

THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
RUTGERS

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September 6, 1989

To: Members of the Radio Council

From: David A. Cayer *Joe*

Subject: A Proposal to Improve the Public Service Image of WRSU
Through a Cooperative Program with the Music Department

WRSU has devoted two hours a week, from 6 to 8 p.m. each Monday, to classical music programming as part of its public service component and outside its basic musical format. While the programming of classical music has been adequate as a broad mixture, there is no particular structure which would lead listeners--students or others--to develop a pattern of regular listenership. It seems unlikely that any sizable number of listeners seeking classical music know about this segment, much less listen to it regularly as a core audience. Further, the frequent practice of broadcasting only parts of multimovement works probably conveys the impression that WRSU--and, by extension, Rutgers--does not take this music very seriously.

This proposal addresses the prospect of improving the quality of this segment of the WRSU schedule and simultaneously of bolstering the image of WRSU by rendering a service to a significant number of students, to a major instructional department, and to a broad community of students, faculty, staff, and general public in its listening area. At the same time, it would give the two-hour segment a regular focus more truly representative of public service programming.

SUPPORT FOR MUSIC 101-102

Under the proposed plan, WRSU would devote the existing two-hour time slot during the fall and spring semesters to the listening assignments for the undergraduate music courses with the largest enrollment, Music 700:101-102. According to the department's acting chairperson, Professor Floyd Grave, Music 101, "Introduction to Music," annually enrolls approximately 200 students in a section taught on the College Avenue Campus and another 80 to 100 in a Douglass-Cook section. It is a prerequisite to Music 102, "Introduction to Music History," a chronological survey which enrolls one-half to two-thirds of those completing 101.

The Music Department produces cassettes containing weekly listening assignments and places multiple copies in the Owl's Roost reserve on College Avenue and the Music Library at Douglass. Given the large enrollments in the courses, students probably face problems in gaining access to the tapes at the most convenient times. Devoting the weekly classical segment on WRSU to a "Music 101 (or 102) Listening Program" during class weeks each semester would simultaneously achieve five goals:

1. It would relieve potential pressure on the listening cassettes on reserve.
2. It would permit students to tape their own copies of the assignments for later study and review, thereby lessening pre-exam demand for the reserve cassettes.
3. It would be an exceptional service to commuting students living within the WRSU broadcast area.
4. It would provide a focus or structure for WRSU's classical music broadcasting by following the course outlines--by style and genre during the 101 semester and by historical period during 102.
5. It would enhance the image of WRSU by making this segment a true public service to the University's instruction and providing an academically oriented program. Creation of a structured format should attract a more regular listenership than presently exists among the general audience, while assuring some core audience of students enrolled in the courses. Because the course syllabus would be available in advance, general listeners might be invited to send for a copy to schedule their listening, thereby providing the station some measure of listenership and enabling listeners outside of the course to gain additional educational value.

The burden on announcing staff would not be enormous. The Music Department would provide the cassettes to WRSU as part of its normal production of reserve listening cassettes, and the syllabus (perhaps with slight additional information from the instructors) would provide enough information for an announcer to state the relation of the music to the outline (e.g., the style, genre, or period being illustrated), plus the specific work, composer, and performers. Professor Grave states that some assignments, particularly in Music 101, involve only parts of works but believes that a two-hour broadcast would often permit WRSU to broadcast the full work (although to do so would require substitution for the excerpt on the cassette). Most 102 assignments involve full works.

BROADCASTING DURING SEMESTER AND SUMMER BREAKS

Support for the Music 101-102 sequence would involve approximately 26 to 28 weeks of the year, although the station could elect to replay selected works during the examination periods to help students review. During the remaining weeks, this segment could be used to add further to the station's public service image, while permitting a broader range of musical programming.

In recent years, New Brunswick has become an important center of classical musical presentation. WRSU could preview performers and repertory to be presented in New Brunswick in future weeks. Such a service would simultaneously inform potential audiences and assist both the Rutgers-sponsored series and the New Brunswick Cultural Center. Such programming could follow this sequence:

From the end of fall semester to late January: previews of the spring concert season at Rutgers and the New Brunswick Cultural Center.

From the end of of spring semester through July: previews of events at Rutgers Summerfest.

From the end of July until the first fall listening hour: previews of the fall season.

This would involve more effort than the current programming, but it would constitute a genuine public service to both listeners and sponsoring organizations. As the University develops its program of civic education, with a related aspect of community service, WRSU staff members might well be able to apply such programming--gathering information on upcoming concerts, finding the records, publicizing the weekly segment--as a form of external public service consistent with whatever form the civic education program may take.

As a further benefit to the station, WRSU could explore whether the Rutgers and Cultural Center presenting organizations might become underwriters of this segment. While they are non-profit groups, they have advertising and publicity budgets and might therefore consider sponsorship of this segment during the non-semester weeks (and perhaps even during the semesters) a low-cost investment in reaching a specialized audience. Even the brief sponsorship announcement would permit highlighting a forthcoming event, and the broadcasting of a selection by the performers soon to appear locally and/or of a work to be performed here would serve as additional publicity for the presenters.

It is likely that the local press would give the station some publicity for such distinctive classical programming, either through regular Rutgers coverage or through their classical music coverage.

While either part of this proposal could stand alone, they can best be considered as a complimentary structure for tying this two-hour segment into a true public service which supports the University's instructional program, assists students in preparing their course assignments, informs the public of our course offerings, and stimulates interest in the general cultural life of the community.