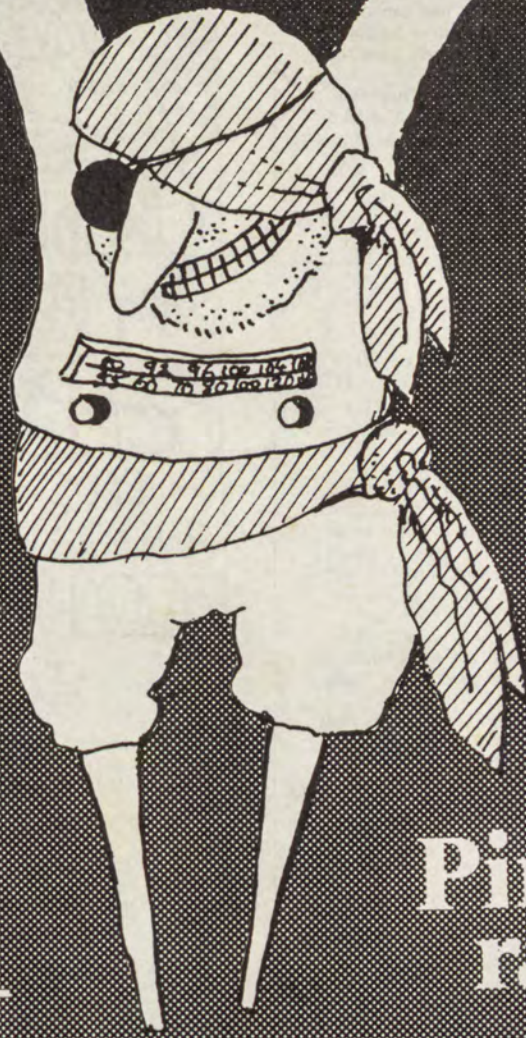


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Aug. 1979

RADIO TIMES

shiver me
megahertz...



Pirate
radio

AUGUST
79(?)

EDITORIAL

volunteer labour has produced yet another collectors item. A little late perhaps, but we're among friends. Anyone who thinks they can resuscitate our printing press from wherever it is that great printing presses go when they die, is most welcome to have a try.

Speaking of assistance, ZZZ also needs someone who can sort out our bureaucracy filing system and lave the Leaning Tower of Newspapers from crashing to its death. Eff Sharp has resigned — no one can quite fill her place, I'll admit, but you're welcome to apply for the job with our independent news team of extraordinarily ability.

Julie Goodall is keen to get started with her programming workshops — if you want to get involved with the station, but feel you don't know anything about it, here's where to start.

WANNA BE CREATIVE?

Just because this article is SMALL and HARDLY NOTICEABLE doesn't mean it's UNIMPORTANT. It's concerned with a very IMPORTANT matter. . . VOLUNTEERS and PROGRAMMING. ZZZ is ever on the lookout for people to become involved in producing PROGRAMMES.

At the moment, I'm looking for people to become involved in making a series of segments on various topics of socio/political relevance, to be exact, a series of inserts on sexist ads, racist ads, anti-homosexual ads in papers, magazines, and on radio and TV, and also a series of segments on ways of saving energy and SMALLTERNATIVES.

Got any ideas? Got any time? Don't be put off by the fact that you may not have had any experience — I can show you everything you need to know (heh, heh.)

Anyone with suggestions, or with time they'd like to spend working on little scripts or on research, please phone me at the station on 371 5111. (Even if it's to say you think it sounds like a good idea).

JULIE GOODALL

PRODUCED BY
RadioTimes VOLUNTEER
COLLECTIVE

Typesetting Marie Blanch for Alert
Typesetting (ZZZZZZ!!)

Registered for Transmission by post as a periodical Category "B".



gossip

Well known night announcer is off soon. Bill Riner is heading NORTH thru Asia. Says he will keep in touch by tape. . . . keep listening.

*

*

Ex Station Co-ordinator, Jim Beatson leaves town and triple zed on a long trip to England. We all thank him for his tireless work and wish Bon Voyage.

*

*

Volunteers still needed to help out lots to do folks, just phone up and join in.

*

*

Promotions David Darling is all smiles since he won Qld. Pop Music Awards '79 for most Outstanding Contributor to the Qld. pop scene. . . Nice work Daffy.



NEWS: Mon-Fri 6am, 6.30, 7.00, 7.30, 8.00, 8.30, 1pm, 5pm, and 7pm.

Additionally on weekday from Monday to Thursday we run shorter interviews and reports in Bill Riner's program between 5pm and 7pm.

Generally we attempt to carry longer interviews either in the morning program on weekdays or on the **BRISBANE LINE** (Sunday 2-5pm). The Brisbane Line tends to be a weekly roundup of the weeks events incorporating the past weeks program highlights.

SPECIALIST PROGRAMS: These are particularly between 9 and 10pm Monday thru Thursday.

Monday: Monday Special. . . an extended look at some interesting artist, group or social issue.

Tuesday: Blues music.

Wednesday: 50s rock and roll.

Thursday: Jazz.

Friday: Live music.

REVIEWS: Plays and movies are reviewed at 12.30 and repeated at 6pm.

SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Campus Roundup: like it says, a daily list of goings on around the campuses. 8.15am Mon-Fri.

Accommodation: daily list of housing available or sought. 10.30am Mon-Fri.

Trips: Leaving Brisbane and willing to share either costs, driving or merely keep someone else awake. We may be able to put you in touch with others going your way. Similarly if you're looking for someone to travel with you we'll run your notice. Noon Mon-Fri.

Brisbane Graffiti: Mon-Sat. 6.30pm nightly roundup of events of interest around Brisbane. Films, meetings, bands, dates. . .

Musicians Classified: idea is to put musicians in touch with other musicians. Help them flog/buy gear, instruments or simply play together. 7.45pm Thurs.

General announcements: These are scattered throughout the day. You tell us we'll tell the listeners.

How to contact us: Ring 371 5111 preferably in office hours and during the week. We'll get the details and you're away. Even better would be to mail all printed press releases, information etc. to us at P.O. Box 509, Toowong Qld. 4066.

