. Has it been only four months since the MPC? It seems an eternity ago. Must be due to the race against the clock every day to see how much can be done for both WOSU and AMPPR.

I thought you might enjoy a bit of a behind-the-scenes look at what your AMPPR Board of Directors has been up to since the MPC last February. Considering the fact that this is a volunteer board in every sense of the word, I think you'll be amazed and appreciative of how much has been accomplished. Here are just a few high points of the ongoing work by those involved in keeping AMPPR successful, growing, and on track:

- ◆ Put finishing touches on MPC 40—paid the bills, balanced the account, wrote thank you notes, stored AV equipment and signs, processed tape orders for MPC sessions, designed/distributed/evaluated MPC surveys forms.

- ◆ Assembled "photo album" of Savannah pictures on the web.

- ◆ Designed Robert J Lurtsema scholarship winner certificate and Robert J Scholarship page on AMPPR web site.

- ◆ Designed and premiered the on-line newsletter version of *Music Notes* with the Spring issue in two formats, PDF and HTML.

- ◆ Launched search for conference site/hotel for 2004 MPC. Successfully negotiated contract with Hilton Clearwater Beach Resort.

- ◆ Completed annual audit of financial records. Filed tax report.

- ◆ Found a new announcer coach and keynote speaker for MPC 41 in San Diego.

- ◆ Signed contract with Conference Group Inc. (Betty Weaver, Joanie Purvis) for MPC 41. Welcome back, Ladies!

- ◆ Planned/scheduled two pre-conference sessions for the PRPD on Wednesday, September 18. NPR's Ben Roe and BBC's John Evans will speak and answer questions.

- ◆ Participated in the initial setup establishing questions and methodology for the PRPD Core Values Classical Music Project.

- ◆ Elected a replacement to fill Tony Hanover's seat on the AMPPR Board (see page 4).

- ◆ Designed new AMPPR banner for conferences.

What's next, you ask? Lots! Work continues to develop the agenda; to find sponsors, exhibitors, and performers for MPC 41 in San Diego; and to publicize our first-time appearance at the PRPD as presenters. We continue to plan with our European broadcasting colleagues for the first-ever world symposium about classical music on the radio, to be held in Amsterdam in November, 2003. I head to D.C. soon for an NPR "Performance Today" Programming Exercise. This, and so much more.

I hope this brief overview gives you an idea of how much AMPPR does year round. We believe in public radio, we believe in music, and we believe in you. That's why we're committed to doing all that we can. Please feel free to let us know how we're doing.

Looking forward to seeing you in Cincinnati on September 18th at the PRPD!

Beverley Ervine
AMPPR President

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Boyce Lancaster Named to AMPPR Board of Directors

Because of a really hectic work schedule, newly elected AMPPR Board member Tony Hanover resigned last month. The Board has elected Boyce Lancaster of WOSU to replace Tony for the remainder of his term.



Boyce was born in Lubbock, Texas, to two people, he says, who really should have known better. He grew up in Tulsa, Oklahoma. As is the case with many of us,

Boyce began piano lessons in third grade. He took up the clarinet in fourth grade and played that instrument through college. Along the way he had stints with varying degrees of success on the alto and baritone sax and the alto and bass clarinet, and he made "disastrous attempts" to play oboe and sousaphone.

Realizing the need for a second career choice, he followed in his dad's footsteps and chose broadcasting. His announcing career began on WPJS-FM in Orangeburg, South Carolina. After a stop in Dayton, Ohio, he became Operations Manager at a small station outside Columbus, Ohio, accepted the same position at WSCW in Charleston, West Virginia, was in sales and did morning drive across town at WCHS, then moved to Columbus as Operations and Program Director for WRFD. In 1984 he accepted a position in the operations department of WOSU-FM, where he is now a Broadcast Producer.

He has programmed and hosted the morning drive program on Classical 89.7 for nearly seventeen years. He produces a weekly two-hour Pops program, does voiceovers and on-air fund-raising for WOSU-TV, and enjoys writing. As a freelancer he writes and produces commercials for radio, TV, and corporate sales, and writes training materials. He has just finished producing a one-hour radio special for national release.

AMPPR At the PRPD

At the Savannah conference, our membership requested that AMPPR expand its advocacy role by providing information about music and music programming at other conferences.

