

Free your radio and your mind will follow

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UtahFM (short for Free Media) is a self-proclaimed grassroots, online music station launched in May. The station wants to be an alternative to mass-marketed music and the limited offerings of other local stations. The programs run live Monday through Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. The past two weeks' archived programs can be streamed online anytime. The station is entirely volunteer-based.



Music director Bill Boyd said the volunteer element makes UtahFM "much more freewheeling and much more individual. It's much more idiosyncratic and much more passionate, because (the DJs) really care much more for it and really look forward to it."

He also said that, unlike most radio stations, there are no higher powers directing the music, so the hosts can play whatever they want.

"The FCC has nothing to do with us since we're on the Web," Boyd said. "There's a lot more freedom of choice here. We can do anything any other radio station can do, just over the Web."

An old hand in the radio business (he started at KRCL in 1990), Boyd prefers the physical CD to a digital download—he shows up for his program slot equipped with a massive file of burned CDs (the hard copies stay at home) and a case of new releases he has acquired as music director.

"All I need is three machines and a box of these (CDs) to do a good show," he said.

Boyd also recognizes that most people—especially younger people—are used to downloading music online.

"More power to 'em," he said.

He said he encourages U students to tune in from their computers at home and that people can listen live in their cars (or anywhere) with an iPhone.

"Not all Internet radio stations can say that," he said.

Eugenia Hero Jaffe, host of Funky Trunk, said Internet radio is only going to become more popular and views UtahFM as a distinct alternative because it's the only local radio station offering block programming.

"If people are interested in having really divergent changes every three hours, then this is for them," Jaffe said. "It's just another way to get music and entertainment, really."

Jaffe also emphasizes the community connection UtahFM creates—something that you can't get from mainstream media

or other alternatives such as satellite radio. Perhaps the best example of UtahFM's community involvement is Pinpoint SLC, a weekly arts and culture podcast. Contributors include City Weekly, SLUG Magazine, the Utah Symphony-Opera, the Gallery Stroll and Plan-B Theatre Company.

Marketing director Patrick Commiskey described Pinpoint as a news break, but not a community calendar.

"You're not going to learn everything that's going on in the upcoming weekend," he said. "But you're going to hear the voices of people putting on interesting (events), and you're going to get their story."

"I would love for (U students) to know they don't have to listen to crappy commercial radio," he said.

Commiskey said ambitious students can get involved by volunteering. UtahFM is seeking volunteers to help with programming, Web site upkeep, press releases and advertising.

Boyd also encourages students to get more involved.

"It's a great way to get your foot in the door, to learn radio skills and it's good community outreach," he said. "This is like the original ground-floor opportunity."

Visit www.UtahFM.org for more information on volunteer opportunities and programming schedules.

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UtahFM Program Highlights

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The Cosmo Show

Patrick Commiskey

Mondays, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

A link between classical music and the greater musical universe, "The Cosmo Show" explores the circumstances in which these forms come together.

Funky Trunk

Eugenie

Thursdays, Noon to 3 p.m.

This mix of R&B, soul, jazz and rock should give you reason enough to crank it. Eugenie mixes grooves from Creedence Clearwater Revival, Santana and Curtis Mayfield with rock from Zeppelin, Bowie and the Rolling Stones.

Calvin's Clubhouse

Calvin (age 6)

Saturdays, 9 a.m. to noon

Yes, they let a 6-year-old have his own show. Calvin cranks the coolest kid-friendly (and adult-approved) tunes this side of the Rockies. Listen for the likes of Johnny Cash, The Beatles, Stevie Wonder and (of course) School House Rock.

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