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# Jazz by the Sea: KRML and the Radio Presence of “America’s Classical Music”

E. Taylor Atkins and Ashley Nichole Parra

In 1994, jazz fans throughout the United States lamented the demise of the last major commercial broadcaster of jazz music, San Francisco’s venerable KJAZ.<sup>1</sup> Going on air in 1959, just as rock and roll, country and western, and rhythm and blues were establishing their dominance of the radio airwaves, KJAZ held out for 35 years before capitulating to a marketplace increasingly indifferent to jazz. Jazz programming has since become an alternative to the classical music format embraced by most non-commercial college stations and National Public Radio affiliates. Today, these broadcasters are largely responsible for maintaining a radio presence for jazz, befitting its Congressionally-designated status as “a rare and valuable American national treasure.”<sup>2</sup> Yet as jazz’s aesthetic status has risen, its commercial viability has plummeted. So-called “smooth jazz”—usually derided by jazz purists as uninspired drivel best suited to elevator rides—is practically the only jazz-like format that remains viable on commercial radio.<sup>3</sup>

However, KJAZ was both preceded and outlasted by another commercial broadcaster in a smaller, nearby market: KRML, an AM station based in the richly forested environs of Carmel-by-the-Sea on California’s Monterey Peninsula. KRML went on the air on Christmas Day 1957 and later enjoyed a brief moment of fame as the setting of adopted Carmelite Clint Eastwood’s 1971 thriller *Play Misty for Me*; the station has expanded and retracted its operations in recent years to include concert promotions and a storefront selling jazz recordings, souvenirs, and ephemera. KRML continues to broadcast on both AM and FM bands, as well as via an internet stream, despite bankruptcy and over two years of minimal operation under foreclosure. Mere weeks

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<sup>1</sup>Ashley Nichole Parra did research for this project and wrote portions of the article as an undergraduate research apprentice. The author and his contributor would like to thank: Johnny Adams, George Fuller, Sam Salerno, Gil Wisdom, and the staff of the Harrison Memorial Library and Monterey Public Library for their participation and assistance; and AJ Johnson, Beatrix Hoffman, and two anonymous reviewers for *Jazz Perspectives* for their comments on earlier drafts. We also gratefully acknowledge financial support from a Summer Research and Artistry grant and an Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship from Northern Illinois University.

<sup>2</sup>H.CON.RES 57, 4 Dec 1987 <http://www.hr57.org/hconres57.html>. Among these are WBGO (Newark), WDCB (metro Chicago), KJZZ (Tempe, AZ), WSIE (metro St. Louis), WGLT (central Illinois), KKJZ (Long Beach), and KCSM (San Francisco Bay Area), the inheritor of KJAZ’s library.

<sup>3</sup>Jazz ranked 24 out of 32 identified program formats (with 84 stations) in the Radio Advertising Bureau’s 2006 *Radio Marketing Guide and Fact Book*, 38, cited in William A. Richter, *Radio: A Complete Guide to the Industry* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 61. This number surely includes “smooth jazz” formats.

after a local citizens' committee formed to resurrect this local "landmark," in July 2011 a local businessman purchased the station, with the apparent intent of retaining its jazz format.<sup>4</sup> Thus, KRML had the distinction of being the last commercial broadcaster of jazz music in the United States (until it switched to rock-oriented free-form programming in October 2012).<sup>5</sup>

At the risk of self-indulgence, I should alert the reader to my personal interest in KRML's story. My stepmother and her sisters were raised in the Carmel area, where my grandparents settled after retiring from the US Navy in 1959. On one of our holiday visits, somehow or other I discovered KRML, right around the time it switched to an all-jazz format in 1982. For reasons I cannot seem to recollect today, I had developed a curiosity about jazz in high school—an opportune time, in hindsight, because it was precisely when Wynton Marsalis was getting a lot of attention and "schooling" the country on its neglected musical heritage, and when digital remastering and the new CD format were making important but long-out-of-print historical recordings accessible again. In my home town of Little Rock, Arkansas, I listened regularly to a Sunday afternoon radio program of jazzy R&B (e.g., Grover Washington, Jr., George Benson, Al Jarreau) broadcasting from KWTD (106.3 FM) in nearby Lonoke. Still, when I stumbled upon KRML, I remember a sense of novelty and wonder at the very idea of being able to dial a radio station anytime to hear jazz. I regularly listened to KRML every time I visited my Carmel family, keeping abreast with its many changes (detailed below) as it continued its commitment to jazz programming. Whether they knew it or not, nearly every family member's car had 1410 programmed as a preset radio station if I ever got behind the wheel. I remember attending at least one KRML-sponsored event, an outdoor concert by vocalist Mark Murphy (which, it turns out, was emceed by Sam Salerno, whom I later met and interviewed for this study). My interest deepened by working as a jazz and blues DJ at WEFT-FM 90.1 in Champaign, IL, while I was in graduate school. I never failed to visit the open-air studio and jazz store at The Crossroads shopping center when KRML was at the height of its prosperity in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Unfortunately, I did not return to the Monterey Peninsula during the period when KRML was in the Eastwood Building on San Carlos Street in the heart of Carmel-by-the-Sea, so after a seven-year absence I was eager to see the new "digs" during a family vacation in summer 2010. My interest in writing the station's history was sparked by the sad discovery that, even though KRML and the Jazz & Blues Company remained

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<sup>4</sup>Mary Brownfield, "Group mobilizes to resurrect bankrupt KRML radio," *The Carmel Pine Cone* (hereafter *PC*) 24 June 2011: 3A; "KRML's new owner has ambitious plans," *PC* 22 July 2011: 1A, 10A. The weekly newspaper currently known simply as *The Pine Cone* was founded in 1915. Although its masthead has changed over time due to mergers with other local newspapers (*The Pine Cone-Cymbal*, 1942–62; *The Carmel Pine Cone-Carmel Valley Outlook*, 1981–93), for simplicity's sake, all citations from the paper are abbreviated as *PC*. See entries for these papers at the Library of Congress website "Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers" <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>.

<sup>5</sup>A list of 53 U.S. radio stations with jazz formats is online at Radio-Locator.com (<http://www.radio-locator.com/cgi-bin/finder?format=jaz&s=R&sr=Y>, accessed 11 June 2011). KRML was the only broadcaster listed that was not a listener-supported, not-for-profit entity. Below I will explain the October 2012 format change, which occurred while this article was under review.

on the signboard, its spaces were completely vacant. Its AM signal was still on air, but the studio and store were no more. Before long I learned of the bankruptcy of David Kimball, its last owner, and the Monterey County Bank's foreclosure on the station in April 2009.<sup>6</sup> Having neither resources nor talents to do much else, I decided it was time to reconstruct KRML's half-century history.

But there is more to this story than merely personal or localized antiquarian interest: it is an extension of my longstanding interest in how jazz figures into cultural and spatial forms of identification; that is, how individuals and communities appropriate and utilize jazz and its attendant "cultural capital" to create and promote distinctive identities for themselves.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, KRML's history provides an opportunity to explore and contemplate the complicated status of jazz music in the American cultural marketplace and mediascape. The historiography of jazz on the radio is surprisingly thin, despite the widely recognized importance of the broadcast medium and of individual radio personalities to the diffusion of the music in the United States as well as overseas. As an effort to explore broader issues about jazz's aesthetic stature, marketability, and audibility on the nation's airwaves through this one station's experience, this study of KRML is probably best described as a "microhistory." This is an approach that has been described as "asking large questions in small places"; that involves "solving mysteries" that highlight the "exemplariness," rather than the "uniqueness," of an individual event or life; and that uses its subjects as "devices" for broader understanding.<sup>8</sup> Although its status as a longtime commercial broadcaster of jazz programming is hardly typical, the history of KRML may prove instructive for understanding the connections between cultural capital, affluence, and geographic place: I am particularly interested in the station's role in enhancing the cultural capital of the increasingly well-off Carmel community, which may help account for the long-term viability of the jazz program format in this particular community.

Why was the last for-profit jazz broadcaster located in Carmel rather than in New Orleans, New York, Kansas City, Chicago, St. Louis, Los Angeles, or some other urban metropolis more readily associated with the music's historical development? The simplest answer is that it was because of the dedication and passion of a handful of adopted Carmelites, who decided to make a home for themselves and for the music in this community. Those individuals will get their proper due here. However, dedicated, passionate jazz aficionados reside in greater numbers in locales with no such reliable radio presence for jazz, so there is more to take into consideration. Specifically, we should note shifts in popular conceptions about and even *uses* of jazz music that have made it aurally suitable to Carmel lifestyles. As jazz has accrued

<sup>6</sup>Mary Brownfield, "KRML clears out of downtown studio—Bank solicits buyers as owner files for bankruptcy," *PC* 10 April 2009: 1A, 16A.

<sup>7</sup>See my "Inventing Jazztowns and Internationalizing Local Identities in Japan," in *Image and Identity: Rethinking Japanese Cultural History*, edited by Jeffrey E. Hanes and Hidetoshi Yamaji (Kobe: The Research Institute for Economics and Business Administration, Kobe University, 2004), 249–262; *Jazz Planet* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2003); and *Blue Nippon: Authenticating Jazz in Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

<sup>8</sup>Charles W. Joyner, *Shared Traditions: Southern History and Folk Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 1; Jill Lepore, "Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography," *Journal of American History* 88.1 (June 2001): 133, 144.

“cultural nobility,” achieving a “new parity . . . with classical music in the sign systems of popular media,” a fancy for the music has become a social indicator of one’s level of cultural sophistication.<sup>9</sup> Entertainment corporations—to the extent they have taken any notice of jazz at all—explicitly utilize its presumed artistic integrity and cultural cachet in their marketing of the music, yet simultaneously emphasize its *functionality* as a singularly classy mechanism for relaxation and romance. Canonized as a quintessentially American expressive form and repackaged as a non-intrusive, unthreatening vehicle for tranquil repose and nostalgia, jazz thus complements the aura of refinement and serenity that Carmel residents have sought to create and have fought to maintain for over a century. Its jazz programming informed by such discursive shifts, KRML sought to sway listeners to accept jazz as the ideal accompaniment to the placid, laid-back Carmel lifestyle.

### Arcady-by-the-Sea

Carmel-by-the-Sea is, above all, a great place to hide. Indeed, the wooded alcoves, ravines, and Hansel-and-Gretel cottages conduce to individual seclusion all too well. To the extent that its denizens, past and present, share an ethos at all, it may be precisely that impulse to bundle up against the cool, moist air, to follow one’s muse without interruption, to nestle, to savor the cozy insularity akin to what the Danes call *hyggelig*. Anything that threatens the ability of residents to seclude at will, to engage with the world as little or much as desired, has met strong resistance. In 1930 historian Albert Parry (1901–92) reported that a Carmelite acquaintance informed him that the semi-official village slogan was “keep [C]armel OFF the map.”<sup>10</sup>

Known for a “stubborn non-conformism,” residents “have been so opposed to regimentation that their houses still have no numbers or mailboxes,” preferring instead to christen their homes—which range from modest cottages to “monster houses”—with names that are whimsical, clever, and occasionally pretentious. Tree cutting is a cardinal offense, and, local historians Harold and Ann Gilliam remark, “this may be the only village anywhere with its own forestry department to maintain its arboreal splendor.”<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup>“Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier.” Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 2, 6, 18; and Krin Gabbard, “Introduction: The Jazz Canon and Its Consequences,” in *Jazz Among the Discourses*, ed. Krin Gabbard (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 2. Several scholars have described this process of canonization. Foundational texts include: Scott DeVeaux, “Constructing the Jazz Tradition: Jazz Historiography,” *Black American Literature Forum* 25.3 (1991): 525–560; John Gennari, “Jazz Criticism: Its Development and Ideologies,” *Black American Literature Forum* 25.3 (1991): 449–523; Gabbard, “Jazz Canon,” 1–28; Bernard Gendron, *Between Montmartre and the Mudd Club* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); the Introduction to Tony Whyton, ed., *Jazz* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), and the essays by Simon Frith, Lee B. Brown, Bruce Johnson, and Sherrie Tucker reprinted therein. See also Andrew Ross, *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1989); and Michael Bernard-Donals, “Jazz, Rock ‘n’ Roll, Rap and Politics,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 28.2 (1994): 128–136.

<sup>10</sup>Albert Parry, *Garrets and Pretenders: A History of Bohemia in America* (1930, 1960; New York: Cosimo, 2005), 243.

<sup>11</sup>Harold and Ann Gilliam, *Creating Carmel: The Enduring Vision* (Layton, UT: Gibbs-Smith Publisher, 1992), 4–5; Michael B. Smith, “What’s in a house name? Comedy, poetry, romance, heaven!” *PC* 26 Nov. 1981: A1, A8.

The distinctions between the one-square-mile municipality of Carmel-by-the-Sea and the surrounding environs loosely known as “Carmel” have always been and remain meaningful legally, culturally, and even “postal-ly” via zip codes (with 93921 reserved for the village proper, where residents must still go to the post office for their mail). This obstinate individualism, clear sense of the distinctions between “Carmel proper” and “wannabe Carmel,” and the growing number of transient weekenders with second homes in Carmel have, unsurprisingly, nurtured a fractious political culture, in which public debate pits competing versions of what will most likely preserve Carmel’s most desirable characteristics: quiet, solitude, “arboreal splendor,” and fidelity to the founders’ original vision.<sup>12</sup>

The Gilliams argue that “Carmel stands at the western edge of the continent and at the leading edge of efforts by communities everywhere to preserve their integrity against the leveling forces of commercialism, disguised as progress.” In that respect, the town “is both a unique phenomenon and a microcosm of some of the conflicts taking place in other American communities,” where citizens wrangle over the competing agendas of the preservation of local auras and the relentless expansion of millennial capitalism. Carmel-by-the-Sea’s win-loss record in this interminable contest defies assessment: no “golden arches,” neon signs, or wax museums blight its landscape, but the pharmacies, hardware stores, barber shops, and other *useful* businesses that catered to locals and enabled them to actually live, work, play, and shop in town vanished long ago, to be replaced by “boutiques, art galleries, antique shops, souvenir stores, and T-shirt bazaars” with a different demographic in mind. For those who see their glasses as half full, the character of Carmel-by-the-Sea remains singular and enchanting: “the unique character, flavor, and mystique of this little paradise, set in incomparable natural beauty, still exists,” local historian Monica Hudson muses, “a treasure to behold, enjoy, nurture, and preserve.”<sup>13</sup> But there is hardly consensus on the amount of damage either cleverly avoided or already done.

The recorded history of the Carmel area begins with the encounter between the indigenous Esselens and Ohlones and Spanish missionaries led by Fr. Junípero Serra (1713–84). In 1771 Serra made Mission San Carlos Borroméo del río Carmelo his headquarters for the evangelization of California. The Mission—which serves as a parish church today—was abandoned in the nineteenth century until restoration work began in 1884, around the time that real estate developers took an interest in settling Euro-Americans in the forested slopes overlooking Carmel Bay.

<sup>12</sup>In 1979 the U.S. Postal Service opened a branch on Rio Road at the mouth of the valley that it called the “Carmel Post Office,” despite the city council’s plea that it be named “Carmel Rancho.” In 1983 local businessman Paul Laub reopened the debate when he proposed that the name “Carmel” should be officially reserved for businesses within incorporated Carmel-by-the-Sea. One city councilman complained that “merchants at the mouth of the Valley just use the Carmel name for profit”; another councilwoman was “concerned that visitors to the mouth of the Valley will be confused and think that they are really in the city of Carmel.” See Michael Gardner, “Does Valley mouth have the right to be ‘Carmel?’” *PC* 28 July 1983: A3; Robert Miskimon, “Changing postal names won’t change reality,” *PC* 4 Aug. 1983: A2; “Council wants to protect ‘Carmel,’” *PC* 11 Aug. 1983: A7.

<sup>13</sup>Gilliam, *Creating Carmel*, 4, 6, 8, 169; Monica Hudson, *Carmel-by-the-Sea*, Images of America (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2006), 8.

The title of the Gilliams' history *Creating Carmel* is deliberate and apt: if the term "planned community" applies anywhere, it certainly describes Carmel-by-the-Sea. In this respect it was but one example of a burst of meticulous urban residential and commercial planning activity in the *fin-de-siècle* United States. Beginning in the 1870s, planned communities, initially designed to house the employees of a single factory, sprang up around the country; they provided low rents and sanctioned particular "wholesome" recreational activities. To guarantee certain community moral standards, later non-industrial municipalities sought particular constituencies of residents by offering a variety of amenities, such as access to transportation, proximity to cities, parks, community centers, and community-wide landscaping and building and zoning codes to enhance visual continuity. They also controlled for racial, ethnic, or religious identification, education level, and income. More often than not, developers with strong personal convictions about the ideal American community sought to foster uniformity and preclude socioeconomic and racial diversity, in part by setting rental and purchase prices at levels affordable only to the upper-middle class and economic elites. Most of the ordinances for planned communities from the beginning of the twentieth century reflect concerns over control of urbanization, public health, and morality. Deeds and zoning were used to attempt to control the moral atmosphere; parks and theaters were preferable to saloons and dancehalls.<sup>14</sup> Carmel-by-the-Sea certainly exemplifies this trend of deliberate community planning for a select group of white residents who were highly educated, affluent, and attentive to public morality, propriety, and the visual aesthetics of their hometown.

Late-nineteenth-century efforts to sell lots in the environs of the Carmel Mission proved unsuccessful, but James Franklin Devendorf (1856–1934) took up the endeavor with a singularly coherent vision. "His notion that a community could be designed to harmonize with nature was then so far from prevailing American practice as to be heretical," the Gilliams contend. "The pioneer urge to conquer the wilderness still dominated community development in the West where it meant leveling the contours of the land, clearing trees, filling ravines, putting creeks in concrete channels or culverts, and totally replacing the works of nature with the works of man." Rather than uproot and clear-cut trees to make his enchanted village, Devendorf planted more of them to prevent erosion and to create a unique residential community nestled in the forest.<sup>15</sup> Having purchased 700 lots and 89 additional acres of beach and dunes on 20 Nov. 1900, Devendorf partnered with San Francisco attorney Frank Powers to found the Carmel Development Company in 1903. They sold lots at prices that were appealingly low even for the times, and fostered goodwill by being uncommonly patient with

<sup>14</sup>Stanley Buder, "The Model Town of Pullman: Town Planning and Social Control in the Gilded Age," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 33.1 (1967): 2–10; Helen Corbin Monchow, *The Use of Deed Restrictions in Sub-division Development* (Chicago: The Institute for Research in Land Economics and Public Utilities, 1928), <http://babel.hathitrust.org>; and Patricia Burgess Stach, "Real Estate Development and Urban Form: Roadblocks in the Path to Residential Exclusivity," *The Business History Review* 63.2 (Summer 1989): 356–383.

