



Entertainment

A chat with our campus radio station

interview by Dragos Ruiu

CJSR, those four letters will either bring smiles, scowls or puzzled looks to the faces of students here. (Or perhaps some mumbling about a column in the Gateway...) The puzzled looks will come from people who don't know what CJSR is about.

Denyse Terry is programming director at CJSR, and she took some time to explain its workings...

"Some people on campus don't even know we exist," she says of the station which is located in SUB, "but we have managed to increase our profile greatly since September. We are still struggling, after all, we are only three years old."

"CJSR started as a club where people used to hang out, then we went FM. Going FM is the 'Big Step' for any student radio station. When you get your FM license, the CRTC (Canadian Radio, Television and Telecommunication Commission) imposes a lot of rules on you and you have to prove that you are going to look for funding elsewhere (other than S.U.)."

"We still aren't financially independent yet, and I can't realistically see us achieving that goal for five, maybe four, years," she says. Currently, the station relies on the good graces of our Students' Union for financial support, but Denyse says, "We are trying to break out into the community and become a community radio station."

"I think we have a lot to offer the community. We offer them alternatives and access that aren't possible anywhere else in the city. And if we are ever going to break away we have to find our own identity — to offer something more than the middle-of-the-road background music that other stations offer."

The station is also under very strict regulations about what kind of material they are allowed to play. "Our radio is necessarily different than commercial radio. CRTC regulations dictate that we are allowed to play 10% hits. Their definition of hits is anything that has placed on a major chart. It doesn't even have to be a local chart, it could be a U.K. chart or whatever."

"We play mostly new material that has been released in the last two years. That way listeners can tune in and be sure to hear something that they haven't heard before."

"Commercial radio stations are allowed to repeat a song 18 times in one day, and almost always do, while we are allowed to play a particular cut once." The regulations covering the station dictate a variety of things, according to her. "We are only allowed to sell four minutes of time per hour to adver-



CJSR's programming director, Denyse Terry

tisers," she continues.

"The advertising regulations are strict, courtesy of the CRTC. They dictate not only the amount of advertising, but the presentation as well. The ads have to be of an informational nature, not a hard sell — we can't use all kinds of flowery language like 'the absolute bestest buy ever.' We produce the ads ourselves and instead of saying things like 'GO DOWN to the brick and buy buy buy!' we soften the language to 'you could go down...'"

These advertising restrictions were a major source of trouble earlier this year when Goose Looneys approached the station about some ads. "They approached us because they wanted to reach the campus

audience. They were perfectly willing to let us produce the commercials, and the whole matter would have been finished in days."

"Unfortunately, it was decided by someone above us that it was okay to use the commercial jingle with the ad. Roger Levesque was removed from the production of it, which was normally his job, and the jingle went in. As soon as it ran, the feedback was negative, and we stood back and said 'I told you so.' We got calls from all kinds of pissed-off listeners... everybody started arguing and it dragged on for months."

Though the format is "mostly music," the station is broken down into four departments: Music, News, Sports, and advertising. "New, sports, and advertising are terrific

training grounds for breaking into the industry. You get training of the various aspects of production that you can't get anywhere else."

Denyse also stresses that campus involvement is very important to the station, "75% of the people working there are or were at one time students here."

"We are sitting here on campus and we would be fools not to take advantage of all the things that we can do when it comes to campus interests, like the Med. students' seat belt campaign a while back or helping the ACT funding cuts team... There was only one campus show when I started, and now there are five."

In defense of the much maligned cultural and foreign language shows, she says, "we offer airtime to groups that are not rich, who can't afford to go and buy airtime from another station. We give a voice to people who can't get a voice elsewhere."

CJSR uses 'block programming' much like CKUA. "It's a way to try to make sense of the insanity. We have to try to please everyone, while catering to a large variety of different interests. This way, listeners can pick up *Airtight* and say oh yeah, I like reggae, so I'll tune in Tuesday night... Or folk music is nice to listen to in the morning, so we program it from 9-11 in the morning and folk listeners can tune in then."