Costs nothing!



PHONE: 367 397

PHOEBE'S CREPE AND QUICHE RESTAURANT

A new Restaurant on the corner of Great George and Charlotte Streets, Paddington, serving a variety of savoury crepes and quiches as main courses.

4ZZZ subscribers get a 20% discount during the first week (from Tuesday 26th June) and 10% discount thereafter.

Open from 6 pm to Midnight Tues - Sunday BYO



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BENEFITS AS LISTED AT THE BACK OF
RADIO TIMES.

4ZZZ-FM
371 5111
P.O. Box 509
TOOWONG 4066

INSTRUMENTAL AS ANYONE IN GETTING BUMS OFF SEATS...



By GRAHAM AISTHORPE

A few months back, in the Singles Extravaganza, about the only way to get any product on vinyl was, as the man says, to do it yourself. Last year, Cameron Allan and Martin Fabinyi formed Regular Records, primarily at the time to record Mental as Anything.

Within three weeks of the December release of *Ma Plays at your Party*, the 1100 pressings were nipped. A re-release through import shops was gone in one day. (Funny how these young, fast and scientific Oz bands seem only to be able to sell through import shops...)

"We're (Regular Record's) star performers at the moment," informs Greedy Smith. "They have a few other acts on the agenda. . . Gerry Humpheries, who used to be in the Loved Ones. . . The Passengers — are they on too?"

"Yeah, The Passengers (*Now The Visitors, until about September, when Deniz Tek finally makes it back to the USA*) and the Other Side, Rob Younger's band", supplies Reg Mombassa.

Mentals picked up a distribution deal with Festival — "A major record company — Carnival, or Mardi-Gras. . . something. *Don't print that!*" was all I could be told at the time. "What we're really going to do," Reg continued, generously expanding on the then secret deal, "is load two Kombi vans with 3000 records and travel around the country!" Really? "I was only pullin' ya leg!"

Well, let's talk about your new record. (Simple 'nuff, uh?) "What, the EP, the single, or our '20 Greatest Hits'?" Mmmm. "We're doing all our latest hits," says Greedy, a little more sensibly. (It's gonna be crammed with ongs! adds silly Reg). "It'll be all originals", is the only thing all are agreeing on. "Except for the riffs and licks we rip off," adds a sly voice.

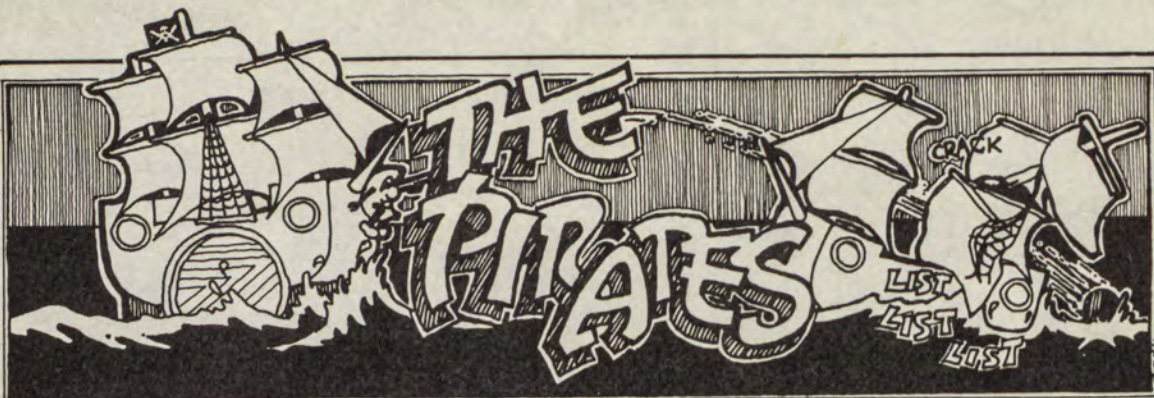
"We play about 18 originals," says Martin Plaza. "Like, today (last QIT lunchtime gig) we played more than 50% originals" ("Yeah, 52%!" from somewhere) continues Martin, "It's better to do a lot of good covers, than a heap of shithouse originals."

"The thing is", says Greedy, "we started off with covers, and we've generally added to it, since then". Familiar, aint it? "Another Flowers?" some cleverdick suggests.

"Oh no, we're not another Flowers, mate. Like we did two or three originals. But that's why they're copping shit down south, I reckon. I asked Steve Cummins what he thought of them, and he was really negative towards them."

So how do you choose the covers? "Oh, we just write down the titles, put them in a hat, and pick a couple out," says Greedy. "No, we only pick songs that are under three minutes long, and have a real catchy, dancy toons."

"And also," Martin's eager to point out, "one criteria is songs that have generally been overlooked by other bands. We try and avoid doing. . . sort of. . . common covers like. . . *you know* — Johnny B. Goode. That's an obvious cover for a band to do." Fair enough?



Pirate Radio is now 15 years old in England, and although the battered and leaky off-shore stations which gained notoriety in the 1960s are more or less finished, land based priates are growing in numbers and popularity.

Radio Caroline, the longest running of all, is said to be coming back to the medium wave band soon, but for the moment the only alternative to the eight legitimate stations is a number of lowbudget, land-based outfits providing a very limited service. The excitement, energy and huge popularity of the early pirates has been replaced by a new generation of law-breakers, just as committed but more down-to-earth and less attractive.

The transformation was a direct consequence of the Marine Broadcasting (Offences) Act, passed by Harold Wilson's Labour Government in August 1967. By making it an offence to supply or support the pirates, the act virtually wiped out offshore piracy for good.

Only Caroline, which broadcast in Dutch as well as English with multinational backing, was prepared to risk prosecution, and its appearances over the last twelve years have been irregular.

First and always foremost of the pirates, Caroline had begun on Easter Saturday, 1964, operating from the ship of the same name in international waters off East Anglia.

Its pop and patter formula was more or less instant success.

Despite Post Office efforts to ban offshore radio, Radio Atlanta came on the air in May and two months later it merged with Caroline to form Carolines South and North, which operated off the Isle of Man.