<sup>15</sup>Gilliam, *Creating Carmel*, 65, 68–69; Hudson, *Carmel-by-the-Sea*, 20.

settlers who fell behind in their \$5.00 monthly payments. Apparently, those who defaulted even received refunds for the amount already paid.<sup>16</sup>

Like many other “planned communities,” Carmel-by-the-Sea was envisaged with a particular demographic in mind. Whereas most settlements in the western United States were of an agrarian character, the Carmel Development Company’s first brochure in 1903 directly targeted “the School Teachers of California and other Brain Workers at Indoor Employment.” According to Franklin Walker, chronicler of Carmel’s bohemian heyday, the developers sought “residents who would form a lively, cultured community. It is natural, therefore, that they should encourage writers, artists, musicians, and university professors to buy in the area, hoping that most of them would at least maintain summer cottages and some would settle as year round residents.”<sup>17</sup> They may have gotten more than they bargained for when they offered free land to writer Mary Austin (1869–1934) and San Francisco’s “King of Bohemia,” poet George Ansel Sterling (1869–1926). Their numbers augmented by refugees of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, artists and illustrators, humanists and scientists, writers and hacks, poets and poetasters, musicians and actors formed a “colony” of self-conscious iconoclasts and non-conformists who exemplified, to varying degrees, the “two elements” Sterling considered essential to any self-respecting bohemian: “devotion or addiction to one or more of the Seven Arts,” and “poverty.”<sup>18</sup> Jack London, Upton Sinclair, Ambrose Bierce, Robinson Jeffers, and other notables joined in to create what one smirking observer dubbed “a hotbed of soulful culture, vortex of erotic erudition ... the most amazing colony on earth ...”<sup>19</sup> “The good life in Bohemia-by-the-Sea,” the Gilliams write, “included moonlight mussel bakes, excursions down the coast to Big Sur, and weekend camping trips into the canyons and valleys of the Santa Lucia Range.” However, some grew disenchanted with a peculiar “Carmel indolence,” criticizing those who migrated “from the East to write novels in this paradise ... [and] found themselves there becalmed and supine.”<sup>20</sup> By the time the United States entered the First World War, the artist colony had all but imploded in an orgy of excessive drinking, philandering, and suicides. Though the brief bohemian *belle époque* has conferred a mystique on the community out of all proportion to its actual duration, and the influx of well-heeled retirees, tourists, and seasonal residents has fundamentally altered the town’s character, there are still enough self-described artists, charming eccentrics, and legendarily ill-tempered recluses to keep Carmel *très intéressant*.

I would be hard-pressed to describe what happened following the collapse of Bohemia-by-the-sea as colorfully as Albert Parry did in 1930:

<sup>16</sup>Sydney Temple, *Carmel-by-the-Sea: From Aborigines to Coastal Commission* (Monterey: Angel Press, 1987), 63.

<sup>17</sup>Carmel Development Company brochure quoted in Hudson, *Carmel-by-the-Sea*, 21; Franklin Walker, *The Seacoast of Bohemia* (Santa Barbara & Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1973), 9.

<sup>18</sup>Donna Marek, *Crème de Carmel: The Story of the Lively Personalities Who Shaped California’s Coastal Kingdom* (Niwot, CO: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1994), 23–24; Sterling quoted in Parry, *Garrets and Pretenders*, 238, and Walker, *Seacoast*, 10.

<sup>19</sup>Willard Huntington Wright, “Hotbed of Soulful Culture, Vortex of Erotic Erudition,” *Los Angeles Times* 22 May 1910.

<sup>20</sup>Van Wyck Brooks quoted in Gilliam, *Creating Carmel*, 99; see also Scott A. Shields, *Artists at Continent’s End: The Monterey Peninsula Art Colony, 1875–1907* (Sacramento: Crocker Art Museum/University of California Press, 2006), 193–195.



By 1925, there was a grave fight raging between the artists of Carmel and the invading realtors. The invaders clamored for improvements: asphalt pavings, solid sidewalks, graded streets. They wanted to build a large Spanish hotel on the waterfront. They raised a cry: Erase the eleven curves of the highway between Carmel and Monterey! The curves are pretty but inconvenient! They keep cars and tourists and trade from Carmel!<sup>21</sup>

There thus ensued an endless war that occasionally erupts to disturb the village calm, between those already there and those who want in, between those who want to keep things as they are—or, better yet, as they imagine they *were*—and those who want to bring a little bit of up-to-date capitalist modernity with them to Carmel.

What some applaud as Carmelites' plucky refusal to acquiesce uncritically to the ideology of economic development as "progress" others denounce as self-serving NIMBYism. On 5 June 1929 the village council passed Ordinance 96—known affectionately as the "Magna Carta"—which states:

THE CITY OF CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA is hereby determined to be, primarily, a residential City wherein business and commerce have in the past, are now, and are proposed to be in the future subordinated to its residential character; and that said determination is made having in mind the history and the development of said city, its growth and the causes thereof; and also its geographical and topographical aspects, together with its near proximity to the cities of Pacific Grove and Monterey and the businesses, industries, trades, callings and professions in existence and permissible therein.<sup>22</sup>

In other words, apparently, "the businesses, industries, trades, callings and professions" in nearby towns were adequate and proximate enough, so there was no attendant need to develop them in Carmel-by-the-Sea itself. Adopted Carmelite Clint Eastwood stood for election as mayor in 1986 to rein in what he considered to be overzealous, "arbitrary and capricious" adherence to this code; some regard his eventual election and efforts to "build bridges" between townspeople and merchants as a step toward making the town more business-friendly.<sup>23</sup> In any case, the Magna Carta makes no mention of the position of the *tourist* relative to resident and business, and therefore scarcely applies to Carmel's reality for the last half century or so. Many Carmelites who protest the deluge of visitors and new neighbors from the outside world have local roots that are scarcely deeper. "Most of us ... came here as tourists before we returned to make it our permanent home," local historian Sydney Temple admits, "Therefore we can hardly complain about the tourists ..."<sup>24</sup>

Whether by design or not, the *hyggelig*-like community ethos has allowed Carmel to maintain a high degree of racial and class homogeneity. Chinese laborers spilled over

<sup>21</sup>Parry, *Garrets and Pretenders*, 246.

<sup>22</sup>The ordinance was drafted by Argyll Campbell, city attorney from 1920 to 1937. Ordinance No. 96, <http://ci.carmel.ca.us/carmel/index.cfm/residents/>; and Carmel-by-the-Sea Municipal Code Title 17.02 (Zoning Division I—Titles, Components and Purposes), <http://www.codepublishing.com/CA/carmel.html>.

<sup>23</sup>Robert Lindsey, "As Clint Eastwood Runs for Mayor, Small-Town Race Hangs on Big Issue," *New York Times* (hereafter *NYT*) 25 March 1986: A20; Robert Lindsey, "Eastwood Marks Landslide Victory: New Mayor-Elect of Carmel Recalls His Movie Role in Fighting Bureaucracy," *NYT* 10 April 1986: A20.

<sup>24</sup>Temple, *Carmel-by-the-Sea*, 194–195.

from Monterey in sufficient numbers to have a visible presence in the early decades of the twentieth century, and nowadays Latinos from nearby Seaside do the lion's share of manual labor—including lawn and garden maintenance, construction and repair work, and delivery services—in the daylight hours. But by and large the resident population is and always has been overwhelmingly white, not to mention increasingly affluent.<sup>25</sup> As we shall see, jazz crusaders on the Monterey Peninsula sensed that the community was dismissive and condescending, if not downright hostile, to African Americans and their music. The racial integration, drugs, noise, and crime that seemed to be part and parcel of jazz culture represented yet another outside threat to the idyllic haven Carmelites sought. Indeed, jazz signified the very world they had hoped to escape by migrating there.

It is sorely tempting to imagine connections between Carmel's bohemian heritage and its position as the home of the last commercial jazz broadcaster in the United States. Alas, alluring as the idea of such an association may seem, it does justice neither to the fundamentally transformed demography of the community, nor to the "business end" of KRML's existence. However much jazz fans may celebrate the station's steadfast commitment to the music, it in fact adopted its full-time jazz format after a quarter-century of trying everything else; and community interest in and support for the station has been so tepid that it is something of a miracle that it has lasted as long as it has. KRML's jazz programming format may have appealed to a handful of Carmelites and their peninsular neighbors, but there is hardly enough residual bohemian or beat sensibility to posit a natural affinity between the population and jazz music. Hence jazz's "fit" within the Carmel milieu must be explained in some other manner.

### Sea Songs

Music has been a cornerstone of community life in Carmel throughout its history, as reflected in the local print media's bountiful music reportage, columns, and reviews. For most of its history the *Pine Cone* newspaper has devoted generous page space to a regular feature, variously titled "Music on the Peninsula," "The Music Scene," "Music Notes," and "Music Corner," and has printed special supplements to preview programs and performers for each annual Bach Festival. Moreover, print advertisements indicate that in the mid-twentieth century Carmel boasted far more record stores, instrument retailers, music schools, performance spaces, and private instructors than one would presume a community of its size could support.

Yet in Carmelite vernacular the word *music* has typically meant something quite specific: Western art music of the "common practice period" (c. 1600–1900). The Carmel Music Society, founded in 1927 by Ethel Dene Denny (1886–1959) and Hazel Watrous (1888–1954), has brought hundreds of world-class performers in this tradition to the Monterey Peninsula. However catholic its individual members' tastes have been, institutionally the Society has maintained a steadfast commitment to the

<sup>25</sup>See 2000 census data at <http://www.zip-codes.com/city/CA-CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA.asp>.

transcendent aesthetic superiority of the European classics, as expressed in this risibly snooty review of a rare “mixed” performance of baroque and jazz in 1958:

The present fashion of dragging the primitively passionate sounds of the Negro into and with more refined music makes a strong mixture but by no means an altogether pleasant one . . . it was supposed to find an analogy between the forms used by Telemann and other Baroque composers and what, to me, is practically formless in the strident, earsplitting bangs and fireworks given out by the Mitchell-Ruff Duo on piano and double bass . . . It was all clever, technical manipulation from each player but the monotony of sameness became excruciating in prolonged listening.

With all respect to the Negro who has a natural impulse to express in sound—and there are highly developed musicians among them—I cannot find any analogy in their utterance to that of centuries of artistic culture that produced the Baroque composers . . .

The Baroque Ensemble of some of our best orchestral players . . . that stood out in purity of tone and intent was a relief . . . While people believe that to “let down” makes for enjoyment, they still choose the less developed or just thoughtlessly fall for a fashion.<sup>26</sup>

It may be unfair to claim that this truculent review reflects the collective ethos of Carmel’s self-appointed musical aesthetes. Nonetheless, the local music community’s general conservatism did not pass without notice or reproach. It was front-page news when, in 1959, local cellist Louise Friedhofer Vadetsky (1917–97) delicately asked “if one of our deterring factors in the past hasn’t been a tendency to be too restrictive in our taste.” Speaking “not as a critic but simply as a citizen with a suggestion,” Vadetsky proposed that “A musician who likes and plays only the classics is limiting himself and his audience . . . A real artist knows his Stravinsky as well as his Bach, Haydn, and Mozart.” The recently widowed cellist was hopeful that a more variegated programming policy at the Monterey County Symphony, as well as the first Monterey Jazz Festival’s program of works by Béla Bartók, Igor Stravinsky, and Paul Hindemith, indicated that a broadened perspective was nigh.<sup>27</sup>

Aesthetic preference for classics and concert settings was reinforced by local statute. In the interwar years, when live jazz was heard almost exclusively in dance halls and nightclubs, Carmel-by-the-Sea was no jazz-friendly town. In late 1939, the proprietor of DeLoe’s tavern caused a ruckus when he installed a piano and hired someone to play it. A concerned citizen brought to the city council’s attention “the danger of this trend for Carmel cheapening the environment and providing another attraction for an element not desired in this community.” Others argued that “pianos be ousted for ‘esthetic considerations,’” and that “Carmel doesn’t want pianos in taprooms any more than it wants neon signs on its streets.” Adamant that “Ocean Avenue shall not develop into a honky-tonk midway,” the council charged City Attorney William

<sup>26</sup>Mary Lindsay-Oliver, “Jazz and Baroque Prove Antagonistic in Ranch Session,” *PC* 6 Nov. 1958: 5. As a student at the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville in 1986, I witnessed the duo of Dwiki Mitchell and Willie Ruff (both conservatory-trained musicians) perform their intimate “chamber jazz” myself, and I am stunned by this critic’s characterization of their performance.

<sup>27</sup>Raylyn Penney, “Peninsula Music Lovers Too Restricted in Tastes, Louise Vadetsky Believes,” *PC* 12 Feb. 1959: 1, 13.

Luis Hudson with drafting an ordinance that would forestall “a night club atmosphere on our main street.”<sup>28</sup> Despite the American Federation of Musicians’ objection that the proposed ordinance “would virtually do away with three jobs for piano players,” on 18 December 1939 the council unanimously approved a city-wide ban on musical instruments and phonograph records in any establishment selling liquor. Council members explained their support for the law by saying, “Carmel being in the nature of a resort town it was necessary to protect it from those things which could be annoying to those coming from the outside,” and “Those who want that sort of thing have only four miles to go to find all they want of it.”<sup>29</sup> An urgency clause was added to enable instant enforcement, “for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety.”

... unless this Ordinance goes into immediate effect proprietors of premises within the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea wherein alcoholic beverages are sold and served to the public will make alterations in their premises providing for facilities for dancing, entertainment and the playing of musical instruments during the coming holiday season.<sup>30</sup>

Advertisements in the *Pine Cone* from the 1950s and ’60s indicate that Carmel coffee houses offered acoustic performances ranging from folk to flamenco, so it is not as if the community was entirely bereft of non-classical, live music; they just could not drink alcohol while listening to it. Four decades after Ordinance 216 went into effect, another City Attorney explained its rationale with refreshing clarity and candor: “the combination of booze and music causes people to do things that disturb the community.”<sup>31</sup>

But Carmelite jazzheads and jitterbuggers were not completely without alternatives. They could make a short drive over the hill to the lavish ballroom of Monterey’s San Carlos Hotel, where Sam Salerno and Johnny Adams both emceed live radio broadcasts of jazz and dance bands. Or, they could stroll down Dolores Street, cross Santa Lucia (the southern boundary line of Carmel-by-the-Sea), and continue on a few meters to the Mission Ranch resort, where the piano bar was a popular venue for national jazz talent, and the barn hosted dances.<sup>32</sup> The Ranch must have earned a bit of notoriety, because when the city council revisited the live music ban in 1979, councilman Les Gross voiced his opposition thusly: “If you have music, you have to allow people to sing. Do the citizens of Carmel want another Mission Ranch? I shudder to think of the consequences if we open one hole in this.”<sup>33</sup>

<sup>28</sup>“Council Will Stop Tap-Room Music,” *Carmel Cymbal* 8 Dec. 1939: 1; “Would Keep Pianos Out of Bistros,” *PC* 8 Dec. 1939: 7.

<sup>29</sup>“Pianos in Taprooms Subject of Ordinance,” *PC* 15 Dec. 1939: 1; “Council Votes Law Banning Tap Room Pianos,” *Carmel Cymbal* 15 Dec. 1939: 1.

<sup>30</sup>Ordinance No. 216, *PC* 29 Dec. 1939: 10.

<sup>31</sup>Quoted in Steve Hellman, “City may change tune on live music ban,” *PC* 2 Aug. 1979: 4.

<sup>32</sup>See photo of Tal Farlow, Red Norvo, and Monty Budwig performing at Mission Ranch in the 1950s, in Hudson, *Carmel-by-the-Sea*, 96.

<sup>33</sup>Quoted in Hellman, “City may change tune,” 4. The ordinance is still in force, though it has been amended several times to allow permits for special events with musical performances, and to grant an exemption to the Sunset Cultural Center. See Carmel-by-the-Sea Municipal Code Title 9.16 (Public Peace, Morals and

Of course, what put the Monterey Peninsula on the jazz map was the Monterey Jazz Festival (MJF), the brainchild of one of the music's most passionate champions, James L. "Jimmy" Lyons (1916–94). Born to American missionaries in China, Lyons began his broadcasting career in 1939 as an announcer at Santa Ana's KVOE ("the voice of the orange empire") before joining a young Stan Kenton's organization as publicist. As a draftee during World War II, he remained in southern California to produce and host the popular *Jubilee* program for the Armed Forces Radio Service. Widely credited with introducing the modern jazz styles to West Coast audiences via his late-night KNBC radio program *Discapades*—and with kick-starting Dave Brubeck's rise to popular acclaim in the process—in 1953 Lyons left a successful broadcasting career in San Francisco, opened a general store in rustic Big Sur, and wasted little time organizing and promoting jazz events in his adopted home. Lyons kept his hand in DJing for Salinas' KDON and San Francisco's KFRC, but poured the lion's share of his considerable energy into producing concerts and realizing his vision of a weekend-long jazz festival on the peninsula. It was no mean accomplishment that he arranged a series of jazz concerts at Carmel's hallowed concert hall in the Sunset Center; one of these shows—on 19 September 1955—yielded the classic jazz recording *Concert by the Sea*, by pianist Erroll Garner, bassist Eddie Calhoun, and drummer Denizil Best.<sup>34</sup> That recording plus, of course, the successful launch of the Monterey Jazz Festival in 1958, gave the peninsula a reputation as a jazz paradise of sorts. Lyons' biography smugly notes the magnitude of his triumph: "He had to convince the community that jazz (which meant black people and junkies) wouldn't spoil the children, wilt the vegetation, or corrupt the coastline. He had to convince them that jazz would bring in money, culture, decent people . . . . The poor remained poor, the rich remained rich. There were no race wars or dope wars. People lived and died that weekend, like they do every weekend."<sup>35</sup>

Given this historical context, Carmel was no more likely than any other community in the United States—and less likely than many—to be a market in which a commercial jazz broadcaster could succeed. Its firm commitment to European art music, its lack of racial diversity, and its statutory aversion to the volatile alcohol-music-dance cocktail indeed suggest an unwelcome clime for jazz. The MJF surely helped to create an audience for jazz radio in the region, but people involved with KRML for some time deny that there has ever been much cooperation or synergy between the two organizations (in fact, MJF broadcast rights have belonged to KUSP-FM 88.9 in Santa Cruz for some time). In any case, although the festival and the radio station debuted within nine months of one another, they had no natural affinity in terms of musical offerings: whereas Lyons' festival presented *The Saxophone Colossus* and *Lady Day*, KRML offered *The Chairman of the Board* and *Doris Day*.

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Welfare—Entertainment in Liquor Establishments), <http://www.codepublishing.com/CA/carmel.html>, accessed 22 June 2011.

<sup>34</sup>Erroll Garner Trio, *Concert by the Sea* (Columbia CL 535, 1956; Essential Jazz Classics 55499, 2011).

<sup>35</sup>Jimmy Lyons, with Ira Kamin, *Dizzy, Duke, The Count and Me: The Story of the Monterey Jazz Festival* (San Francisco: San Francisco Examiner, 1978), 60, 62.

## MOR @ KRML

At its meeting of 29 October 1957, the Monterey County Planning Commission granted permission to Monterey resident Paul F. Hanson to erect a radio transmitter near the mouth of the Carmel Valley, to the southeast of Carmel-by-the-Sea. Hanson was vague about his programming format, reportedly saying it would consist of “different types,” such as “cultural music including that of Elvis Presley,” but he promised that his station would deliver “the best sounds on the Monterey Peninsula.”<sup>36</sup> On Christmas Day that same year, KTEE (presumably evocative of golf, the favorite local pastime) went on the air as the town’s first broadcaster. The quiet switch to the KRML call sign (on 26 March 1960) more explicitly identified the station with the foggy idyll it called home.