So, for the first time ever, AMPPR will host two presentations at the 2002 PRPD Conference at the Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza Hotel in Cincinnati on Wednesday, September 18. We will be in the Landmark Room beginning at 1:30 p.m. as part of the pre-conference activities.



These two vital sessions will deal with music in public radio here and abroad and are of concern to all stations carrying music as part or all of their formats.

Our first session will run from 1:30 to 2:45, with speaker Benjamin Roe, NPR's new Director of Music, who will fill in the blanks and offer perspective and prospects for NPR's new cultural course. His talk is entitled "Paper Music: Coloring in the Classical Lines of the NPR White Paper."

Refreshments will be served before the 3:00 session, scheduled to run until 4:15. The speaker for the 3:00 session will be Dr. John Evans, Head of Music Programming for BBC Radio 3, who will review the recent evolution of Radio 3. The BBC's classical-music service has broadened its programming to include world music and expanded jazz programming, basing the changes on a combination of new strategies and intensive research. Find out how one of the world's premiere broadcasters has addressed some of the same programming issues that confront public radio in the United States.

Dr. Evans' talk will be a preview for the First Worldwide Symposium on Classical Music Radio, to be presented by AMPPR and the European Broadcasting Union in Amsterdam in November, 2003, hosted by Radio Netherlands, the Dutch International Service, with support from Deutsche Welle, the German International Service, and NOS, the Dutch National Broadcasting Foundation.

There will be time in each presentation for active Q&A sessions, so come prepared with questions for our speakers.



AMPPR NEWS
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Barone Cited For Longevity



MPR's Mary Lee and Michael Barone,
with AMPPR's Chris Kohtz

On Saturday, February 16, 2002 at the AMPPR Board of Directors Meeting held during the Music Personnel Conference in Savannah, Georgia, the following 'resolution' was passed:

"Whereas, PIPEDREAMS began more than 20 years ago, with recordings made in the summer of 1980 during a national convention of the American Guild of Organists held in the Twin Cities...

"Whereas PIPEDREAMS has provided a national audience with premieres of works by such noted composers as Robert Ward, Alberto Ginastera and Calvin Hampton...

"Whereas through his unfailing dedication to providing the highest quality programming, Michael Barone has sustained a twenty-year relationship with program sponsors Mr. & Mrs. Wesley C. Dudley...

"Whereas PIPEDREAMS' national reach has grown from 64 stations in its first year to 180 stations today...

"Whereas Michael Barone has produced nearly 800 PIPEDREAMS programs providing more hours of organ music to a national radio audience than any other American program, past or present...

"Whereas PIPEDREAMS and Michael Barone have been recognized by the American Guild of Organists (1996 President's Award), the Organ Historical Society (1997 Distinguished Service Award), and ASCAP/American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (2001 Deems Taylor Broadcast Award for Excellence)...

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"Whereas Michael Barone has a ten-year backlog of great material waiting to get into the PIPEDREAMS pipeline (!)...

"Now therefore, be it resolved that the Board of Directors of The Association of Music Personnel in Public Radio expresses its profound appreciation to Michael Barone for his inestimable service to the institution of classical music on public radio, and for his manifest contributions to the service public radio provides to audiences nationwide."

To which Michael Barone has responded in thanks:

Your celebratory resolution pleased me inordinately. I feel particularly humbled by it because I've not been much of a participant in recent AMPPR activities, and also because I know that there are many others (all of us?) in this business who put in the long hours with dogged determination to provide 'good news to all people' (actually, "good music"). In reality, many others deserve salutations, too. Even so, I thank you, sincerely.

Reflecting upon my nearly thirty-five years in public radio, I am astonished by the overall progress which has been made as the system has grown and attracted listeners, and also daunted by the challenges we face in keeping our particular part of the public radio banquet fresh and available. Recent realignments by stations and national distributors have caused more than a few tremors of concern.

But even in the face of change, after all these years I still am motivated by the power of music...this marvelous energy source with which, and for which, we live. My family liked classical music. I'm not quite sure why I became so involved with it at such an early age (literally before I could reason). Driving from the Savannah luncheon to my return flight (from Atlanta...don't ask), I listened to the (oft maligned) Met Opera broadcast of *La Boheme*, happy to find it available on my rental car radio, entertained by the Opera Quiz and Peter Allen's solemn introductions, moved to tears (inevitably?) during the final moments.