Several more followed, some of them based in disused wartime forts, and at the end of the year the influential important, Radio London started up. There was a wild, freebooting spirit in those days, best illustrated by Tom Pepper, owner of Radio Invicta and a self-confessed smuggler, who drowned in the River Thames, and by Screamin' Lord Sutch, who shocked everyone with his wild stage act, then stood for Parliament in a General Election and started a radio station when he wasn't elected.

Even for the ordinary pirate, life was hazardous: a big wave could send the needle sliding across a record as millions listened in, while a big gale could push the ship into British territorial waters, which meant going off air until the storm subsided.

The DJs had to be very, very dedicated. When on the sip they would often broadcast for over three hours a day, and though they spent one week on the mainland for every two aboard, this time was taken up with personal appearances, answering fan mail and other station work.

When Caroline started, Britain's only alternative to the BBC, and the only station regularly playing pop music, was Radio Luxembourg so the pirates had little trouble in establishing an audience. The format was basically American — nonstop music, jingles and adverts, charismatic, DJs, slick patter, transatlantic accents — and that meant a lot of listeners.

In April 1966 a National Opinion Poll revealed that, two years after its inception, more than a third of the population of Britain (about 20 million people) were listening to pirate radio, a staggering total. Certain (mainly Labour) MPs began to press for some kind of check on what was, after all, an illegal intrusion into official wavelengths.

In an effort to shake off their irresponsible image the pirates then adopted an air of respectability. They smartened themselves up, rented offices in Mayfair, and enforced the sort of limits on themselves that the Government might impose on official commercial radio: not more than six advertising an hour, no controversial (i.e. political, contraceptive or religious) adverts accepted.

When former sheep farmer called Ted Allburey started Radio 390 he aimed it expressly at the middle class housewife market, and once a week he ran a magazine show for businessmen.

The aim of all this was not so much to avoid anti-piracy measures as to ensure Government approval for the introduction of legitimate, land-based commercial stations. There was a very strong desire to get ashore, to be rid of the multitude of problems that inevitably beset the radio ships.

The pirates reckoned they had a good chance of being awarded franchises under new conditions. They certainly didn't envisage being closed down. Ronan O'Rahilly, the Irish founder of Radio Caroline, declared that any politician prepared to lend himself an anti-piracy bill would find himself in a lot of trouble with his constituency. (Sure enough, Labour lost the 1970 election).

But those new conditions didn't come. In July 1966 the Marine Broadcasting (Offences) Bill was introduced, hastened almost certainly by the murder of Radio City owner Reg Calvert, an event that had much more widespread effect than any change of image.

In December, the government announced plans for Radio One and BBC local stations. On August 15, 1967 the Marine Broadcasting (Offences) Act was introduced and the pirates went under. The following month Radio One opened with 17 of its DJs and all of its ideas borrowed from the pirates.

Land piracy — operating from garages, fields, tower blocks — became the only viable means for free enthusiasts. In theory, they ran a much greater risk than the ships, with police or Home Office officials often just around the corner. In practice things are different.

Mike Knight of Radio Jackie, at age 10 one of the oldest of today's pirates, was asked on Capital Radio recently how Jackie had survived so long. "By keeping on the run" he said, "We're contravening the 1949 Wireless Telegraphy Act which says that we can't broadcast without a licence. But as we're not actually harming or offending anybody the authorities aren't that hot when it comes to tracking us. It's just a matter of changing transmission sites each week (so they don't know exactly where we're going to be coming from), watching out for them, and hoping really."

THE PIRATES cont....

Operating on Sundays in South London only from 9am to 5pm, Jackie is fairly typical of the modern pirates, although the format – relying heavily on the Top 40 – is more mainstream than some.

The ideal of the sixties pirates – the desire, realised in 1973, to see independent local stations – has been developed by their successors.

Mike Knight says: "We are campaigning for the introduction of really local community radio stations. There's room for at least one station in every London borough.

"We're broadcasting in Sutton. For a Radio Sutton, just covering the borough of Sutton, we'd probably need no more than 200 or 300 watts. No international agreements would be broken if we were to go on an allocated frequency with that sort of power. We have been proving for years now that the audience is there, and that they will listen to an alternative service."

Besides Jackie (227m MW) – hard to get in North London – there are only a handful of good pirates.

Radio AMY (Alternative Media for You) gives a good all-round service in North London, Sundays 10-4pm on 217m MW, and it has an offshot, AMY east, opening in East London soon.

Radio Invieta, (92.4 VHF), Sundays 12-3.15pm), is very professional and very different, concentrating on slick, pre-recorded programming, specialising in soul music and audible over most of the city.

Thameside (90.2 VHF, Sundays 7-8) has even less output but is well put together with a pop rock format similar to American FM radio. It too gives general coverage.

For the pirates of today the game is their hobby, not their life. Operating on tiny budgets for a few hours a week, their stations couldn't seem more different from the ships of the sixties, backed as many of them were by big American corporations and garnering much of their income by letting the record companies pay for needle time.

But the point of piracy is just the same as it was 15 years ago. One station per borough may not be as far away as you think.



I put the headphones on last night just in time to hear Allah or Buddha or somebody else in Authority utter a doom on all dishonest people who tap the ether without a licence from the P.M.G. I had taken one out some time ago so my withers were unwrung; but I felt a spasm of sympathy for the small boy next door, who has spent the savings of many months in acquiring from voracious dealers the necessary parts for a two valve set, but who hasn't a chance of raising the 25 bob for the licence.

Being a spirited boy he will doubtless dismantle his aerial tomorrow and start looking into concealment. He uses his iron bedstead as the antenna and keeps his phones under his pillow. The other waves are expensive and means of concealment mean that the police have more chance of catching the next murderer than of nabbing the nimble radio thief. And the goods taht the broadcasting companies charge as much for, aren't rubies and emeralds either.

In England, the licence costs 10s so the programmers are infinitely better. If the Australian companies can't improve their services without charging the present exorbitant fee, the money should be collected from the people who are making all the profit out of the new craze, the purveyors of imported wireless apparatus.

Shoving the whole burden on the public will simply mean the converting of decent young Australians into furtive law-breakers.