Carmel’s first local station went on the air at a time of rapid expansion in radio, with unprecedented numbers of license requests for AM frequencies flooding the Federal Communications Commission. “Contrary to what many people think, radio stations are not put on the air by self-interested businessmen who hire an announcer, purchase some records, and sell commercial time to an advertiser,” one applicant in suburban Chicago explained. “A radio station is a business licensed by the federal government to operate in the public interest.” Quite a lot of people wanted to serve the “public interest,” as radio historian Michael C. Keith observes that “the demand for AM frequencies reached such a fever pitch in the early ’60s that the FCC was prompted to impose a freeze on license issuance in order to sort things out.”<sup>37</sup> The national networks’ profile on the airwaves had declined precipitously as television assumed radio’s former role as all-purpose provider of information and entertainment, but local radio was booming, offering low-cost, community-oriented programming focused on the disc jockey, with local and national news updates, and local advertising. FM radio, on the other hand, was hardly flourishing, despite its superior, static-free sound quality. When KTEE went on the air, there were over 3000 AM stations in the United States, compared to around 530 FM broadcasters; the latter tended to be clustered in urban markets, where AM frequencies were too saturated to accommodate newcomers. FM receivers were still expensive, so FM programming tended toward the tastes of cosmopolitan, well educated, higher income urbanites, people who could also afford to purchase the new high-fidelity (“hi-fi”) stereo equipment for which FM was well suited.<sup>38</sup> So when

<sup>36</sup>“Planners Approve Valley Radio Station,” *PC* 31 Oct. 1957: 4; “New Radio Station for Carmel,” *MPH* 30 Oct. 1957, Radio & Television clipping folder #1, California History Room, Monterey Public Library; “Radio Programs,” *MPH* 19 Dec. 1957: 18; 26 Dec. 1957: 28. The *PC* story identifies the transmitter site as “Odello Island,” which presumably refers to the valley’s Odello marsh at the mouth of the Carmel River, an area that today is being restored as a wetlands preserve. The 1958 *Broadcasting Yearbook* lists Hanson as “pres, gen mgr & news director,” with a staff of five (A-244). Scanned back-issues of *Broadcasting Yearbook* (hereafter *BY*) are available online at <http://www.americanradiohistory.com/>.

<sup>37</sup>Michael McClure, “FCC Soon to Hear Plea for Glen Ellyn Radio Station,” *Chicago Tribune* 1 Aug. 1965: W3; Michael C. Keith, *Talking Radio: An Oral History of American Radio in the Television Age* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), 129.

<sup>38</sup>Keith, *Talking Radio*, 45, 48–49, 135; Christopher H. Sterling and Michael C. Keith, *Sounds of Change: A History of FM Broadcasting in America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 1, 11, 84–85.

Paul Hanson applied for his AM license, he was making the more economically sound and potentially profitable choice between broadcast bands—although later KRML owners, program directors, and listeners certainly wished he had been more prescient about FM’s eventual rise to dominance.

An early advertisement for the station features a graphic of the famous Lone Cypress and declares that KRML is “Truly an adventure in fine listening.”<sup>39</sup> Its claims to “adventure” notwithstanding, KRML broadcasted what was known as “MOR” (“middle of the road”), “light music,” and “easy listening,” which Canadian scholar Keir Keightley describes as “the most successful musical mainstream of the twentieth century prior to rock.” KTEE/KRML went on air at precisely the midpoint of the period that Keightley identifies as a distinct “epoch” in popular music history (1946–66), when the predominant musical culture was adult-oriented and favored familiar, hummable melodies; “soft” textures emphasizing string sections more than brass; avoidance of the rhythmic and improvisational “excesses” of jazz; a less demanding, more “inclusive” and “populist” ethos than art music; and “functionality” as “aural wallpaper” for “unconscious listening.” Unlike television, radio did not require the listener’s undivided attention, but rather could provide a “sonic background to other activities”—as one programmer put it, “You don’t have to stop what you’re doing to listen to our program.”<sup>40</sup>

As television began to usurp radio’s position as a multi-purpose provider of entertainment and information in the late 1940s, radio turned increasingly to specialized formats, with MOR the most viable and marketable alternative to the Top 40 programs targeting youth.<sup>41</sup> Featuring the music of Percy Faith, Guy Lombardo, Dinah Shore, Frank Sinatra, Eydie Gormé, Perry Como, Doris Day, Annunzio Paolo Mantovani, Nat King Cole, and Nelson Riddle, among others, the MOR format was pitched as the antithesis of teen-oriented pop and provided a soothing, inoffensive “soundtrack” for the “historical bloc” of middle-class professionals that emerged to social and cultural prominence in post-World War II America. “Uncongenial to the babbling brass and jackhammer jazz of the earlier Swing Era,” Joseph Lanza claims, “the postwar home required softer, subtler, more enchanting, and even haunting textures.”<sup>42</sup> Indeed, in the late 1950s many in the industry declared the decisive victory of “melodic standards” over rock ‘n’ roll on the radio. *Newsweek*

<sup>39</sup>1960 *Illustrated Directory Carmel and Pebble Beach California* (N.p.: The Women’s Auxiliary of the Peninsula Community Hospital, 1960), 6. The KRML call sign first appears in “Radio Programs,” *MPH* 26 March 1960: 10. I have yet to find any public announcement of the change. The KTEE call sign is currently used by an FM station in North Bend, Oregon (<http://www.ktee.com/>).

<sup>40</sup>Keir Keightley, “Music for Middlebrows: Defining the Easy Listening Era, 1946–1966,” *American Music* 26.3 (Fall 2008): 310, 316, 317, 326. For a feisty aesthetic defense of mood music, see Joseph Lanza, *Elevator Music: A Surreal History of Muzak, Easy-Listening, and Other Moodsong* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994).

<sup>41</sup>Peter Fornatale and Joshua E. Mills, *Radio in the Television Age* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1984), 15; Michael C. Keith, *Voices in the Purple Haze: Underground Radio and the Sixties* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 3. It is worth noting, however, that even when radio turned primarily to music formats, many stations continued to schedule programs dedicated to specific genres of music. It took a few more decades for radio to settle into its current “niche market” approach.

<sup>42</sup>Keightley, “Music for Middlebrows,” 317, 321; Lanza, *Elevator Music* 67; Keith, *Voices*, 7.

described a “definite trend toward playing the great songs of the ’20s, ’30s, and ’40s” indicating that “adult audiences are simply fed up with the bleating cacophony of rock ’n’ roll.” San Francisco’s KGO had reportedly even “banned rock ’n’ roll and shipped its entire collection of such records to a saloonkeeper in Samoa.”<sup>43</sup> By sticking to the mainstream hits of the 1940s and ’50s, KRML’s initial format was well suited to the growing population of “greatest generation” professionals, military veterans, and retirees emigrating—or, some would say, escaping—to Carmel in the 1960s, whose presence fundamentally transformed the community’s culture and demographic profile, in addition to setting off the steep rise of its property values.

More detailed information about programming on KRML in its early years is scarce. *Broadcasting Yearbooks* from the early 1960s list “specialty programs” in foreign language instruction (German, Italian, and Spanish).<sup>44</sup> At least one of KRML’s regular features proved memorable enough for sardonic comment by two very different authors. Saul Alinsky (1909–72), a pioneer in modern community organizing and activism on behalf of the poor, ridiculed a KRML morning program called *The Sunshine News* that “headlines the positive, only the good news of the world!” (“And boy,” he quipped, “they had to stretch to get it”). The Reverend Dr. Colin Morris (b. 1929), an English Methodist minister and religious broadcaster, likewise remarked on this program in his tract *The Hammer of the Lord*: “Every morning, an announcer with a happy-happy voice would open the transmission with the words ‘Here is the good news of the world’ and proceed to read a bulletin from which all mention of wars, tragedies, and disasters was rigorously excluded. And in particular, death was *out!* Except for regrettable accidents, no one ever died in Carmel.” Both Alinsky and Morris suggested that this Pollyannaish newscast reflected a blissful myopia endemic to its locale: Carmel was “really a Brigadoon fantasy place where people go to get away from everything,” Alinsky wrote, “one of America’s Shangri-Las of escape from the world as it is.” “I am told this little town is as near to the Garden of Eden as one is likely to get on earth,” Morris noted, “. . . though one might have reservations about the right of the citizens of Carmel to sweep the nasty bits of life under their expensive Persian carpets. They might retort that if they can afford the privilege of contracting out of the seamy side of existence, why shouldn’t they?”<sup>45</sup> It seemed to these critics that *The Sunshine News*—and possibly KRML’s whole mellow “mood music” format—enabled and perpetuated Carmelites’ native penchant for keeping the rest of the world and its blemishes at bay. Thus did KRML achieve its first taste of national notoriety.

<sup>43</sup>“Swing and Sway,” *Newsweek* 24 Aug. 1959: 76.

<sup>44</sup>“Specialty programs: German, 1 hr wkly” (1961–62 BY, B-15); “Specialty programs: German, ½ hr.; Italian, ½ hr.; Spanish, 10 hrs., all wkly” (1963 BY, B-16); “Spec progs: Gr, 1 hr wkly” (1964 BY, B-13).

<sup>45</sup>Marion K. Sanders, *The Professional Radical: Conversations with Saul Alinsky* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965, 1970), 60; Saul David Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals* (New York: Random House, 1989), 12; Colin Morris, *The Hammer of the Lord: Signs of Hope* (Nashville/New York: Abingdon Press, 1974), 141.



## Playing Changes

Although Paul Hanson is listed as proprietor of KTEE/KRML in local directories until 1964, the *Broadcasting Yearbook* indicates that on 4 March 1960 the license was purchased by the Carmel Broadcasting Company, of which real estate developer Samuel S. Smith was president and general manager.<sup>46</sup> Smith set up KRML's studios within a cramped two-room office suite in his new Carmel Rancho Shopping Center near the intersection of Highway 1 and Carmel Valley Road, the first of many such retail and office developments that so radically altered the character of the area (the station would remain there until 1994; Figure 1).

There is evidence that Smith had considerable ambition: he placed a graphic ad in the 1960 *Broadcasting Yearbook*, of two upraised male hands, one pointing what appears to be a short conductor's baton (or magician's wand?) toward the open palm of the other, with the caption "KRML—Selling Over a Quarter Million Central Californians—PLUS an Average of 3 ½ million touring listeners who spend in excess of 32 million dollars annually—Carmel-Monterey."<sup>47</sup> Smith also applied for and received a license for an FM signal (assigned to 101.7 MHz), and a UHF television channel (35), although neither plan materialized.<sup>48</sup> But trade publications also indicate the instability of KRML's staff: positions such as "women's director," "news director," and "commercial manager" appeared and vanished; and between 1957 and 1969, KRML had seven station managers and seven chief engineers.<sup>49</sup> When Smith sold the license in November 1965, to KRML, Inc. (co-owned in absentia by San Franciscan Alan Chapman Lisser and three Angelinos), the station had been off the air since April. Lisser announced the resurrection with another ad in a national trade paper: "The QUALITY Radio Station in Monterey Peninsula Market—KRML—'The Sound of Music'"<sup>50</sup>

KRML's next owner brought a wealth of experience in radio broadcasting when he purchased the station from Lisser on 25 October 1968, mainly out of a desire to relocate

<sup>46</sup>The station's first directory listing—still as KTEE—is in *Polk's Monterey-Pacific Grove City Directory (Monterey County, Calif.), including Carmel, Seaside and Del Rey Oaks* (San Francisco: R.L. Polk & Co., 1960), 328. Hanson last appears in the 1964 *Polk's*, though there is no separate entry for the station.

<sup>47</sup>KRML ad from 1960 *BY*: A-115.

<sup>48</sup>"Planners Favor Two Valley Shopping Centers," *MPH* ca. 1957, County Planning—Carmel Valley clipping folder, sheet #41, California History Room, Monterey Public Library; "Start Work on Valley Center," *MPH* 11 Nov. 1960, County Planning—Carmel Valley clipping folder, California History Room, Monterey Public Library; "R3 Zoning Approved, C1 Denied," *MPH* 1 March 1961, County Planning—Carmel Valley clipping folder, California History Room, Monterey Public Library. Regarding expansion plans, see "KRML-FM not on air: target date unknown: 101.7 mc; 3 kw. Ant 295 ft.," 1965 *BY*: B-14; "Applications for UHF stations filed with FCC since Jan. 1, 1964," *Sponsor* 10 Aug. 1964: 10; and "Television Station Applications Pending," 1965 *BY*: A-104. Later editions indicate that KRML-FM was authorized to duplicate 50% of the AM outlet's programming.

<sup>49</sup>See KTEE and KRML entries in 1958 *BY*: A-244; 1960 *BY*: A-115; 1961–62 *BY*: B-15; 1963 *BY*: B-16; 1964 *BY*: B-13; 1965 *BY*: B-14; 1967 *BY*: B-14; 1968 *BY*: B-15; and 1969 *BY*: B-15.

<sup>50</sup>Lisser (1919–2004) was president of KRML, Inc.; his partners were Clifford Gill, Lisle Sheldon, and David S. Drubeck ("KRML back on air," *Broadcasting* 7 Feb. 1966: 46). Lisser's obituary notes that he witnessed the attack on Pearl Harbor while working at KGMB-AM 590 (*San Francisco Chronicle* 13 June 2004: Z-99). Ad in 1967 *BY*: B-14.



**Figure 1** Two-room suite occupied by KRML studios from 1957 to 1994, in Carmel Rancho Shopping Center, 2011. Photo by the author.

to the Monterey Peninsula.<sup>51</sup> After being discharged from the U.S. Air Force, Sam Salerno had attended a Hollywood broadcasting school for two years, studying elocution, copywriting, and “radio theory.” Following initial placements as a DJ and talk host at Fort Bragg and KREO-AM in Indio, CA, Salerno came to work at KMBY-AM 1240, the Monterey Peninsula’s first broadcaster, whose studios were located in the downtown San Carlos Hotel (now a Marriott). Salerno hosted a nighttime program as well as remote broadcasts of dance bands from the San Carlos’s ballroom. Like other radio talent in the 1950s, he was required to do any- and everything: selling advertising, writing copy, programming music, reading news, doing interviews, and fielding calls. “You had to learn how to read [news off the teletype] cold. If you couldn’t read cold, forget it.” His career took off with a fifteen-year stint as “Sam the Morning Man” in Las Vegas, “during the Rat Pack days.” To supplement his income he worked as an announcer for the CBS network’s broadcasts from the Dunes Hotel, and as a record promoter for bandleader Lionel Hampton, pianist Dorothy Donegan, jazz organist Milt Herth, the singing duo Art and Dotty Todd, and singer/trumpeter Louis Prima. “I did everything in Vegas, you know, I did interviews, sports. I was kind of like the Larry King of radio there ... interviewing all the stars; I interviewed everyone who ever came to town. Did golf shows, did golf-casting, just about everything.”

Salerno continued to do “just about everything” at KRML. He brought his “Morning Man” persona along to host the first show of the day, then he would “clean up” and hit the street to sell advertising. “I wasn’t an executive. You couldn’t be an executive; you

<sup>51</sup>“New Owner for Radio KRML,” *PC* 31 Oct. 1968: 20; 1971 BY B-18.

couldn't sit behind a desk and say, 'Go out and sell.' It was tough, the market was tough then. We were selling spots for two dollars, a dollar-and-a-half; now they get fifty, a hundred dollars a spot." Salerno says that KRML had a "good reputation" when he bought it, but it was "a struggle at first" nonetheless. "They had a great signal; they could pick us up in San Jose when we first had the station." "The big problem we had," he remarks, was that "we were a daytime station, sunrise to sunset."<sup>52</sup>

The Salernos tried several things to make KRML more profitable and prominent on peninsular airwaves, including petitioning the FCC for more on-air hours. In 1970 the station became an ABC network affiliate.<sup>53</sup> Far more controversial, however, was the change in format from MOR to progressive rock. "Well, as soon as we changed the format, they went crazy, all the older people: [falsetto voice] 'What have you done to my beautiful station?'" The format change was momentous enough to earn a write-up in the trade paper *Billboard*, which noted the challenges involved, "because the 200,000 persons residing in this area below San Francisco are mostly retired, ex-military and as such are not prone to Grand Funk, Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young, Janis Joplin, Emerson Lake [& Palmer], or Jimi Hendrix, some of the record artists on KRML's 'free form' playlist." "Record companies don't consider this a major market," Salerno told *Billboard*. "But we do need new albums for the library. The service from San Francisco is real lousy."<sup>54</sup> Such challenges notwithstanding, Salerno insists the change was initially successful, and a *Pine Cone* article confirmed this: "The kids have responded like filings to a magnet. Kids at Carmel High School will listen all day to KRML, the Carmel AM station which plays a progressive rock schedule during the daytime, and switch the radio off at nightfall rather than listen to the Carpenters and Jackson 5 over KDON, a typical bubblegum station in Salinas." However, Salerno contends, local rivals "KDON and KMBY copied us. They were full-time, and they killed us . . . . See, 'cause we were day-timers. See, the listener's gonna be fickle, right? If you go off at five o'clock, they're gonna—*boop*—they're gonna punch KDON or they're gonna punch KMBY." Moreover, in the early 1970s FM was starting to cut into the AM audience, with the very same "album-oriented rock" (AOR) format and a more static-free sound. Within weeks of KRML's change, KLRB-FM 101.7 went on-air as "the bay's first 'progressive rock' FM station."<sup>55</sup> Salerno held out for a while, but admits, "Just before I sold it we went back to a lighter sound."

<sup>52</sup>Interview with Sam Salerno, Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA, 15 June 2011. Salerno attributes KRML's relatively weak signal nowadays to a run-in with a real estate development: "When the Riverwood condo project was built, we had to move the tower. So we moved it, we laid ground wire and everything else, and then when they started building the condos they tore up the ground wire. I was gone by then. So, you know, without ground wire you don't have a good signal."

<sup>53</sup>"Today it's KRML-by-the-ABC," advertisement, *PC* 19 Feb. 1970: 19.

<sup>54</sup>"KRML Accents Hard Rock in Daytime," *Billboard* 3 April 1971: 42. The format change was promoted with ads in the *Pine Cone* that stated, "KRML, Carmel-by-the-Sea, RADIO 1410 AM, 'For the times they are a' changin'" (*PC* 1 April 1971: 31; and *PC* 8 April 1971: 28).