Since then, I have had some further revelations. I led a mixed crew of "Pipedreams" enthusiasts (a waiter, a stock broker, two lawyers, two retired ministers with wives, a dairy farmer, librarian, school teacher, four engineers...hydraulic, mechanical, electrical, electronic) on a tour of historic organs in "Bach Country" in eastern Germany. I was moved by their eagerness, innocence, and delight as they listened to instruments two-, three-, and four-hundred years old.

I've also done some "Pipedreams Live!" events...in Madison, central and rural-northwestern Minnesota, and our Twin Cities...where I was moved by hands-on interaction with the "organ crowd," eager, friendly folks who were all over the map, demographically: a three-year-old and two eight-year olds (who listen every week), middle-school kids, high-school kids, twenty-somethings, folks younger and older than I am....people involved in music, or involved WITH music, people with ears who hear.

I also attended (yes, and produced) a nine-hour marathon performance of the complete organ works of Olivier Messiaen (!) played by Paul Jacobs, an incredibly talented and focused 25-year-old Yale grad student (who did the complete Bach organ works on July 28, 2000, in an eighteen-hour marathon...this kid has stamina, and is GOOD!). We broadcast three hours live. More marvelous than

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the crowd that showed up at the Basilica was the response of listeners to the broadcast portions, which they found fascinating.

Also totally unscientific but interesting, my brother (an architectural photographer working in eastern Pennsylvania and New York) has been amazed by the unaccountable diversity of the non-musicians with whom he has come in contact through various projects who, upon discovering his "Barone" connection, reveal that they listen regularly to "Pipedreams."

Does this all mean anything? Perhaps no more than what we knew at the start, that classical music (and organ music, too) is emotionally compelling, spiritually affirming, attractive to many who might not even know it yet, and undeniably necessary for others for whom Public Radio broadcasts provide cogent connection. These folks are "out there," of wide-ranging ages and backgrounds, waiting for more moments of enchantment, and not just the same-old-same-old. It's up to us, still...and the performers and composers from times past and present who provide us with the "meat"...to keep the banquet table full, and fresh and inviting. After that, there is no turning back. Thank you...for listening.

Michael Barone
Minnesota Public Radio

MPC 41 San Diego



Marriott Pool Area

**San Diego Marriott
Mission Valley Hotel,
February 5-8, 2003**



**For Sponsorship, Performance,
and Exhibitor Opportunities,
contact Beverley Ervine,
ervine.1@osu.edu (614)292-9678,
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Programming Music in the Real World: Some Thoughts, and an Interview with Kristjan Järvi

by Boyce Lancaster

Attracting an audience...when we're children, it starts as "Hey Mom, look at me! Hey Dad, watch this!" Then maybe we put on a puppet show for the family, act in the second grade play, play our first piano recital, march at halftime, or sing in a chorus. All of these things can be done without an audience, of course, but what's the point? For all the millions professional athletes make, it's still thousands of cheering fans that get the adrenaline pumping.

In the world of the performing arts, the same thing applies. Audiences give purpose to what we do. In public radio and the performing arts, they provide much of the funding for what we do. Millions are spent trying to figure out what audiences want, how they want it presented, and how we can attract a larger piece of the listener pie.

Yet, for all of the research, audience polling, market testing, surveys, and data crunching, one of the most consistently popular albums of the last two years received almost no commercial-radio airplay and barely showed up on industry radar, at least until it won Grammys for Album of the Year, Best Male Country Vocal Performance (Ralph Stanley), Best Country Collaboration with Vocals ("Man of Constant Sorrow"), and two other Grammys, including Producer of the Year for T-Bone Burnett.

Closer to home, think back to The Benedictine Monks of Santo Domingo de Silos recording *Chant*. How long did it take for record companies either to raid their vaults to re-master Gregorian Chant recordings or arrange a session to get one in the can? *Chant* was, of course, quickly followed by *Chant II*.

In radio, more and more stations are being programmed by fewer and fewer people, and formats are being defined more narrowly than ever. The prime example on the commercial side is, of course, Clear Channel. At last check, they owned 1170 radio stations and 19 television

stations in the United States and held interests in Australian and New Zealand radio stations, Spanish language radio, and outdoor advertising companies. McDonalds has come to radio! You can travel to virtually any place in the United States and hear the same thing you hear at home. As you've traveled over the last decade, how much shopping have you done in cities where you find a shopping center with 175 stores, 172 of which are identical to those you have at home?