—An article printed in the "Bulletin" dated 9th October, 1924.

Living With Joint Efforts

After July's flood of high capacity Cloudland Joint Efforts, you and many others are probably thinking... "Wow, Triple Zed must be rolling in Moola!". So was I. But as has been said by some "The Truth of the Matter Is" . . . that we're not. In fact, we haven't even made enough to keep ol' ZZZ alive over the five weeks.

Heard it all before. . . eh? Well, you gotta remember that we don't charge much. All you decent, loveable alternative radio supporters have to fork out either \$2 or \$3, but we still only charge those hordes of non-subscribers \$4. You can't find anyplace else in Brisso and possibly Australia that does it at that price, can you?

And where can you see good local bands and top Australian and International acts on one night in a hall with the spacious dance floor and excellent performer exposure of Cloudland.

In most ways it's just about the best we've been able to do in the three years Triple Zed has been presenting Joint Efforts – great music, a comfortable venue at a very reasonable admission fee. But we rely on getting big audiences, and in the main we have been successful in achieving this. Attendance at the recent Joint Efforts has ranged from about 800 to around 2500. Unfortunately the number of factors that affect the size of the crowd that you get is almost as big as the crowd. And most of those factors are impossible to predict or even guess at.

So the risk involved is positively scary. Nonetheless we only made a loss on one of the five latest Big Ones.

Another thing about Big Ones is that the costs involved become fairly ridiculous. Particularly because Triple Zed doesn't have enough people to get around and organize things like bulk buying of food, beer, wine, disposable cups etc. So. . . we have to pay another organisation to do it. Silly, isn't it. We even have to hire some security cos with an operation as large as a Cloudland Joint Effort then someone, somewhere is going to be unpleasant, and understandably an unpaid volunteer trying to stop a fight shouldn't have to take the punishment.

Even so the damage to the hall is sometimes pretty bad and of course, Triple Zed gets the bill. Then there are inescapable costs like paying the bands, actually renting Cloudland and paying for whatever cleaning needs to be done after the volunteers who hang around when the musics over have swept up the surface rubbish.

Advertising in newspapers and artwork and printing for our own posters and handbills can be added in, and then there are all the things you might forget about, which I have. Anyway. . . you add up all the costs and take it away from what people paid to get in and get pissed. Whats left you put in the bank and hope you've got enough to cover all the bills and wages and everything that keeps a radio station on air (at least \$3000 per week!)

Meanwhile our invincible promotion co-ordinators are planning more fun and Joint Efforts in a Cloudland near you, soon! Look for details this ish.



When Brisbane SHARKS finally sobered up and formed a band, some strange things started happening. Their debut saw crazed poets flaunting their pseudo anti-intellectual one liners, a classical violinist pirouetting in bathing suit, raincoat and army boots. Later, on stage bitching and drunken arguments, and hoards of overenthusiastic fans storming on stage to lend vocal support. Sharks had begun.

From the mid week mediocrity of their individual career pursuits emerged the weekend bedlam that is The Sharks. This schizophrenic existence is reflected in thier lyrics.

*"Monday we go to the laundromat
Tuesday you make a cup of tea
Wednesday we stay in bed real late
Thursday you go to the R.E.
But we're acting cool, real cool.
And we're out to fool you."*

After such a startling debut, The Sharks replaced their violinist with a sax player-guitarist; althaough their approach to the repertoire is to whip up a song hours before a concert the total sound is electrifying.

SAVE THE SHARKS

THE SHARKS now consist of Cecily (piano), John (Bass), Phil (sax-guitar), Paul (drums) and Mark (guitar and vocals). Their material consists of originals, cover versions and bastardized arrangements of everyone's old favourites e.g. "MacArthurs Park" and "Who wants to be a millionaire". Their originals are critical yet apathetic, intellectual yet crass, and overstated in a "fair dinkum" way, frenzied yet melodic, demanding attention.

VERSE FROM LOBOTOMY

*You've taken out half of my brain,
I can't feel love I can't feel pain,
Hit me, kick me, lick me, love me, it's all the same,
I don't know where I am and I've forgotten my name.*

AND ON THE SUBJECT OF HAMBURGERS

*De De Deport
De De Deport
De De Fuck Off Ronald McDonald.
Yankee go home
Ronald MacDonald leave Australia alone.*

The only way is up and a single is due soon. Where can you see The Sharks? Any Brisbane venue where there is live music thanks to 4ZZZ-FM, and at assorted parties in the suburbs (if you're lucky!).

Save The Sharks!!

BLUES

PAYIN' THE COST TO BE THE BOSS

The popular music market provides employment for a vast number of fulltime musicians and singers, many of whom have made a living from the industry from an early age, rarely having to resort to ditch-digging or factory work to make ends meet. But to a number of the artists you hear each week on 'Nothin' But The Blues', despite their international reputations, music is not a constant preoccupation.

Life in the ghetto is still a rough deal. Weekend gigs in local bars and taverns, maybe an occasional recording session — the rest of the week is filled, by economic necessity, with a tiring day job, in the steel works, truck driving or whatever. That's payin' your dues.

It's a hard struggle to obtain recognition and regular gigs for the average blues player. Many work hard and long waiting for a break that may never come. John Jackson worked for many years as a gravedigger, B.B. King was a radio announcer, Elmore James had a radio repair shop, Kid Thomas drove a truck until he accidentally knocked down and killed a young white girl. The distraught father hunted down, shot and killed the young harp player. He was not prosecuted. So it goes.



ALBERT KING

Albert King, after spending his early life as a farm hand, cook and bulldozer driver is now among the lucky few, well known to many rock music fans and of course a household name to the blues cognoscente. Born in Indianola, Miss. on April 25 1923 and raised in Osceola, Ark. he did not in fact become a full time musician till the age of 33.

He taught himself guitar as a kid, and being left-handed, when he got his first real instrument, merely turned the box around, with the strings upside down. He still does it that way. He plays all wrong but it sounds allright.

