

For WXYC, variety is spice of life

By SALLY PEARSALL
Editor

WXYC on 89.3 FM, the campus radio station, can't be defined as simply progressive or alternative — it's got a unique programming style all its own.

"When you turn on WXYC, you could hear anything from alternative stuff to old stuff to jazz to blues to reggae," said Steve Balcom, program director for the station. "We don't have the block programming of other college radio stations, and we don't get into traps of playing only all-new music."

Balcom said most of what gets played on WXYC depends on the DJs' personal tastes; during their air time, they are given almost complete freedom to play whatever music they want. And because the station is student-funded, WXYC's programming isn't cluttered with commercials.

WXYC does have some regular shows, including Sunday's "Orange County Special," which features traditional bluegrass, country and folk music, and the "Northern Hemisphere Live" phone-in talk show. Last semester, Dean Smith was a "Northern Hemisphere Live" guest host.

This summer, WXYC has added another specialty show — the "New Music Show," which is broadcast on Saturday night and features brand-new releases. Phone lines are open during the show so that listeners can call in their opinions.

WXYC also broadcasts UNC sports, including lacrosse and women's basketball games. And on student election night, WXYC keeps the campus updated with the



A WXYC DJ spins the tunes during his shift

Tar Heel/Laura Patterson

election returns.

It's a student-run station, but WXYC staff say they don't think it's the most popular station on campus. "We don't have the illusion that we've got the majority of the students (listening), but we do get a good portion," said Jason Bott, station manager.

"We also reach a large part of the community — people who are looking for something different," he added. "We've been around for 10 years; we're well-established in this area."

WXYC has also established a reputation for excellence among college radio stations. In 1986, the Gavin Report, a music industry

trade magazine, named WXYC as one of six best alternative radio stations in the country. The station was also spotlighted along with four others in a feature article on college radio stations in Rolling

Stone magazine.

It's not easy to get hired as a DJ at WXYC. "You have to know a lot about music to work here," Bott said. "Of the people who come in here trying to get a job,

we turn away about 90 percent." Balcom added, "When we hire DJs, we make sure we hire people who have a sound music background and will come across well on the air."

PIPES

BY GEORGE

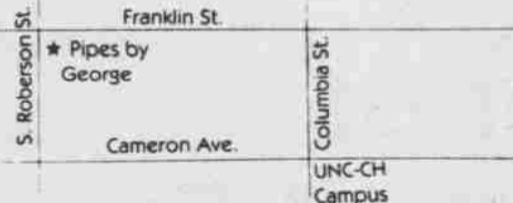
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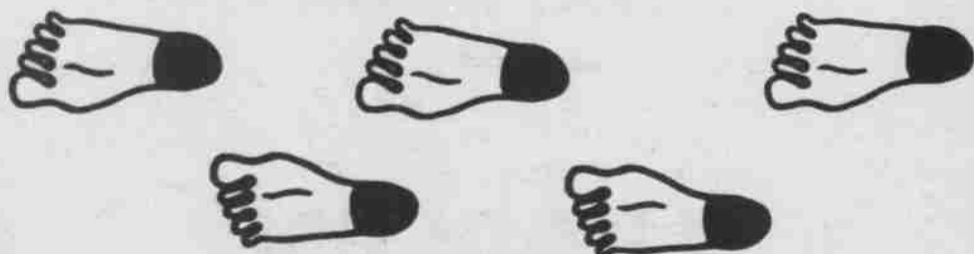
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