

Planet needs Kiwi voices

by Natalia García

An Auckland radio station combines sounds of Ghanaian drums with Punjabi language, news from Tonga and Korean hip hop, broadcasting 143 shows in 51 languages.

But Planet FM is weak on Kiwi voices.

For \$45 per hour anyone can have their own show with no editorial regulation, as long as they obey the law.

So where is the voice from New Zealanders who have a passion, a controversial opinion, a determined political view or want to promote alternative music?

Terri Byrne, broadcast manager of 104.6 Planet FM, says mainstream New Zealanders are probably not aware of the importance of community radio.

She says its role is understood by people who don't have other media representation like ethnic minorities, but English speakers are less aware that this opportunity is available.

Even though there are some shows run by English speakers with particular interests, the vast majority are in a foreign language and targeted at a minority group community.

"I would like to see more people using our radio in English to explore new ideas, movements, and thoughts, but they aren't as proactive as people who don't have English as a first language," she says.

Byrne became involved with public broadcasting after feeling discouraged by working in commercial media where she says the main goal is to provide clients to advertisers.

"Media is our public conversation, it is how we learn and how we communicate with each other and the absence of this has political and social consequences."

Byrne says minority groups start their shows moved by a need to communicate and share with people from the same culture the things that are important to them.

"It gives people a presence, a sense of place.

"It is a way for them to say 'we are here and this is who we are'."



ALTERNATE AIRWAVES: Chakara Lim and Rotha Touch present the SamLeng Khmer radio show Tuesdays.

This thought is shared by Charles A-Dwamena, who helps run the Ghana A 2 Z show every Tuesday at 6.15pm.

This has music, current affairs from Ghana and New Zealand, and provides a forum for compatriots to exchange ideas and share feelings about life in New Zealand.

A-Dwamena, a leader in the Ghanaian community in Auckland, has been in this country for 11 years and thinks this space to get virtually together helps the community grow.

He says this is a really fulfilling activity for him, not only because his childhood dream

was to be a radio presenter, but because of the positive effects he receives.

"When people call us and thank us for the work we do, that's what makes me happy."

Najtej Randhawa is a fifth generation New Zealander who still feels a need to connect with his origins.

He runs Radio Punjabi every Tuesday at 4.55pm, a show including live discussions, music and interviews.

Randhawa enjoys being able to contribute to the Punjabi scene, connecting old and new generations and helping to maintain their language.

He has been doing this for six years, and he admits it is a big sacrifice as it demands time, and requires a big commitment, but he says he loves to do it.

Byrne says there is not enough space for public broadcasting in New Zealand.

She thinks one of the reasons could be because people need to pay a fee to be on the air.

"I don't think that should be there. I think communities should be able to access their own media without a cost."

To become a part of Planet FM call Christine on 302 0238.

Anything goes for Orewa theatre musical

by Sarah Menzies

Performers at the Centrestage Theatre in Orewa have just begun rehearsals for a production of *Anything Goes*.

Anything Goes, which was chosen from a multitude of musicals, is proving to be a popular choice with board members and actors alike.

Vincent Lipanovich, vice president of the Centrestage Theatre Company board, says it chose *Anything Goes* to be one of the four productions it stages this year for several reasons.

"It's our 50th Anniversary this year, our golden jubilee, and *Anything Goes* is a classic show, a great musical. It fits with the theme of the year for us," he says.

"Also, it's a show that will sell, and we have to meet expenses."

Lipanovich, who will perform the role of the purser, says he chose to participate because of the good production team.

As well, he admires the show's composer.

"I pushed very hard to get this show on because I am a big Cole Porter fan. Cole Porter is a genius," he says.

Elizabeth Wright plays the role of Hope Harcourt. Hope is the love interest of the male lead, Billy Crocker. She is a young American debutante set to marry an English gentleman until she meets Billy.

"The reason I chose *Anything Goes* is because it is a fantastically hilarious show, and you just can't be blue when you're doing it. It's the sort of show where you really have to stop yourself from laughing on stage because it's so much fun," she says.