Just as guitarist Son Seals began professionally as a drummer with Albert King, Albert commenced work hitting skins for Homsick James and then Jimmy Reed. He was still playing guitar on the side and finally recorded for Parrot in 1953. Following encouraging success with these pressings, Albert formed his own band and settled in St. Louis. The Parrot sides and those recorded for Chess and Bobbin in the period 1959-61 show that Albert developed his distinctive style early in the piece, adding further refinements till we find him at his creative peak during his long stay with Stax from 1966.

Following up his hits of the late sixties with knockout live performances at Fillmore and other mainly white rock venues consolidated his popularity with a wide cross-section of the concert-going and record-buying public. Recent releases on Tomato find him playing an updated version of his basic style, grainy throaty vocals with stinging sustained notes from Lucy over a funky soul-based rhythm.

Musically Albert is very much his own person. He claims to share a father with B.B. King, uses the same name and even calls his guitar Lucy. (B's axe is named Lucille). But there is no sense of plagiarism or rivalry evident on vinyl or in the flesh. On stage Albert is consistent, even predictable, but undeniably inventive and exciting. I witnessed a typical set in 1975. After the band (rhythm, organ and three horns) settled into a groove, Albert, very relaxed in a check jacket, pork pie hat and smoking a pipe, he strapped on the now familiar Gibson Flying-V.

On puny Pom rockers, this huge menacing contraption appears intent on devouring the musician, but Albert's ample frame made it look like a toy. The first chilling cluster of notes broke the relative silence like a rush of afterbirth. The rest I leave to your imagination. After a couple of warm-up numbers, pipe and tile were removed and the man got down to business with a string of his early Stax hits like 'Born Under A Bad Sign' and 'Laundromat Blues' ending the set dripping with sweat and leaving the audience weak at the knees. Why hasn't this man been brought to Australia?

'Nothing' But The Blues' will be presenting an Albert King special during August. Keep listening.

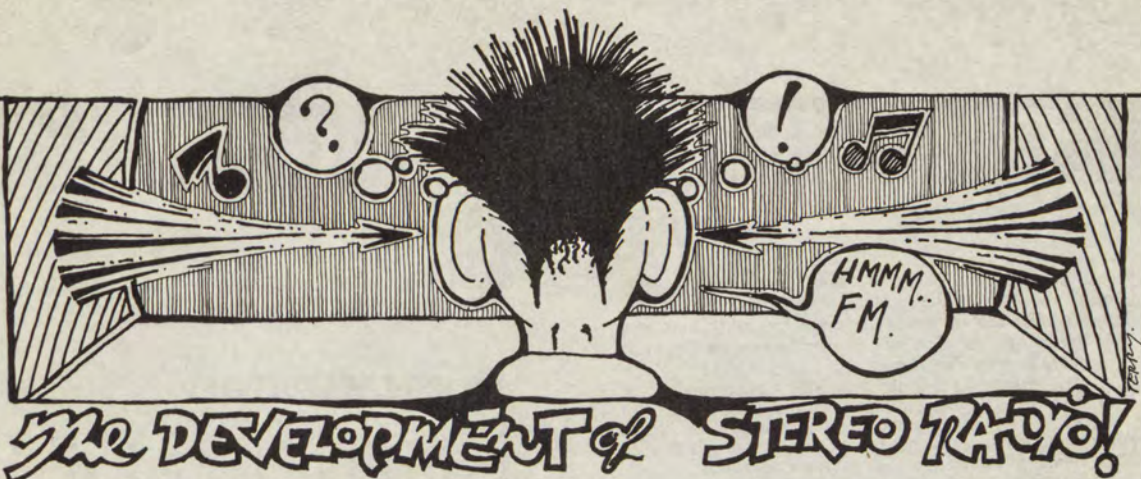
—MARK DOHERTY



FURRIE ZED'S

AUGUST - BIG - PREDICTIONS

DURING AUGUST--- YOU--- WILL HAVE--- A--- GOOD-----
--- TIME --- AS --- THE FIRST --- WEDNESDAY ---
- AT --- THE SURFAIR --- YOU --- WILL SEE --- WAIT ---
--- FOR IT --- CONTRABAND --- ON THE FOLLOWING ---
WEDNESDAY --- THE EIGHTH --- AT SURFAIR ---
--- LOBBY LLOYD --- AND --- THE COLOURED BALLS ---
- HAVE --- PULLED THEMSELVES --- TO-GETHER --- WITH ---
- MENTAL - AS - ANYTHING --- ALSO --- ON --- FRIDAY ---
--- AT CLOUDLAND --- THEN --- JUST FOR --- SCHOOL ---
--- HOLIDAYS --- A SURFAIR --- DOUBLE --- DIPPER ---
- WITH --- MATCHBOX --- ON WEDNESDAY --- THE FIFTEENTH ---
- AND --- RICHARD CLAPTON BAND --- ON THURSDAY --- THE
--- SIXTEENTH --- THEN SATURDAY --- THE EIGHTEENTH ---
--- AT CLOUDLAND --- THE SPORTS --- LAST VISIT ---
--- BEFORE ENGLAND --- PLUS --- RICHARD CLAPTON BAND
--- THE ALIENS --- MELB --- THEN NEXT PLEASE --- IS ---
- WEDNESDAY --- AGAIN --- WITH --- THE ANGELS --- AGAIN ---
- AT --- SURFAIR --- AGAIN --- ALSO --- THE ANGELS ---
- PLUS --- OTHERS --- AT CLOUDLAND --- ON THE ---
- FRIDAY --- THE TWENTY-FOURTH --- AND --- JUST ---
--- SNEAKING --- IN --- ON AUGUST --- THE TWENTY ---
--- NINTH --- AT SURFAIR --- YOU GUESSED IT --- 'COS ---
- IT'S --- A --- WEDNESDAY --- ZZZ --- HOPE TO ---
PRESENT --- YOU ALL --- WITH --- MI-SEX --- GOOD-BYE



FOUNDER OF FM DIED FIGHTING

On March 6 1954, the world's first FM station, call-signed W2XMN, went off the air after sixteen years continuous broadcasting without any advertising subsidies.

