



The Devaluation Of "Post Radio"

HzS  G  d

"Fighting to stay free"

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And now, ladies and gentlemen...

...here is Number 1,1,1, on the list of things I hate when people say. To paraphrase: "Isn't talking up records on the radio like riding a horse-and-buggy instead of driving a car?"

They think it's a perfect analogy to what radio has become. I can't think of one that's worse.

When one thing replaces another, like the automobile replaced the horse-and-buggy, it's supposed to be a clear improvement on what came before. I was fine with cable replacing broadcast, even digital replacing physical. But when I say that I don't see how DJ-less – or DJ de-emphasized - music presentation is an improvement, does that make me sound to anyone under a certain age like I'm clueless?

I'm fairly certain I already know your answer, and it's yes.

Although Salon.com already ran an article titled "Radio Killed The Radio Star," that was in 2002, and its focus was the Telecommunications Act of 1996 as the source of the destruction of radio as we knew it then. Were I to write one with that title now, it would go further back than 1996 to point fingers. Much further back. I'm thinking 1965, the year of KHJ.

Now, don't get me wrong: I loved KHJ. KHJ will always stand as a shining example of how to follow Bill Drake's vision for top 40 without compromising personality. It is my belief that it was not KHJ (et al) that killed the radio star but rather the stations, programmers and consultants KHJ influenced (and in some cases, those who tried to copy KHJ). As in those who asked, now that we see picking up the pace of top 40 garners big ratings, what ELSE can we do to get bigger ratings?

That's where the trouble began. So-called improvements – the Q format, FM formatics on AM, long commercial breaks, uninterrupted music – may have sent listeners the message that personality no longer mattered. As the full-service AMs that featured personalities went away, no FM stations stepped up to take their place. The industry seemed to propagate the message: music + more talk = lower ratings.

The irony is that were there the PPM technology then that we have now, this may never have happened. If ratings had suggested an older audience, that audience would continue to be served with post-hitting personalities. Then the next generation, and the next, would still appreciate what we try to do and respect its creativity, the same way they appreciate "just the facts" journalism or a well-scripted television episode (although time may be running out for both).

The devaluation of "post radio" has hurt the quality of radio not just from the listener's standpoint, but also from the announcer's. For the most part, the generations of DJs that followed the first to talk up music don't do it with the same skill. It's not their fault: it's what they (and in some cases, we) were raised on. Not to mention it's often about what they're often told to say or read over an intro. That air talent doesn't get to talk as much as once was the case also doesn't help things much.

As I've said in earlier *HZ's*, the possibly worst part of all this is that the oldest listeners, those who were raised on the best personality post-hitting presentation there ever was, have become complacent about its disappearance. While it was never really a battle between talking and music, the powers that be made it one and made sure that music won, and everyone in every age group now seems fine with this. Everyone seems to feel that if you want to hear "Brandy," you should hear it uninterrupted from start to end, even though the potential for adding value in those first 11 seconds pre-vocals is immense.

It's probably a bit of an exaggeration, but it feels to me like there is only one person left in radio who can do this kind of radio every night of the week and make a decent living at it, and that's

Tom Kent (easily google-able). There are kids half the man's age that can't keep up with TK. Granted he's not as frenetic as when I first discovered him that summer of 1977 on the on-its-last-legs WIBG/Wibbage in Philly, but he can still keep you engaged in the opening seconds of any song. Most jocks on radio today could stand to learn something from Kent, and I count myself as one of those: I'm always stealing from TK (I hope he's not reading this).



Kent: Still smokin'

Could there be a "re-valuation" of post radio? I don't think so, not even if, or perhaps when, Internet radio becomes more easily accessible in cars. Online listeners have especially become accustomed to uninterrupted music, so if anything, it would be further devalued. Yes, there are many live hosts online, but sadly, most aren't hosts who are mindful of posts.

And the hits...

PROVING ITS METAL The day I predicted would come, has: heavy metal/hard rock/whatever you want to call it has been officially muzak-ed. That's my term for, become so ingrained that when you hear it used in adult-targeted commercials (or for other purposes) on radio or TV, you don't flinch.

The song that did it? Twisted Sister's "We're Not Gonna Take It," now in commercials for Extended Stay America hotels. Honorable mention to Ozzy Osbourne's "Crazy Train," which is sung by that family in the TV spot for Honda Pilot, although the actual recording isn't heard.

This of course means that other advertisers will copycat, and maybe we'll soon be seeing/hearing campaigns like:

- * Guns 'N Roses' "Sweet Child O' Mine," for Huggies diapers
- * Def Leppard's "Pour Some Sugar On Me," for Equal
- * Black Sabbath's "Iron Man," for Tonka
- * AC/DC's "Big Balls," for Target

- * Judas Priest's "Living After Midnight," for Serta
- * Van Halen's "Running With the Devil," for Underwood
- * Metallica's "Enter Sandman," for Lunesta

and

- * KISS' "Shout It Out Loud," for Miracle Ear

HALL & VOTES America's Pop Music Hall of Fame – the Hall for the rest of us – will be inducting its first 20 artists next year, and yours, your help is needed. Visit <http://www.americaspopmusichalloffame.org> on September 20th to vote for who you think should make the cut, based on 40 worthy nominees.

Here are the 40, each of which had to have placed a song on the national charts between 1946 and 1975: Paul Anka, the Beach Boys, the Beatles, the Bee Gees, Tony Bennett, Chuck Berry, Pat Boone, the Carpenters, Johnny Cash, Ray Charles, Chubby Checker, the Dave Clark Five, Nat King Cole, Perry Como, Bobby Darin, Neil Diamond, Bob Dylan, the Everly Brothers, the Four Seasons and Connie Francis, Elton John, Dean Martin, Johnny Mathis, the Monkees, Ricky Nelson, Roy Orbison, Patti Page, Les Paul & Mary Ford, the Platters, Elvis Presley, Simon & Garfunkel, Frank Sinatra, Smokey & Miracles, the Supremes, Three Dog Night, Bobby Vinton, Dionne Warwick, Andy Williams, Hank Williams and Stevie Wonder.

The Hall is – or will be - located south of Pittsburgh, PA, in Canonsburg – home of two of those 40, Perry Como and Bobby Vinton.

AND ALL THAT OTHER STUFF Let's see, what else are we up to?

- * "The CHRONICLER" in Thursday's *Billboard Top 40 Update* (subscribe free at <http://www.billboard.biz/newsletters>)

- * "The Rest Of The Week With Rich Appel" Saturdays 6am-1pm ET, Sundays 10am-3pm ET (listen at <http://wrnradio.com/streaming/>, sample at <http://wrnradio.com/2012/03/watch-rich-appels-video-aircheck-video/>).

- * The page at WOR radio (<http://wor710.com/pages/13810913.php?contentType=33&contentId=135319&stationId=753&isPreview=1&noCache=1>)

- * Follow me at <http://twitter.com/#!/@Restoftheweek>

- * Friend me on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/richappel7>).

Thanks as always, for every time you...

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