Public radio is quickly becoming the very thing for which it was to be an alternative. The only difference is that we do it with Vivaldi, Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms, instead of Aerosmith, Creedence Clearwater Revival, The Beatles, and the Doobie Brothers. As we further and further narrow our formats, we move closer and closer to becoming background music. The fewer selections we allow in our "rotation," the quicker we bore our audience.

In a recent conversation with Kristjan Järvi of Absolute Ensemble, we discussed what arts organizations and public radio stations could do to increase audience. Providing background music was not on his list. "There's a magazine in England called *Classic FM*, he began. "I never understood their slogan, which is, 'Music You Can Relax To,' or something like that. I don't think most of classical music is music you can relax to. It's actually very agitating music. If you start to categorize classical music as Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and Telemann's flute sonatas, that's completely doing disservice to what that art form is. You're taking a very short segment of time in history and only attributing classical music to that. That's not classical music. Music has developed from banging rocks together to what we have available now, which is everything from Thrash Metal to Michael Daugherty, Rap, Aerosmith, and etc."

For decades, programmers and producers have tried to take a successful program or format and duplicate that success elsewhere, whether in another program or on other stations. Hollywood is probably the best example of this with seemingly endless sequels trying to recapture the

success of past films. With what is available to music programmers today, Järvi seems puzzled by what has been called by some the “dumbing-down” of classical formats.

“Everything has to be so neat and tidy for people...not so much for the listeners, but for the people who are programming. Everybody is afraid to take a risk, whether it is a radio show, a TV show, or a concert program that is untested. I feel that many, including the record companies, are falling back on the stuff that has had, like, one major hit. They say, ‘OK, let’s try that model.’ Then they’re wondering why that model doesn’t work again. It’s simply not going to work every time because people want something new. They don’t want the same thing repeated.”

As an increasing number of radio stations are programmed by a diminishing number of people, more and more of us rely on technology to help. Computer programs can put together a day’s worth of playlists pretty quickly; but without diligence, creativity is compromised. As programmers, the worst thing we can do is let programming become something that readily sinks into the background, programming not to offend rather than to excite, uplift, motivate, and enlighten. It’s great that many of our stations provide music in offices, retail establishments, and restaurants, but that just turns public radio into a cheaper source of Muzak. While classical music is at our core, Järvi says, “I feel that initially, if the computers pick, say, the “1812 Overture,” the last movement of the *Jupiter* Symphony, and things like that, initially it’s going to work. If you’re going to continue to do that with small changes over months and years, it’s not going to remain interesting for anyone, and it’s not going to actually get any new listeners. It’s going to, I feel, kind of maintain the old listeners and [eventually] drive the new ones away. People get bored very easily...their attention spans are so short.” In other words, when we talk about attracting new listeners, younger listeners, this is not the way to go about it.

One thing we all see in mainstream formats is format changes. Let’s say you’re in a market that has no oldies station, so Corporation

A decides to change the format of one of their stations. A huge advertising campaign begins. The market has been without an oldies station for years, so an audience quickly builds. Ratings go up, revenues go up, things look great. Then people begin to grow bored. They’ve heard the same handful of songs by Clapton, Stones, Beatles, Beach Boys, Neil Diamond, and Stevie Wonder so many times that they begin to look for something new. On the other hand, there is an AOR station in Dayton, Ohio (WTUE-FM), which switched to that format in the early 1970s. After nearly thirty years, they are currently number three in the market, not because they narrowed their format but because they change as music changes.

In classical music radio, now more than ever, there is exciting new music being written by a wide array of young composers...Michael Daugherty, Eric Ewazen, James McMillan, Charles Coleman, Erkki-Sven Tüür, and many others. Every one of these composers has music suitable for classical airplay. It’s exciting, stimulating, and fresh. True, we do still get calls wanting information about the standard rep pieces we play, but most of my calls and e-mails come from listeners wanting to know about something new, something different, something that stood out from everything else. Age is not an obstacle, either. One of my most faithful listeners is an elderly woman who not only listens for the old favorites, but really enjoys the new pieces as well. She says it brings back great memories and creates new favorites.