<sup>55</sup>Gary Frantz, "A Major Longhair Cultural Event: New FM Rock Station in Carmel," *PC* 22 April 1971: 26–27; Salerno interview. KLRB, the only other radio station with a Carmel address and zip code, went on the air on 29 April 1971. Under new call signs KWST, KXDC, and KAXT, the station relocated to Monterey in 1987 and, ironically, adopted an easy listening format like KRML's previous one. See 1973 *BY*: B-13; 1988 *BY*: B-26; 1995 *BY*: B-35. On 10 July 1989, another station opened in nearby Carmel Valley, KPUP-AM 540 (later KIEZ,

At just short of a decade, Salerno's tenure was the longest of any owner's in KRML's twenty-year history. He also made a decision that would have a lasting impact on KRML: on taking over in 1968, he immediately hired an old friend, Johnny Adams, as his program director. Born Ettore "Anthony" Maffezzoli in Trenton, NJ, Adams became a jazz fan when he heard Ray Charles performing "Come Rain or Come Shine" on the radio. Attending one of Salerno's live broadcasts from the San Carlos Hotel for KMBY, he was mesmerized by the announcer's poise (Figure 2). Salerno, in turn, was impressed with Maffezzoli's voice and recommended he go to radio school himself. Salerno also rechristened him "Johnny Adams," because "in those days an Italian name like that didn't go over on radio; you had to have a 'Smith' or a 'Jones' or a 'true American' name."

In 1953, Adams started working for KMBY in Monterey—then owned by Bing Crosby—where he hosted his own live broadcasts; he eventually followed Salerno to Las Vegas, but returned to the Peninsula to launch his first jazz record show on KIDD-AM 630 (Monterey) in the 1960s. Whenever a station changed formats or canceled his jazz shows, he recalls, "I said, 'Good-bye!' ... I love jazz and that's it, that's my life." This is quite apparent when one sees the thousands of LPs, CDs, and tapes that line most of the wall space in his hilltop circular home in the Carmel Highlands. "I've got the best collection in the country," Adams says proudly. "In the country. I got records nobody's got: Bing Crosby with Glenn Miller; Nat Cole with Tommy Dorsey." "I started jazz on the Peninsula," he adds, "before Jimmy Lyons. I brought jazz to the Peninsula, and I kept it alive, and it's still alive, after all these years."<sup>56</sup> Adams produced albums, wrote liner notes, and promoted concerts (booking Billie Holiday at a peninsular roller skating rink in the early 1950s is among his proudest moments), but arguably his most enduring legacy was the establishment of KRML's identity as a jazz broadcaster in the early 1980s. Before that, however, both he and Salerno facilitated the tiny station's exhilarating entrance onto the national stage as the setting for a cinematic thriller starring and directed by one of American film's most iconic figures.

### Playing *Misty*

Clint Eastwood's directorial debut gave KRML its next brush with fame. In cinematic circles, *Play Misty for Me* (1971) is widely described as the first in a series of "crazy chick flicks" featuring women who become murderously psychotic when jilted by an insensitive lover, stalking him and his wife or girlfriend(s) in a jealous frenzy.<sup>57</sup> Although

KSRK, and KMEQ), with C&W, oldies, MOR, and news/sports/talk formats. As KRXA today, it bills itself as a "progressive talk" outlet.

<sup>56</sup>Interview with Johnny Adams and Sam Salerno, Carmel Highlands, 21 June 2011. For his most recent show, *And All That Jazz* on Monterey's KNRY, Adams programmed about 80% of his playlist from LPs, adding excerpts from old tape-recorded interviews he did with jazz stars such as Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Cal Tjader, and Carmen McRae. Not long after our interview, KNRY was purchased by Immaculate Heart Radio and began broadcasting Catholic programming.

<sup>57</sup>*Play Misty for Me* (Clint Eastwood, dir., Universal, 1971). *Misty* and its offshoots—*Fatal Attraction* (1987), *The Crush* (1993), *Swimfan* (2002), *Chloe* (2009), and *Obsessed* (2009)—lend themselves all too easily to feminist critique. Critics contend that these films express either a male fantasy about female sexual interest ("She must be really into me"), or a "masculine hysteria" engendered by female empowerment since the 1960s (although



**Figure 2** Johnny Adams (L) and Sam Salerno (with thousands of LPs), at Adams' home in Carmel Highlands, 2011. Photo by the author.

reviews were mixed at the time of its release, with some complaining about the rookie director's lingering shots of the Monterey Peninsula's gorgeous coast, *Play Misty for Me* was a box office success and is now regarded as a culturally important film not just in Eastwood's oeuvre but in American cinema generally (one clinical psychiatry professor even recommends showing *Misty* to students "to illustrate the DSM-IV diagnostic criteria for borderline personality disorder").<sup>58</sup> "The real subject of the movie," critic Richard Brody writes, "which raises it above the moralizing successor *Fatal Attraction*, is demagoguery. The chaos that Dave [Garver, the main character, played by Eastwood] inadvertently wreaks, and his eventual comeuppance, results from using his public image self-servingly and retaining his magnified persona in his off-hours; and the political lessons to be drawn from it are as universal as those of [Eastwood's] more overtly socially oriented later films."<sup>59</sup>

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*Misty's* original script was written by Jo Heim, a Los Angeles legal secretary). Adam Knee argues the film "signals a crisis in efforts towards a viable figuration of a 1970s masculinity": Eastwood's protagonist—KRML DJ Dave Garver—exhibits contradictory traits of machismo and hipness, misogyny and sensitivity, racism and tolerance. *Misty* is thus "indicative of a passing moment of progressive questioning of traditional constructions of male identity prior to the conservative reaction which launched [Eastwood] to greater macho stardom" as rogue cop Dirty Harry. See Adam Knee, "The Dialectic of Female Power and Male Hysteria in *Play Misty for Me*," in Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark, eds., *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinity in Hollywood Cinema* (London & New York: Routledge, 1993), 88, 100–101.

<sup>58</sup>Steven E. Hyler, "Using Commercially Available Films to Teach About Borderline Personality Disorder," *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic* 61.4 (Fall 1997): 458–469.

<sup>59</sup>Roger Greenspun, "Eastwood as Director," *NYT* 4 Nov. 1971: 52; Richard Brody, "Eastwood Ho!" *The New Yorker* 9 March 2009: 10.



**Figure 3** Clint Eastwood in the KRML studio, an image often used in station publicity. Used with permission from Getty Images.

Although there was to be no direct financial remuneration, Sam Salerno assented to Eastwood's request to shoot *Misty* in the KRML studios for the "notoriety," which has indeed proven beneficial. He notes that a still from the film, of Eastwood behind the KRML microphone, continues to figure in the station's publicity (Figure 3).

Johnny Adams coached Eastwood on how to operate the board, and may also have been a partial inspiration for Dave Garver's character. "Everything that happened to [Garver] ... has happened to me," he told the *Pine Cone*, "Except for blowing the chick through the window, that's my life story."<sup>60</sup> To this day, when Adams receives a phone request for "Misty," he responds with a quote from the movie, "Get off of my back, Evelyn!" Eastwood later sought Adams' feedback on the script for his 1988 Charlie Parker biopic *Bird*, and hired him to play a bartender in it.

There are a couple of noteworthy ironies regarding the station's part in *Misty*. For one thing, KRML's FCC license required it to go off the air at sundown, usually around 6:30 or 6:45, a fact that Salerno and other owners insist made it more difficult for the station to gain a following and be successful. However, in the movie Dave Garver's program *begins* at sundown, which was beneficial to the narrative, of course, but also convenient for the production. The film crew could shoot its scenes

<sup>60</sup>David Leland, "KRML's Johnny Adams keeps tradition alive," *PC* 4 Dec. 1986: 29, 35. See pictures of Eastwood at the KRML control board and with Johnny Adams at "The Clint Eastwood Archive," August 2012, [http://theclinteastwoodarchive.blogspot.com/2012\\_08\\_01\\_archive.html](http://theclinteastwoodarchive.blogspot.com/2012_08_01_archive.html). Adams' unique bachelor pad was also considered for use in *Misty*, as Garver's domicile, but the crew balked at toting its cameras and other equipment up the steep, winding road to the house.

in the studio after KRML had gone off the air for the night, so the “notoriety” was achievable in part by making a virtue of the station’s FCC-mandated “handicap.” Although most of the diegetic music Garver plays in the film—with the exception of Erroll Garner’s “Misty,” of course—is best described as a dated, late-sixties jazz-rock hybrid, KRML is identified as a jazz station, and at one point Garver and fellow jock Al Monte (James McEachin) do a remote broadcast from the Monterey Jazz Festival.<sup>61</sup> Yet at the time of shooting KRML was still MOR, and by the time *Misty* was released in November 1971, it had already changed to the progressive rock format. Anyone inspired by the movie to make a trip to Carmel and tune in to 1410 AM looking for jazz would have been disappointed: during the day s/he would hear Jimi Hendrix or Janis Joplin, and in the evening find just dead air.

### “From Spirituals to Swing”

In October 1977 Sam Salerno sold KRML to George A. Edwards. For the rest of the 1970s the new owner kept the reinstated MOR/easy listening format, which likely pleased the ever-swelling ranks of Carmel retirees.<sup>62</sup> However, in April 1981, scarcely three years after his purchase, the *Monterey Peninsula Herald* reported that Edwards had made a deal to sell the station to Carmelite Stoddard P. Johnston. KRML was off-air for seven months while negotiations proceeded. Apparently, however, the deal fell through, because in November Edwards was still in charge and announced another format change: KRML was to be a religious broadcaster.<sup>63</sup> I suspect that it was Ronald Reagan’s election to the U.S. Presidency in 1980 that inspired Edwards to eye the newly prominent, politicized evangelical Christians who, somewhat surprisingly, gave the former Hollywood actor their unqualified support. Edwards—a Roman Catholic—considered Christians to be a population underserved by the media and set about to correct this. Religious programming was hardly new to KRML; for many years it had broadcast a Sunday morning program, *The Bible Speaks to You*, sponsored by the locally prominent Church of Christ, Scientist (whose church and reading room occupy prime real estate in Carmel-by-the-Sea, about 600m up the slope from the ocean).<sup>64</sup> Station manager David Bruce told the *Herald* that he and Edwards had determined that there were no Christian broadcasters “within a hundred miles,” but added that despite the overtly Christian music and message, “we don’t want to alienate anyone and we want to be fair.” They hoped that KRML—which would remain a commercial, for-profit enterprise—would become an example of “loyalty radio,” meaning “people who listen to this listen to nothing else.” The faithful may indeed have deemed it divine affirmation

<sup>61</sup>Original music for the film was composed by Dewells “Dee” Barton (1937–2001).

<sup>62</sup>“KRML sold to L.A. man,” *PC* 20 Oct. 1977: 20; “2 Radio Arts Shows Pick Up New Stations,” *Billboard* 4 Feb. 1978: 28.

<sup>63</sup>“Radio Station KRML Off the Air Pending FCC Approval of Sale,” *MPH* 4 April 1981: 31; “KRML Format Now Religious,” *MPH* 5 Dec. 1981: 37, Radio & Television clipping folder #1, California History Room, Monterey Public Library.

<sup>64</sup>See ads in *PC* 4 Jan. 1968: 18, and 19 Feb. 1970: 18.

when, in June 1983, KRML received permission from the FCC to increase its signal strength from 500 to 5000 watts, and to broadcast the gospel 24 hours a day.<sup>65</sup>

Eighteen months after KRML's conversion experience, a *Pine Cone* feature observed that the new format reflected broader national trends: Christian broadcasting and media were booming nationwide; and with the migration of most music programming to the FM band, AM stations were "seeking creative and profitable alternative formats." "Christian radio is rising quickly because America is hungry for positive music," Edwards explained. "There has not been a Christian station in this area that is filled with church-going people and this need wasn't being filled." In addition to remote broadcasts of Sunday services from churches in Carmel and Monterey, he announced plans to sponsor and promote concerts by Christian artists, and to add more locally produced programs (including a children's show). Still, KRML remained a shoestring operation: most of its programming was automated, pre-recorded, or syndicated; and the staff consisted of two full-time and two part-time employees, with no local on-air talent or sales manager.<sup>66</sup> None of Edwards' plans materialized; perhaps he overestimated the number of underserved evangelicals on the Monterey Peninsula, an area of the world in which mainline Christians, New Agers, or agnostics arguably hold greater sway. By March 1984, Christian teachings were "offered until noon only," followed by a three-hour segment of "adult easy listening," and Johnny Adams' *All That Jazz* program from 3–6 PM daily.<sup>67</sup>

### Jazz on Air

By the time Gil Wisdom of Irvine and Alan Schultz of Half Moon Bay joined forces to buy KRML from George Edwards (effective 6 December 1985), KRML had already switched to the all-jazz format for which it is best known.<sup>68</sup> Everyone agrees that stalwart jazz crusader and interim manager Johnny Adams was responsible for initiating the change and selling it to his changing cast of employers: "They came in," Adams recalls, "and they said, 'We thought we bought a religious station,' and I said, 'Well you did, but I converted it, to jazz.'"

In many respects, Adams was a holdover from, and a link to, an earlier era of jazz broadcasting, "a time when jazz was a lifestyle—a personal statement attesting to one's beliefs, intelligence and 'hipness.'"<sup>69</sup> Like his counterparts Jimmy Lyons, "Symphony Sid" Torin (1909–84), Al "Jazzbeaux" Collins (1919–97), Holmes "Daddy-O" Daylie (1921–2003), Ed Beach (1923–2010), Dick Buckley (1924–2010), and Chuck Niles (1927–2004), Adams was a non-musician who earned a place in jazz history for his expertise and passion for the music, on-air personality, and intimacy with musicians.

<sup>65</sup>Quoted in "KRML Format Now Religious," 37; "Radio Station Gets OK to Raise Power," *MPH* 2 June 1983: 43, Radio & Television clipping folder #1, California History Room, Monterey Public Library.

<sup>66</sup>Michael Gardner, "Religious radio spreads the message in Carmel," *PC* 7 June 1983: A-16-17.

<sup>67</sup>"Radio Station Names General Sales Manager," *MPH* 2 March 1984: 22. Plans for a 24-hour broadcast apparently had not panned out, either, because in 1986 KRML was still a "dawn-to-dusk" station.

<sup>68</sup>"Carmel Radio Station Sold," *MPH* 27 Dec. 1985: 43, Radio & Television clipping folder #2, California History Room, Monterey Public Library.

<sup>69</sup>Leland, "KRML's Johnny Adams," 29.



Adams implemented the format change in defiance of broader trends in American radio broadcasting in the early 1980s: jazz was becoming increasingly scarce on the airwaves, losing its viability as a commercial format (unless “smoothed”), and migrating to public radio. Indeed, the radio profile of “America’s classical music” had steadily waned since the 1960s. To identify the causes and consequences of this rather steep decline, we must temporarily take leave of the snugly haven of Carmel-by-the-Sea to examine jazz radio on a macro-historical scale.

It is well established that radio played an important role in disseminating the genre across the country and around the globe on a grander scale than local performances could achieve.<sup>70</sup> Before World War II, jazz performances could be heard via radio broadcasts in the homes of urbanites, suburban families, and rural citizens alike. Live performances constituted the majority of prewar jazz radio broadcasts, though such opportunities were limited for black performers because of racial discrimination within the industry. Nonetheless, radio allowed listeners to encounter musicians from different parts of the country playing different styles of music—the most famous example being John Hammond (1910–87), who championed Count Basie’s music after hearing it broadcast from Kansas City in 1936. Reflecting on the importance of radio to the popularization of jazz, Nat Hentoff mused, “Those broadcasts, back then, were a boon to all kinds of folks. People without money for a cover charge, for instance . . . , the sick, and the shy. Their jazz needs were greatly nurtured by the radio. And the kids who had very big ears even if they couldn’t get past the bouncer and buy a drink.”<sup>71</sup>

After World War II, the radio industry experienced several changes that resulted in the growth of jazz programming as a popular medium. One such change was the move toward promotion of record sales as the primary purpose for broadcasting, replacing live performances with recordings as the format of choice. This change led to a growing emphasis on publication and performers’ and writers’ legal rights to compensation from broadcasting.<sup>72</sup> Business politics led to contention over rights to air music on radio stations, culminating in multiple bans on the American Society of Composers Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) in 1941 and the American Federation of Musicians (AFM) in 1942.<sup>73</sup> These bans, and others like them, allowed groups otherwise marginalized because of their race or socioeconomic status, such as jazz musicians, to dominate stations otherwise unable to afford the increasingly expensive ASCAP or AFM music for their broadcasts.<sup>74</sup> In addition to internal business decisions, the

<sup>70</sup>William Barlow, “Black Music on Radio During the Jazz Age,” *African American Review* 29.2 (Summer 1995): 325–328; see also W.A. Brower, “Jazz Alive!: Ad-Free Radio Taylored Just for You,” *Down Beat* (hereafter *DB*) 3 May 1979: 18–19, 42.

<sup>71</sup>Bill McDonough, “Dial AM for Jazz,” *Jazziz* Feb. 2000: 74; Nat Hentoff, “Jazzin’ the Airwaves,” *The Progressive* Feb. 1982: 54.

<sup>72</sup>Scott DeVaux, “Bebop and the Recording Industry: The 1942 AFM Recording Ban Reconsidered,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 41.1 (Spring 1988): 126–165.

<sup>73</sup>Clifford John Doerksen, *Rough Music: The Cultural Politics of American Radio Broadcasting, 1920–1932* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002).

<sup>74</sup>Barlow, “Black Music,” 328; John Ryan, *The Production of Culture in the Music Industry: The ASCAP-BMI Controversy* (New York: University Press of America, 1985).

introduction of television presented both challenges and opportunities to radio. Despite some criticism that radio was “so crushed under the steamroller of television’s success that it has, for the present at least, lost a sense of its peculiar capabilities” and had become “a haphazard, scatterbrained, and demoted participant in our national life,” there was also hope that it could “explain the news and ... produce superior music” when compared to TV.<sup>75</sup> Time slots previously devoted to long news broadcasts, variety shows, and dramas, all of which migrated to television, allowed stations to try broadcasting a wider range of genres and styles of music, in an effort to keep the attention of the American public. Jazz was one of the genres that benefited from this diversification of radio music programming.

Jazz radio broadcasts thrived mid-century with the expansion of many jazz programs and the introduction of the first all-jazz formats in the late 1950s, in San Francisco (KJAZ), Los Angeles (KBCA/KKGO), and Bridgeport, CT (WJZZ).<sup>76</sup> It was during this period that DJs emerged as public personalities who “hipped” the public to jazz history and promoted new talent. Men such as Lyons, Collins, and Niles were often musicians themselves and are still revered as key players within the jazz community. Each DJ had his own style, but across the board they created personas that allowed them to walk the line between artist and fan, making them appealing and accessible to both musicians and listeners. Collins, for example, claimed to broadcast from an imagined setting called the “Purple Grotto,” from which he provided listeners with “boptalk about whatever pleased him: about jazz.”<sup>77</sup> This gave listeners the feeling that they were part of a cool, underground music culture. From the mid-1940s to the mid-1960s, jazz DJs were regarded as autonomous “playlist artists” who kept listeners abreast of the music’s development. Although few of these personalities worked for stations with all-jazz formats, they kept jazz in the public ear through weekly or nightly slots on stations with diverse programming schedules. Yet, while new forms of programming were being created that would benefit jazz radio, jazz was slowly being squeezed out of many commercial programming schedules in favor of pop and rock music programs. Ironically, the most reliable places to catch jazz on the radio were overseas, even behind the Iron Curtain, where shortwave broadcasts from Voice of America made the host of *Jazz Hour*, Willis Conover (1920–96), “the world’s favorite American.”<sup>78</sup>

<sup>75</sup>Raymond Swing, “Radio: The Languishing Giant,” *Saturday Review* 12 Aug. 1967: 51–53.