About 45% of the station's airtime is open programming, with "a little bit of everything," ranging from folk and jazz to rock-oriented A.O.R. "About 65% of the open programming is rock-oriented."

"We want to get rid of this 'hippies on acid image' some people have of us. Our DJ's do a tremendous amount of work preparing the background to their shows, selecting the music and their own production. We have to be aware of other musical forms as well as the mood of the times. A lot of now mainstream groups got their start from playing on stations like ours."

"Not everybody likes everything, but we try to represent as many groups as we can. We want to put music in as positive a light as possible."

Denyse insists that comparisons between their station and other shows like CBC's *Brave New Waves* are "unfair" on the basis of funding. "After all, *Brave New Waves* has more full time paid executives than our whole station..." Everyone has their own opinions, I guess.

Whether you agree with their approach or not, people on campus deserve to know about CJSR, and the station deserves your feedback.

Re: Sounding the rhythm of poetry in show

Re: Sounding

Latitude 53 gallery

interview by Mike Spindloe

Perhaps the most underpublicized type of entertainment event that one can seek out on (or off) campus is performance poetry. The name itself conjures up images of intense literary types citing abstruse and obscure texts for audiences of fellow fanatics. Not for your average neophyte reader, or even university student, you might be inclined to say.

But as Douglas Barbour, an English professor at the U of A and, along with partner Stephen Scobie, one half of the performance poetry duo Re: Sounding, is quick to point out, poetry has always been meant to be heard. The sound of a poem is often as important as its meaning, and appreciation of the artistry of language is as important as divining underlying meanings.

Re: Sounding takes the performance aspect of poetry one (or two) steps forward, into the realm of "sound poetry", in which a

given text and predetermined structure are merely starting points for an improvisational performance. "It's comparable to jazz music," explains Barbour, "in that you take the text as a base but in performance it's never done exactly the same way twice."

Barbour furthers the musical comparison with references to the work of minimalist avant garde composer Steve Reich. For example, in one of his recordings, Reich took a single phrase of speech and multi-tracked it, gradually bringing the phrase out of and then back into sync to create an effect of coherence slipping into confusion and back again.

There is, as well, a percussive aspect to sound poetry. The performers may take a letter sound or syllable and play on that particular sound to create a rhythmic background to juxtapose with a line of counterpoint. In Europe, where sound poetry has become better known than in North America, performers sometimes use pre-recorded backing tapes as a base, or even accompany-

ing instrumentalists. Add to all this the dramatic aspect of live performance, and "sound poetry falls somewhere between the genres of music, drama and poetry," says Barbour.

Douglas Barbour is first and foremost a poet, though, with several volumes of poetry to his credit, the latest being an anthology entitled *Visible Visions*, published in 1984. He describes his own work as "free verse which tries to discover what it's doing while it's doing it."

Barbour and Scobie have been working and performing together since 1969, the scope of their performances gradually evolving into the present Re: Sounding format. In 1981 they co-edited an anthology of Canadian comic poetry, *The Maple Laugh Forever*. The duo have performed across Canada, in Europe, and New York city, where they received a rather infamous notice in the *New York Times*.

That august publication dubbed their NYC performance both "interesting" and "infantile", within the context of a single sentence!

But, as Barbour points out, the word infantile comes from the latin 'infans', meaning "before language", or pre-speech, and since their performance includes using parts of words and letter sounds for desired effects, the adjective was perhaps inadvertently appropriate.

A Re: Sounding performance includes solo pieces by both authors, as well as "ensemble acoustic pieces consisting of everything from 'conventional' free verse to homo-linguistic translations (from English into English) to improvisation on given texts." And although Scobie is now based at the University of Victoria, the two still perform as often as mutually crowded schedules will allow.

Finally, Barbour emphasizes the entertainment aspect of their performance: "If the audience isn't enjoying it, then we are failing them". Re: Sounding's performance will be resounding through the Latitude 53 gallery, 10920 - 88 Avenue, at 8:00 p.m. this Thursday evening, March 19. Admission is free.