The strength of Hope's character also really appealed to Wright.

"What I like about Hope is that she is quite an innocent character, but in the end she asserts herself to her mother, and finally makes the decision that she should be with Billy.

"She is also a soprano, which is my voice type."

Wright also liked the contemporary relevance brought to the show by the movie *De-Lovely*, a movie about Cole Porter's life which is derived from *Anything Goes*.

"*De-Lovely* brings a new generation the wonderful 1930s music of Cole Porter. In the movie, the songs are sung by major singers like Alanis Morissette, Robbie Williams, and Sheryl Crow. It just shows how accessible the music is, and how important it is," she says.

Anything Goes will show at the Centrestage Theatre in Orewa from July 1-15. For enquiries phone theatre manager Jill Rae on 09 426 8214.

Concert goers get no satisfaction at Western Springs

by Karen Tay

The Stones may have rolled out of town, but concerns from some fans have sparked a debate over the continued suitability of Western Springs as a concert venue.

Dave Stewart, general manager of Springs Promotions, a company that worked in conjunction with Auckland City Council to promote Western Springs stadium, said the main complaints came from fans in the general admission hillside area.

"They said there were too many people in the area, but people didn't move around the venue properly," he said.

Western Springs has played host to bigger concerts than the Rolling Stones, he said.

One of the largest was David Bowie in 1976 with a total of 92,000 fans and more recently in the summer of 2001/2002, the Bee Gees entertained a crowd of

75,000, Stewart said.

Stewart maintained that Western Springs was an ideal concert venue because it was in a "central location" with plenty of parking and unlike places like Eden Park, it was a venue that had "permitted activities".

The Auckland City Council website says that a maximum of six concerts will be allowed over the 2005/2006 season. A noise monitoring terminal at the stadium has been built to ensure compliance with council rules.

"Acoustically it's a good venue because unlike Eden Park or Ericsson Stadium, you don't get the echoes and bounce back because it's a natural amphitheatre," Stewart said.

Nicky Shannon, a fan who attended the Rolling Stones concert on April 16, said she felt the stadium was a good place to "sit down and lax out", but the acoustics "simply weren't immersive enough to really get into things". She had general admission tickets and "found

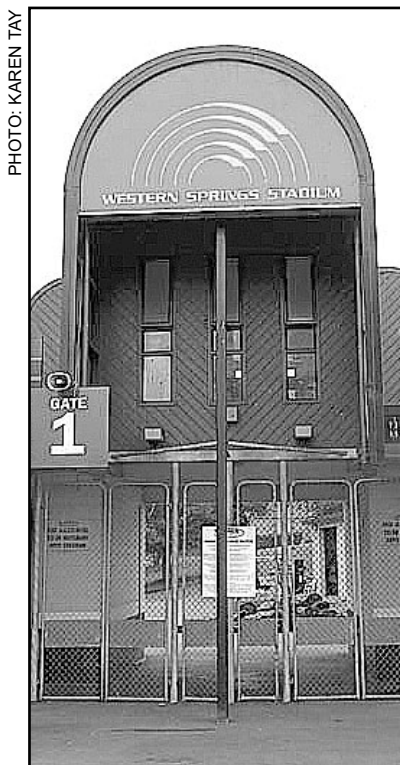
seats" on the grass bank near the Western Springs speedway sign.

"Ericsson Stadium obviously wouldn't have the capacity for the Rolling Stones concert. The St James has options for seating or standing but again isn't big enough so all up, Western Springs was probably an excellent choice for concerts of this size," she said.

Shannon had never attended a concert at the stadium before but would probably go to another one if the opportunity presented itself again.

Nick Morrison, another fan at the Rolling Stones concert, said he thought the venue "sucked" and he "didn't get any satisfaction" from the \$100 he spent on his ticket.

"I spent the whole time moving around and got stuck behind a big tree. I would've been better off sitting at home listening to the CD. Western Springs just wasn't good enough for that kind of concert," he said.



STADIUM DEBATE: Is Western Springs in need of a revamp?