W2XMN, based at Alpine, New Jersey some 17 miles from New York, started regularly scheduled FM broadcasting on July 18, 1939. The station only went off the air because its mentor Major Edwin Howard Armstrong, the inventor of FM, had committed suicide. On the night of January 31, 1954, Armstrong just walked out of the window of his 13th floor apartment at exclusive River House in Manhattan, bowed down with frustration over the legal problems centering round his master patents on FM.

To cut what is an horrendously long and complex story short, at the time of his death Armstrong had no less than 21 legal suits running against RCA, Motorola and other radio and TV set manufacturers. Armstrong had built the Alpine Heights FM transmitter with his own money, and some of it with his own bare hands, following an earlier squabble with RCA.

He first made FM work in 1933 and the next year had been allowed to take over the NBC experimental TV station on the Empire State Building in New York. Using a 2Kw FM transmitter on 44MHz, Armstrong disproved once and for all the folklore belief that VHF radio reception would stop abruptly at the horizon, which is 45 miles from the Empire State. He succeeded in transmitting static free radio to Haddonfield in New Jersey, a distance of 85 miles.

In November of 1934 he even multiplexed four different programs onto a single carrier — music on the main channel, a facsimile on a super audible subcarrier on a second channel, a synchronising signal for the facsimile on a third and a telegraph channel on a fourth subcarrier.

But even these successes could not compete with the lure of television, the nation's new toy. Armstrong and his equipment were ordered out of the Empire State Building. This is how the Alpine Heights transmitter was born. Armstrong, a millionaire shareholder in RCA (thanks to earlier inventions such as the Superhet) sold a block of stock and spent \$300,000 constructing the 400 foot tower at Alpine.

The first program went out at 4 o'clock on the afternoon of July 18, 1939. Apart from a brief silence in the evening, caused when an insect crawled into a transformer, short circuited the power and caused a 20 second trip, all went smoothly. Gradually Armstrong achieved what he had set out to achieve. Albeit at his own expense, he gave a small cross section of the American public a chance to judge for themselves what FM radio had to offer.

At the time that Alpine first went on the air, there were only 25 FM receivers in existence, all built by General Electric at a cost to Armstrong of around \$10,000 and distributed free to his friends. But within a year there were 150 applications for new FM stations on file at the FCC. After the inevitable war hiatus, the

FCC decided to shift the FM broadcasters from the original low frequency bands (around 40MHz) to bands between 88 and 108 MHz, where of course FM radio still remains.

Armstrong and his colleagues fought bitterly against this frequency shift arguing that the right place for FM was between 42 and 56 MHz and the right place for television was upstairs in the higher VHF bands. Shortly before his death, Armstrong was still referring to the FCC frequency shift decision as "one of the colossal engineering blunders of the century". It's an interesting thought — was Armstrong or the FCC right? If FM were today downstairs at between 42 and 56MHz would we bless or curse Armstrong for it?

Even though the frequency shift, for better or worse, obsoleted the half million or so FM receivers already in use, FM became the craze. By 1948 there were 404 FM stations operating in the USA, 436 more had been authorised for construction and 178 conditional grants were out. Suitable receivers were being produced at a rate approaching two million a year. This set the scene for the legal attack by Armstrong which was to prove literally suicidal. He resented the fact that whereas most FM receiver manufacturers were paying royalties on his patents, a score of companies, notably RCA, were still holding out.

He sued them all but cracked under the strain of the necessary pre-trial work. Against the advice of friends and lawyers, Armstrong's widow Marion continued fighting the unfinished legal battles after his death. It took until 1967, a full 13 years later before the last court case had been decided in favour of the inventor. But with Armstrong gone there was no driving force to keep the station on the air. As one employee put it, "No matter if someone picks up the tab and puts it back on the air tomorrow, Alpine is dead. It died with the major." In all Alpine cost him \$2 million of his own money.

MOVING ?

RADIO TIMES DOESN'T AUTOMATICALLY TRACK DOWN SUBSCRIBERS YOU KNOW SO IF YOU'RE GUNNA MOVE WHY DON'T YOU LET US KNOW YOUR NEW ADDRESS AND WHILE YOU'RE AT IT HOW ABOUT RE-SUBSCRIBING . . . (SORRY NO EASY TO USE FORM WITH THIS ONE...)

ON THE RECEIVING END

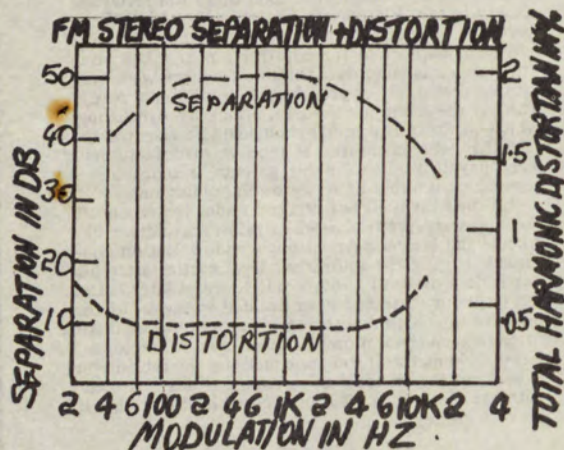
RAMPANT TECHNOLOGY LOOSE

Selecting your new FM tuner from the vast array of glossy silver or slinky black models presented to you by an over zealous salesperson will probably have you either buying the first one shown to you or departing the shop heavily bewildered.

This month we'll look at how to sort through some of the array by using specifications. One word of warning. Of course, don't forget that advertised figures are designed to sell a product, so try and confirm with independent figures from say review magazines.

Generally the first specification found is frequency response. It should cover the area of 20Hz to 15KHz, as flat as possible i.e. the plus or minus db figure is given this should be as small as possible. Some manufacturers roll of frequency response at about 30Hz to reduce low frequency "thumps". The high frequencies end at 15KHz due to the filtering required, within the receiver, to block the 19KHz pilot tone. This tone is used to decode the stereo information in FM transmissions.