“I feel like we [Absolute Ensemble] owe our success to constantly re-inventing ourselves,” says Järvi. “We started out as a string ensemble which was full of students. None of them knew what they were doing. I didn’t either! Now we have a very clear idea of where we’re going.” The ensemble has just finished a new recording “based upon the rock model of what an album is. It’s not compositions by composers so much as it’s a band performing tunes [which are mostly] original. We even have mixes on there, like lounge mixes which, for an ensemble coming out of the classical realm, is completely unheard of.”

In many ways, according to Järvi, public radio and arts organizations have similar problems, some of them self-created. "Subscriptions and these kinds of tools [such as computers] that have made life easier for organizations have, in a way, made them a bit complacent and are actually putting them out of business. To do things as a routine is very easy, but to do things as inventively as possible is not so easy. Necessity breeds creativity. You have to constantly think of ways to draw in [audiences], how to be artistically interesting and still maintain integrity, to have this kind of vision, to not become too comfortable with yourself, to constantly be moving forward."

Our main purpose in classical music radio is entertainment. Music education is certainly a by-product of that, but our listeners don't turn on the radio thinking, "I'm going to tune in and learn something about Bach today." They want to be entertained. On the other hand, introducing our listeners to new composers and performers is both entertaining and educational. Even in today's communication-rich world, no one can ever find everything available in recordings, new and old. While entertaining our audience, it is part of our job to let our audience know what is coming out, whether in our regular format, maybe in some type of new-releases program, or even on our web sites. We can create an experience on the air that can do for our listeners what Järvi and Absolute try to do for their audience. "We are creating a type of music that can be very groove-oriented and can actually affect people on this kind of mysterious, emotional, spiritual level, which can be done by either beautiful OR ugly music. I feel there is a need and room for us to create a sonic experience which is enhanced by the intense musical performance of a band that really believes in the music it creates and performs. It kind of brings the listener out of reality. Everybody's obsessed with, like, 'we have to bring reality back into music.' In my opinion, we have to bring fantasy back into music."

I think one of the most disturbing things a listener can tell me is, "I listen to your radio station when I study" or "Your station helps cover

up the outside noise while I read." Creating ambience is for restaurants wanting a comfortable place for you to sip coffee and chat, or retail outlets that spend time trying to figure out what music makes you feel like spending money. We work for radio stations with more music available than any other format in the world, yet we generally barely scratch the surface of what is available. That is to our own detriment and that of our listeners, whose main connection to the wonderful, stirring, moving, uplifting, sensual, peaceful, thunderous world of music is what we broadcast. Järvi seconds this. "When Absolute performs, it's got to be an experience like no other. That's what's actually bringing people back and creating our audience. It's getting to the point where rather than saying, 'Hey, what's on the program? Maybe I'm gonna check out some Beethoven's Fifth,' it's, 'Hey, I've gotta go see Absolute!' I just feel this is the best time in music. The creativity is very, very high right now.

According to Järvi, many musicians are trying more and more to get their music to the public in live performances, to "actually have them feel the raw effect of the music itself, rather than presenting music as some kind of very intellectual affair behind closed doors where nobody's allowed to criticize anything." It is incumbent upon each of us as programmers, announcers, and program producers to take the very best of what we have to offer to our audience...to both entertain and enrich.

All in all, Järvi sees classical music, both it's performance and broadcast, as personality-driven entertainment...a place we can go to escape the rigors of everyday life, a medium that goes far beyond the "corporatized" version we see today.

"Just to perform music is a nice thing. It's kind of recreational. However, I think everything has to have a purpose, especially if we're going to sell tickets and make money. People want to enjoy themselves. You have to look at it as the entertainment it is. Whether it's classical or rap, it's entertainment. [We can create] this kind of world which is absolutely beautiful, this fantasy

world which has a lot of meaning, a lot of PERSONAL meaning to each one of the viewers and listeners.”

