

Radio listeners are a jumpy lot

Few adhere to a set style of programming

I learn a lot from my students. In another life I teach English at Austin Community College. Recently I learned that one and the same person, a 20- to 25-year-old white male, listens to both Top 40 and rock 'n' roll radio. In the mornings, he says, he jumps between Mike Butts (on B-93, KBTS-FM) and Clark Ryan (on KLBJ-FM) — quite a leap.

Recently I learned from another student that one person — in this case a thirtysomething black female — can listen to both B-93, the abovementioned high-powered, all-hit station, and KNLE-FM, a non-commercial Christian adult contemporary station.

These unusual (to me) conjunctions started me thinking about the variety of radio I listen to. It's not too unusual for me to sample a talk show on KLBJ-AM, check out what rock song Z-102 (KPEZ-FM) or KGSR-FM is playing, and jump to oldies on Kool-99 (KLTD-FM) before settling on classical music on KMFA-FM. I like to think there's at least a degree of consistency in my taste, but then I actually enjoy KUT-FM's daring segue from folk music to grand opera on Saturday afternoons.

The ratings tell radio programmers how much of their audience is shared with other stations, but exactly who they are sharing with is a subject of endless speculation.

Logic suggests that if someone listens to one country station — KASE-FM, for instance — he will also listen to the other country stations in town, KVET-AM/FM and KATG-FM. But it ain't necessarily so. If a listener likes KASE for its low-key, easy-going approach, that same listener might choose soft-and-easy adult contemporary Majic-95 (KKMJ-FM) as a first alternative.

You've got to ask whether any station's formats are mutually exclusive — that is, if you listen to one there's no way you'll listen to the other. At first glance, you'd certainly say no one who likes rap also listens to classical. But taste is a tricky thing, and nobody's figured out all the variables.

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It's folk music in the summertime at KUT-FM.

The Cactus Cafe has long been known as one of Austin's leading venues for folk music. For the second year, KUT-FM's production manager Walter Morgan has produced a 13-week summer series in *Live at the Cactus*. Morgan recorded performances at the Cactus Cafe this year (and is still taping at some Cactus Cafe shows this month), then electronically polished them for broadcast.

"It's about as close as you can get to being there," Morgan said. "There's no added noise between the microphone



Radio

John Herndon

and the broadcast. It's really clean."

Folkways host David Obermann introduces the performers.

"We've got some great players, obviously," Morgan said. "Some really good stuff. The Cactus is a great venue."

The series airs Sundays at 7 p.m. Guy Clark and Townes Van Zandt are scheduled for June 9; Alison Krauss, June 16; Loudon Wainwright III, June 23; Gamble Rogers, June 30.

Folk Masters: Traditional Music in the Americas, recorded live at Carnegie Hall, airs at 10 p.m. Saturdays for 13 weeks this summer beginning June 8.

The programs range from Puerto Rican bomba to black gospel, Cajun music and Kansas City jazz. The first program is *Cowboy Songs, Mountain Ballads and Bluegrass*. The schedule continues with *There's Twelve Gates to the City: Black Gospel Styles* (June 15), *La Veille: An Evening's Entertainment* (Cajun music, June 22), *La Isla y la Costa* (Puerto Rican and Columbian music, June 29).

The John Hammond Years charts the course of American popular music from ragtime to rock through a personal memoir of critic, producer and talent scout John Hammond. Hammond discovered, produced and promoted Miles Davis, Aretha Franklin, Pete Seeger, Bruce Springsteen, Count Basie, Billie Holiday, Benny Goodman, Bob Dylan and George Benson, among many others, and the program traces 50 years of social change through music and interviews.

The program airs Saturdays at 9 p.m. First is *Ragtime and Blues* (June 8); then *The Birth of Swing*, the story of the formation of the first mixed-race jazz band when Hammond persuaded Benny Goodman to hire Lionel Hampton (June 15); *Kansas City Swing*, the creation of the Count Basie Orchestra (June 22); and *Lady Day*, conversations with Billie Holiday about her debut engineered by Hammond (June 29).

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In another interesting summer special, KUT's Louis Harrison is observing the 100th anniversary of Cole Porter's birth with a two-hour program celebrating his music and lyrics at 2 p.m. Sunday. The show will feature such classics as *Night and Day* and *I Get a Kick Out of You* recorded by performers as diverse as Fred Astaire and Ethel Merman, David Byrne and k.d. lang. Also included are rare archival recordings made by Porter.