

OWEN CARMICHAEL

Internal Music Director, WRCT 88.3 FM
Carnegie Mellon University • Pittsburgh, PA

5 CURRENT FAVORITES



Asheru And Blue Black Soon Come • Various Artists Funky 16 Corners • J-Live The Best Part • Various Artists Monkeywrench The System: Prehensile Style • Various Artists Nigeria 70



How many watts is your station? How many people do you reach?

1750 watts. Our signal carries pretty far, so we reach, say, a couple million people.

What's the station motto/your personal programming philosophy?

Here's the deal on my hip-hop show: if it's clean, it sounds good, and it's not getting play on the mega-corp stations, play that shit, period. If it's local, even better. I try to make it clear that there's so much more to hip-hop than what you hear on mainstream stations — creative beats, unconscious lyrics and fresh styles from up-and-comers who just plain aren't getting heard about because they don't fit the formula. Most of the shows we air really try to convince people that there's amazing variety in your local record store that isn't on your radio dial, whether it's jazz, rock, techno, hip-hop, country, whatever.

How long have you been and will you be MD? How do you abuse your power?

I've been MD for two years now. I abuse my power by arbitrarily playing that old "Mr. T's Commandments" record and the "Rappin' Ronnie Reagan" thing put out by the Doonsbury guy, knowing full well I won't lose my show for it.

What was your most successful fundraiser?

That'd have to be the time Fugazi came to our campus and played a WRCT benefit concert. That shit was *packed*.

Who are you most proud of bringing either to the station or to your campus to perform and why?

I'm really proud of the fact that WRCT has two live shows per week that bring in bands to the station to play a set — one Monday at 9 p.m. and one Friday at 6 p.m. It seems like an amazing amount of grunt work and coordination just to get a band up and playing, so those cats work their tails off every week. Plus, they even cut a compilation album of tracks recorded live at the

station. My hat is off to those guys.

What's the most fucked up thing that ever happened to you while you were on-air?

I was reading this really funny PSA called "Clubhouses For The Mentally Ill Put Lives Back On Track." The "clubhouse" was something like a halfway house where mentally ill people could get basic help finding a job, dealing with bills, treatment, housing, etc. While I was reading it, former WRCT DJ/current WFMU DJ Doug M came in the studio and said, "Clubhouses for the mentally ill? What's the password?" and I said something like, "Ha ha, clubhouses for the mentally ill — where the password is 'heeeeeeeeeeeelp!'" and we both busted out laughing. But then I thought, "Wait, that went out over the air... that was really offensive... man, I'm such an asshole."

What was your most embarrassing radio-related moment?

Reading another PSA for the Mediation council of western Pennsylvania. It's a 30-second spot which talks about how to get someone to mediate in your disputes — but in the course of the first 25 seconds of the thing I must've said "meditation" instead of "mediation" six or seven times. Finally I thought, "Wait, why would I want to hire a mediator?" and then I figured it out and had to pretty much tell the listeners to disregard that whole spot and listen as I read it again.

What's the best promo item you've ever received?

What's that classical-violinist-turned-hair-metal-diva's name — Giant Kat? Great Kat? Kat something? Well, she sent a poster of herself, in leather and goth makeup, blood splattered all over the place, crucifixes, etc., to our metal DJs Rob and Pete, signed "To Rob and Pete — bow slaves!" That was pretty cool. Pales in comparison to the good old days before I was around, when bands would send us their new release as a "cassandwich," i.e., a tape between two pieces of bread.

Does your station still play vinyl?

Hell yeah. We started broadcasting in the '40s so we have 30,000 pieces of wax. I play about 75 percent records on my show, and I know a lot of the indie/punk rock DJs play a lot of the priceless gems we have on 7". We have an amazing collection of vinyl.

What's your major?

I'm getting a PhD in Robotics.

When will you be graduating?

Probably spring 2003.

If you could see anyone live (dead or living), who would it be and why?

John Coltrane. His live recordings have an intensity to them that you almost never hear, live or recorded. Actually being there would blow me away that much more.

What's your favorite Behind The Music episode?

Neil Diamond. That motherfucker is so ordinary. No drugs, no sex slaves, no jail time, no bandmates drinking themselves to death, just some guy who writes thoughtful little songs and likes to sing 'em in front of people. He didn't have to worry about prima donnas claiming they were the creative force behind his music, no legal battles, none of that shit.

AIRCHECK

WRCT 88.3 FM "Tall And Lean"
Tuesday, midnight-2 a.m.

Partial Playlist from April 23
Owen Carmichael

KRS-ONE Rappaz R N Danja
NAS Stillmatic

HERBALISER Verbal Anime

LORD SEAR Hello

BIG L Ebonics

SMUT PEDDLERS One By One

HUSH Sampler

MR. LIF Cro-Magnon/Fulcrum

HIEROGLYPHICS The Who

W. ELLINGTON FELTON Soul Sonnets

DJ KRUSH Kakusei