For most of us, broadcasting is more than just a job. It is the opportunity to open up a limitless supply of musical treasures—to share with our audience the rush of emotion we experienced upon hearing the opening chords of Rachmaninoff’s second piano concerto...the goose bumps we felt each time Pavarotti swept to the ending of “Nessun dorma”...the stunning virtuosity required for Mozart’s “Queen of the Night” aria...the peace and serenity of Vaughan Williams’ Tallis Variations; to share with our listeners the joy, sorrow, rapture, tranquility, and excitement to be found in each piece we play. We have a direct connection with the emotions and life experiences of composers, each of whom left a portion of their souls in their work. It is a unique pleasure to be entertained in this way. It is our honor, our privilege, and our responsibility to reveal this world to our listeners.

Boyce Lancaster is Broadcast Producer at WOSU Classics Network in Columbus, Ohio, and a member of the AMPPR Board of Directors.



Flirting with Commercial Radio

by Dave Bunker

I hesitate to admit this, but a few months ago, seeking to supplement my meager freelancer’s income, I applied for work at (gasp) my local commercial classical station.

During the many years I hosted classical programs at public radio stations, commercial classical was always the evil other, the embodiment of everything that public radio must never become. This station—let’s call it WJSB—has all the features I had been taught to loathe:

Commercials, of course, some with rock music beds.

A seriously restricted playlist. My clock radio alarm is set to this station, and three of the last four pieces which have been on at 6:30 a.m. have been concertos by Vivaldi. The other was one of Mozart’s childhood symphonies.

Oh-so-smooth commercial voices.

Repetitious music beds under the weather, cute names for regular features (“The news block at seven o’clock”), and other such frou-frou.

As you might imagine, I went to my interview with “Mike,” the PD, burning with curiosity. Would he be wearing chunky gold rings? Would he greet me with the jokey bonhomie of a used-car salesman? Would the halls be papered with twenty-dollar bills?

The reality of the place was a bit of a letdown. Mike was a friendly but distracted and slightly worried-looking fellow in a casual suit. The station looked a lot like public stations I have known—cramped control rooms, a music library doubling as office space, and a big rack of humming automation equipment. Also like many public stations, it was horned into a space not originally intended to be a radio studio, in this case a converted apartment.

No money on the walls, either. Actually, with regards to money, it’s pretty amazing that WJSB exists at all. It is a rarity in these deregulated times: a locally-owned classical station, all the rarer for existing outside a major metropolitan

market; yet they have done well enough to buy up some frequencies, growing into a scattered four-transmitter network across the state. And they can afford to have live local announcers on during morning and evening drivetime. During the day and overnight, and for most of the weekend, they automate a national service.

Mike is proud of the station's success, and he credits his programming. That homogenous blend, it would appear from our conversation, arises out of his experience programming other formats in commercial radio. He freely admits that he knew little about classical music when he started programming WJSB. He approaches it, he says, as a variety of easy-listening. On the other hand, he also says he enjoys the music, and he takes pride in the station's service to the community. He told me how satisfying it was to hear from a local school that they were piping the station's music into the halls between classes.

We discussed the possibility of my working as a fill-in host. I glimpsed the steel beneath his affability when he asked if I was comfortable hosting a show which had been programmed by someone else. "Sure," I said. Then I couldn't help adding, "for the occasional sub shift." If I were working for you every day, I would want at least to talk to you about the possibility of broadening the repertoire out a little bit—maybe play some solo piano every once in a while. This comment earned me one of those dubious looks you don't want to see in a job interview.

We also discussed the possibility of my producing a specialty show, a couple of hours on the weekend. There's more room for variety then; for example, on Saturday evenings they feature a locally-hosted big band show. This part of the conversation went better. I suggested a new releases show. To my surprise, he countered by suggesting a 20th century music program. He sounded willing to let me try something to see how it would fly. The measure of success, it became clear, was simple. If the salespeople were able to sell ads during the show, it stayed. If they couldn't sell it, it went.

I have to confess that I found this refreshing. In public radio we have this endless struggle between mission and market. No doubt it is necessary, and no doubt we are the better for it, but there's no denying it is a struggle. It saps energy that could otherwise go directly into making better radio. In commercial radio, you know the guy with the hook is there, and you know he won't hesitate to use it, so there's nothing left to do but get out there on that stage and sing your heart out. I can respect that.

In sum, on my first foray into the perilous realm of commercial radio, I heard nothing to make me run away screaming. The only thing that I still have doubts about is trying to "pump up my delivery," as Mike says, with apparent scorn for the drab slow-talking of public radio. But even that strikes me as an intriguing challenge.