<sup>76</sup>WJZZ-FM 99.9 had an all-jazz format from 1960 to 1964, with pianist/composer Dave Brubeck serving as program director.

<sup>77</sup>Bill Amatneek, “Memories of Jazzbeaux, Jazz Radio’s Hep Pioneer,” *DB* Dec. 1997: 18–19.

<sup>78</sup>“Jazz on British Radio & Television,” *The Jazz Review* Jan. 1961: 37–38; Lawrence Elliott, “The World’s Favorite American,” *Reader’s Digest* July 1985: 94–97. Conover hosted the VOA *Jazz Hour* from its inception in 1955 until shortly before his death. The program was part of a broader US foreign policy initiative to win hearts and minds in the communist bloc and decolonizing countries with musical Americana. The most comprehensive treatment of this subject is Penny von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). See also Alan L. Heil, *Voice of America: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), esp. chapter 13; and Rüdiger Ritter’s and Mark Breckenridge’s articles dealing with Conover in the present issue.

In the 1960s the “continuous format,” directed toward niche markets, fueled a radio industry renaissance, but such “broadcast parochialism” entailed the phasing out of the kinds of specialty shows on which jazz was most frequently presented.<sup>79</sup> What was at stake was a fundamental contradiction between the rights of private individuals and corporations to pursue programming options that yielded higher profit margins, and the FCC’s mandate (in the 1934 Communications Act) to “prescribe the nature of service to be rendered by ... each station,” according to the amorphous standards of “public convenience, interest or necessity.” As FM band space became increasingly scarce and fewer new licenses became available in the 1970s, prospective broadcasters adopted new tactics to get on the air:

... the FM spectrum has been a battleground for rights in conflict and, as is usually the case in war, the public suffers most. The pattern is clearly defined and depressingly monotonous. A conglomerate buys a financially dubious classical music station, with protestations that better management will save the station. Once the company has secured its place on the dial and its outlet in a major market, Brahms and Mozart are packed off to the basement and electronically amplified teen-agers, all hair and spangles, consolidate their monopoly of the airwaves. Oo-ah, oo-ah, thump, thump, twang, without relief.<sup>80</sup>

The same tactics wrought “major changes” and a virtual end to commercial jazz broadcasting in the 1970s.<sup>81</sup> Popular dissatisfaction with so-called “educational radio” stations (usually affiliated with academic institutions), then the primary purveyors of non-commercial local programming, led to the advent of the community radio station. In response to the 1967 Public Broadcasting Act and the subsequent creation of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), National Public Radio (NPR) was founded in 1970 to distribute news programming to community radio stations across the country.<sup>82</sup> Later in the decade, both NPR and its affiliates expanded programming to include educational segments and music as well as the standard news; among these were acclaimed syndicated shows such as Dr. Billy Taylor’s *Jazz Alive!* (1977–82), Ben Sidran’s *Sidran on Record* (1984–90), and Marian McPartland’s *Piano Jazz* (1978–2011). Most NPR funding came from the CPB until the mid-1980s, when CPB began funding individual stations.<sup>83</sup> By the late 1980s new institutions such as Public Radio International, in partnership with the British Broadcasting

<sup>79</sup>William H. Honan, “The New Sound of Radio—All-News, All-Music, All-Ghetto Radio is a Success,” *NYT Magazine* 3 Dec. 1967: 323.

<sup>80</sup>Richard A. Blake, “The Sounds of Musics,” *America* 30 Nov. 1974: 350; cf. The Communications Act of 1934 47 U.S.C. 151 § 303—POWERS AND DUTIES OF COMMISSION (<http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/47/303>).

<sup>81</sup>“L.A. Jazz Radio,” *All About Jazz*, April 2004 (<http://www.allaboutjazz.com/php/article.php?id=1897>).

<sup>82</sup>“A Brief History of NPR and Public Broadcasting,” National Public Radio, 2012 (<http://www.npr.org/about/aboutnpr/history.html>). The listener-supported Pacifica radio network, launched in 1949, and broadcasting from Berkeley’s KPFA and New York’s WBAI, was an iconoclast among public broadcasters, offering radical critiques of American militarism that its staid “educational” counterparts would not dare to air. See Jeff Land, *Active Radio: Pacifica’s Brash Experiment* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

<sup>83</sup>“About CPB,” Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 2012 (<http://www.cpb.org/aboutcpb/>); Brower, “*Jazz Alive!*,” 19; and John Hunt, “NPR Confab: Upbeat, Wary,” *DB* Nov. 1981: 15.

Corporation (BBC), Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), and *New York Times*, diversified public radio's program offerings.

The rise of public broadcasting proved a mixed blessing for jazz, which found a new radio home even as commercial stations abandoned the music for other formats; but public broadcasting's role as a refuge may also have hastened jazz's marginalization in the radio market. From around 1980, commercial stations in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Chicago made drastic format changes that virtually took jazz off the air in big markets; although public radio initially stepped in to fill the void (as it did with classical music), in the early 2000s even non-commercial stations retreated from their commitment to jazz programming.

One of the earliest and most high-profile casualties among for-profit outlets was New York's WRVR-FM 106.7, which featured Ed Beach's "Just Jazz" (1961–76) and NBA star Spencer Haywood's weekend jazz program.<sup>84</sup> Broadcasting from the French Gothic Riverside Church just off the Columbia University campus, WRVR began in 1961 as a non-commercial source for news, talk, religious programming, classical and jazz music. Beach's weekday drive-time and Saturday evening jazz shows earned substantial followings; after switching to a 22-hour all-jazz format in 1974, general manager Robert Orenbach reported that "the station's revenues had increased more than 100 per cent" in one year's time.<sup>85</sup> Listeners turned activists in 1975 when Riverside Church sold WRVR to Florida-based Sonderling Broadcasting, whose owner stated flatly, "Jazz has proven not to be commercially viable." With the support of luminaries such as Milt Jackson and Art Blakey, the so-called Citizens Committee to Save Jazz Radio initially demanded that the FCC block the sale, but eventually succeeded in pressuring Sonderling to maintain a significant presence for the "fragile art" on WRVR, as a "public service."<sup>86</sup> The victory was short-lived: by 1980 WRVR (by then a Viacom property), like many other stations trying to hitch a ride on the mechanical bull of the *Urban Cowboy* craze, had gone country. On September 8 the staff was given two hours' notice of the impending format change, after which a truck-full of country music tape cartridges arrived and the jazz library was "immediately removed." By noon WRVR spoke with a twang. When they heard Waylon Jennings' "Are You Ready for the Country?" follow Charles Mingus' "Goodbye, Pork

<sup>84</sup>The "WRVR Lives" web site (<http://www.wrvrives.org/>) memorializes the station. Having previously hosted a jazz program on Seattle's KYAC while playing for the SuperSonics, Haywood started at WRVR after being traded to the New York Knicks. See Spencer Haywood, with Scott Ostler, *The Rise, the Fall, the Recovery* (New York: Amistad, 1992), 156, 174. The station is now WLTW; a Memphis station ("The River" 104.5 FM) currently uses the WRVR call sign.

<sup>85</sup>John Wicklein, "Riverside Radio," *NYT* 1 Jan. 1961: X11; Jack Gould, "Radio: 'Just Jazz' Just Fine," *NYT* 11 May 1964: 63; Clayton Riley, "He's Just Wild About Jazz," *NYT* 12 Dec. 1971: D23; Les Brown, "GAF Negotiating to Buy WRVR and Make It a Classical Station," *NYT* 25 Feb. 1975: 71. WRVR became a for-profit commercial broadcaster in 1970.

<sup>86</sup>"Jazz Group Files With F.C.C. to Block Purchase of WRVR," *NYT* 11 Sept. 1975: 83; "None of That Jazz," *NYT* 16 Oct. 1975: 38; George Goodman, Jr., "Jazz Concert Will Aid Fight to Block Sale of WRVR," *NYT* 17 Nov. 1975: 61; "Sonderling to Keep WRVR Jazz Concept," *NYT* 19 Nov. 1975: 87. It should be noted that WRVR's late-'70s playlist heavily favored fusion or contemporary jazz over trad, swing, bebop, Latin jazz, or the post-bop mainstream, so even those who protested the later format change most vigorously were not entirely enamored of the programming.

Pie Hat,” New York jazzheads deemed it not cool, but the president of Viacom’s radio division was neither sympathetic nor tactful: “Jazz listeners deserve service just like anyone else—but there’s no reason why we should have to suffer with low ratings because of it.”<sup>87</sup>

Finding common cause with the WNCN Listeners Guild, which protested that station’s format change from classical to rock, Citizens for Jazz on WRVR appealed to the FCC, arguing that it should have an interest in the “preservation of diversity” on the airwaves. Besieged with several such petitions, the FCC turned to the United States Supreme Court, which ruled on 24 March 1981 that “the free market was better than the Federal Government at preserving diversity.”<sup>88</sup> New Yorkers were mortified that the “jazz capital of the world” no longer had a fulltime jazz broadcaster. “And we’re supposed to be the hippest city in the world,” trumpeter Clark Terry noted disdainfully. “Why?”<sup>89</sup>

The demise of commercial jazz radio in other cities was perhaps less jolting than in New York, but no less distressing for devoted listeners. In Chicago, another city with a rich jazz heritage, a handful of jazz programs were scattered among a few commercial stations from the 1950s. The ephemerality of jazz on Chicago radio, however, rankled committed devotees like Studs Terkel: “It’s tragic,” he said in 1958, “that in the second city in the country, one of the cradles of jazz, there is so little of it heard on the air. A couple of disc jockeys play jazz—mostly modern—but no show is catholic in taste, no show really displays its rich tradition.”<sup>90</sup> In the 1960s, the self-proclaimed “wonderland of jazz” was the daytime-only WAAF-AM 950, which boasted a talent roster that was both a model of racial integration and an embarrassment of riches: the rhyming DJ “Daddy-O” Daylie in the mornings; Olympic legend Jesse Owens in the afternoons; self-described “loud mouth” Marty Faye (1922–92); and the more mild-mannered, if no less opinionated, Dick Buckley.<sup>91</sup> A 1966 *Daily Defender* article praised WAAF for “filling the need for specialized broadcasting by not stooping to the ‘lowest common denominator’ in musical taste” (that is, “no rock yet”). Yet, within a year WAAF was sold, and it now adopted a Top 40 format. Listeners did what WRVR fans would do a decade later: they petitioned the FCC to compel the station’s new proprietor to reinstate the jazz format, deploying a rhetoric that invoked cardinal principles about cultural diversity and democracy. “WAAF is the only station that deals ... [with] jazz in

<sup>87</sup>“WRVR-FM Switches from Jazz to Country,” *NYT* 10 Sept. 1980: C21; “WRVR-FM’s Change in Format Protested,” *NYT* 11 Sept. 1980: C20; “Citizens for Jazz to Protest WRVR Format Switch,” *NYT* 23 Sept. 1980: C23; Lee Jeske, “Imagine! All That Jazz, But No All-Jazz Radio Station Here!” *NYT* 20 Sept. 1980: 19; Samuel G. Freedman, “Jazz Station’s Listeners Organize—Just in Case,” *NYT* 3 Jan. 1982: C11; and Lee Jeske, “Recession’s Harvest in the Apple—Goodbye, Commercial Jazz Format,” *DB* Dec. 1980: 12.

<sup>88</sup>*FCC v. WNCN Listeners Guild*, No. 79-824 (<http://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/450/582/case.html>); Linda Greenhouse, “High Court Says Radio Stations Can Shift to New Styles of Programming,” *NYT* 25 March 1981: A16.

<sup>89</sup>“Radio Tries to Fill Its Jazz Void,” *NYT* 27 Nov. 1980: C19; C. Gerald Fraser, “WRVR Group Petitions to Restore Jazz,” *NYT* 31 Dec. 1980: C16.

<sup>90</sup>John Fink, “Studs Terkel Says Radio, TV Ignore Jazz,” *Chicago Tribune* (hereafter *CT*) 16 Feb. 1958: SW16.

<sup>91</sup>WAAF “Wonderland of Jazz” ad, *CT* 4 Nov. 1966: B8; Bob Hunter, “Radio Stations War for Negro Market,” *Chicago Defender* (hereafter *CD*) 12 Jan. 1963: 6; “Integration is On, Behind WAAF Airwaves,” *CD* 16 Nov. 1963: 10.

its social and historic development,” one protestor wrote; “the honest portrayal of each group’s cultural heritage and special contribution to our American life enhances the mutual respect and appreciation for each other. This respect is a basic requirement if our Democratic ideals are ever to be a reality.” She considered the switch to rock ‘n’ roll particularly odious: “Is it desirable to reduce us all to early teenage mentality and sensitivity?”<sup>92</sup> Over the next three decades, commercial broadcasters WBEE-AM 1570 and WXFM-FM 105.9 both took ill-fated stabs at becoming Chicago’s go-to station for jazz.<sup>93</sup> For the rest of their careers, Daylie, Buckley, Faye, and Benedetto “Count Bee Jay” Massarella bounced from station to fickle station as jazz programs appeared, moved around, and vanished on Chicago’s airwaves.

Similar fates awaited jazz stations on the West Coast. Los Angeles’s 24-hour jazz station KKGO-FM 105.1 had been on the air since 1960 (originally as KBCA), launching the career of the venerable Chuck “Bebop Charlie” Niles, whose name became synonymous with jazz in the City of Angels. KKGO made its signal available nationwide in the early 1980s via satellite cable transmission. In 1990, however, president Saul Levine announced KKGO would no longer broadcast jazz, opting for a classical format instead.<sup>94</sup> “We just reached the point where the sales department couldn’t sell it,” he admitted, “and national (account) sales reps refused to present it.” Levine secured employment for veteran DJs Niles and Sam Fields at Long Beach’s non-commercial KLON, and moved the jazz programming to KKJZ-AM 540, but weak signals from both outlets further angered jazz-loving Angelinos.<sup>95</sup> A few hundred miles to the north, San Francisco’s KJAZ-FM 92.7 limped along for a few more years. Arguably the jazz station with the highest national profile, KJAZ went on air on 1 Aug. 1959 through the efforts of the indefatigable Pat Henry (1926–99). Before he sold the station to Ron

<sup>92</sup>“WAAF Still Tops in Jazz Programming: 44 Year [sic] in Biz, No Rock Yet,” *Daily Defender* 17 Oct. 1966: 10; “Which Road for WAAF? Jazz or Rock,” *CD* 8 April 1967: 1; Jacqueline Williams, “WAAF Format Change Protested,” *Daily Defender* 19 April 1967: 15; Mary E. Griffin, “WAAF Fan Pops Rock ‘n’ Roll,” *CD* 22 April 1967: 10; “Radio Listeners Battle In WAAF Jazz Format Row,” *Daily Defender* 25 April 1967: 6. With the 1967 format change, WAAF became WGRT. It is now “Relevant Radio” WNTD, a Catholic talk station.

<sup>93</sup>Eric Zorn, “Jazz programming up; more stations have the blues,” *CT* 22 Nov. 1982: E1; Eric Zorn, “WXFM’s days are numbered for all that jazz,” *CT* 31 Oct. 1983: D1, D9; Howard Reich, “Air-waives—Why can’t Chicago support a full-time jazz station?” *CT* 21 Feb. 1993: 12; Howard Reich, “Radio Looks for a Rebound—Few Outlets, Weak Signals Make Jazz a Rarity on the Airwaves,” *CT* 13 March 1994: 8. Broadcasting from south suburban Harvey, IL, WBEE was purchased by Detroit-based Great Lakes Radio and switched to an all-gospel format in 2003; it is now known as WBGX (“Big Gospel Express,” <http://gospel1570.com/>). See Howard Reich, “Jazz radio experiencing yet another death in the family,” *CT* 12 May 2003: 1.

<sup>94</sup>Eliot Tiegel, “Satellite Jazz Blankets America,” *DB* Feb. 1984: 12; Claudia Puig, “KKGO-FM to Add Classical to Its Jazz,” *Los Angeles Times* (hereafter *LAT*) 15 July 1989 (<http://articles.latimes.com/>); Claudia Puig, “Jazz Fans Sing the Blues Over KKGO Switch,” *LAT* 7 Oct. 1989: 1; Leonard Feather, “Horns of a Dilemma: Jazz on the Radio,” *LAT* 17 Dec. 1989: 74; Zan Stewart, “KKJZ Format Change Spells End of an Era [in] Radio: Its switch to classical music marks the first time the L.A. is without a commercial jazz channel,” *LAT* 21 Sept. 1990: 22. See also “Bach vs. Rock,” *Newsweek* 19 March 1973: 83–85.

<sup>95</sup>Zan Stewart, “AM Reception Problems Plague KKJZ; KLON and KUCR to Discuss Power Dispute,” *LAT* 14 March 1990 (<http://articles.latimes.com/>); Greg Braxton, “Classics Jazz KKGO-FM Ratings: When the station switched from bop to the three B’s, it began a healing process for classical music devotees,” *LAT* 12 May 1990 (<http://articles.latimes.com/>). When Levine’s AM station closed, KKJZ became the call letters for a Portland, OR, smooth jazz station; KLON eventually inherited the KKJZ call sign in 2002, bringing it back to southern California.

Cowan in 1980, Henry was a very hands-on owner, producing his own show, taking care of technical problems, selling advertising, and keeping a constant ear on the other talent to make sure what he called “my air” was up to snuff. Like his counterparts elsewhere, Cowan could not generate sufficient revenue with the all-jazz format, so KJAZ went off the air on its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary. An attempted resurrection as a “coast-to-coast” non-profit service on satellite and cable systems, in partnership with Chicago’s classical station WFMT, lasted a mere eight months.<sup>96</sup> The continued presence of a handful of AM broadcasters—Cincinnati’s WNOP, St. Louis’ KZJZ, Chicago’s WBEE, and, of course, KRML—did little to mitigate the sense of calamity that “America’s only remaining commercial jazz radio station,” KJAZ, had succumbed to the cold, cruel realities of the marketplace.<sup>97</sup>

In each of these cases, a local not-for-profit station (or, occasionally, a weak-sig-naled, for-profit AM outlet) stepped in to keep jazz on the air.<sup>98</sup> For some, the move to public broadcasting was natural and inevitable: as Jeremy Orgel of Columbia University’s WKCR-FM 89.9 put it bluntly, “Commercial radio and honest jazz programming are pretty much incompatible.”<sup>99</sup> On the other hand, one could argue that the eviction of jazz from for-profit playlists created opportunities for non-commercial stations to formulate, re-create, or consolidate their own identities and to win over a preexisting clientele of aggrieved but devoted listeners. Although WKCR and the city-owned WNYC both gave jazz additional air time, Newark’s WBGO-FM 88.3 became the clear inheritor of WRVR’s mantle, as well as its library. One year after its initial broadcast in 1979, WBGO found its niche with a fulltime jazz format that filled the void left by WRVR. Program director Albert Pryor made the decision to “go on the air around the clock” with jazz the same day that WRVR went

<sup>96</sup>“Proud of KJAZ,” *Billboard* 28 Aug. 1965: 12; Howard Reich, “West Coast Jazz to Grace Radio Waves,” *CT* 24 Oct. 1993: 10; Jesse Hamlin, “Jazz Is Bustin’ Out All Over: KJAZ Goes Cable, Other Stations Fill Airwaves,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (hereafter *SFC*) 11 April 1995: E-1; Stephanie Salter, “Jazz and a Store: Goodbye to All That,” *San Francisco Examiner* (hereafter *SFE*) 17 Aug. 1995 (<http://sfgate.com>).