Related to frequency response is separation. This is the amount of left signal getting into the right channel and vice versa. The normal specification is done at 1KHz but a more critical result can be seen at higher frequencies. At least 30db within the confines of 50Hz and 10KHz is adequate. A sharp drop at the high



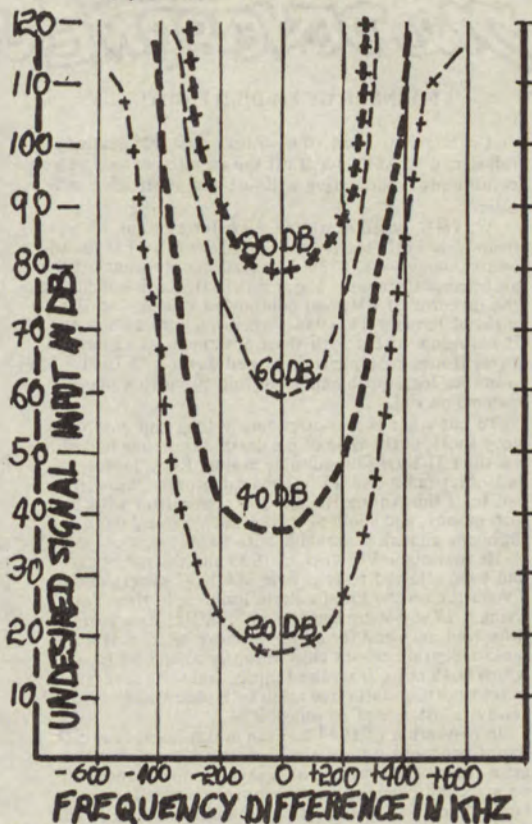
frequency region is normal.

Sensitivity (sometimes called 1HF sensitivity) is one of the specifications that have been subject to advertisers abuse, and in most cases is downright misleading. In mono it should be about 2-3 microvolts. In stereo it should be between 5-10 microvolts. Better to look at the 50db quietening sensitivity, or, the input level required for the tuner to produce a 50db signal-to-noise ratio. This is a more usable specification. Look for the lowest figure possible. Remember the stereo signal needed for this figure will be a lot larger - figures around 60 microvolts, for stereo, are normal. Some manufacturers are publishing curves for this sensitivity - basically the steeper the better - starting as soon as possible after the curve starts.

Total Harmonic Distortion (THD) is normally another confusing specification because of the many ways it can be measured. Hopefully several frequencies (e.g. 100Hz, 1KHz, 4KHz and 7KHz) in both stereo and mono should be given. Once again the lowest

figure possible is what you want and your dollar will control its minimum. Nominally 0.5% in mono-double in stereo.

FM SELECTIVITY



Signal to noise ratio (S/N ratio) give you an idea of the receivers noise relative to the input voltage. Once again curves help. Average figures are about 70db for mono and about 65db for stereo (weighted figures) or 65db and 70db unweighted figures.

Limiting indicates the ability of the tuner to reach its full output relative to signal strength. If you are in a fringe area - it should be early - but basically it should be as low a value as possible - between 3 and 4 microvolt is an average.

This should give you an idea on where to start to look for your new tuner. I suggest looking around and short-list the tuners you like the look of (and can afford) then compare specifications and have a listen to them all, preferably in the same place to get a good comparison. If you're a non-subscriber using this article, don't forget to add \$20 to the purchase price and send it to Triple Zed, so we don't fade away and leave you with nothing to receive.

—LAURIN MCKINNON
TECHNICIAN

FINE MUSIC



4MBS FM 103.3 Mhz

WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE?

At the moment, Brisbane has two on-air alternatives to commercial radio, and one other not yet to air. Between them, 4ZZZ FM (102.1 MHz), 4MBS FM (103.3 MHz) and 4EB AM (1485 KHz) cater for a wide spectrum of tastes. ZZZ you already know about, unless you've stolen this copy of Radio Times.

4MBS FM 103.3 Mhz

4MBS FM

4MBS is a fine music station, presenting a program of 90% classical and 10% jazz. According to Paul Setto, their Station Manager, their policy is based on entertainment, enjoyment and education for better understanding of what you're listening to. Later on, they hope to get into live concerts, and putting together programmes that would be suitable for school listeners, parallel to the ABC. Basically, the announcers speak for only 45 seconds per item, based on the premise that if you can't say anything good about the music, don't say anything at all. They're not involved in current affairs issues of any sort, and as a result of external broadcasting restrictions, no advertising is allowed.

4MBS obtained its licence in October 78 based on the example of 2MBS in Sydney. The station has a board of 14 unpaid directors who, along with Paul, decide station policy. Paul is the only fulltime staff, and he sees his position as the advisor, disseminator of technical knowledge and volunteer co-ordinator — he provides the direction in which the station travels. There are 36 volunteer programmers who select the music (from their own private collections), a group of "slotters" who organise the programmes into an interesting day, and a group of announcers who work at times suitable to them.

They play the music they like rather than cater to an audience; so far they have 780 subscribers who pay \$25 for the pleasure. Other finances comes from the sponsorship system, whereby a business can pay for half an hour or so, to have the business name, address, phone number and service mentioned. As Paul says, "we're a bit particular about who they are, we don't really want the 'Joe-Sludges', however we'd welcome any of the multinationals".



The station is run differently from ZZZ and EB in that Paul directs the operations; he isn't convinced that collectives can be efficiently productive without a source of direction. However, he believes in full internal volunteer co-operation, and personal and technical co-operation between the three stations. Having such different audiences, there's no need for inter-station competition, and such a lot to be gained from co-operation.



4EB

Angela Zammataro, the Office Co-ordinator for 4EB feels the same, although she would extend the areas of co-operation to include coverage of social and cultural issues. The idea of sharing a news service independent of the Courier Mail needs further discussion, but it is a very interesting prospect.

4EB is the ethnic station, catering for approximately thirty different groups. Their policy is to present a full entertainment, educational and information service in the groups particular language, along the line of "Our Radio is your radio". Angela calls it "multi-cultural pluralism; non-political and non-religious". There is also to be an Intercultural programme broadcast in English.

4EB is to go to air shortly. The station has a Council of fourteen volunteers — representing the ethnic groups involved, to decide on policy and programmes. Any individual is invited to assist on the programming committee. This station, like ZZZ and MBS exists on its committed volunteer labour, assisted by others with more skill and/or direction. Finance for 4EB comes from the \$5 subscription fee, and the sponsorship system.