As it turns out, I've just gotten a new job back in public radio, so I guess the commercial radio experiment is not going to happen any time soon. But if I had heard back from Mike in time, I would have given it a shot.

Dave Bunker is Program Director at WMPG in Portland, Maine, and former President of AMPPR.



San Diego Skyline

The Last Minute Interview

by Tony Hanover

Whether you're working for Rick Dees at "The Weekly Top 40" and are told as you stroll in one fine morning at 8:45, "Here's her bio, you're doing a phoner with Jewel from a tour stop in Baltimore in ten minutes," or are asked by a promoter friend late one afternoon to "do a live interview/in-studio performance with North African Kora virtuoso Mamadou Diabate tomorrow morning before his only area gig on this tour," you'll find the need in radio to be prepared for anything.

This concept was known in 70s hipster slang as "Having your game tight." OK, OK, so the Boy Scouts had dibs on the concept far earlier, but still, the point is to expect as a given, rather than be surprised or caught off guard by abnormalities in timing, scheduling, travel and the like.

In both instances cited above, I was able to respond with top-notch results because the information necessary to carry off the tasks at hand was already familiar territory for me.

While helping to produce one of the world's most popular and widely syndicated radio programs, I made it my business to have reviewed and assimilated every bit of trivia and statistic on all the top pop stars, past and present, who could come up as subjects on the countdown. Huge binders of clippings, articles, record company bios, website info, and trivia were at my fingertips and largely committed to memory. Many reference guides lined our studio shelves.

I knew that morning before I even put down my briefcase or got my first cup of coffee that Jewel Kilcher was born in Homer, Alaska, came from pioneer stock, and had a roadhouse musician for a father. I knew that this (at the time) fairly new artist was a poet-singer-guitarist who had lived a truly bohemian existence for a time with her mother, surviving together out of her car. I knew about her early gigs in a San Diego coffeehouse. Most importantly, I knew she could *yodel*. I could've done the interview right that moment if she had been on the line.

Likewise, when many years later I was called about the harpist from Mali, I knew exactly who he was, and furthermore, I had his CD within arm's reach while taking the call. Listeners still remark to me about his unique and enlightening on-air visit and performance.

I believe that as broadcasters it is our responsibility to keep cognizant of not just our "corridor of Classical Music," but of local, regional, national, and world affairs.

Try to soak up everything in your periphery. Trivia is your friend. Imagine remarking, as our gifted KCSN Director of Classical Programming Martin Perlich did to a certain celestially gifted soprano, the granddaughter of a slave—a fact that the diva had never publicly spoken of—and you've got interview GOLD. Know, too, that in reference to the title of this article, Mr. Perlich was informed he could have this particular interview "if he could get down here to the Music Center today before the end of Mahler's 4th." Martin scored in a big way with no prep time because he knew his stuff.

Here are just a couple of tips on how to be more "ready for anything" as a classical announcer.

- Have a few stock questions in reserve for the main "types" of folks you could expect to talk to: conductors, soloists, vocalists, chamber players, orchestra players, studio musicians, composers.

- Know the terms and tools of their trades and where they work. Know what their jobs entail. For instance, how much does the average person know about a violin bow? Do you know how one works? What are the parts of it? What they're made of? What do they cost? (Have you ever priced a set of gut-strings for a double bass? WOW!)

- Be ready to talk on a basic human level about things that are common and relevant, rather than things trite and obvious.

To conclude, having a good base of information allows you to separate the human being from what they're there to promote. (C'mon, how often does Leonard Slatkin or Cecilia Bartoli drop

by the station unaccompanied “just to chat”?) This way, you can more easily flesh out the standard “Hi-how-are-you, so-you’re-playing-with-the-Phil-tonight, the-blanky-blank-concerto-in-G-Major, what-else-is-on-the-bill, do-you-and-maestro-Sowanso-get-on-well, MARvelous!, tickets at the PerformingArtsCenterBoxOffice or online at pricetix.com, thanks-for-coming!!!”-type interview. Hopefully you’ll look forward to those “invigorating” last minute in-studio guests because you’re prepared to shine in those (never again) unexpected happenstances.

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*Program Directors, Music Directors,
Music Announcers, Producers,
Music Librarians, Music Critics,
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