<sup>97</sup>Bill McDonough, “Dial AM for Jazz,” *JAZZIZ* Feb. 2000: 74. Unfortunately, with the exception of KRML, all of these stations either ceased operations, were sold or otherwise compelled to drop their all-jazz formats: KZJZ-AM 1340, created by former staff of nearby non-commercial WSIE-FM 88.7, lasted only a year (1998–99); WNOP-AM 740, which had a jazz format from 1962, signed off in 2000; see previous footnote regarding WBEE. See Michael Bourne, “The Exception: New Jazz Station Hits St. Louis,” *DB* April 1999: 47; Steve Graybow, “WNOP Sign-Off is Cincinnati’s Loss,” *Billboard* 16 Dec. 2000; and John E. Leming, Jr., “WNOP Has Seen It All—Country, religious programming and the Jazz Ark,” 28 July 2008 (<http://nky.cincinnati.com>).

<sup>98</sup>It is worth mentioning that the “big band” format (featuring Artie Shaw, Tommy Dorsey, and Glenn Miller) became increasingly popular among AM broadcasters in the 1970s and ’80s. Monoaural recordings from the swing era worked well on the lower-fidelity AM band, so they were a viable alternative to the news/talk format to which AM broadcasters gravitated. To some degree, however, the big band format (repackaged as “Music of Your Life”) is considered distinct from a jazz format. “And the Beat Goes On,” *Newsweek* 15 July 1974: 92; Eric Dorn, “WJJD climbs on big-band wagon,” *CT* 12 April 1982: D1; Michael Small, “Big Band Means Big Bucks for Al Ham, Whose Syndicated Oldies Show Has Made Him Radio’s Monarch of Mellow,” *People Weekly* 20 Dec. 1982: 131–133.

<sup>99</sup>Quoted in C. Gerald Fraser, “Public and College Radio Stations Nurture Jazz Others Neglect,” *NYT* 8 April 1979: 45. WKCR earned praise from the jazz press for its live broadcasts and “festivals,” in which the entire corpus of a specific artist’s work was aired (“And if it runs 24-hours-a-day for a week, so be it”). Unlike most other jazz programmers, WKCR also showcased the music of artists like Cecil Taylor and Steve Lacy. See Lee Jeske, “Columbia’s Gem of the Air Waves,” *DB* Feb. 1983: 13.

country. “That same night at 1 A.M. I went on the air and did our first all-night shift.” WBGO steered clear of “the slick jazz-pop and jazz-rock” that WRVR had increasingly showcased, trying to maintain a balance between canonical, “unadulterated jazz ... from ragtime to big band swing to bebop to avant-garde,” while “making sure new albums get played.” Although not formally affiliated, WBGO was “around the corner” from the Rutgers University Institute of Jazz Studies, and its staff had access to its research materials and recordings. For New York-area jazz fans, WBGO’s rather sudden success and longevity as a “jazz institution” have significantly mitigated the tragedy of WRVR’s demise.<sup>100</sup>

Chicago’s WBEZ—like WBGO a community broadcaster unaffiliated with either a university or PBS television outlet—arguably benefited in a similar fashion by embracing jazz programming. Founded in 1943 as the broadcast arm of the Chicago Board of Education, WBEZ had become, for some, “just that bland, boring ... station” and “more than a bit of an embarrassment,” run by retired teachers and school officials with no background in radio, according to one *Tribune* account. Until it became an NPR affiliate in 1972, WBEZ “was still spinning Sousa marches for the school children, still killing the hours and filling the schedule with silly, storytelling dribble ... .”<sup>101</sup> But by the mid-1970s WBEZ had expanded both its news and its music programming, with shows devoted to jazz, blues, Latin, and folk. Nationally syndicated broadcasts of the Chicago Jazz Festival and of local artists’ performances on Linda Prince’s *Windy City Jazz* (1982–84) gave WBEZ a nationwide audience.<sup>102</sup> Although it never became a “full-timer” like WBGO, jazz programming clearly helped raise Chicago Public Radio’s local and national profile.

The closure of jazz radio outlets in San Francisco and Los Angeles proved to be a boon for two small college stations, KCSM-FM 91.1 at the College of San Mateo, and KLON-FM (now KKJZ) 88.1 at California State University, Long Beach. On air since 1964 and 1981, respectively, as student broadcast training facilities, both stations had already devoted significant air time to jazz when their for-profit counterparts, KJAZ and KKGQ, went out of business. Each inherited the libraries and much of the on-air talent from those stations, and earned heretofore unimagined listener and corporate support. In 1996 the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that KCSM’s rating share saw a “growth rate faster than that of any other public station in the country. The latest ratings show KCSM radio’s audience has grown 29 per cent in the past year and has quadrupled since 1993, when the station instituted the nearly all-jazz format.” Thanks in part to the on-air presence of “KJAZ refugees” like Dick Conte and Jesse “Chuy” Varela, program director Melanie Berzon explained, “In one year’s

<sup>100</sup>Robert Palmer, “Artists Flock to Greene Street’s WBGO Jazzathon,” *NYT* 14 May 1982: C7; Evelyn Kaye, “WBGO Swings Into Success with Jazz,” *NYT* 21 Aug. 1983: H25; Valerie Mercer, “Fulfilling a Dream at a Jazz Station,” *NYT* 18 June 1989: NJ12; Tad Hendrickson, “All Jazz, All the Time—And Built to Last,” *JAZZIZ* July 1999: 79–80; Jennifer Odell, “WBGO Hits 25 Years on Air,” *DB* May 2004: 16; and <http://www.wbgo.org/about/background>.

<sup>101</sup>Marilynn Preston, “WBEZ perks up as Nolan strikes down the bland,” *CT* 11 Feb. 1976: B1.

<sup>102</sup>Eric Zorn, “WBEZ earning high marks under tutelage of Ken Davis,” *CT* 2 May 1983: B1; and W.A. Brower, “NPR Offers Satellite Fund,” *DB* Feb. 1982: 16.



time, we gained 18,000 listeners. Shifting from a mixed format of jazz and news and public affairs to a 24-hour, all-jazz format definitely increased our audience.”<sup>103</sup> Likewise, despite controversies over program direction, staff expertise, and fundraising, KLON/KKJZ has managed to keep jazz on L.A. airwaves and earn a wider audience than its predecessor KKGQ had.<sup>104</sup>

The prosperity of public broadcasting outlets that adopted all-jazz (or jazz and blues) formats did little to alleviate a sense of crisis among those to whom a radio presence for “America’s classical music” was significant. In the 1990s so-called “smooth jazz” became a serious contender on the airwaves. Smooth jazz has been described by critics as soothing yet formulaic and even trivial, as a commercialized pop-jazz hybrid, as “new adult contemporary,” “quiet storm,” “background” or “elevator” music, or more pejoratively as “cracker jazz” of “jazz lite,” or “vajazz” (“vagina jazz”). But there is no doubt that smooth jazz has been commercially successful, at least until quite recently. A derivative of fusion, taking its cues from pop, R&B, and rock, smooth jazz is considered less demanding of listeners and thought to require little previous knowledge of jazz for enjoyment.<sup>105</sup> The introduction of the smooth jazz trend in the 1980s signaled a challenge to traditional jazz radio and the development of a clash over jazz radio formatting that is ongoing. By 1997, 160 stations in the United States were devoted solely to smooth jazz, gaining advertising support due to the format’s appeal to a wide and diverse range of the listening population.

Many advocates of jazz broadcasting—who generally favored “straight-ahead” big band, bebop, or post-bop jazz from the mid-twentieth century—were mortally offended by the smooth jazz trend: they were ferociously indignant that the noble “j” word” was appropriated to christen such insipid aural pabulum, to attract “people who like the idea of jazz but don’t really like jazz.”<sup>106</sup> Interestingly, many industry executives and program directors did not disagree with this line of argument, nor did they make much effort to defend smooth jazz from an aesthetic standpoint. That said, they made no apologies for their success, either. Although an Arbitron executive admitted, “Smooth jazz is just a fancy name for easy listening,” programmers considered themselves “crusaders, softening up the defenses of listeners who do not necessarily like jazz.” “We know that what we’re playing isn’t the purest form of the American art form known as jazz,” Lee Hansen, program director for Chicago’s WNUA-FM 95.5, conceded. “But a lot of it is very rhythmic and melodic, with

<sup>103</sup>Mark Simon, “KCSM’s Ratings are Airborne—Jazz strikes a chord with public station’s listeners,” *SFC* 29 April 1996: A-12; Al Morch, “Getting KCSM on track,” *SFE* 28 June 1996 (<http://sfgate.com>); Philip Elwood, “‘On the Hill’ this weekend and on the air, 24 hours a day, on radio ratings grabber KCSM,” *SFE* 6 June 1997 (<http://sfgate.com>).

<sup>104</sup>“LA. Jazz Radio.”

<sup>105</sup>KBLX-FM 102.9 in San Francisco is generally recognized as the innovator of this format, airing a blend of soft pop, R&B, New Age, and jazz fusion from 1979 to 2011; its motto was “Soft and Warm, the Quiet Storm.” See Janine Coveney, “KBLX Keeps the Quiet Storm Burning in S.F.,” *Billboard* 18 Jan. 1997: 80. Other forerunners of the format were KIFM-FM 98.1 in San Diego and KTWV-FM 94.7 (“The Wave”) in Los Angeles.

<sup>106</sup>Eliot Tiegel, “Smooth Moves on the Air,” *DB* Dec. 1996: 10–11; Peter Watrous, “The Jazz is ‘Lite,’ but the Radio Profits are Heavy,” *NYT* 5 June 1997: C13; Steve Teeter, “Real Jazz or Nothing,” *NYT* 11 June 1997: A24; and Tom Masland and Yahlin Chang, “Jazz for Drive Time,” *Newsweek* 20 May 1996: 76.

adventurous improvisational passages that legitimize it as a form of jazz. And it's a form of jazz that we think will lead people to jazz with more substance." Defenders of smooth jazz also noted that it drew a more ethnically and racially diverse audience than any other radio format: WNUA's manager boasted that "the racial makeup of WNUA's audience more closely mirrors that of the city of Chicago than any other station . . ." <sup>107</sup>

Relatively few of the so-called "jazz police" who objected to the smooth, however, spoke up for the avant-garde, a style that deviates from adherence to certain forms and harmonies, and which also figured into the contention over jazz radio programming. While there is an audience for avant-garde jazz, the style can be difficult for new listeners to follow and does not serve as well as ambient sound as smooth jazz does. Avant-garde jazz is often excluded from straight-ahead jazz programming, and is almost never heard on smooth jazz stations. Listeners looking for such music are even less likely to find an outlet than mainstream fans. <sup>108</sup> A 1999 *Down Beat* story on the increasing use of market testing by non-profit jazz programmers noted that "driving improvisation" was the least attractive of six musical qualities in focus groups, and therefore DJs had adopted the habit of fading the volume down on any song in which a soloist or ensemble switched from "poetic tonality" to "more dissonant territory." "And you can't have an attitude of 'Take your medicine. This is good for you,'" one program director said. "They don't have to take it." In some cases, the redaction of experimental or dissonant jazz from playlists was a direct response to the rise of smooth jazz competitors. *JAZZIZ* staff editor William Kinnally noted a "gradual narrowing of playlists" on both public and commercial stations from the early 1980s to the late 1990s: "This development mirrors the trend toward niche programming that has characterized radio in general throughout the last 15 years . . . . As a result, even bebop has been replaced by more melodic and lyrical styles." <sup>109</sup>

Far more dispiriting than the smooth jazz vogue was the drawdown of jazz programming by both national and local public broadcasters. In 2002, National Public Radio announced it would discontinue *Jazz Profiles* (hosted by Nancy Wilson since 1996) and *Billy Taylor's Jazz at Kennedy Center* (1995–2002), and cease distribution of *Jazz at Lincoln Center* (hosted by newsman Ed Bradley since 1994). Local public stations, too, either reduced jazz programming substantially or eliminated it altogether. In

<sup>107</sup>Watrous, "Jazz is 'Lite,'" C13–14; Dan Kening, "WNUA finds a lite diet can make a station grow," *CT* 5 July 1992: 5; Brian Soergel, "The Genres: Brian Soergel on Smooth Jazz," *Jazz Times* Sept. 2000 (<http://jazztimes.com>); see also Don Jeffrey, "No Respect Dept.," *Billboard* 28 June 1997: 36–37. By the mid-2000s, many stations (including some of the most successful early pioneers like WNUA) were abandoning smooth jazz; its failure as a format was as sudden and rapid as its rise was a decade earlier. One oft-cited factor in this steep ratings decline was inherent in the "passive" mode of listening smooth jazz encouraged: listeners generally failed to identify individual artists or develop loyalty to them.

<sup>108</sup>"KCSM 'All Out': Making Room for the Avant-Garde," *JAZZIZ* June 2004: 96. In 2003, despite some strident complaints from regular listeners, KCSM became one of the very few stations to devote air time to "free" or avant-garde jazz. "All Out" is a four-hour, Thursday night program featuring "improvisational jazz that pushes the envelope" and that "rarely gets heard" (<http://kcsfm.org/jazzprograms/allout.php>).

<sup>109</sup>Charles Levin, "Reconfiguring the Public Radio Puzzle," *DB* April 1999: 42–46; William Kinnally, "Tracking the Signal Since 1983," *JAZZIZ* Sept. 1997: 104. For more discussion on the narrowing of programming in jazz radio, see also Juliet Anja Sink, "Making It in Public," *JAZZIZ* Dec. 1998: 98; Tad Hendrickson, "Who's Behind the Playlist?" *JAZZIZ* Sept. 1999: 82; and Tad Hendrickson, "Pushing the Envelope Wide Open," *JAZZIZ* Oct. 1999: 90.

1997, WDCU-FM 90.1 in Washington, DC, which had provided jazz to the Beltway and Baltimore since 1980, was sold to C-SPAN and became a fulltime public affairs channel. WYSO-FM 91.3 in Yellow Springs, OH, went to a news-talk format in 2002, even cutting the long-running jazz show of veteran DJ Steve Schwerner, who had been on the Antioch College station since its founding in 1957.<sup>110</sup> Chicago listeners were livid when WBEZ cut all of its music programming (which included blues, folk, and world music) at the beginning of 2007. To many, jazz radio was a tribute to the city's role in the music's history: "If this were Lincoln, Neb., fine," one broadcaster cracked. "But this is a part of our history in Chicago, a part of who we are."<sup>111</sup>

Nat Hentoff attributed public radio's renegeing on jazz to a 1998 ratings survey that reportedly "showed that jazz, blues, classical music and opera programs attracted markedly less donations than news and commentary."<sup>112</sup> This led to a crisis of identity for jazz radio: could jazz survive if its radio presence disappeared? While not everyone agrees on the answer, the crisis initiated debate about the viability of the traditional jazz radio format established in the mid-twentieth century. Autonomous, *auteur*-DJs had largely lost control of playlists, which were increasingly determined by corporate owners or even computers. As Kyle LaRue of WEAA said in *JAZZIZ* in 1999, "the days when people just sit in the studio playing their favorites ... are over."<sup>113</sup> Members of the jazz community questioned whether a return to DJ-oriented programming would save jazz radio, or if that is an outdated paradigm that should give way to newer styles of jazz programming. There was not even a consensus on whether the fight to keep jazz on the air is worth the effort. Some, like Cephas Bowles of WBGO, insisted that a "strong radio community means a strong music community," but others argued that jazz radio was in such a "sorry-assed state" that it could not be redeemed, so energy to promote the music was best redirected elsewhere.<sup>114</sup>

Bassist, singer, and composer Esperanza Spalding sums up the concerns of many jazz musicians and listeners: "The benefit of the radio is [that] something beyond your realm of knowledge can surprise you, can enter your realm of knowledge. Part of the premise of that stems from my concern about the accessibility of jazz, just how people can access it. If you don't already know about jazz music, how would you be

<sup>110</sup>"C-SPAN Steps In as Buyer of WDCU in Washington," *Current* 25 Aug. 1997 (<http://www.current.org/in/in715dca.html>); Nat Hentoff, "Purging Jazz from Public Radio," *Jazz Times* March 2003 (<http://jazztimes.com>); and Virgil Hervey, "For the Schwerners, life after YS, WYSO," *Yellow Springs News* 25 Sept. 2008 (<http://www.ysnews.com/>).

<sup>111</sup>Howard Reich, "Fans dial up anger over format change," *CT* 16 April 2006: 9. Dick Buckley was offered a one-hour Sunday night slot for "discussions" about jazz within the new format, but Buckley was not "thrilled" by the idea (Charles Leroux, "A radio voice at the crossroads," *CT* 20 Oct. 2006: 1). WDCB-FM 90.9 in west suburban Glen Ellyn has since become the main radio source for jazz in the Chicagoland area, although some are discontent that it still has public affairs programs and slots devoted to bluegrass, blues, Celtic, folk, and other genres.

<sup>112</sup>Bill McDonough, "Change Is in the Air," *JAZZIZ* Aug. 2002: 74; Hentoff, "Purging Jazz"; and Aaron Cohen, "Chicago NPR Affiliate to End Jazz Programs," *DB* July 2006: 14. Taylor's 2002 stroke may also have been a factor in the cancellation of *Jazz at Kennedy Center*.

<sup>113</sup>Hendrickson, "Who's Behind the Playlist?" 82.

<sup>114</sup>"Radio Stations Hit the Target Audience," *Billboard* May 2003; John Corbett, "The Sorry-Assed State of Jazz Radio," *DB* June 1995: 30–35; and Charles Suhor, "Jazz Radio and Jazz Education—Can't We Be Friends?" *Jazz Education Journal* 37.6 (June 2005): 38–40.

exposed? How would you get an opportunity to find out if it spoke to you? If you get exposed to it enough, you might find a taste for it.”<sup>115</sup> Considering that *Billboard* magazine declared the average jazz listener to be male and between the ages of 35 and 55, there are those in the jazz community who would argue that one of the primary goals of jazz radio programming should be to create an accessible and educational place for new, younger listeners to discover the genre.<sup>116</sup> Still others argue that overly contrived educational programs detract from the listening value of a long set of uninterrupted music desired by current jazz fans. A separate yet related issue is the balance of air time devoted to canonical, classic artists and recordings, compared to new releases and younger talent (a matter that some programmers have delegated to predetermined formulae or automated software such as Selector or MusicPro).<sup>117</sup>

While no clear resolution to this debate is foreseeable, satellite radio companies have worked to address this argument by using twenty-first-century technology to update the formatting of jazz radio programming, hoping to help jazz radio survive into the new millennium. Satellite radio corporations such as SiriusXM offer multiple jazz radio station options for their listeners ranging from smooth jazz to educational “entry-level” jazz for new listeners, to straight-ahead and avant-garde programs for the more experienced or adventurous listener. Satellite radio listeners are charged a subscription fee for services and thus satellite programmers are not obliged to limit programming for the purpose of ensuring high listener numbers or high advertising dollars.<sup>118</sup> While satellite radio can provide a wider range of listening options, thus allowing for multiple jazz programs, not all listeners are ready to pay for their radio listening experience.