At the moment, EB broadcasts through MBS from 7 to 8 on Saturday mornings. Although it's not a true representation of what they're like, it's a good opportunity for people to get to know them, and good practice. Future plans for EB include the translation of CES job vacancies, live broadcasts and more educational programmes. Their next meeting for programming convenors is Monday 6th August, if you're interested in participating.

4ZZZ, 4MBS and 4EB will be constantly welcoming more volunteers to keep the public broadcasting situation what it should be — the People's Radio — an alternative worth listening to.

—SANDRA WATKINS

XTC...XTC...XTC...XT

INTERVIEW:



ANDY PARTRIDGE

How did you run into the other people in XTC?

Ah...literally in a drunken stupid sort of pub I think. We were all in the same sort of situation, we just wanted to be in a group and get a sniff of fame and fortune you know.

What sort of venues do you like playing?

Hot, seaty and small where I can put my hands on the audience and they can come up and jump around on the stage and we can talk to the audience and shake hands with them. I'm not really into big places; if we have to play big places which is sometimes beyond our control because so many people want to see us and we just can't invite them all into a tiny club, we have to say look we have to play a big place because so many of you want to see us.

If we ever do these bit places it's a little bit sub because you lose some of the atmosphere and the audience have to try extra hard to get into you but I like small clubs. People are constantly saying this band sells like XTC or that band sells like XTC: In the British music papers week after week we find our name cropping up as a kind of meter for up and coming bands. All that's quite rewarding. I wouldn't mind a bit of money. I'm the poorest I've ever been in any of my jobs.

What sort of bands do you like now?

I don't like bands at all. They bore the shit out of me actually. Personally I'm not an admirer of disco music. It is absolutely the backbone of the music industry right now; so you can't knock it cause it's like the people who used to go out and throw 'emself at Glen Miller y'know in the 40s and they go out and throw 'emself at Phil Bester and people like that now, I just don't belong to any of that kind of thing at all.

Are you going to release a single?

Oh yeah, yeah its another of Colin's songs coming out as a single, its called "Making fun for Nigel" which is pretty ah, what's the word, representative, of the album, very primitive, got a very loud basic drum singer in it, which for the benefit of people who like sneak previews sorta goes ah, ah, boo ba boo-cha, tishum bishum ba, caboom ba boom-cha tishum bishum ba - something like that, it's called "Making fun for Nigel" - look out for it, it's a hot thing, a little goodun.

I believe in letting the personalities in through the band, you just can't style the personalities of the people making the music, you just couldn't tell them what to play; that'd kill the band.

I'm maybe the "captain" or something, the bloke who steers but I'm only one quarter of the boat.

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OXLEY HONDA: 114 Oxley Road, Oxley 10% discount on all parts, accessories and repairs.

TOOWONG MUSIC CENTRE: 51 Sherwood Road \$1 discount on all items, records and instruments.

BUSH HAVEN ART CENTRE: Dayboro and Salisbury Rd, Mount Simpson 5% discount on pottery and paintings.

IAN AITCHISON & CO: 42 Douglas St, Milton 10% discount on backpacking, camping equipment and motorcycle touring equipment.

THE HUNGRY YEARS CAFE: 6 Sherwood Rd, Toowong 10% discount on all meals.

THE SOURCE RESTAURANT: Shop 17 & 18 Elizabeth Arcade 10% discount on all meals.

CENTENARY POOL RESTAURANT: Gregory Tce, Spring Hill 10% discount on all meals.

UNIQUE BATIK: 47 Sherwood Rd, Toowong 10% discount on all clothes.

MOUNTAIN EXPERIENCE: Barry Pde, Fortitude Valley 10% discount on all equipment with Radio Times advertisement.

GRIDLEY'S LIGHT & SOUND: 50 Quay St, City 5% discount on lightshows, hire and Gridleys goods.

NATIONAL FILM THEATRE OF AUSTRALIA: equal to student discount for over 18s.

CRITERION BOOKSHOP: 332 Brunswick St, Fortitude Valley. 10% discount on all items.

PETER'S WEST END 'MUSIC CENTRE: Vulture Street 10% discount on all items.

PLANET PRESS & PLANET PUBLISHING: 188 Barry Parade, Fortitude Valley 10% discount on all printing, typesetting and artwork.

KARLIMAI ASIAN TRADERS: Elizabeth Arcade 10% discount on all items.

ABUTMENT GRAPHICS: Phone 52 1856 10% discount on all artwork, photographs and stereos.

LILLIES: 454 Upper Edward St, Spring Hill 10% discount on all secondhand clothes and accessories.

SANDALWOOD TREE: Picadilly Arcade, The City 15% discount on all clogs, footwear, leather goods.

FEROZA: Indian Curry Restaurant 227 Given Terrace, Paddington ph 36 3483 \$1 off all meals to subscribers.

PEPPE'S PIZZERIA: Hawken Drive, St. Lucia Village ph 371 5438 10% discount.

WW1 JEANS: Basement Queens Arcade 10% discount guys and girls casual clothes phone 229 3509.

GAYTHORNE THEATRE: \$1 per show.

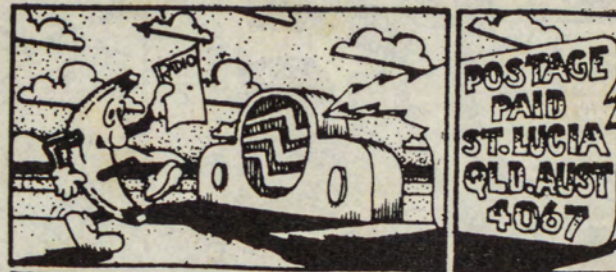
HQ MUSIC: Seabreeze Shopping Centre, Middle Street, Cleveland. 10% discount.

POPULAR THEATRE TROUPE: 60 Waterworks Road, Red Hill discounts for subscribers on all programmes.

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FREE FLUID SURF SHOP: Caloundra Rd, Caloundra, phone 91 3260 generous discounts to ZZZ subscribers.

RADIO TIMES....



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