

# Student Radio Station Seeks More Minorities

By Erika Helm  
Ink Staff Writer

When Dheeraj Vasishta walked into the campus radio station a few months ago, he had high expectations.

But before Vasishta, an Asian Indian student, could showcase his disc jockeying abilities, he and WXYC (89.3 FM) were split apart.

The reason? Vasishta wanted a block of rap programming and WXYC didn't.

"My impression is that WXYC represents music taste of the upper- middle-class white students," said Vasishta, a sophomore RTVMP major. "The way it stands now, rap is just tossed into the mix like everything else."

It's this tossing and mixing of rap, along with hard rock, country, blues, urban, bluegrass, jazz, and new wave, that has people like Vasishta complaining about the station's inability to appeal to blacks and other minorities.

"The audience from what I can tell, fits into the culture of the radio station - white males," said Wayne Journee, a black DJ at the station.

Last summer, Journee embarked on a diversity campaign at the station. Its purpose was to attract more minorities into the station.

"If we get people of color and women working within WXYC, it will increase the listening audience among them," said Journee, who is still working on recruiting efforts.

Broadening the station's audience, however, is not an easy task. In fact, with the station being a virtual unknown among many black students, the feat will be a challenge.

"The station just doesn't appeal to me," said Toure' Claiborne, a senior economics and African-American Studies major from Greenville.

"I don't listen to it because I don't feel that they consistently play music I want to hear. I might find that I only like one song every hour," he said.

But consistency is not the

station's priority. Diversity is.

According to some station employees, WXYC is an "educational station" that allows people to go beyond their boundaries.

"If you listen to the station, you can hear that the music we play is a model of diversity," said WXYC's station manager Bob Boster.

For Boster, this diversity is illustrated in the fact that listeners can hear rap artists De La Soul followed by blue grass singer Dox Watson at any given time. It's also exemplified by the station's listing as one of the top 10 college stations nationwide.

Mike Shoffner, a white DJ, who is a fan of hip hop and soul, said, "I've learned about other kinds of music that I wouldn't have otherwise listened to."

WXYC began its commitment to diversity around 1980 when Bill Burton took over as music

director.

In the April 14, 1982 edition of *The Daily Tar Heel*, Burton was quoted as saying he felt a need to change the station's image and "broaden the whole scope."

"If you only have liked one kind of music ... you should listen to another radio station," Burton said.

White DJ Marty Gallowitz, who began working at the station this semester, agrees.

"WXYC is an educational station," he said. "We try to show people that all music can come together just as different types of cultures can."

"We just want people to listen to the music and dig it. We're not concerned if the act is on BET, MTV or TNN."

But not everyone, some DJs included, "dig" WXYC's music.

Tamika Green, a black DJ, said she can understand why her black friends don't listen to

WXYC. They are not used to the mixture, she said.

Green, whose main problem is with the station's playbox, admits that playing a variety of music styles is hard considering that she caters to hip hop.

"We have six songs we have to play, and I don't know any of it," Green said. "The music is still basically the same, very one-sided."

The music is not diversified enough."

Vasishta agreed.

He said that WXYC's look at diversity is unrealistic and out of step with college trends nationwide. That's why he proposed the rap programming.

"I believe there is underline politics that is attached to rap music and by playing one song you don't get the sense of power," he said. "It wouldn't kill WXYC to take into account what the audience wants."

But with the station's motto

being it's not what's in the mix, but how you mix it, those against block programming say it alienates people.

Nevertheless, WXYC does have a few special programs such as "Orange County Special," which caters to blue grass and folk music; "Northern Hemisphere," a talk show similar to "Larry King;" and "The New Science Experience" featuring rap, house and techno on Saturdays from midnight to 3 a.m.

Next spring, there will be approximately five positions open for DJs.

Those interested should stop by the radio station upstairs in the Student Union. The job is unpaid and usually requires beginners to work the late night and early morning shifts, which last two to three hours.

## Understanding Struggle for Black Freedom Key to Good Citizenship

By Beth Glenn  
Ink Staff Writer

According to Cornel West, professor of religion, author of six books and director of the African-American Studies Department at Princeton, everything that Americans need to be good citizens can be learned from the Black Freedom Movement.

West, who delivered the 1993 Weil Lecture on American Citizenship, told audience members that the way to make citizenship mean something again was to "make public, communal life acceptable" and "engage in public conversations."

During the hour-long speech, West cited standard tenets of the black resistance

movement such as the rotation of leaders, the questioning of authority and the use of ordinary people as ways to revive democracy.

"The black freedom struggle is a species of the Radical Democratic Tradition," said West, who spoke on Nov. 4 in Carroll Hall. "To be in a black body in a society shaped by whites is to walk a slippery tightrope."

"The struggle is to respond with dignity to white supremacist assaults on black humanity. It bothers me that that tradition of struggle is hard to transmit."

According to West, ordinary people possess energies that if unleashed, could bring about phenomenal social change, which would allow their voices to be heard in government.

"The very definition of a

citizen is one capable of ruling or being ruled, (so) radical democracy is deeply troubling to all elites," he said. "All forms of authority ought to be suspect, that is, justified by appealing to the rights of ordinary people."

At the end of his speech, West prescribed four components to building a multiracial democracy.

First, he encouraged citizens to analyze the distribution of wealth and power in society.

"We... must first acknowledge that a sense of the present should be rooted in critical analysis of the past," West said, while encouraging citizens to build on the best of the past and invent new forms.

Second, West advocated "an all-embracing moral vision" through which citizens should realize the equality of all humanity and should be able to ask one another, "What

are you going through?"

Third, West said each citizen should have the courage to attack and analyze his or her own convictions, or take a "self-critical, courageous stance." Thus, when a good citizen enters dialogue with another, both should listen and come out slightly changed.

West's last call was for a "sense of audacious hope," even in the face of evidence that things might not get better right away.

"We all must keep our eyes on a cause larger than each one of us," he said. "We can overcome cynicism and pessimism by acting, and dialogue and public conversation are forms of acting."