Thus, the future of jazz on the radio is still unclear: while there are some in the jazz community who are certain of the imminent death of jazz radio, not everyone has lost hope. Commenting on the elimination of jazz on WBEZ, *Chicago Tribune* columnist Jack Fuller wrote, “It is not a coincidence ... when an art form becomes advanced enough to get into a Harvard dictionary, an Oxford companion, and onto a Pulitzer Prize list, it pays a price—the loss of its popular following.” On the other hand, Dick Buckley and Chris Heim, two of the program hosts who lost their jobs when WBEZ purged its schedule of music, have expressed optimism that jazz radio could prosper in a less avaricious climate. Buckley conceded that jazz broadcasting would never be as profitable as rock, but he insisted, “you can make a very comfortable living broadcasting jazz.” “The meaning of commercial viability depends on how

<sup>115</sup>Quoted in “Esperanza Spalding: Jazz as Radio Music,” *Weekend Edition Sunday*, 18 March 2012 (<http://www.npr.org/2012/03/18/148617293/esperanza-spalding-jazz-as-radio-music>); and “Jazz Radio History: L.A. Theater Works Does Dinah Washington,” *Radio Survivor*, March 2012 (<http://www.radiosurvivor.com/2012/03/17/jazz-radio-history-la-theater-works-does-dinah-washington/>).

<sup>116</sup>“Radio Stations Hit Target Audience,” *Billboard* May 2003: 49–50.

<sup>117</sup>Bill McDonough, “Dead or Alive,” *JAZZIZ* Oct. 2000: 82; Hendrickson, “Who’s Behind the Playlist?” 82; Odell, “WBGO,” 16; and Dan Ouellette, “The Question is ... Should Jazz Radio Adopt a Top 40 Format?” *DB* Sept. 2004: 21.

<sup>118</sup>Marc Hopkins, “XM and Sirius Satellite Radio: Jazz in the Air,” *Jazz Times*, July/Aug. 2006 (<http://jazztimes.com>). At this writing, SiriusXM has one channel called “Real Jazz” and a smooth jazz channel, “Watercolors.” Other stations in the “Jazz/Standards” category are devoted to New Age, blues, Broadway and movie showtunes, and Frank Sinatra (<http://www.siriusxm.com/music>).

greedy you are,” Heim said. “A lot could be done on radio that could be self-sustaining, even a little profitable. But people want to make a lot of money. If they don’t, they’re not satisfied, so they don’t do it at all.”<sup>119</sup>

Within the broader context of turbulent change in jazz radio over the last half century—in which other commercial FM and AM stations gave up on jazz or shut down entirely, in which smooth jazz rose and fell with meteoric aplomb, in which public radio first championed then jilted jazz, and in which broadcasters settled stylistic and generational disputes by opting for increasingly specialized “niche” programming—KRML fared rather well by comparison. Certainly, it spent ample time on the brink of catastrophe, sometimes off the air for months at a time, and it was by no means unaffected by the trends described above. Yet retaining its jazz format for nearly three decades in the face of these considerable pressures was itself quite a remarkable achievement. It makes KRML appear as a veritable beacon of constancy and hope in the demoralizing world of jazz broadcasting.

### Golden Years

We might characterize the Gil Wisdom–Alan Schultz era (1985–2004) as one of “tempestuous stability” for KRML, with shifting ratios of locally produced programming vis-à-vis satellite feeds (from KJAZ in San Francisco and KLON in Long Beach), expansion into retail, record production, concert promotion, appeals to the FCC for signal improvement, and two major studio relocations, but also a steadfast and unstinting commitment to mainstream jazz programming. Owners and staff made earnest efforts to present jazz as the most natural aural complement to the Carmel lifestyle, to deepen the station’s roots in the community, and to create enduring relationships with other local businesses and organizations. To the extent that they succeeded in accomplishing these things, KRML may owe its peculiar durability as a jazz broadcaster to location, location, location.

In their first ten years at the helm, Wisdom and Schultz encountered no shortage of trials and obstacles: the FCC denied their initial applications for an FM simulcast signal and a 24-hour broadcast schedule; the Lower Carmel Valley Advisory Committee balked at their proposal to erect three new antenna poles on the valley’s south slope if the airport commission required that they be painted an orange and white candy stripe (“a classic case of ‘aesthetics versus health and safety,’” a county official surmised); and KJAZ, whose satellite feed constituted the majority of KRML’s daytime schedule, folded. “Anybody with any business sense would have given up a long time ago,” Wisdom joked. “It’s definitely the love of music. That has to be the driving force.”<sup>120</sup> Better days were indeed ahead.

<sup>119</sup>Jack Fuller, “What about all that jazz?” *CT* 8 May 2006: 23; Buckley quoted in Reich, “Air-waives, 12; Heim quoted in Corbett, “Sorry-Assed State,” 33. Fortunately, Chris Heim landed at Wichita, KS, Public Radio, KMWU-FM 89.1, where she produces a nationally distributed world music program and hosts nightly jazz and weekly blues shows ([http://www.kmuw.org/index.php/about/staff/chris\\_heim/](http://www.kmuw.org/index.php/about/staff/chris_heim/)).

<sup>120</sup>David Leland, “KRML radio station makes bid for new FM frequency,” *PC* 22 Dec. 1987: 4; “KRML Radio Seeks Approval for Antennas on Valley Slope,” *Carmel Valley Sun* 7 Dec. 1988: 5; and Mac McDonald, “KRML spins a song called prosperity—Reports of jazz’s death are greatly exaggerated,” *MPH* 6 Oct. 1994: 1D, 3D.

Adams' initial presence as interim station manager and program director provided some continuity and a sense of focus to KRML's programming mission, but eventually he was joined by other jazz-savvy hosts who were able, to some degree, to restore the tradition of the jazz DJ as an independently creative raconteur and hipster, who took pride in the craftsmanship required to assemble a coherent and stimulating program of music. For the first time, KRML's talent roster included several African Americans—Buddy Lowe (1930–2012), LeRoy “The Jazzcat” Downs, Clifford Brown, Jr., Clifford Brown III, and Afrikahn Jamal Dayvs—which was not insignificant in a community where racial diversity was not a notable attribute. The longevity of some of the on-air personalities' tenures was also noteworthy: Adams, Lowe, David Kimball, and George Fuller established solid followings with their respective long-running programs. Lowe had two three-hour blocs on Sundays, with *Gospel Meditations* in the morning and *Blues Express* in the afternoon; Fuller hosted the weekday drive-time cool-out session *Sunset Jazz* and the Sunday afternoon *Jazz Brunch*, while also serving for a time as facilities manager. Fuller explains that the talent worked for KRML as “independent contractors,” who sold their own advertising and acquired their own sponsors. Aside from extra remuneration for assisting with concerts, production, and maintenance, “That's how you were paid. You lived on your commission.” Although securing sponsorships was extremely difficult, the jazz format itself was an asset, Fuller maintains, because the local community is a hospitable “jazz/blues market.”<sup>121</sup>

George Fuller's lifelong commitment to the craft of jazz broadcasting is no less remarkable than that of Johnny Adams, although it has certainly entailed greater personal sacrifice (real estate investments had made Adams independently wealthy enough to DJ without financial concern).<sup>122</sup> Born in Panama and raised in Oklahoma City, Fuller decided to become a jazz radio programmer when he was still a lad.

As a child, what my parents had in their library was classical music and jazz, and rumbas and sambas and bossa novas. So, knowingly, when I was five years old I was putting [Sergei] Rachmaninoff records on a turntable. Or Clare Fischer. When I was six I listened to Ahmad Jamal. When I was seven I listened to Dave Brubeck. It's what was played in the house, and I was in love with it. And somewhere along the line, when I was, oh, ten or eleven, I told my mother, “I know what I want to do.” She says, “What?” I say, “I want all this stuff; I want to work in a radio station, and play jazz.”<sup>123</sup>

Local radio offered some late-night jazz and blues programs, and his Colombian mother and her Puerto Rican friends exposed him to Latin American music; indeed, though stereotyped as country-and-western territory, in the 1950s and '60s, Fuller claims, Oklahoma was more of a musical “melting pot” than most people realize.

After a year at KCBX-FM 90.1, a college station in San Luis Obispo, CA, Fuller returned to Oklahoma City to work at KAEZ-FM 107.7 from 1976 to 1984. KAEZ (now KRXO) was a black-owned commercial station that broadcast soul, jazz, and

<sup>121</sup>Interview with George Fuller, Harrison Memorial Library, Carmel-by-the-Sea, 22 June 2011.

<sup>122</sup>Leland, “KRML's Johnny Adams,” 35.

<sup>123</sup>Fuller interview.

blues; at times the only white person on the talent roster, he played jazz on the graveyard shift. His dream, however, was to work at KJAZ in San Francisco. Two years doing “traffic reports” for KJAZ failed to land him a slot, so he relocated to Long Beach to accept an apparent offer from KLON that was ultimately rescinded. Homeless, living in his car, and with no connections in Los Angeles, Fuller sent his demo tape to KKGO and secured a slot for which more than twenty others had also applied. He was at KKGO—hosting his own show and serving as studio engineer for legendary jazz critic Leonard Feather (1914–94)—until it dropped its jazz format four years later. “I was on the air with KRML for three months” in 1991, he recalls, but unable to “make it financially,” he returned to Long Beach and kept trying to get on at KLON, whose signal KRML was using for sixteen hours of the day (when switching back to local programming, his former colleague Chuck Niles alerted listeners, “Now I’m going to hand it over to my old friend,” either Johnny Adams or Buddy Lowe). Wisdom and Schultz eventually lured Fuller back to KRML with more favorable terms. Fuller’s main job was hosting the weeknight program *Sunset Jazz*, which featured “romantic ballads” almost exclusively. “It taught me so much,” he muses. “I already knew how to program jazz ... actually, I learned that in black radio ... , but when I came here it was just almost learning it over again, especially doing a show that was all ballads, because doing midnight to six, six or seven nights a week in Oklahoma, I was, you know, all over the road.”

Fuller’s return was well timed. In 1994, having signed a deal with the local cable television service to stream its signal, Wisdom and Schultz made the momentous decision to leave KRML’s longtime home in Carmel Rancho for a 120-square-meter suite at The Crossroads, a newer, open-air retail and dining center, about a quarter mile to the southwest. One storefront served as the broadcast studio; passersby could easily view the announcers and talk show hosts doing their thing, with the iconic KRML microphone from *Play Misty for Me* perched prominently atop the console. The adjacent storefront contained The Jazz and Blues Co., a retail shop selling a variety of merchandise related to the music: CDs, percussion instruments and guitars, KRML and Monterey Jazz Festival T-shirts, and jazz-themed artwork, collectibles, and knickknacks (Figure 4). The new location was also a venue for as many as a thousand in-store performances (by Fuller’s count) by national and local jazz artists, as well as home to Blackhawk Records, whose vast catalog included a rare recording of Billie Holiday’s performance at the first Monterey Jazz Festival (MJF) in 1958.

A 2002 *Billboard* feature described The Jazz and Blues Co. at the height of its prosperity, attributing its success to “increased synergies with the all-jazz/blues format radio station.” Wisdom said, “What is really having an effect on our overall sales is that we’ve been doing our own programming since Jan. 8, 2001, on KRML 24 hours a day.” The store’s inventory included around 5000 album titles, “with customers asking for 50-plus special orders a week.” Wisdom also reported that KRML’s “35-plus age demographic” was becoming increasingly youthful: “All five areas of the jazz music industry that we’re in with Wisdom Broadcasting Co. are skewing toward a younger audience. We’re getting a lot of women at our concerts, especially single ones. I think the PBS-TV



**Figure 4** Storefronts at The Crossroads, formerly occupied by KRML studios and Jazz & Blues Company, 2011. Photo by the author.

documentary that Ken Burns did on jazz may have something to do with it this year, along with the number of jazz festivals now.”<sup>124</sup>

It is noteworthy that, while describing mutually beneficial “synergy” between these enterprises, the owners ultimately ascribed their success to the radio station and the localization of its programming; that is, KRML remained the heart of the operation and its own achievements enabled the successes of peripheral endeavors. So in the Carmel community commercial jazz radio seemed to be delivering on the promise in which its advocates nationwide had such earnest faith: it had nurtured and sustained an audience not only receptive to jazz, but enthusiastic for it. Abandoning the satellite feed from KLON in favor of locally-produced programming, using that programming to promote on-site concerts and vice versa, adding some local public affairs and interview shows, and even offering personalized, folksy advertising for area businesses, by the turn of the millennium KRML had arguably sunk deeper, hardier roots in the sandy soil of Carmel than it ever had managed before, and enjoyed a prominence in its community that jazz broadcasters elsewhere could scarcely imagine.

When KRML relocated yet again in summer 2004, this time to the heart of Carmel-by-the-Sea, it seemed like yet another auspicious occasion to raise the station’s local profile. According to Wisdom, The Crossroads surprised him by declining to renew KRML’s lease. When he reached out to Clint Eastwood for assistance in locating a new site, the former mayor offered space in his eponymous building on San Carlos

<sup>124</sup>Patricia Bates, “Radio Station KRML 1410 Helps Propel Jazz & Blues’ Sales,” *Billboard* 30 March 2002: 61.





**Figure 5** Signage at the Eastwood Building location, Carmel-by-the-Sea. Photo by Nathalie Roland. Used with permission.

between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, overlooking the famed Hog’s Breath Inn, and told his property manager to “make it happen” (Figure 5). “It’s a station that belongs downtown,” Eastwood stated. “I love the music they play, and it will be a fun addition to the neighborhood.”<sup>125</sup>

Coincident with the move, Wisdom Broadcasting sold KRML, the retail shop, record label, and concert series to David Kimball, an on-air personality and staffer since 1991. Kimball planned to expand on the former owners’ ambitions and believed the new location would prove to be an asset: “We’re kind of feeling like we’re coming home to Carmel where we should be—right in the heart of things. That’s going to enable us to be helpful to the community and shopkeepers and gallery owners. We can keep a pulse on what’s new in town.” While maintaining locally produced jazz shows and Don Bowen’s interview program *Around Town*, KRML added syndicated programs *Jazz at Lincoln Center*, Jim Cullum’s *Riverwalk Jazz*, and Judy Carmichael’s *Jazz Inspirations* to its schedule and launched a streaming webcast, which circumvented the weakness of the AM signal and enabled listeners anywhere in the world to tune in.<sup>126</sup>

Despite the passing of its recently arrived and well-respected morning man, drummer Charles Alan “Chazz” Mewhort (1942–2005), KRML seemed poised to

<sup>125</sup>Telephone conversation with Gilbert Wisdom, Carmel-by-the-Sea, 4 Aug. 2010. Eastwood quoted in “KRML will move downtown,” *PC* 14 May 2004: 1A, 18A.

<sup>126</sup>Paul Miller, “KRML gets new owner and downtown studio,” *PC* 11 June 2004: 1A, 8A; “Name Dropper,” *MPH* 17 June 2004 (<http://nl.newsbank.com>); “David Kimball stays tuned in to jazz,” *MPH* 11 July 2004: E3; Stephen L. Vagnini, “Don’t touch that dial: KRML opens new chapter,” *PC* 3 Sept. 2004: 19A; Victoria Manley, “KRML jazzes up new space,” *MPH* 25 Nov. 2004 (<http://nl.newsbank.com>).

continue its ascent. Tourists, especially Eastwood fans, made a stop at the station/store part of their itineraries; collectors poked through its rare vinyl LPs; customers of the newly launched internet store generated both more revenues and more listeners; and, in a validating gesture, the city government incorporated the station's internet stream into its revamped home page. When its fiftieth anniversary rolled around in 2007, KRML not only co-hosted a block party with the MJF, but also rated special mention in a how-to book for prospective entrepreneurs, which identified The Jazz and Blues Co. as a successful example of specialty retail.<sup>127</sup>

### Blue Days

In February 2009, less than five years after purchasing KRML and its ancillaries, Kimball filed for personal bankruptcy. Two months later the local press reported that the studio and shop were “abruptly” vacated and the merchandise and fixtures “suddenly” removed (Figure 6). The property manager disclosed that although “[t]he Eastwoods have worked with KRML for months trying to keep them there,” Kimball was well behind on both his rent and loan payments. His creditor, the Monterey County Bank, took over the broadcast license and hired a media broker, Ray Rosenblum of Pittsburgh, to oversee the sale. Despite the appeal of KRML's *Misty* connection, Rosenblum dismissed the original asking price—\$1.8 million—as “a fantasy”; the property manager for the Eastwoods, whom some considered the “ideal buyers,” likewise deemed it “exorbitant.” As another year passed without a buyer, the price was reduced to \$950,000 and then \$750,000 (\$350,000 for the station, \$400,000 for the record collection). Bank CEO Charles Chrietzberg remarked that there was a “good possibility” that KRML might convert to a not-for-profit entity. After all, he joked, “I’d say it’s been ‘non-profit’ for awhile.”<sup>128</sup>

There is no shortage of opinions among former KRML staffers about what went wrong. “They thought they could capitalize on Clint Eastwood’s building, and that’s where they failed,” Adams says. “I can’t figure out people who buy radio stations and know nothing about ’em.” Disenchanted with KRML’s programming direction, Adams left to take up a weekly show on Monterey’s KNRY (formerly KMBY). “I’m the only one playing good jazz,” he insists. “Miles Davis, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Frank Sinatra with Count Basie ... Carmen McRae, Ella Fitzgerald. *That’s jazz.*” Fuller is more charitable about the foreclosure, explaining that Kimball was unable to make payments when the interest on his adjustable-rate loan went up. “So that’s one thing

<sup>127</sup>A Toledo, OH, native who relocated to Salinas in 2000, Mewhort had previously drummed for Sergio Mendes and Brasil '66, Nancy Wilson, and Al Jarreau. Joe Livernois, “Drummer Chazz Mewhort dies,” *MPH* 28 Dec. 2005 (<http://nl/newsbank.com>); “Jazz drummer had a weekly radio show,” *Toledo Blade* 30 Dec. 2005 (<http://www.toledoblade.com>); Marie Vasari, “KRML and all that jazz,” *MPH* 1 Sept. 2006 (<http://nl/newsbank.com>); Mary Brownfield, “Slick new city website set for unveiling,” *PC* 14 March 2008: 11A; Chris Counts, “Jazzfest, KRML celebrate golden anniversaries with bash,” *PC* 14 Sept. 2007: 13A; and Dorothy Finell, *The Specialty Shop: How to Create Your Own Unique and Profitable Retail Business* (New York: AMACOM, 2007), 74–76.

