

Radio Ga Ga revisited...

Have South African radio stations changed for the better?

With reference to [my previous post](#) on this issue August 5 2004, I find myself revisiting the idea that the changes in South African have actually now more than ever closed the door on a potentially wealthy market.

To refresh your memory, the idea was posed, to great debate that the current broadcasters of our country are excluding a rock based audience. It may not be a large audience in comparison to the pop market, but it's a wealthy group of people. These include professionals, semi-professionals, unprofessionals and students.

I again find myself virtually in tears when I tune into most stations and either hear hip-hop, R & B, Rap, and then the ever present pop. Now don't get me wrong the basic is that these tastes in music all have their place and purpose, but where is the rock based station? In a country which allegedly has a place for all to be heard and not lambasted the powers that be in radio broadcasting seem to continually ignore the rock lovers.

A revisit to the stations of choice in Gauteng:

94.7 Highveld Stereo:

Not much has changed here... well, sort of. The station is seemingly in a bit of a rut. They are constantly (in the marketing pages) appointing people to places of authority and not focussing on their key element, the music. There is a place for this hot adult contemporary feel for a station, even though they should strictly be an adult contemporary station according to ICASA. But being Primedia, you can pretty much do as you please. Highveld is losing presenters, which begs the question, what's wrong at Primedia, and does management have a clue about people? The line up at this stage is very dull; Mansfield has become very stale with Sam adding to the same old routine over and over again. Maistry is trying to be the nice guy and coming across as the dog that will do anything for a slot on air. Kane is still trying to be funny, sexy and a friend all at the same time. She has also found the rut of doing it for too long and would probably best be suited to the competition (94.2). Jay is unfortunately losing the battle at Primedia, he seems as if he wants to try new things but is being reigned in by management who don't want to rock the boat. Then here is the cracker, Garcia and Pilgrim sharing the evenings... do management at Primedia have a clue about sourcing the right people quickly and effectively? It's been too long to not have a set presenter in a so-called prime slot and leaving it to chance is just a bad idea. The music again is very repetitive, for example it's quite possible to hear the same song within a 4-hour period, during in office listening time.

Jacaranda 94.2

The jingles have changed... well done... the payoff line has changed... again well done... Michelle Constant is on breakfast... what the Are you thinking? The rest of the line up is pretty much the same, or maybe the over compression on the microphones makes them sound the same... could it be they change their stage names and continue on the merry way. Although Patrick Hayworth is an okay edition to the line up, again his personality is stunted. The feel he had at Highveld is gone and he has become a drone... as with the rest of the line up. The music repetition is again a problem for me; at least they are trying with the same old promotions as any other out of town radio station and getting away with it.

5 FM

This is where things are quite strange. All you hear for breakfast is a relatively educated man screaming at you. Gilman has no technical ability, sometimes you hear blaring music and someone shouting to be heard over it, then the music fades out and he still shouts at you! Why? Then Jardine comes along and says some of the most arbitrary things that make no sense. F and Martinengo are making the best of a bad station and doing very well at it. They sound fun, entertaining and

educated; this is the best thing on 5 at this point. Cliff is still obnoxious and crass. When he has nothing to say he ignores the music and tries something funny, invariably failing to convert it into a laugh. Surely when you have nothing entertaining to add you should just play the music, although on the other hand then there would be only two presenters on 5: F and M! Finally at 5, their current target market, "a 24 year old black female", by all accounts there are many other stations catering for this market, and 5 is missing the boat in reaching them.

Others

Since reading that Richard Perry has been appointed as station manager of Tuks FM in Pretoria, I certainly hoped that he would make some sort of difference in this vast array of stations ignoring the rock fans of our country. They are still talking a load of senseless rubbish, but have become better. The signing of Barney Simon is the best move they could have made, he sounds as if he finally found a decent home. The line-up is very confusing at times, but I find myself listening for the music, that is when I can pick it up in the northern suburbs of Jo'burg. The fact that Afrikaans is still on the station is surprising, but manageable. I certainly hope that they do succeed and give the commercials a run for their money.

So again I propose the idea of a typical play list and line-up for a station I would like to hear, some things have changed and some not. The fact is that there are still things missing in the South African radio array.

Line-up:

6-9: Alex Jay (94.7)
9-12: Grant Nash (Tuks FM)
12-4: Victor Kay (Ofm)
4-7: Ian F and Sasha Martinengo (5FM)
7 to 10: Patrick Hayworth (94.2)
9-12: Richard Perry (Ex-94.7)
12-3: Grant Nash (Tuks FM)
3-6: Phindi Gule (East Coast)

Typical Play list:

1. 3 Doors Down – Let Me Go
2. K's Choice – Almost Happy
3. The Killers – Mr. Brightside
4. The Narrow – The Living Daylights
5. Metallica – The Unforgiven
6. The Parletones – Here Comes a Man
7. Switchfoot – Redemption
8. Arno Carstens – Another Universe
9. Simple Plan – Shut Up
10. Crash Test Dummies – The Ballad of Peter Pumpkinhead
11. Sugardrive – Retrofriend
12. Dave Matthews – American Baby
13. Soul Asylum – Runaway Train

What do you think...?