<sup>128</sup>Mary Brownfield, “KRML clears out of downtown studio,” *PC* 10–16 April 2006: 1A, 16A; Kera Abraham, “KRML on the Rocks?” *Monterey County Coast Weekly* 23 April 2009 (<http://findarticles.com>); Lane Wallace, “Bank to sell KRML and its records—There is local interest in ‘Misty’ station, broker says,” *MPH* 29 Jan. 2010: A1.



**Figure 6** Eastwood Building signboard, still bearing the names KRML and Jazz & Blues Company, over two years after eviction, 2011. Photo by the author.

that sunk him. And I really feel for Mr. Kimball. He's a radio guy; I could tell." Moreover, Fuller notes, after the move to the Eastwood building the staff roster nearly doubled, from seven to thirteen: "People wanted to come in and do shifts, and David opened the door ... But the down side was that some of them were playing other *than* jazz, other *than* blues. They would break format. So you could tune in and there might be something country, there might be something rock, there might be something Broadway/cabaret."<sup>129</sup> Fuller suggests that such bewildering eclecticism did not help KRML: "I've been taught, from day one that I got into this, even when I got my federal license, if you want to sell something, you stick to the format."

Remarkably, KRML did not go off the air, as it had during previous episodes of distress. Indeed, former owner Gil Wisdom marveled at the bank's determination to ensure that jazz stayed audible at 1410 kHz until a buyer was found. For over two years former staff and volunteers, led by George Fuller and program director Jim Sintetos, recorded their shows on home computers for broadcast on the 500-watt AM transmitter and a 250-watt FM channel (94.7) in Monterey. The indefatigable Sintetos, without an office or proper studio and "working out of what could pass for a tool shed," remained optimistic that once someone purchased the station it would "be better than it ever was."<sup>130</sup>

<sup>129</sup>Fuller interview, verbal emphasis in italics.

<sup>130</sup>Chris Counts, "A year after bankruptcy, KRML is still on the air and still for sale," *PC* 8 Jan. 2010: 6A.

KRML's predicament was noticed. Expressions of concern by Mayor Sue McCloud, local business owners, and other citizens indicate that, despite a long history of apparent indifference and diffidence, KRML had managed to cultivate a loyal audience, who viewed its hard-won longevity and its jazz format as cultural assets to the community. At the local post office, grocery store, parking lot, or gym, Fuller was asked by people whom he had never met, "What's going on with the jazz station? I miss your show." While awaiting someone with the requisite deep pockets to step in, members of the community organized to discuss other potential options. According to the *Pine Cone*, when realtor Gin Weathers and some friends started discussing KRML over lunch at the Mission Ranch, "We realized that it's an asset and part of our community—it's kind of like saving a landmark. It's productive and does something, and can do even more for our community if we can bring it back." The women founded the Save KRML Steering Committee, devoted to "getting the station online again to promote Carmel and tourism, keep history alive, play music, host talk shows, support local businesses and help disseminate crucial information during emergencies and disasters." Keeping KRML in local hands was a top priority: "We cannot allow this community radio station to be purchased by an outside entity. Its value is great and historical significance a treasure. Preserving this asset for our community will promote community pride and pay dividends for generations to come." The Committee thus sought to raise "less than half a million dollars" to take over the station from the bank, and to entice an investor "who's equally interested, passionate, and who has the wherewithal and the financial resources to at least get the ball rolling."<sup>131</sup> Within a month's time, Scot McKay, owner of the Carmel Valley Athletic Club, stepped forward with an offer of \$150,000 and the blessing of Clint Eastwood himself. Though he had no prior experience in radio, observers were relieved that he kept KRML from becoming the property of an unidentified but sinister-sounding "national country music syndicate." The new studio would be in a space behind McKay's athletic club in the valley, but his ultimate aim was to reestablish a presence in downtown Carmel-by-the-Sea.<sup>132</sup>

A new web site and Facebook page trumpeted the station's history—especially the Eastwood/*Misty* connection—and boasted a new logo of a very dapper frog holding a microphone (Figure 7).

While maintaining its jazz format on AM, FM (102.1 MHz), and internet stream, KRML also promised more local public affairs and "lifestyle" programming, such as *Corks and Forks* with a culinary luminary from Big Sur. Although still technically a for-profit enterprise selling advertising, KRML also sought to generate revenue through an "underwriting" arrangement with businesses and individuals, a far more common practice in the non-commercial public broadcasting sector. For several

<sup>131</sup>Mary Brownfield, "Group mobilizes to resurrect bankrupt KRML radio," *PC* 24 June 2011: 3A.

<sup>132</sup>"KRML's new owner has ambitious plans," *PC* 22 July 2011: 1A, 10A; and Roy Rosenblum, "Carmel, California's jazz-and-blues KRML (1410) is sold," *Radio-Info.com* 21 July 2011 (<http://www.radio-info.com/news/>); Joel Ede, "Carmel Businessman Keeps KRML Local," *Monterey County Weekly*, 20 July 2011 (<http://www.montereycountyweekly.com>).



**Figure 7** Dapper frog that represented KRML in its last days as a jazz broadcaster, 2012. Used with permission of KRML Radio.

months after the purchase, the web site had links for both advertising and donations.<sup>133</sup>

However, in October 2012, McKay and his staff pulled what they described themselves as an “obnoxious stunt” that brought an end to KRML’s jazz age. Selecting what they considered the ten “most annoying songs” from the current *Billboard* Top 40, they played these over and over for five days (October 24–28). The new format—dubbed “Radio Yummy”—was a ruse, but drew a furious response from listeners both nearby and faraway and instigated a new campaign to “Save KRML” and “Resist Corporate Radio” (which may itself have been part of the gag).<sup>134</sup> The *Monterey Herald* reported that “Interspersed with those musical ‘earworms’ were screaming disc jockeys mispronouncing Carmel and horrifyingly irritating commercials for fictional products (such as a screw-on hairpiece) and bogus local events (a monster truck rally at the Lone Cypress).” Relief came on October 29, when locally produced music, talk, and lifestyle programming resumed, but without the jazz format (McKay personally notified Eastwood, who took the news graciously). “We plan to

<sup>133</sup>See <http://www.krml.com/> and <http://www.facebook.com/KRMLRadio>; Dave Seyler, “What McKay will pay for,” *Radio & Television Business Report*, 27 July 2011 (<http://rbr.com/what-mckay-will-pay-for-play-misty-station/>).

<sup>134</sup>Radio Yummy—Carmel’s Hits Played Again and Again and Again,” <http://radioyummy.com>; “Save KRML,” <https://www.facebook.com/pages/SaveKRML/200106506790529>; and “KRML Dumps Jazz to Play Nothing But Hits as ‘Radio Yummy,’” All Access.com, 25 Oct. 2012 (<http://www.allaccess.com/net-news/archive/story/111803/krml-dumps-jazz-to-play-nothing-but-hits-as-radio->). Three YouTube videos were also posted during the campaign, in which someone repeatedly pastes Radio Yummy stickers on a man’s shirt and car. “You’re ruining radio in Carmel!” the man rants in one.

have a really diverse, deep playlist,” general manager Mike Hale announced. “Our intent is to become the antithesis of the corporate-run radio station.” At this writing, KRML’s web site states:

Outside of specialty programs KRML is a music station for music fans. We are concerned less about genre or era and more with the substance of songs and the merits of the artists. The result is a diverse mix of the best rock, blues, folk, and alternative songs from icons to unknowns. In short, KRML is a station for music fans, aficionados, and thoughtful listeners who want to be surprised and delighted song after song after song.

In a nod to its heritage as a jazz station, KRML maintains a web-stream of jazz programming; but, Hale stated, “jazz and blues are a niche market. Several people have tried to make the station succeed with that genre, and they’ve all failed.”<sup>135</sup>

### Jazz Sunsets

Why was the last commercial jazz broadcaster in the United States based in Carmel, California? I have suggested several potential answers here: the nearby presence of the oldest continuous jazz festival in the world, and of adopted Carmelites (not the least of whom was named Clint Eastwood) dedicated to proselytizing on the music’s behalf; a community tradition of supporting the arts generally and musical activity in particular; and the concurrence of jazz’s ascendant cultural prestige value and the Carmel population’s increasing affluence. These factors overcame municipal restrictions on musicking while boozing, and a paucity of racial diversity, both of which could have easily forestalled the development of a jazz-friendly market.

It remains vexing to gauge the degree of favor KRML and jazz have enjoyed in Carmel (especially in the absence of any recent Arbitron ratings data). Considering that it has been the only radio station in town for most of its history, there has been surprisingly little reportage on KRML in the local print media, nor any mention whatsoever in the handful of published community histories. Few of the library staff or city clerks I met while doing research in Carmel knew anything about KRML other than that it exists, though when informed of its unique status as a commercial jazz broadcaster they were duly impressed. When asked if there is much local support for jazz, Johnny Adams replies indignantly, “There *should* be! It’s the [oldest] jazz festival in the world, continuously. The Monterey Jazz Festival. And yet, they don’t support it.” Fuller, on the other hand, is more sanguine, noting that when KRML presented Dave Brubeck at the 320-seat Golden Bough Playhouse, exactly one week after September 11, 2001, “Three-fourths of that concert sold out from announcing it on *KRML*,”

<sup>135</sup>Dennis Taylor, “Carmel’s venerable jazz station KRML changes format to rock,” *MPH* 30 Oct. 2012 (<http://www.montereyherald.com>); Joe Livernois, “Sitting up and taking notice when local media has a local owner,” *PC* 2 Nov. 2012: 30A; “Clint Eastwood tells Scot McKay “Be Careful What You Wish For,” [www.24-7pressrelease.com](http://www.24-7pressrelease.com), 2 Nov. 2012; Lance Venta, “KRML Plays Misty No More; Flips to AAA,” *Radio Insight*, 29 Oct. 2012 (<http://radioinsight.com/blog/headlines/79440/krml-plays-misty-no-more/>). AAA = “adult album alternative.” As an indication of its rising profile, KRML was welcomed into the Carmel Chamber of Commerce and became a member of its Executive Leadership Council (*PC* 30 Nov. 2012: 11A; and 25 Jan. 2013: 11A).

before the print media ever publicized the show. “On the day of the concert . . . we had to turn back 200 people.”<sup>136</sup> Perhaps the public statements of the Save KRML Steering Committee are the most revealing: they say little to nothing about jazz specifically, but rather emphasize the station’s status as a “landmark” and an “asset,” potentially “productive” in instilling “community pride,” “promot[ing] Carmel and tourism,” and “support[ing] local businesses.” In other words, KRML’s longevity itself was reason enough to support it. The elision of jazz from such pronouncements might indicate either a rhetorical strategy to persuade non-jazz fans of KRML’s value, or perhaps the committee’s own dispassion for the music. When the city council conferred official honors on Gary Hamada for his long-running *For Locals Only* talk show, it was certainly recognition of the station’s past and potential future contributions to the community quite apart from its jazz messaging.<sup>137</sup>

As stated earlier, Carmel’s century-long vigilance against the homogenizing rapacity of millennial capitalism has been partially successful—but only partially. Similarly, KRML’s effort to buck the trends in radio formatting—to stand up for a musical idiom whose commercial viability is in inverse relationship to its artistic and social respectability—can be described as only somewhat victorious. KRML still exists as a legally private enterprise; it has not been swallowed up by one of the ever-shrinking number of radio conglomerates; and it continued to broadcast jazz for thirty years. But it clearly did not generate the requisite advertising revenue to make it a *profitable* private enterprise, and thus for some time occupied an ambiguous space between commercial broadcaster and listener-supported community station. Its continued existence, commercial independence, and long commitment to the jazz format are all cause for celebration, but its community support has been just enough to make it survive rather than thrive.

As purportedly the “most ‘spiritual’ of the arts of the spirit,” music “represents the most radical and most absolute form of the negation of the world,” which has been a communal venture among Carmel residents for over a century.<sup>138</sup> The survival of KRML may have been predicated on the transformation of jazz itself into a hip, high-class “aural wallpaper” among most American listeners. Perhaps, then, KRML the jazz station functioned as KRML the MOR station once did, providing an auditory security blanket for a community determined to keep things mellow. One clue suggesting as much was KRML’s station identification in the latter days of its jazz format. For many commercial broadcasters, this federally-mandated, hourly ritual is a time to trot out a peppy, custom-made, three- or four-note jingle announcing their call signs and channel numbers.<sup>139</sup> And then there was the sound of surf and

<sup>136</sup>Adams and Fuller interviews. See also Alex Gilrane, “Pretty Cool for a White Guy—After Six Decades, It’s Hard To Remember That Dave Brubeck’s Jazz Was Once Revolutionary,” *Monterey County Weekly* 13 Sept. 2001 (<http://www.montereycountyweekly.com>).

<sup>137</sup>“Hamada to be honored Nov. 1 by city council,” *PC* 28 Oct. 2011: 12A.

<sup>138</sup>Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 19.

<sup>139</sup>Federal Communications Commission, Code of Federal Regulations—Title 47: Telecommunications, 47 CFR 73.1201 (a)(2). See also Fred Wasser, “The Not-So-Distant History of Radio Jingles,” *Weekend Edition Saturday*, National Public Radio, 28 July 2012 ([www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org)).

seagulls that greeted listeners on California's Monterey Peninsula who found 1410 on their AM dials. A purposively mellow voice informed them that "The best in jazz music is right here on KRML radio, 1410 AM, and streaming live all over the globe on krmlradio.com." The juxtaposition of soothing sea sounds with jazz was a quite deliberate effort to foster an atmosphere of relaxation, suitable to the resident "old timers," Silicon Valley weekenders, and vacationing tourists comprising Carmel-by-the-Sea's milieu.

Yet in this respect, to paraphrase the Gilliams' history of Carmel, KRML was "both a unique phenomenon and a microcosm" of broader trends in American public culture. This "re-branding" of jazz, if you will, is evident in the brazen marketing tactics adopted in the last two decades by major recording companies with deep jazz catalogs, intent on selling jazz as the coolest "chill-out" and "make-out" music. Its "cultural accreditation" confirmed and institutionalized, jazz enjoys a respect and cachet that so-called "easy listening" or "beautiful music" never could, nor even pretends to possess.<sup>140</sup> But contemporary ears accustomed and inured to "hard" styles like heavy metal, punk, techno-house, and hip hop increasingly hear jazz—once considered audacious, provocative, and even, at times, raunchy—as gentle and relaxing, and to the extent that jazz remains marketable at all in the United States, much of its appeal is this very quality. Moreover, jazz evokes a rather ill-informed nostalgia for mid-twentieth-century America, a time when, as Jay Pritchett put it in a recent episode of *Modern Family*, "If you were a straight white guy who played football, you couldn't have a bad day."<sup>141</sup> Major recording companies, many of which long ago deemed it foolhardy to nurture younger artists and build new jazz catalogs, have instead taken to issuing multiple thematic compilation series intended specifically to induce relaxation, evoke nostalgia, or inspire amorous activity. Dig these titles:

- *Jazz 'Round Midnight* (43 albums, Verve, 1990–97);
- *For Lovers* (23 albums, Verve, 1999–2007);
- *Love Songs* (8 jazz albums, Columbia/Legacy, 1999–2005);
- *Jazz Moods: Hot/Cool/Round Midnight* (12 albums, Columbia/Legacy, 2004–05);
- *Jazz for a Rainy Afternoon*, *Jazz for the Quiet Times*, *Jazz for When You're Alone*, *Jazz for When You're Not Alone*, *Jazz for When You're in Love*, *Jazz for a Coffee Break*, etc. (19 titles, 32 Jazz, 1998–2000, and Savoy Jazz, 2003–05);<sup>142</sup>
- *Plays/Sings for Lovers* (15 albums, Concord, 1990–2009);

<sup>140</sup>Bernard Gendron uses the phrase "cultural accreditation" to describe the esteem jazz attained through engagements with avant-garde and modernist art, music, theater, cinema, and literature (*Between Montmartre and the Mudd Club*, 8–10).

<sup>141</sup>"Planes, Trains and Cars," episode #69, *Modern Family*, ABC-TV, original air date 2 May 2012.

<sup>142</sup>Legendary producer Joel Dorn (1942–2007) initiated the *Jazz for ...* series of compilations—drawing on recordings from Joe Fields' Muse Records catalog (1972–95)—for his 32 Jazz label in the late 1990s. The Savoy Label Group later acquired rights to reissue and expand the series as budget-priced two-CD sets, which have sold quite well.



- *Jazz Moods: By the Fire, Dinner by Candlelight, Latin Romance, At Love's End, etc.* (Concord, 24 albums, 1999–2004).<sup>143</sup>

Jazz thus promises to sweep the listener away from the bustle of modern life (which in fact jazz *used to signify*) into a classier era, sexual ecstasy, or a state of deep chill. Just as Carmel was conceived and regards itself as a sanctuary from the dehumanizing grind and cacophony of modern life, for three decades KRML positioned itself as a haven on the airwaves enabling listeners to escape the more raucous din of mainstream popular music. Like its non-profit counterparts, KRML programmed music that represented the uncontroversial historical and contemporary post-bop “mainstream,” shunning both the electronic slickness of “smooth jazz” and the occasionally prickly atonality of avant-garde music. The programming was as artistically stimulating or as innocuously soothing as the listener wished it to be, which is pretty much what living in Carmel is all about.

Is there something wrong with this? Of course not. People engage with music at different levels in different situations; it may vex hardcore jazzheads that the rest of humanity is missing out on beautiful experiences by not listening to jazz more attentively, yet that does not mean they are above using jazz to set or augment a mood, or for purposes other than dedicated listening. Perhaps if its appeal as a “mellowing agent” is what it takes to keep jazz in our public culture at all, true believers should simply be glad of it.

### Abstract

The last for-profit radio station with an all-jazz format was located not in a major city or center of jazz activity, but in Carmel, California. KRML-AM 1410 broadcasted jazz almost exclusively for three decades, before changing to an eclectic rock format in October 2012. This article attempts to explain the conditions that enabled this small but affluent community to sustain a presence for jazz on the airwaves for so long. Moreover, it takes a microhistorical approach that examines the ways that KRML's history reflects the broader national trends in jazz programming. As jazz has accrued “cultural nobility,” a fancy for the music has become a social indicator of one's level of cultural sophistication. Canonized as a quintessentially American expressive form and repackaged as a non-intrusive, unthreatening vehicle for tranquil repose and nostalgia, jazz thus complements the aura of refinement and serenity that Carmel residents have sought to create and have fought to maintain for over a century. Its jazz programming informed by such discursive shifts, KRML sought to sway listeners to accept jazz as the ideal accompaniment to the placid, laid-back Carmel lifestyle.

<sup>143</sup>This is not to mention other compilation series from the 1990s and early 2000s that suggested historical linkages to more recent pop culture fads such as acid jazz, swing dancing, and the lounge revival (e.g., Verve's *Talkin' Verve*, Impulse's *Roots of Acid Jazz*, and Fantasy's *Legends of Acid Jazz* series).